**OUR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The City of Bellevue can enhance its current outreach and engagement methods by boosting its current social media practices, focusing more on student engagement, and incorporating technology to foster two-way communication and make planning activities more accessible and interesting.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**
We recommend that the City consider two-way communication methods on several different social media platforms. Two-way communication can be achieved using the “Stories” feature on Instagram. The City can reach younger generations using Snapchat. Webinars can engage with those who cannot make meetings because of their schedules, mobility challenges, or language barriers.

**INTERPERSONAL STRATEGIES**
Engaging students at age-appropriate events where they are given opportunities to “solve” real-world problems can give the City insight on parts of neighborhoods often overlooked, and inspire a lifetime of civic engagement for participants. A youth commission program or a plan-a-thon organized for youth are two approaches the City might consider.

**TECHNOLOGY**
By integrating technological devices with traditional public meetings, in-person engagement activities can be made more meaningful and efficient, and visioning capacity increased. Tablets are versatile tools that can be used in a variety of contexts to efficiently display and collect data. Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality technologies can be used to let the public interact with and be immersed in design plans.

A suite of engagement strategies will help planners connect with a broader range of community members.

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**THE CHALLENGE**

The City of Bellevue Community Development Department’s goal for this project was to learn more about methods of community engagement and outreach that would encourage greater participation of underrepresented residents, specifically those who represent the generations X, Y, and Z and who live in Northwest and Northeast Bellevue neighborhoods.

Community input is vital when making decisions that affect a community’s quality of life. This is true because nobody knows more about a community’s unique needs and aspirations than residents themselves. It is important for those community members who are typically underrepresented in and excluded from planning processes (e.g., younger generations, and minority racial populations) to become active participants in conversations about how to make planning processes more equitable and inclusive. Encouraging all residents to participate requires a variety of different approaches, some of which may be used in concert with others.