

# 2021 City budget planning public participation plan

Updated Aug. 3, 2020

## Overview

This document outlines the public participation methods the City will use to educate and inform the public about its fiscal year 2021 budget planning process and opportunities for the community to provide input. It also includes a timeline of key milestones in this process.

## Public participation opportunities

The City of Everett and Snohomish County are in phase two of the Governor’s “Safe Start” plan. Under this phase, gatherings involving more than five people are not allowed. Because in-person public meetings aren’t yet allowed, the City will use other engagement opportunities, as outlined below.

There are four objectives for the public participation plan:

- 1) **Inform:** prior to engagement and action, the public and decision-makers need to have the opportunity to be informed about City budget considerations. To accomplish this goal, the City plans to use a combination of the following tools:
  - **News Flash:** the City will continue to use the City’s News Flash subscription tool to share information about, and invite participation in, upcoming meetings, hearings or information. Go to [everettwa.gov/subscribe](http://everettwa.gov/subscribe) and select “City of Everett News” in the News Flash category.
  - **Website:** the City will keep the 2021 budget section of the website ([everettwa.gov/2021budget](http://everettwa.gov/2021budget)) up to date. This includes:
    - ✓ Calendar and links to public meetings and hearings
    - ✓ Background documents
    - ✓ If a series of similar questions come in, the website will be enhanced to include frequently asked questions
  - **Newsletter:** information about the budget planning process and opportunities to engage and provide input will be shared in the City’s newsletter.
  - **Public and neighborhood forums:** hold public and neighborhood forums to inform (and engage) interested persons regarding budget options being considered for 2021. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, these forums are planned to be held online unless health directives change. The City will create some combination of the following engagement opportunities to inform interested persons:
    - ✓ *City Council meetings:* the city council will receive regular briefings on city budget planning. [everettwa.gov/council](http://everettwa.gov/council)
    - ✓ *Neighborhood meetings:* staff will gauge the most effective ways to share information with neighborhoods, such as attending meetings, via Zoom or other electronic platforms.
    - ✓ *Special request meetings:* City staff would be open to any requests for meetings to answer questions or engage in discussion with interested groups.
- 2) **Engage:** ensure that there are opportunities to engage the public in dialogue regarding budget decisions that are being considered. These engagement opportunities include:

- Most of the sessions identified above under the “Inform” section will include an opportunity for public engagement.
  - An online form will be created to receive input on the budget. All responses will be included in the public record and forwarded to appropriate staff and City Council. Staff will strive to respond to questions received.
  - Mail can be sent to Lori Cummings, executive director, at 2930 Wetmore Ave., Everett, WA 98201, Suite 10-A
- 3) Listen: the City will actively listen to all input received, whether at a public meeting, hearing, email, mail or telephone. Constituents always have the opportunity to provide comment at city council meetings. A formal opportunity for input is also available at public hearings. Public hearings will be advertised through publication in the local newspaper and through broadcast on the City’s media and online outlets.
  - 4) Respond: the City will synthesize and summarize input received and provide recommendations to address comments before action by either the mayor or city council.

### **2022 and beyond: Fiscal Advisory Committee (FAC)**

In 2020, the City pulled together a team of business and community leaders to advise on our long-term structural deficit budget challenges. The goal of the FAC is to educate members of our community on the budget challenges faced by the City and advise the mayor and council on long-term solutions for financial sustainability. The FAC will not be making recommendations on the 2021 budget; rather their focus will be on 2022 and beyond.

### **Timeline**

See the 2021 budget timeline at [everettwa.gov/2611/2021-budget-timeline](https://everettwa.gov/2611/2021-budget-timeline).