Early Engagement Results –
Outreach and Communication Preferences
2024 Comprehensive Plan and City Center + Alderwood

Background and Overview

Beginning in Fall 2021, DBS staff conducted an early engagement effort to gather input and learn about the engagement preferences from those who work, live, and play in the City of Lynnwood. The primary goal of this effort was to identify how the community wants to receive information and provide feedback on long range planning projects. City staff collected 451 survey responses. City staff also conducted interviews with the Chamber of Commerce, business representatives, and community-based organizations to supplement survey responses.

Overall, survey respondents preferred online or digital interfaces to receive information and provide feedback on City projects. The overwhelming majority of survey respondents indicated surveys (either online or paper) as the preferred method to provide feedback to the City.

In contrast, conversations with interviewees indicated a strong preference for communication through trusted community voices instead of traditional City outlets (such as the City's website, social media, or newsletters). Interviewees repeatedly indicated several immigrant and BIPOC communities have a strong distrust and discomfort with government surveys and recommended focus groups as a preferred method of data gathering, especially for communities who speak languages other than English.

The results of this early engagement effort will inform future community engagement efforts for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update and the City Center + Alderwood Plan. Meaningful, robust, and equitable community participation is an important part of the creation of both plans.

Survey Respondents

The early engagement survey was available in English and Spanish. It was promoted through the City's email listserv, posted on the City's social media account, shared via email to community partners, and in an article in the Inside Lynnwood newsletter. A total of 451 surveys were collected online through the City's website and in paper format during a Public Works recycling/shredding event, Halloween Hullaballoo, and at the Lynnwood Food Bank. The City collected 228 email addresses from people indicating they would like to receive project updates.

Table 1 includes details about the number of surveys collected through each method.

Table 1. Total Surveys

Survey Method	English	Spanish	Total
Online	195	1	196
Recycling Event	28	-	28
Halloween Hullaballoo	122	11	133
Food Bank	77	17	94
Total	**422**	**29**	**451**

People surveyed were asked to identify their relationship to the City of Lynnwood by selecting all categories that applied: live in Lynnwood, work in Lynnwood, shop in Lynnwood, spend leisure time in Lynnwood, use parks or trails in Lynnwood, attend a place of worship/faith community in Lynnwood, use social services in Lynnwood, own a business in Lynnwood, attend school (or family member attends school) in Lynnwood, or other. Nearly 65% of respondents live in Lynnwood, 66% shop in Lynnwood, and 52% spend leisure time (including using the parks or trails) in Lynnwood. Just over 20% work in Lynnwood.

Overall, survey respondents were older, had higher income levels, had higher rates of home ownership, and more identified as female when compared to the City as a whole. For additional information refer to **Appendix 1: Survey Demographic Information.**

Survey Results

The following section summarizes what we learned about engagement preferences from survey respondents.

Survey Question: How do you currently receive information and updates about what is happening in the City of Lynnwood?
Survey respondents were asked to select all ways they receive information and updates about what is happening in the City. A majority of survey respondents (58%) indicated they receive information and updates about what is happening in Lynnwood through email communication. According to 2020 Census data, 93% of Lynnwood households have a computer, and 86% of Lynnwood households have a broadband Internet subscription.

Table 2 provides information on how people receive information about the City, listed from most utilized to least.

Table 2. Ways People Receive Information and Updates About the City

Ways to Receive Information and Updates	% of Respondents
Email communication (newsletters, announcements, etc.)	58%
Websites / The Internet	37%
Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Next Door, etc.)	32%
Inside Lynnwood Newsletter	28%
Local Media (newspapers, radio, etc.)	21%
Physical Mail (postcards, flyers, etc.)	17%
Flyers Included with Utility Bills	15%
Through someone else (friend, neighbor, colleague, etc.)	14%
Press Releases	10%
Through a Community Organization (faith community, nonprofit, service, etc)	7%
Events Hosted by the City	5%
Boards and Commission Meetings	4%
Council Meetings	3%
Other (please specify)	3%

White and BIPOC survey respondents indicated the same top three ways of receiving information and updates about what is happening in the City of Lynnwood. However, white survey respondents were much more likely than BIPOC respondents to prefer email communication, the Inside Lynnwood Newsletter, and flyers included in Utility Bills. BIPOC survey respondents were much more likely than white respondents to prefer to receive information and updates through physical mail, events hosted by the City, and Boards and Commissions meetings.

Survey Question: Please indicate how useful you think the following communication tools will be to receive and interact with information about upcoming projects.
Survey respondents were asked to select on a scale of "not at all useful/not preferred, somewhat useful, and very useful/preferred" which communication tools would be helpful to receive and interact with information about upcoming projects.

Over half of the respondents indicated email communication, websites, and social media would be very useful/preferred to receive and interact with information for upcoming projects. The Inside Lynnwood newsletter and physical mail (postcards, flyers, etc.), also rated well.

Table 3 identifies how respondents categorized various communication tools, from more useful/preferred to least useful/not preferred.

Table 3. Preference from Most to Least for Communication Tools

Preference for Communication Tools	Score (Higher Scores indicate More Useful/ Preferred)
Email communication (newsletters, announcements)	2.7
Websites / The Internet	2.5
Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Next Door, etc.)	2.3
Inside Lynnwood Newsletter	2.2
Physical Mail (postcards, flyers, etc.)	2.2
At In-Person Community Events	2.0
Press Releases	2.0
Flyers Included with Utility Bills	2.0
Advertisements in Local Media (newspapers, radio, etc.)	1.9
Online Events Hosted by the City	1.9
Pre-Recorded Videos	1.8
Council Meetings	1.7
Boards and Commission Meetings	1.7
Establishing a Phonebank/Hotline to Call in Questions	1.6

Generally, white and BIPOC survey respondents indicated the same ranking for their preferred communication tools, with some slight variations in the latter half of the list.

Survey Question: How do you prefer to provide feedback to the City?
Survey respondents were asked to select all methods of feedback they preferred to provide feedback to the City. Surveys were overwhelmingly the preferred method for providing feedback to the City (84% of responses recommended online surveys, and 24% recommended paper surveys). Nearly 25% indicated written communication (email or letter) and community meetings (19%) were also useful methods to provide feedback.

Table 4 lists methods to provide feedback based on most preferred to least preferred.

Table 4. Preferred Feedback Methods

Feedback Methods	% of Responses in Favor
Online survey	84%
Written communication (email or letter)	25%
Paper survey	24%
Community meeting about a project (sometimes called an "open house")	19%
Small group discussion with community members and City staff	12%
Individual discussion with City staff (phone call or in person)	9%
City Council meeting	6%
Boards or Commission meeting	4%
Other	2%

Both white and BIPOC survey respondents indicated online surveys, paper surveys, and written communication as their top three methods to provide feedback to the city.

Survey Question: Q4. If you would like to attend an event (either virtually or in person) to learn about and provide feedback to the City, what time(s) generally work best for you?
Most respondents indicated their preferred time to attend an event (either virtually or in person) to learn about and provide feedback on a project on weekday evenings (68%) or weekend afternoons (58%). Other potential meeting times were significantly lower, polling between between 20 to 36%. There were no significant differences between white and BIPOC respondents.

Survey Question: Are you willing to host a meeting or share information about upcoming projects with your community?
About five percent of survey respondents indicated they were willing to host a meeting or share information about the project with their community. City staff will follow up with these respondents to identify opportunities for partnership in future engagement activities.

Survey Question: Do you speak a language other than English? If so, what are your preferences for meetings and materials in other languages?
About 6% of survey respondents indicated they speak a language other than English. According to 2020 Census data, this is significantly lower than Lynnwood's population, of which 39% speak a language other than English at home.

Of the survey respondents who indicated they speak a language other than English, a majority (almost 90%) indicated they it would be very useful to attend a meeting and review materials in English. About 25% indicated it would be very useful to attend a meeting and review materials in the language they spoke/read (other than English).

Summary of Interview Conversations

During December 2021 – February 2022 City staff conducted interviews with individuals who are recognized as community voices or have connections with community groups. The purpose of these interviews was to help supplement information we may not have captured through survey responses. Staff had conversations with:

- Alessandra Durham, Snohomish County;
- Doug Raiford, Lynnwood Race and Social Justice Coordinator.
- Karina Gasperin, Snohomish County Latino Coalition;
- Linda Jones, Chamber of Commerce;
- Nekya Johnson, Community Foundation of Snohomish County;
- Pa Ousman Joof, Washington West African Center;
- Phong Nguyen, Lynnwood Business Consortium and Anna's Furniture; and
- Van Kuno, Refugee and Immigrant Services Northwest.

Overall, community members reflected on and recognized the impacts COVID-19 has had on businesses and community-based organizations. There was strong recognition of a tight labor market, lack of time/availability, and increased demands for people's attention.

According to 2020 Census data, 30% of Lynnwood residents are foreign born. Engaging with all members of the Lynnwood community is vital to the success of future projects. Interviewees highlighted cultural differences to consider for immigrant, refugee, and BIPOC communities. A common message we heard was that these communities may not fully understand American government processes and frequently have a strong distrust for surveys from the government. Interviewees also mentioned communities with lower English literacy rates would prefer to communicate verbally or in the primary language they speak.

The following recommendations were repeatedly mentioned as preferred engagement methods to reach communities that the City has not historically been connected with:
1. Host focus groups or listening sessions instead of long series of standing meetings.
2. Partner with individuals or community-based organizations who are recognized as trusted voices for specific communities.
3. Use social media and existing events to increase awareness of efforts.

Next Steps

This early engagement work will inform engagement plans for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update and the City Center + Alderwood Plan.

Appendix 1: Survey Demographic Information

The following tables provide a summary of the survey respondents' demographics in comparison to 2020 Census and 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) data for the City of Lynnwood.

Table 5. Comparison of Age Demographic Information

Age	Early-Engagement Survey	2020 Census
Under 65	70%	83%
65+	19%	17%
Did Not Respond	10%	-

- The US Census requires forms to be completed, people cannot leave answers blank

Table 6. Comparison of Gender Demographic Information

Gender	Early-Engagement Survey	2020 Census
Female	60%	51%
Male	28%	49%
Other	1%	*
Did Not Respond	11%	-

* 2020 Census data does not include this information.
- The US Census requires forms to be completed, people cannot leave answers blank

Table 7. Comparison of Household Income Demographic Information

Household Income	Early-Engagement Survey	2016-2020 ACS
Less than $25,000	7%	21%
$25,000 – $74,999	21%	37%
$75,000 - $99,999	10%	11%
Over $100,000	31%	32%
Did Not Respond	29%	-

- The US Census requires forms to be completed, people cannot leave answers blank
Data Source: ACS Table S1901,
https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=2020%20ACS&t=Income%20and%20Poverty&g=1600000US5340840&tid=ACSST5Y2020.S1901

Table 8. Comparison of Race/Ethnicity Demographic Information

Race/Ethnicity	Early-Engagement Survey	2020 Census
White alone	55.2%	58.2%
Black or African American alone	1.8%	9.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1.1%	0.3%
Asian alone	14.6%	17.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.9%	0.1%
Two or More Races	6.2%	11.4%
Hispanic or Latino	9.1%	13.4%
Did Not Respond/Other	11.1%	-

- The US Census requires forms to be completed, people cannot leave answers blank

Table 9. Comparison of Housing Demographic Information

Housing Status	Early-Engagement Survey	2020 Census
Own	57%	53%
Rent	29%	47%
Other	3%	*
Did Not Respond	10%	-

* 2020 Census data does not include this information.
- The US Census requires forms to be completed, people cannot leave answers blank