

Missing Middle Housing: Tell Your City

Engagement Report for A Regional Coalition for Housing and East King County Partner Cities

June 2023



Partner Cities:
Bellevue
Bothell
Kenmore
Newcastle
Redmond

“Affordable housing feels impossible to find, especially when you are a single-income household. Whatever is affordable is far away from work or family and friends and is simply not where I want to live. I want to be able to have the option to stay in East King County but the price of living is too high for what I earn.”

-18-25-year-old Redmond worker who lives in another city in King County (English speaker)

Community Voices: About this Report

Community members and city leaders alike recognize that King County, like many urban, suburban, and rural counties throughout the United States, faces a major crisis in affordable housing. Too many residents struggle with housing security, cost burden, and displacement from the communities in which they work, shop, and send their kids to school. The five East King County cities that commissioned this report – Bellevue, Bothell, Kenmore, Newcastle, and Redmond – know that the historical approach to housing must change. Driven by market forces and with a heavy focus on single-family housing, this approach tends to exclude BIPOC and low-income community members. Cities must invest in new housing options to retain their residents and workers and to thrive.

This report summarizes a concerted effort to engage people in the five Partner Cities who have historically been excluded from decision-making about housing policies. People from a wide range of ethnic and social communities came together to learn about *middle housing* (housing options more dense than single-family homes, but less dense than multi-story apartments) in meetings convened by trusted community organizations. Individuals from 651 households shared their personal experiences, responding to questions and providing detailed comments in English and five other languages.

Many of these participants were homeowners (40%) and/or business owners (15%). And many were struggling to afford to keep their housing within the East King County communities they preferred.

Some of the participants in this process could imagine themselves in middle housing. And some might have been unable to look past the urgent need for housing help right now, to the construction of moderate-income units perhaps many years in the future.

Almost half (46%) of participants had already been displaced at least once due to the high costs of housing. The voices of others previously displaced from the Partner Cities, and perhaps the region as a whole, are absent from this report, but deserve the consideration of its readers.

As the Partner Cities continue their planning and partnership with community members, they must listen for answers to questions both asked and unasked, and facilitate a balanced landscape of housing welcoming to all.

“Esta es la primer vez que se me pregunta sobre esto. En mi comunidad no conozco a nadie que haya hablado con ningún representante de la ciudad. Estos procesos son muy importantes y deberíamos de tener mejores formas de comunicación, especialmente si se trata de asuntos relacionados al futuro de nuestras familias y comunidades emigrantes.

This is the first time I have been asked about this. I don't know anyone in my community who has spoken to any city representative. These processes are very important, and we should have better ways of communication, especially when it comes to issues related to the future of our immigrant families and communities.”

- 46-55-year-old employed Newcastle renter (Spanish speaker)

Background

A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) is a partnership of King County government and East King County Cities working to preserve and increase the supply of housing for low- and moderate-income households in the region. In 2022, five of ARCH's member cities (Bellevue, Bothell, Kenmore, Newcastle, and Redmond, collectively the "Partner Cities") initiated a series of planning processes to explore expanding the types of housing (collectively known as "middle housing") that may be built in neighborhoods that currently allow only single-family or low-density residential housing types. At the same time, each city is conducting a racial equity analysis to address displacement of very low-, low- or moderate-income households, and/or individuals from racial, ethnic, and religious communities that have been subject to discriminatory housing policies in the past.

The Partner Cities were interested in hearing about displacement and affordability concerns, preferred housing types/locations, and other input to inform planning and policy decisions.

As part of these planning processes, the Partner Cities provided funding through ARCH to contract with Eastside For All to assist with engaging underrepresented populations whose voices and perspectives have not historically been part of public planning processes in East King County.

Such populations may include, but are not limited to:

- Renters
- BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other people of color) individuals, families and communities
- Immigrant and non-English-speaking communities, including cultural communities from the top-spoken languages in East King County
- Low-, very low- and moderate-income persons, including people who work in East King County but live elsewhere
- People with disabilities
- Religious minority communities
- People experiencing housing instability and homelessness

A detailed methodology of this engagement is provided in Appendix A: Methodology.



Middle Housing

Middle housing refers to a range of housing types that are compatible in scale, form, and character with single-family houses but offer more *housing density* (see right) than single-family homes. The term “missing middle” describes the relative lack of this type of housing in many American communities. Common types of middle housing include:

- **Duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, fiveplexes, or sixplexes.** These buildings contain between two and six separate living units. On the outside, they sometimes look like single-family homes and sometimes look like small apartment buildings.
- **Townhouses.** These buildings are at least two stories tall and include three or more separate living units that share at least one wall.
- **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU or DADU) or backyard cottage.** This is a living unit that is added to the same lot as a single-family home. These can be either attached to a single-family home (such as an addition that shares walls or a developed second story with a separate entrance) or detached (i.e., a separate structure).
- **Garden style apartments, courtyard apartments, or cottage housing.** These living units may or may not share common walls and are arranged around a shared garden or courtyard.
- **Stacked flats.** These living units each span a single story of a multifamily building of up to three stories, with each unit having windows on all sides of the building and its own front door.

Exhibit 1 illustrates some examples of middle housing.

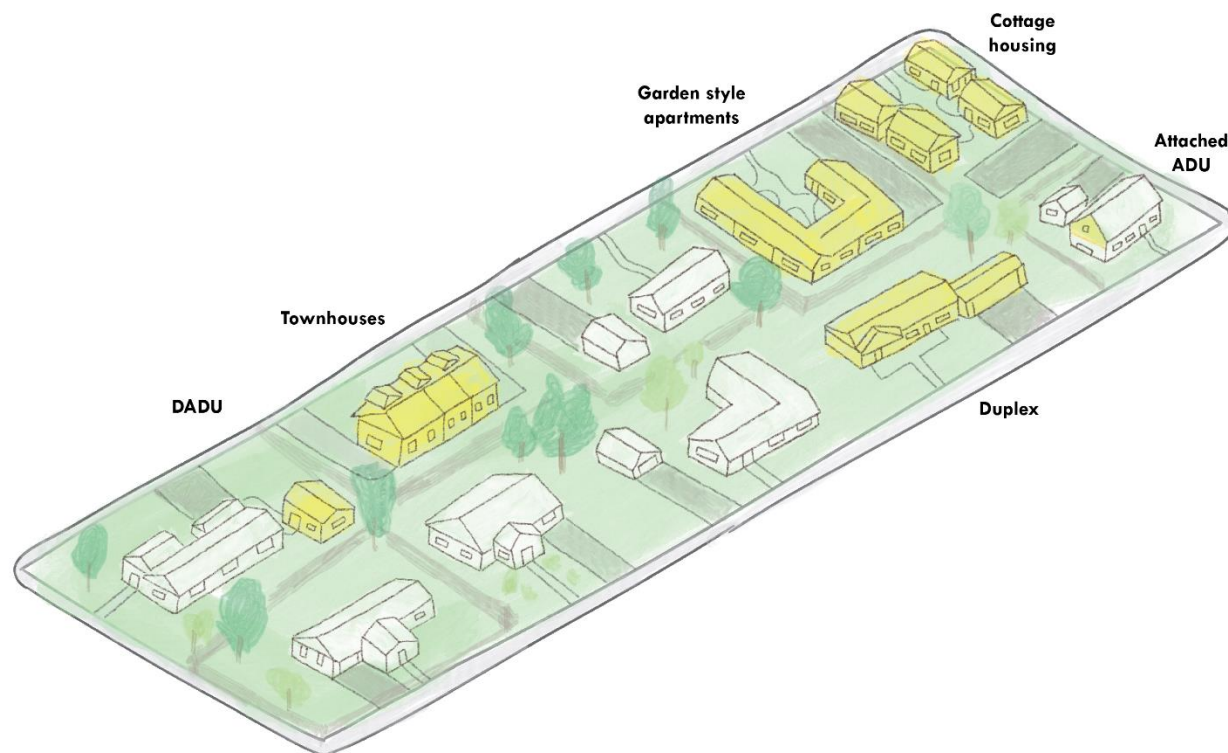
In 2023, [a new law](#) passed in Washington state that will allow many types of missing middle housing throughout many cities in the state, including in neighborhoods that have historically only allowed single-family homes, making the public engagement and review conducted by the Partner Cities especially timely and relevant. The law also removes off-street parking requirements for development of middle housing within a ½-mile walk of a major transit stop. The law comes into effect on July 23, 2023 and offers different types of zoning by city size.

- **Cities with at least 75,000 residents.** All residential lots will be zoned to allow two or more units. Residential lots that are within a ¼-mile walk of a major transit stop or that include at least two affordable housing units will be zoned to allow six or more units.
- **Cities with between 25,000 and 74,999 residents.** All residential lots will be zoned to allow two or more units. Residential lots that are within a ¼-mile walk of a major transit stop or that include at least one affordable housing unit will be zoned to allow four or more units.
- **Cities with fewer than 25,000 residents.** If the city is within a continuous urban growth area with another city that is the largest in a county of at least 275,000 residents, then all residential lots will be zoned to allow two or more units.

This law defines “affordable housing” as affordable to households with incomes at 60% of area median income (AMI) for rental units and 80% of AMI for ownership. Cities can alternatively comply by ensuring that three-quarters of lots allow the densities described above, with the remaining one-quarter of lots including environmentally critical areas that have not previously had any exclusionary covenants.

Housing density describes the number of individual housing units within a given amount of space: a higher housing density means that there are more housing units in an area. Large apartment buildings are examples of high housing density, while single-family homes, which often have space-consuming features like yards, driveways, and/or garages, are typically examples of low housing density.

Exhibit 1. Examples of Middle Housing



Source: BERK, 2023.

About Eastside For All

[Eastside For All](#) (EFA) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2019 to advance racial equity and social justice in East King County. EFA organizes and mobilizes within communities of color and immigrant communities who are most impacted by racial disparities and inequities.

EFA provides training and consultation to city partners, school districts, King County departments, and other large institutions on co-creation frameworks for public participation and decision-making. One of EFA's core priorities is housing justice.

Outreach Approach and Planning

Together with trusted partners, EFA connected with impacted community members and leaders in Bellevue, Bothell, Kenmore, Newcastle, and Redmond. This work was designed and implemented using racial and cultural equity approaches to ensure broad participation among the populations prioritized by ARCH for the outreach project.

In collaboration with ARCH and Partner Cities, EFA coordinated drafting the format, process, and materials needed for community engagement activities, the translation of materials, and the development of data/input collection tools. A subset of community-based organizations were essential advisors in the co-development of background materials, survey questions, review of translations, and other engagement design aspects. Preparation and onboarding with community-based organizations took place throughout the month of March and into early April 2023.

Engagement via community events, small group conversations, and individual meetings took place from April to May 2023. Each organization was encouraged to conduct outreach in ways that best suited their communities. Although people were able to fill out the survey without other engagement, the focus was on gathering input as part of individual and group conversations where people could ask questions, share their experiences more fully, and be supported when housing issues were raised.

The final report was prepared by [BERK Consulting](#), a public sector consulting firm in Seattle, summarizing data collected by community-based partners and compiled by EFA.

An important aspect of this work will be following up with all the communities who participated. In addition to sending the summary report to participants and partners, EFA will work with ARCH and the Partner Cities to provide updates on how the communities' input was applied, next steps, and other ways for community members to be involved. These community gatherings will launch in the summer and are intended to support bridge-building and ongoing relationships between cities and communities.



Community-Based Partners

The community-based organizations that engaged with Eastside For All (EFA) as partners include the following:

- [Africans on the Eastside](#)
- [BizDiversity](#)
- [Brazilian Community Services](#)
- [Hopelink](#)
- [Immigrant Women's Community Center](#)
- [Indian American Community Services](#)
- [Islamic Center of Bothell](#)
- [King County Promotores Network](#)
- [Larissa Chuprina](#)
- [Pride Across the Bridge](#)
- [Team TEAD](#)
- [United Hub](#)
- [YES, Latine Youth & Family Services, Community-Based Programs](#)

Information and invitations to participate were also sent by the Partner Cities, posted on EFA's website, and shared with additional groups, organizations, and at events.

It is important to acknowledge the organizations and leaders who contributed their time, energy, and expertise to this initiative. It is also important to acknowledge that there are many more community-based organizations and groups that were invited but could not participate or did not respond. Many of our community members are struggling to meet basic needs, cope with mental health issues, and navigate other stressors. Local organizations are lifelines helping community members address a range of critical needs. Although they have a strong interest in housing justice, and often advocate in other ways, they do not have the time to add an outreach project like this to the many priorities they are focused on.

Community Participants

This section provides an overview of the characteristics of attendees of community meetings and other survey respondents (broadly called participants throughout the report).

About three-quarters of all participants lived in the five Partner Cities, with just a small percentage (4%) outside of King County. Exhibit 2 shows the detailed distribution, with the highest number of participants (228) in Bellevue, and the smallest number among the Partner Cities in Newcastle (26, or 4%). While this project identified participants by their current city of residence (and also asked about work location, discussed in the Employment subsection of the section Our Experiences, Our Stories), some of the people most impacted by housing cost burden may already have been displaced from the Partner Cities, and may have been unavailable to participate due to this impact.

Exhibit 2. Geographic Distribution by City of Residence

Q: What city do you live in?

City / Geography	Number of Participants	Percentage
Bellevue	228	35%
Bothell	99	15%
Kenmore	40	6%
Newcastle	26	4%
Redmond	101	16%
Seattle	21	3%
Other in King County	109	17%
Outside of King County	27	4%
Grand Total	651	100%

Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

Through the community-based partners, this project sought to engage a broad range of people of color who live or work in the Partner Cities. Exhibit 3 shows the distribution of racial categories with which participants identified. The largest number of responses (198, or 30% of responses) identified the participant as Latino/Hispanic, followed by East Asian (127 responses) and White/Non-Hispanic (113 responses). However, these categories may be overlapping, given the choices provided (“mix race” as well as other categories which are non-exclusive).

Exhibit 3. Self-Identified Race(s)/Ethnicit(ies) of Participants

Q: (Optional) Race/Ethnicity (check all that apply for mixed race/ethnicity)

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Participants Self-Identifying in Category
African	54
Arab or North African	21
Black/African-American (U.S. born)	28
East Asian	127
Eastern European	12
Indigenous, Native Alaskan	8
Latino/Hispanic	198
Mix Race	34
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1
South Asian	41
Southeast Asian	24
Western European	7
White, non-Hispanic	113
Grand Total	668

Note: There were 551 individual respondents to this question. Respondents could select all answers that apply, so the total number of responses is higher (668) than the number of respondents.

Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

“Надо помочь старшему поколению оставаться в своих домах и их делить с другими семьями.

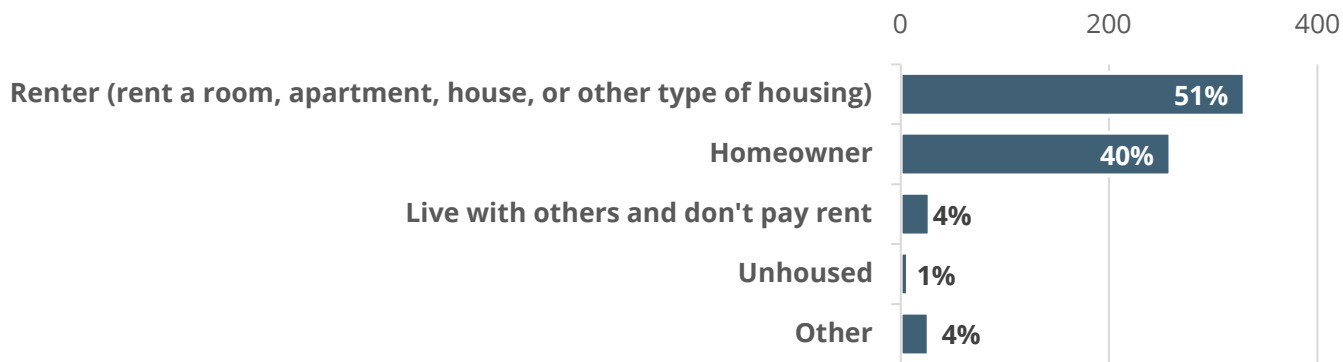
There is a need to help the older generation to stay in their homes and share them with other families.”

- Self-employed homeowner who commutes to Bellevue, Bothell, and Redmond (Russian speaker)

Exhibit 4 shows the situation in which respondents currently live (sometimes known as “housing tenure”). Slightly more than half of respondents (51%) currently rent their housing and 40% are homeowners. The remaining respondents live with others without paying rent or live in other housing types including manufactured homes (commonly called mobile homes) and transitional housing. One percent of respondents (seven people) are unhoused.

Exhibit 4. Housing Situation

Q: “Are you currently...” [with response options as noted]

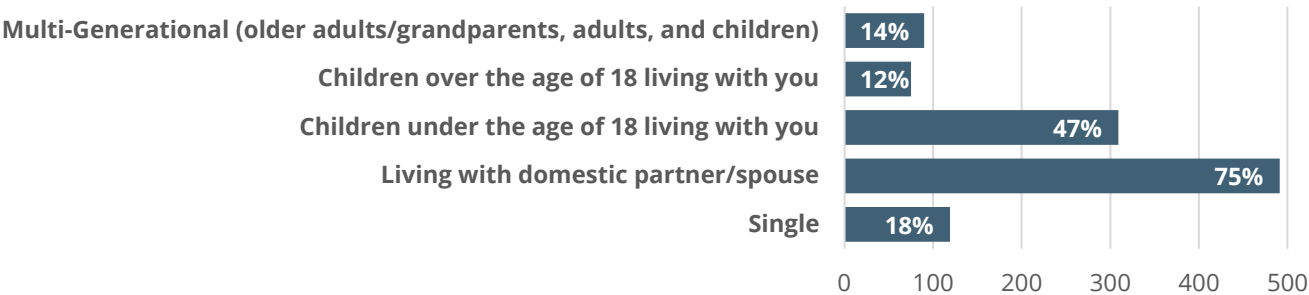


Note: 651 respondents.
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

Exhibit 5 shows that three-quarters of participants lived with spouses or partners, and almost half (47%) had children under 18 living in their households. However, nearly one in five (18%) lived alone. The question did not include an option for living with roommates or “other,” so this percentage is unknown.

Exhibit 5. Household Composition

Q: “Please describe your household. Check all that apply.”

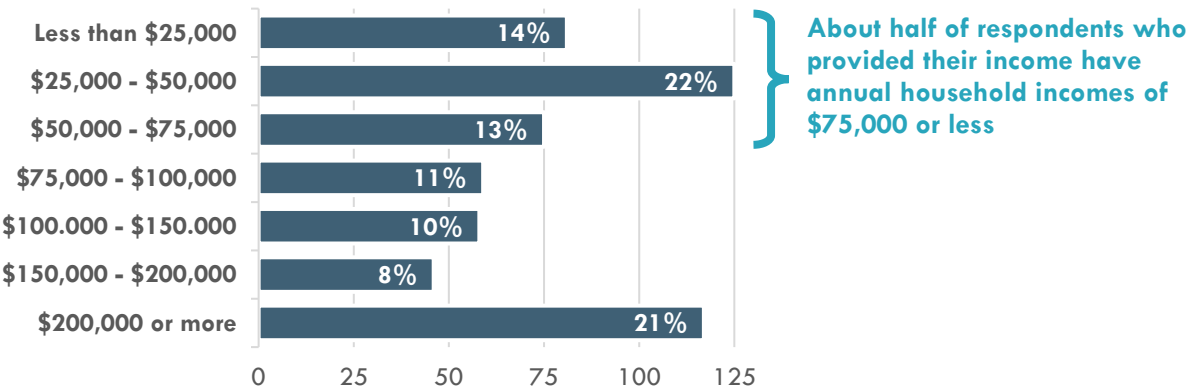


Note: 651 respondents.
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

When asked about household income, as shown in Exhibit 6, 1 in 7 (14%) of participants said they were not sure or preferred not to answer. Of the 561 participants who did provide a household income, half (281 people) said that their income was \$75,000 or less. One in five said that their household income was higher than \$200,000.

Exhibit 6. Household Income

Q: “What is your annual household income level? (Counting all those who work)”



Note: 561 respondents provided household income. 90 respondents selected “Not sure or prefer not to answer.”
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

"Tired of you ... tearing down historical things in cities, to build homes that people that have helped the community and have lived there for years can't afford. You are taking away [the] culture of cities to put [in] insanely high priced houses."

-18-25 year old employed renter who commutes to Bellevue, Bothell, Redmond, and Kenmore (English speaker)

Our Experiences, Our Stories

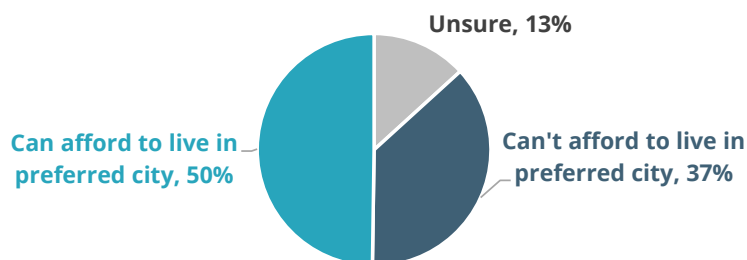


Current and Preferred Housing

Exhibit 7 shows how participants felt about whether they can afford to live in their preferred city. Half of respondents (50%) reported that they can afford to live in their preferred city, while over one-third (37%) reported that they cannot. The rest (one in eight respondents) were unsure of whether they can afford to live in their preferred city. Notably, the survey and community meetings primarily engaged residents and workers in Partner Cities, rather than people who may have already been displaced to locations outside of those cities.

Exhibit 7. Perceived Ability to Afford to Live in Preferred City

Q: "Are you able to afford to live in the city you want to live in?"

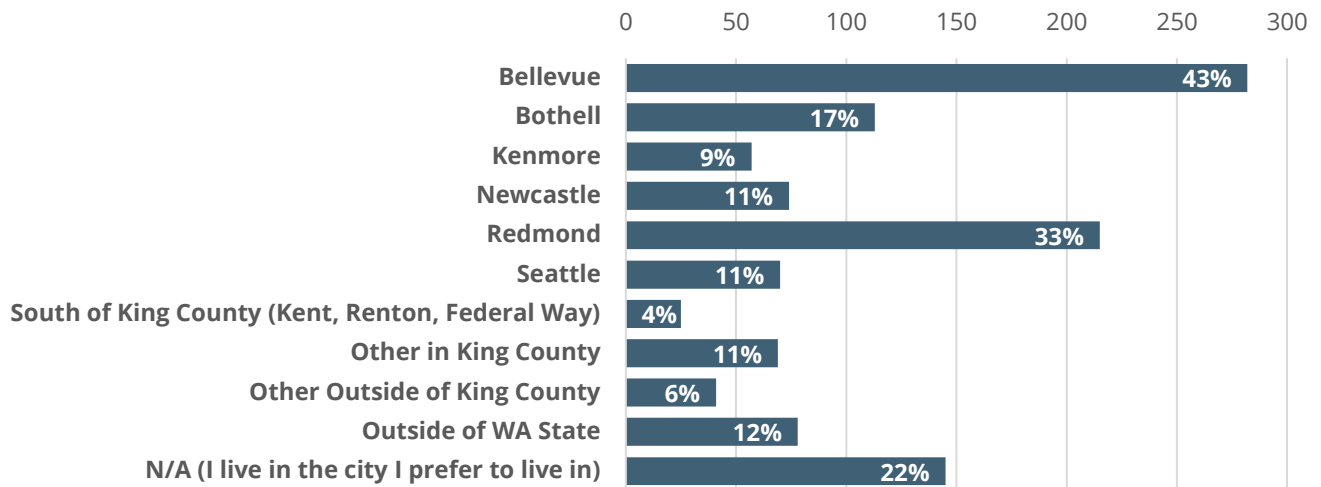


*Note: 651 respondents.
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.*

Exhibit 8 shows the cities in which participants would like to live if they could afford to do so. The largest proportions of respondents would want to live in Bellevue (43%) and/or Redmond (33%). One in five respondents (22%) reported that they currently live in their preferred city.

Exhibit 8. Preferred Cities to Live In

Q: "If you could afford to live in a different city, where would you like to live? Check as many cities/regions as you want."



Note: 651 respondents. Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could select multiple options.

Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

“Eu trabalho todos os dias na região de Kirkland mais os altos preços me fazer ter que dirigir muito todos os dias, diminuindo assim o meu tempo de qualidade com minha família.

I work every day in the Kirkland area but the high prices make me have to drive a lot every day, decreasing my quality time with my family.”

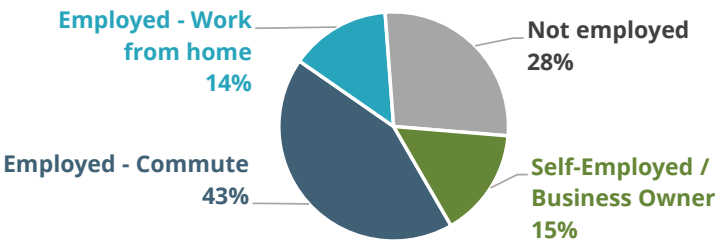
- Self-employed 26-35 year old who would like to live in Redmond (currently commutes to multiple Eastside cities, Portuguese speaker)

Employment

Exhibit 9 shows participants’ employment status. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of respondents are employed, including in a location other than their home (43%), working from home (14%), or with self-employment or business ownership (15%). Slightly more than one-quarter (28%) of respondents are not employed.

Exhibit 9. Employment Status

Q: “Employment”

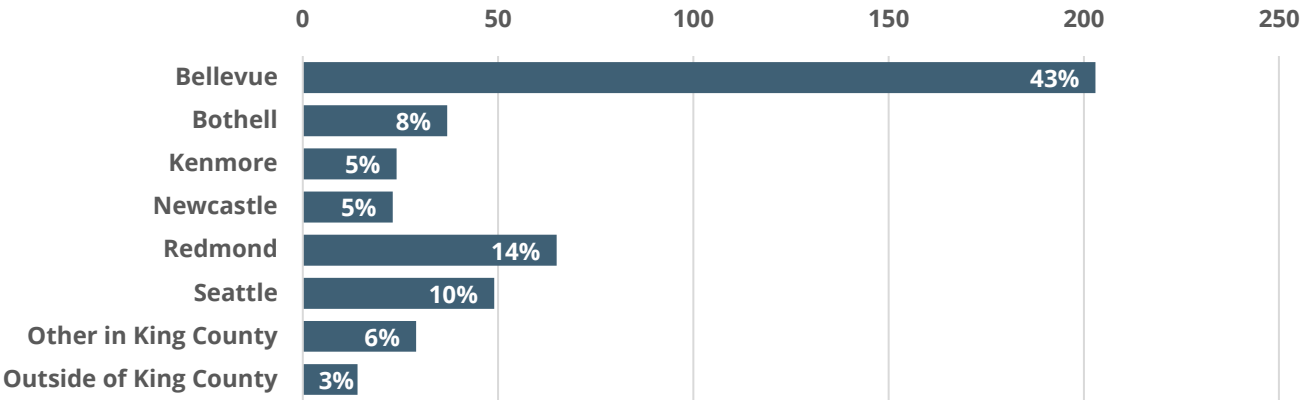


Note: 651 respondents.
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

Exhibit 10 shows the locations to which participants who work in a location outside of their home commute to work. The largest proportion of respondents (43%) commute to Bellevue, and the next highest proportion of respondents (14%) commute to Redmond. This aligns with participants’ preferred cities of residence as shown in Exhibit 8.

Exhibit 10. Locations of Employment

Q: “If you are employed and you commute to work, what city do you work in? Check all that apply.”



Note: 467 respondents. Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could select multiple options.
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

“We are [a] hardworking family and it pains me to say that we still can't afford to buy a house in the place we want to live in because of the outrageously high housing markets.”

- 26-35 year old, employed Bothell renter (English speaker)

Middle Housing: Aspirations and Preferences

The survey presented respondents with sample price ranges from Zillow to rent and own middle housing versus a single-family home, as shown in Exhibit 11. The survey then then asked participants if they thought they would be able to afford middle housing, given these price ranges, shown in Exhibit 12.

Exhibit 11. Zillow Cost Estimates for Rental and Ownership of Single-Family Homes and Middle Housing

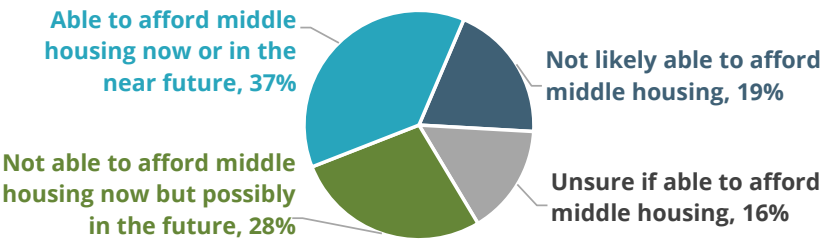
	Estimated Rent Range			Estimated Cost to Own Range		
	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Median
Single-family Home	\$1,995	\$9,800	\$4,725	\$824,000	\$9,850,000	\$2,662,500
Middle Housing	\$2,200	\$4,600	\$3,593	\$510,000	\$980,000	\$732,000

Source: Zillow, April 2023.

Exhibit 12 shows that more than one-third (37%) of respondents thought that they could afford to rent or own middle housing now or in the near future and more than one-quarter (28%) reported that they could not afford middle housing now but that they possibly could in the future. One in five respondents (19%) reported that it is not likely that they could afford to rent or own middle housing and one in six (16%) were unsure.

Exhibit 12. Perceived Likelihood of Being Able to Afford Middle Housing for Themselves

Q: “Considering the above price ranges to rent or own middle housing, would middle housing be affordable for you?”



Note: 651 respondents.

Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

“No middle housing please in our Newcastle neighborhoods.”

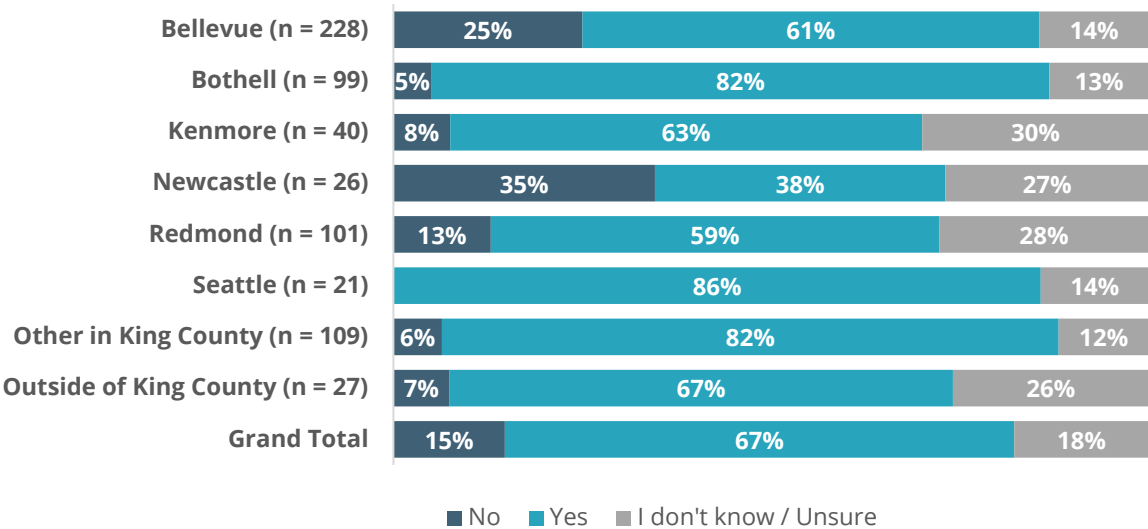
- 45–54-year-old employed Newcastle home owner (English speaker)

Across all participants, two-thirds (67%) expressed support for having middle housing options in their city; 15% did not support middle housing options, while the rest (18%) were unsure.

Exhibit 13 shows the support by city of residence. Among residents in Partner Cities, support was lowest in Newcastle (38%) and highest in Bothell (82%), and hovered around 60% in the other three Partner Cities.

Exhibit 13. Support for Middle Housing by City of Residence

Q: “Do you support having Middle Housing options in your city even if you may not be able to afford it?”



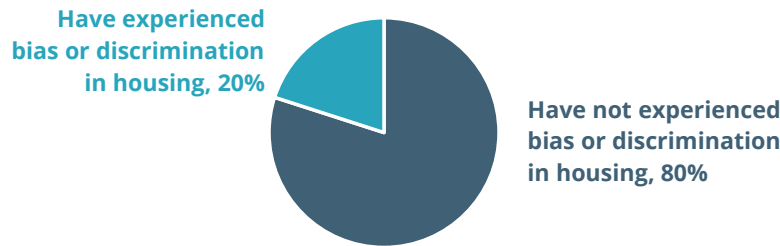
Note: 651 respondents. “n” refers to the number of people who responded in the category shown to the left, for example, 228 Bothell residents.

Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

Exhibit 14 shows that one in five respondents had previously experienced discrimination in housing. These experiences may cause distrust of authorities that guide or enforce housing policy, and make respondents less likely to expect that middle housing would be accessible to them, whether or not they could afford it.

Exhibit 14. Experiences with Bias or Discrimination in Housing

Q: “(Optional) Have you or someone in your household experienced bias or discrimination in housing?”

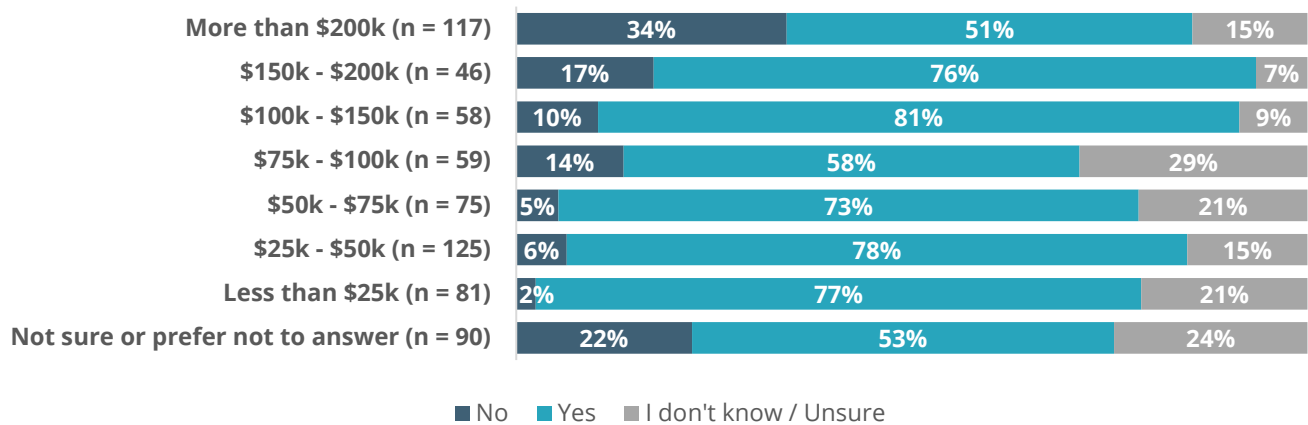


Note: 584 Respondents
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

Participants also showed support for middle housing across all income levels, as shown in Exhibit 15. Support was lower at the highest income level (51% of households with incomes above \$200,000 supported middle housing options) but was only 58% among households with incomes between \$50,000 and \$75,000, and was 53% among people who preferred not to answer. Eastside For All believes that some participants may have responded not supporting middle housing because they think of it as competing with the need for affordable housing for people at lower income levels.

Exhibit 15. Support for Middle Housing by Income Level

Q: “Do you support having Middle Housing options in your city even if you may not be able to afford it?”



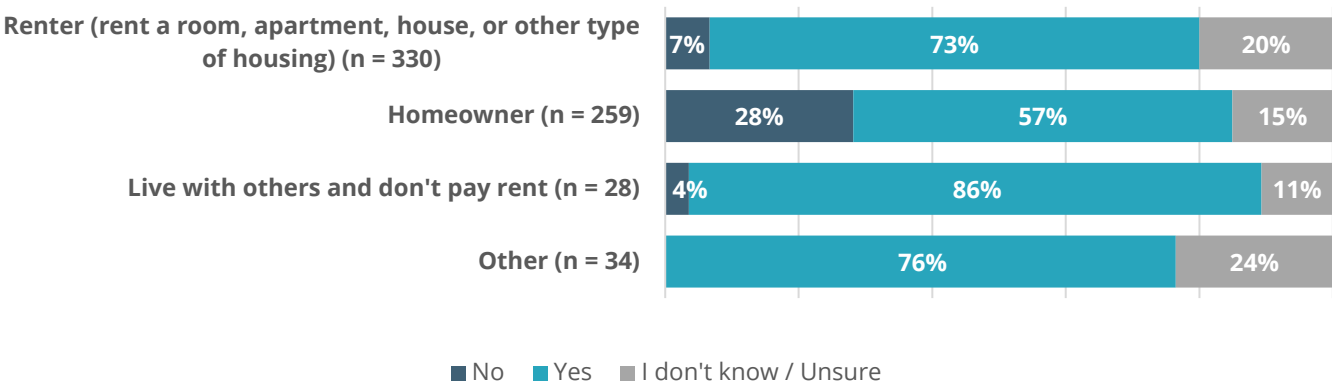
Note: 651 Respondents
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

“Bellevue is really amazing but extremely expensive. Is a great place but not accessible for most of the community around. To live there you must have a very good income and prove you are very financially stable, otherwise almost not possible.”

- 18-25 year old self-employed Bellevue renter (English speaker)

As shown in Exhibit 16, respondents who owned their homes were less likely to support middle housing (57% supporting) than others. Almost three-quarters of renters (73%) and even higher proportions of people living with others without paying rent or in other housing situations (including being unhoused) supported middle housing.

Exhibit 16. Support for Middle Housing by Current Housing Situation



Note: 651 Respondents
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

There was broad support for middle housing across self-identified racial categories, although the limited number of respondents of some ethnicities and races make this data less reliable. More detail is available in Appendix

B. Full Results.

Business Owner Experience

Because the BIPOC communities engaged through this project include many small business owners (15% of participants), EASTSIDE FOR ALL and its partners sought information from their unique perspective. The survey provided instructions that asked only business owners to respond to the questions shown in this section.

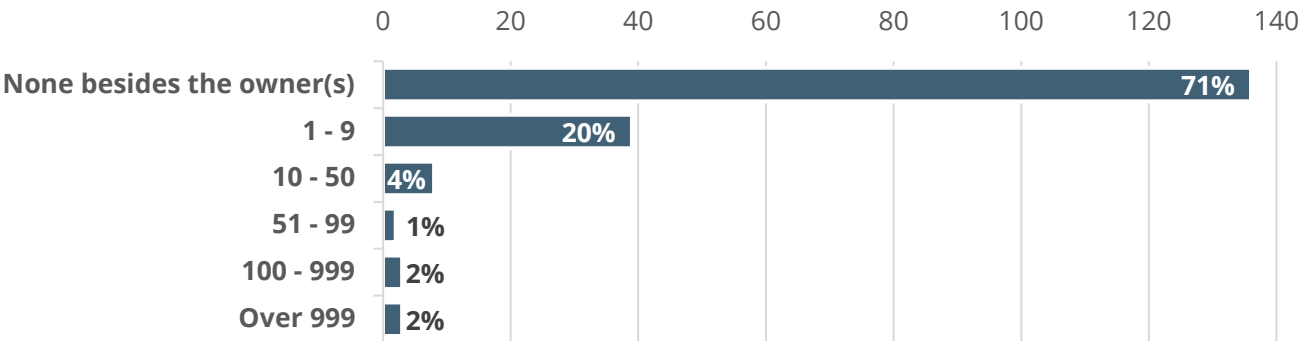
Exhibit 17 shows the number of employees at respondents' businesses. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of respondents are the sole employee at their businesses. One in five respondents (20%) have between one and nine employees, and the remaining 5% of business owner respondents have 10 or more employees. These limited numbers of employer respondents suggest that Partner Cities should use caution in relying on this data to guide decision-making.

"Housing is becoming more and more expensive. I am afraid the younger generations cannot afford to buy their own house at all. We need a change."

- 46-55 year old elf-employed Redmond business owner, home owner (English speaker)

Exhibit 17. Number of Employees at Respondents' Businesses

Q: "How many employees do you have?"



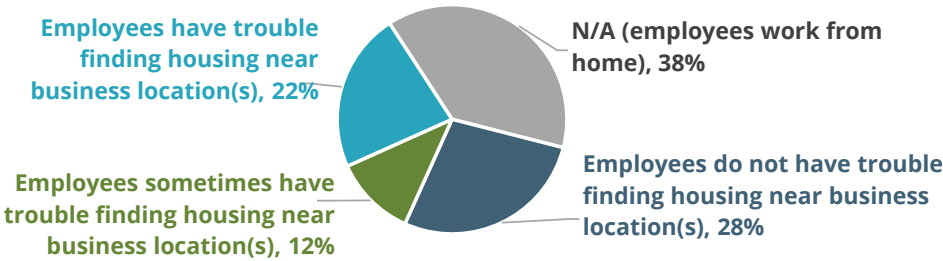
Note: 191 Respondents

Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

Exhibit 18 shows how participants assess their employees' difficulty in finding housing near their business location(s). One-third (34%) of respondents reported that their employees have trouble or sometimes have trouble finding housing near their business location(s). The remaining two-thirds of respondents reported that their employees do not have difficulty with this or work from home. There is an unexplained discrepancy in the number of people who responded to this question (173) given that only 55 people reported having employees besides themselves in the previous question (as shown in Exhibit 17).

Exhibit 18. Employer Assessment of Employee Difficulty Finding Housing Near their Business Locations

Q: “Do your employees have trouble finding housing near your business location(s)?”



Note: 173 Respondents
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

“Me siento muy frustrada, preocupada y triste. Necesitamos precios accesibles para personas de bajos recursos.

I feel very frustrated, worried and sad. We need affordable prices for low-income people.”

- 36–45-year-old employed Bellevue renter (Spanish speaker)



Reflecting Community Priorities

ARCH and Partner Cities have taken meaningful steps to equitably involve community members in housing policymaking. ARCH and Partner Cities have engaged with a broad cross-section of community members to shape housing policy and investment at the local level, and have conducted racial equity analysis to address displacement of lower-income households from communities that have historically been subject to discriminatory housing policies. Nonetheless, there are still significant barriers to meaningful participation in this work for populations whose voices and perspectives have not historically been a part of public planning processes in East King County.

As noted in the Background section above, despite a strong interest in housing justice, many members of these underrepresented communities are struggling with basic needs and do not have the time to add an outreach project like this to the many priorities they are focused on. For these same reasons, middle housing can seem unattainable to many lower-income households. For the many residents in our communities struggling with housing cost burden and housing insecurity, it may be hard to form meaningful opinions about new housing production, even for units costing less than traditional single-family homes. Future townhouses and duplexes can seem far off to people in a housing crisis.

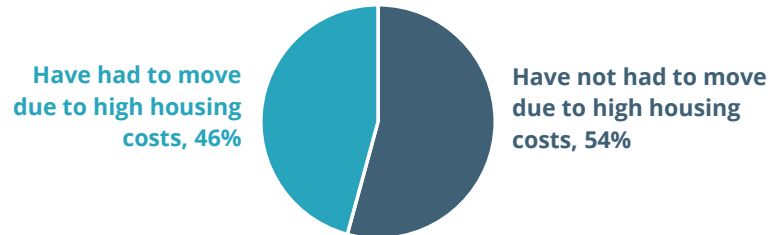
This section describes respondents' experience with displacement and highlights their homeownership aspirations and hopes for themselves.

Displacement

Exhibit 19 shows the proportion of respondents who have previously had to move due to the high costs of renting or owning a home. Nearly half (46%) of respondents have had to move due to high housing costs.

Exhibit 19. Prior Displacement due to Housing Affordability

Q: “Have you had to move because of the high costs of renting and/or owning a home?”



Note: 651 Respondents

Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

“住宅增加，人口稠密，也许会给交通、治安和教育带来一些麻烦

The increase in housing and population density may indeed bring about some challenges in terms of transportation, public safety, and education.”

- 56–65-year-old employed Bellevue homeowner (Chinese speaker)

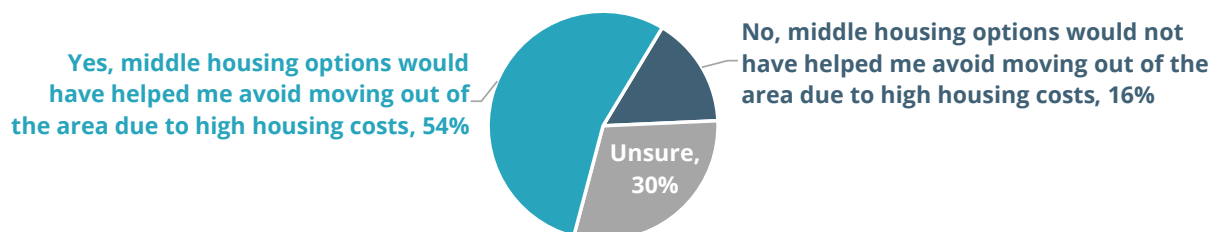
Exhibit 20 shows whether respondents thought more middle housing options could have prevented their displacement. Notably, 523 survey participants responded to this question, while only 298 participants reported that they had previously had to move due to high housing costs in response to the question shown in Exhibit 19. More than half (54%) of the 523 respondents reported that the availability of more middle housing options would have helped them stay in the area, while one-third (30%) were unsure. One in six respondents (16%) noted that middle housing options would not have helped them stay in the area during prior displacement events.

“I dislike your housing policies. These cost-reducing middle housing options are simply exacerbating factors like traffic congestion and community insecurity.”

- 36-54-year-old self-employed Bothell homeowner (English speaker)

Exhibit 20. Can Middle Housing Options Help Residents Avoid Displacement?

Q: “(Optional) If in the past you had to move for financial reasons, would more Middle Housing options have helped you stay in the area?”



Note: 523 Respondents

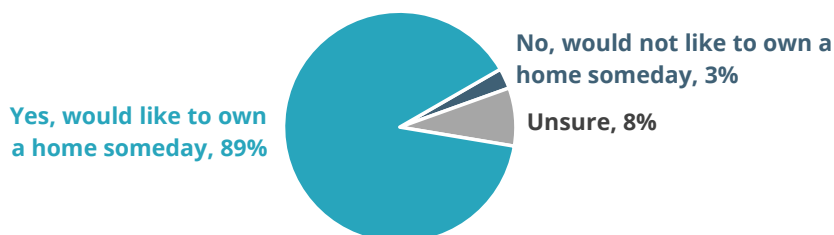
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

Housing Aspirations and Interest

While many of the people who provided input have experienced displacement or other challenges with basic housing affordability, they largely do aspire to own homes. Exhibit 21 shows that among those who did not respond that they already owned a home, almost 90% of respondents said that they would like to own a home someday. (Since only 195 respondents to this question said that they already owned a home, versus 259 who said that they were homeowners in Exhibit 4, some homeowners must have said that they were unsure, would, or would not like to own a home someday if it is financially possible.)

Exhibit 21. Homeownership Status and Aspirations

Q: “Would you like to own a home someday if it is financially possible?”



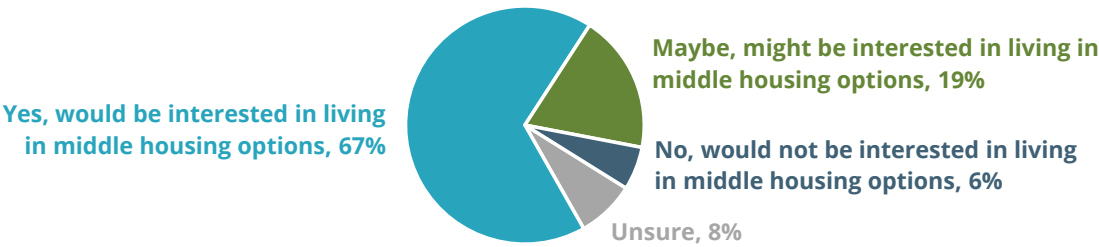
Note: 456 Respondents. An additional 195 respondents indicated they already own a home.

Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

Given descriptions of middle housing types (see Background) and estimated cost ranges for middle housing (see Exhibit 11. Zillow Cost Estimates for Rental and Ownership of Single-Family Homes and Middle Housing), participants were asked if they would be interested in middle housing *if it was affordable to them*. Exhibit 22 shows the responses from people who did not say that they already own a home. While two-thirds said that they would be interested in middle housing, it's important to reflect on how this is qualified. Nearly 300 of 651 respondents said they had experienced displacement due to high housing costs. For these and other people under significant financial pressure simply to stay in their current housing, even homeownership of lower-cost middle housing might be too high to be affordable.

Exhibit 22. Interest in Middle Housing Among Non-Homeowners

Q: “If these types of middle housing options would be affordable to you, would you be interested in them for your home?”



Note: 392 Respondents. An additional 259 participants said that they were already homeowners. “These types” refer to middle housing examples provided in the survey, as described in the Background and in Exhibit 12.
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

“No conozco los líderes de mi ciudad y la mera verdad no sé si este tema se toque con ellos.

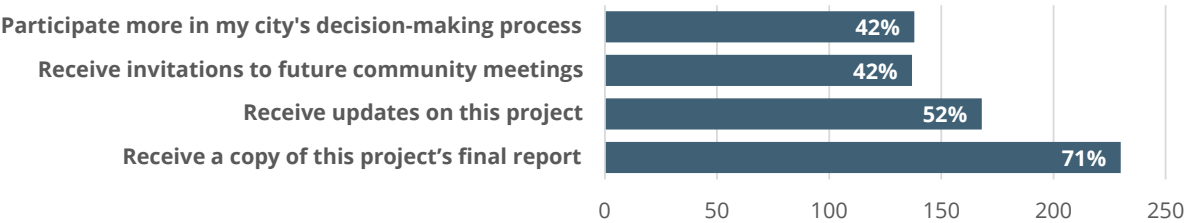
I do not know the leaders of my city, and to be truthful I don't know if this issue is something they deal with.”

- 36–45-year-old employed Bellevue renter (Spanish speaker)

This was the first time some participants were asked about the topic of housing, and others said that they didn’t know whether their city leaders cared about this topic. Almost three-quarters (71%) asked to receive a copy of the report, but a smaller percentage (just 42%) expressed interest in participating more in their city’s decision-making process or receiving invitations to future community meetings. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is the need to connect more concretely with participants on their priorities: to reflect their contributions in city policies, and to build further trust.

Exhibit 23. Interest in Further Engagement about this Project

Q: “Interest in further engagement”



Note: 326 respondents. Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could select multiple options.
Source: Eastside For All, 2023.

Eastside For All (EFA) wishes to acknowledge ARCH and the Cities of Bellevue, Bothell, Kenmore, Newcastle, and Redmond for investing in community-based outreach efforts to ensure participation from people whose opinions are typically lacking in city forums, surveys, and other engagement efforts. Building bridges between community members and the city governments was an important desired outcome, beyond gathering input on middle housing.

By supporting and compensating each community group to co-design the process and facilitate outreach in culturally specific ways that are most relevant and meaningful, the network of organizations and leaders were successful in engaging diverse opinions and experiences. (See Appendix A, Methodology, for details on the community-centered approaches.) Trusted messengers, who share similar cultures and backgrounds to those they work with, extended personal invitations to their community members in the context of existing relationships, conversations, and priorities - as opposed to a one-time isolated outreach effort. This aligned with community-based groups' desire to have ongoing influence and impact on decision-making, with more opportunities to share their voices in their own languages and in supportive settings that nurture future civic involvement and leadership opportunities.

EFA extends deep gratitude to the community-based organizations and leaders who took time out of their many priorities to partner on this project. Their insights and guidance were essential to the project's success and most importantly, to ensuring that a broad range of community members were given the opportunity to voice their needs and suggestions for regional decision-making. Thank you to each community member who came to learn about middle housing, shared their personal experiences about the local housing crisis, and provided thoughtful input in hopes that their participation would help others or future generations, regardless of whether they would be able to personally benefit.

EFA also wishes to thank BERK Consulting, Inc. for developing the written report in a way that closely aligned with the focus and spirit of the outreach effort.

Appendices

A. Methodology

Typically, engagement efforts with cities or other large institutions do not include local community groups and leaders in the co-creation process, which often means that the first time community organizations are aware of the outreach is when they receive an email to invite their community members to a focus group or to complete a survey. While these engagement activities are often provided in other languages, the translations are not consistently vetted for accuracy and cultural meaning. The information shared in the invitations often requires community organizations to craft messaging to convey the importance of the topic and the relevance to their community members. Most organizations do not have the time or bandwidth for this work, nor are they compensated for it.

Nonprofit leaders are mindful about what they ask of their communities. Without taking part in the planning and design, many organizations are reluctant to encourage their community members to participate, not knowing what to expect, how people will be treated, who is facilitating the meeting or survey, and how their opinions will be received.

The methodology and approach sought to address these challenges by including community partners at the beginning of the process and supporting the engagement methods they recommended. While the input to ARCH and the Partner Cities about middle housing was important, the network of community-based partners emphasized the opportunity to support their communities who are struggling with housing options. They wanted to have conversations, understand how cities make decisions, and have a supportive space to share their experiences, needs, and ideas. Organization partners were encouraged to have individual and group conversations alongside sharing the survey.

Timeline and Key Activities

February 15, 2023

Eastside For All was selected as the lead organization for the outreach effort.

February 22, 2023

Initial meeting with ARCH and the Partner Cities (5 additional meetings of this group took place through May 24th).

March 2023

Eastside For All contacted Eastside-based organizations who have been involved in housing issues or other community engagement projects, as well as additional organizations that may not have been involved, but serve populations that the project intended to reach. An overview of the project, including compensation information, was sent out and invitations to participate were extended to community-based organizations and local community leaders.

March-April 2023

- 21 individual and small group meetings took place with potential community-based partners to provide more details about the project including what would be expected and the desired outcomes.
- As partner organizations were identified, subcontractor agreements were prepared and finalized.
- A subgroup of the partners participated in the early co-design process, providing input on the materials about middle housing that would be most helpful for community members, identifying their desired outcomes, and drafting questions that would be best to ask of their communities.

- Eastside For All compiled the input and created an initial survey draft and presentation materials in English and Spanish. These were reviewed and edited by the subgroup.
- Updates to the English and Spanish versions were completed. The final English version of the presentation and survey was translated into Russian, Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, Hindi, and Arabic by professional translators. The survey was also translated into Vietnamese and Korean to reach additional communities that would potentially be impacted by middle housing policies. (There are many more language and cultural groups in the region; however, without a community-based group to engage for each cultural community, the project was limited to the community's current capacity for the type of outreach required to support full engagement from participants.)
- Outreach partners vetted the translations and made corrections.
- A list of community resources related to housing was developed and translated into the primary outreach languages, to be shared with participants throughout the engagement project who needed housing help.
- The event host survey was created and shared to be completed by organizations after each event they facilitated. It captured basic information about attendees and overall themes discussed.
- Partner organizations were provided with information on how to distribute and document stipends to community members to support their participation in events. Most provided \$25 in the form of Visa gift cards.

Mid-April to May 25, 2023 (survey closed on May 25)

The bulk of the outreach activities took place following spring break and the end of Ramadan. Community-based organizations and leaders engaged in a range of outreach efforts including:

- Virtual and in person group meetings/events, either as part of existing gathering times or as additional ones.
- Individual phone calls and meetings.
- Tabling at community events.
- Sharing via social media and emails.

Outreach partners hosted 22 events with a total of 12 languages spoken at the various events. Because events were hosted in language by community-based partners – some of whom are multilingual – it was common to have events in multiple languages. Organization staff and leaders facilitated the events, which contributed to the welcoming and safe space as well as allowed each community to put the topic in context of their community's priorities.

Most events were attended by 8-15 participants; there was one large group with 98 participants and a tabling event at the United Festival in Redmond with several organizations who shared information about the middle housing effort with over 1,000 event attendees.

Along with Eastside For All, four community-based organizations jointly hosted an event with some of the Eastside cities on May 3, 2023 called *Let's Build for All*. This interactive community engagement workshop invited community members to share ideas about their ideal neighborhoods. Although not specifically part of the middle housing outreach project, event partners shared a handout with the survey links in multiple languages at their tables and spoke about the middle housing effort. There were 75 attendees.

Eastside For All was in regular communication with the outreach partners throughout the project to provide support, answer questions, process payments, and send reminders about due dates.

May 26 to June 15, 2023

- Eastside For All compiled the raw data from the spreadsheets, highlighting data per the co-design input from the community partners as well as the data requested by ARCH and the Partner Cities.
- Community-based organizations assisted with the translation of a small number of quotes to be featured in the report.
- Eastside For All engaged BERK Consulting, Inc. to draft the report summary, including the design layout.
- Eastside For All organized detailed data to post online.
- Drafts of the report were shared with ARCH, the Partner Cities, and the community-based partners.
- Final report prepared and published.

Next Steps

Eastside For All's proposal to serve as the lead community-based organization included engaging community members after the project to build ongoing relationships with city staff and leaders. The community-based partners will again be involved in co-planning, working on a series of gatherings where community members can hear how their input is being used and other ways they can get involved. As part of that planning process, there will be a debrief of the outreach effort. The group will highlight what went well and what can be improved. This information will be shared with ARCH, the Partner Cities, and others interested in engaging community members from a range of races and cultures in large initiatives.

B. Full Results

Full survey results are available online at <https://eastsideforall.org/middle-housing-outreach/>.