

HALA Community Focus Groups

Frequently Asked Questions



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Purpose, Goals, and Structure

What is the purpose of the HALA Community Focus Groups?

- The Community Focus Groups will guide implementation of the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA), the bold action plan put forth by Mayor Murray and the City Council to address the current housing affordability crisis facing our city. We are asking residents from neighborhoods across the city to participate as volunteers to inform the HALA process. **A key priority of the Community Focus Groups engagement will be the proposed land use and zoning changes that affect neighborhoods.**

What are the goals of the focus groups?

- The meetings are intended to elicit constructive dialogue about affordable housing programs and other HALA recommendations. Specifically, we need your help to shape the land use changes required to implement the Mandatory Housing program (MHA), also known as the “Grand Bargain.” This program has a goal to deliver 6,000 new affordable units in the next 10 years.

What is the structure of the focus groups?

- Community Focus Groups will meet monthly throughout 2016.
- Each of the four focus groups comprises about 40 people. Each will have its own meeting day and time each month, with a total of four focus group meetings occurring monthly.
- Groups include representatives of every urban village and neighborhood in Seattle.
- Meetings will be open for other members of the public to observe and comment during a set time on the agenda.
- Meetings may be recorded or filmed so a broader public audience can follow the process online and via social media.

Application Process

When did applications first become available?

- Applications were first available to the public at the HALA community engagement kickoff event, *Seattle at Work*, held at City Hall on January 26, 2016. Applications were posted to the HALA website (www.Seattle.gov/HALA) shortly thereafter.
- Applications were translated into six languages (Korean, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Traditional Chinese, and Vietnamese), distributed to communities across Seattle, and posted to the [HALA website](http://www.Seattle.gov/HALA) about two weeks after the English language application was made available. Due to this delay, the deadline for non-English speaking applicants was moved back (see below).

What was the deadline?

- Applications were due Friday, February 26, by 8:00 p.m.
- Applications in non-English languages were due Friday, March 11, by 8:00 p.m.

- Applicants could submit their forms via email, postal mail, or in person at the Office of Planning and Community Development.

Who was invited to apply?

- All were invited to apply. See below for information about selection principles.

Who applied?

- Nearly 700 community members applied from across Seattle, with several from nearby cities.
- Applicant characteristics can be found on the [HALA website](#) and at the end of this document.

Selection Process

How were participants selected?

- **Selection Committee.** The HALA Community Focus Group selection committee consisted of five members, one each from the Department of Neighborhoods and Office of Housing and three from the Office of Planning and Community Development.
- **Sequence of decision-making process.**
 1. The committee met to review applicants using the **selection principles** aiming to include a diverse grouping of people from each urban village.
 2. Aside from name, address, and contact information, **all other applicant characteristics were provided voluntarily in application narratives.** For this reason, it was not possible to discern gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, renter/owner status, income, and many more characteristics for all applicants. Many people chose to self-identify, and that information — along with applicant interests, perspectives, and backgrounds — was considered during the selection process in meeting the pre-established criteria.
 3. After the initial selections, the committee tallied participant characteristics according to the established principles to ensure representation from a diversity of groups.
 4. The committee met with Puget Sound Sage, with whom the City is working to bring members of underrepresented communities into the focus group process. This aspect of the focus groups aimed at welcoming a diversity of perspectives while further equipping members of traditionally underrepresented groups with experience and skills in government and community leadership processes. Sage recommended ten people who had applied from among Seattle’s 33 urban villages.
 5. The committee’s recommended list was then sent to and approved by the mayor’s office, at which time notices were sent to applicants.

The City desires participation by a broad range of community members who reflect Seattle’s diverse population. We strove to ensure balanced representation from a range of different demographics and perspectives, including:

- Traditionally under-represented groups, including minorities, immigrants, refugees, and non-native English speakers;
- Renters;
- Households with children; and
- Experienced neighborhood advocates

What were the selection principles?

I. Representation from every urban village / neighborhood area

- 4-6 community members from each urban village / neighborhood area
- Most participants (50-75%) should reside within the urban village boundary (including boundary expansion areas proposed through Seattle 2035) where the bulk of land use changes will occur.

- Residents from some areas outside urban villages will be considered along with the nearest adjacent urban village.
2. **Achieve an even balance in each focus group of persons with wide-ranging and diverse perspectives and experiences**
 - Strive to reflect the diversity of Seattle as a whole.
 - Each focus group should include:
 - Renters and homeowners;
 - Experienced community advocates and newcomers to City processes;
 - Ages and genders;
 - Households with and without children; and
 - Members of traditionally underrepresented groups, including but not limited to:
 - persons who identify as non-white;
 - non-native English speakers;
 - members of immigrant and refugee communities; and
 - members of LBTGQ communities.
 3. **Consideration for participants who will be liaisons to other community networks and groups**
 - Liaison networks can be of any sort, not necessarily policy/land use, such as:
 - religious groups or cultural community;
 - parent groups;
 - hobby or arts communities; and
 - student groups.
 - Consideration will be given for any community network with which the participant is willing to informally communicate about HALA and share information about the process.
 - Status as a liaison is not a requirement but can distinguish applicants when a high number from an urban village/neighborhood area apply.
 4. **Allowance for inclusion of other relevant and unique perspectives**
 - A small number of participants (5% or less of total participants) who reside in areas other than those identified in I may be considered if they represent a unique perspective directly relevant to implementation of HALA programs. Examples may include:
 - Homeless persons; and
 - Residents who have been displaced from Seattle or are not able to live in Seattle due to housing costs.

Invited Participants

Who was invited to participate in the HALA Community Focus Groups?

- 169 community members from across Seattle were invited to participate in the HALA Community Focus Groups.
- Participant characteristics can be found on the [HALA Focus Group web page](#).
- The list of participants by focus group can be found on the [HALA Focus Group web page](#).

Additional questions?

Please contact us at HALAApplication@Seattle.gov

And **thank you** to everyone who applied.

Please continue your involvement in the HALA conversation.