

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

CENTRALIA HOUSING ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN | MARCH 2023

## 1.1 Purpose

The Community Engagement Plan will guide outreach and engagement strategies of the Centralia Housing Assessment and Action Plan (CHAAP). The plan will include a joint vision with the Centralia Housing Committee, local community organizations and Centralia stakeholders. The Community Engagement Plan will determine a path forward in actionable strategies to address Centralia's housing needs for its residents. This includes the following elements:

- Objectives
- Stakeholder Matrix
- Engagement Strategies

## 1.2 Objectives

### Information Objectives

- Build a common understanding of unmet housing needs in Centralia.
- Identify opportunities to create a shared vision for housing in Centralia.
- Determine desired housing types for people at all income levels in Centralia.

### Process Objectives

- Engage diverse perspectives and demographic groups to promote equitable access to housing.
- Design equitable outreach and engagement strategies to reflect all perspectives and opinions.
- Build consensus on strategies and tactics for the CHAAP.

## 1.3 Stakeholder Matrix

This stakeholder matrix identifies the key stakeholder groups, the information needs associated with that group, and strategies and priorities for reaching that group. The matrix below provides a framework for ensuring the community engagement activities meets the objectives of the CHAAP. See Exhibit 1, below.

**Exhibit 1. Stakeholder Matrix**

Demographic Group	Information Needs	Approach
Renters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unmet housing needs</li> <li>Input on changing constraints and opportunities with the current housing market.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Needs and Priorities Survey</li> <li>Tabling at community outdoor events in Centralia</li> <li>Community interviews</li> <li>Virtual focus groups</li> </ul>
Owners of MF housing or leasing agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insight on changing constraints and opportunities with the current housing market</li> <li>Identify additional champions for Centralia Housing</li> <li>Review and advance preliminary housing need findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-engagement Interviews</li> <li>Housing Needs and Priorities Survey</li> <li>Virtual focus groups with local organizations, leasing agents and developers</li> </ul>
Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify unmet housing needs</li> <li>Identify service needs</li> <li>Identify desired housing options to support aging populations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Needs and Priorities Survey</li> <li>Tabling at community outdoor events in Centralia</li> <li>In-person focus group with local organizations and senior residents</li> <li>Community interviews</li> </ul>
High School Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify housing challenges faced by students</li> <li>Insight on changing community characteristics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One-on-one interview with school district staff</li> <li>Identify potential opportunities to partner with local students</li> <li>Housing Needs and Priorities Survey through weekly digital newsletter and social media</li> <li>Tabling at community outdoor events in Centralia</li> <li>Presentation to students in a civic education class</li> </ul>
Centralia College Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify housing challenges faced by students</li> <li>Insight on changing community characteristics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews with Centralia College staff and reps</li> <li>Housing Needs and Priorities Survey</li> <li>Community interviews</li> <li>Tabling at Centralia College campus</li> <li>Identify potential opportunities to partner with local students</li> <li>Virtual focus group with students</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One-on-one interviews with Centralia College staff</li> </ul>
Households of all income groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand perception of affordable housing supply</li> <li>▪ Identify constraints and opportunities with the current housing market</li> <li>▪ Identify desired housing options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interviews with social service providers</li> <li>▪ Pre-engagement Interviews</li> <li>▪ Housing Needs and Priorities Survey</li> <li>▪ Community interviews</li> <li>▪ Tabling at community outdoor events in Centralia</li> </ul>
Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) community groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify trends in housing needs</li> <li>▪ Collaborate on best practices for engagement for the CHAAP</li> <li>▪ Review and advance preliminary housing need findings</li> <li>▪ Insight on community constraints and opportunities for housing</li> <li>▪ Identify additional champions for Centralia Housing</li> <li>▪ Understand how the CHAAP can respond with cultural competency with all communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pre-engagement Interviews</li> <li>▪ Interviews with social service providers</li> <li>▪ Virtual focus groups with local organizations</li> <li>▪ Housing Needs and Priorities Survey</li> <li>▪ Tabling at community outdoor events in Centralia</li> <li>▪ Community interviews</li> </ul>
Social Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insight on changing community characteristics and trends in housing needs</li> <li>▪ Identify constraints and opportunities with the current housing market</li> <li>▪ Identify additional champions for Centralia Housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One-on-one interviews with social service providers</li> <li>▪ Pre-engagement Interviews</li> <li>▪ Virtual focus groups with local organizations</li> <li>▪ Housing Needs and Priorities Survey</li> <li>▪ Community interviews</li> </ul>
People experiencing homelessness or housing instability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify desired housing outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interviews with social service providers</li> <li>▪ Housing Needs and Priorities Survey</li> <li>▪ Tabling at community outdoor events in Centralia</li> </ul>
Representatives of the development/building community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review and advance preliminary housing need findings</li> <li>▪ Identify additional champions for Centralia Housing</li> <li>▪ Insight on changing constraints and opportunities with the current housing market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pre-engagement Interviews</li> <li>▪ Housing Needs and Priorities Survey</li> <li>▪ Virtual focus groups with local organizations, leasing agents and developers</li> <li>▪ One-on-one interviews with real estate agents and developers</li> </ul>

## 2 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

### 1 Pre-Engagement Interviews. August 2022

The purpose of a pre-engagement interview is to improve the project team's understanding of the systemic and institutional barriers to participate in government processes that communities face. In addition, the interviews can help to identify opportunities to improve the community engagement approach. The pre-engagement interviews inform the overall Community Engagement Plan. BERK will conduct interviews with representatives of or experts on the following groups.

Topic	Contact	Note/Date
College Students	<b>Price Peterson</b> Centralia College 360-623-8555 <a href="mailto:price.peterson@centralia.edu">price.peterson@centralia.edu</a>	8/8/2022
Seniors and Older Adults	<b>David and Diana Williams,</b> Stillwaters management team 360-736-4744	8/8/2022
Low-income Housing Needs	<b>Brent Mitchell,</b> Reliable Enterprises 360.736.9558 x 104 <a href="mailto:bmitchell@reliableenterprises.org">bmitchell@reliableenterprises.org</a>	8/9/2022
Social Service Providers	<b>Ruth Gutierrez,</b> Housing Resource Center of Lewis County <a href="mailto:rgutierrez@hrclewiscounty.com">rgutierrez@hrclewiscounty.com</a>	8/16/2022
High School Students	<b>Lisa Grant</b> Centralia School District <a href="mailto:lgrant@centralia.webnet.edu">lgrant@centralia.webnet.edu</a>	9/16/2022

### Questions

#### Goal: Identify housing challenges and opportunities in Centralia.

- What are the unmet housing needs in Centralia?
- When thinking about the people you serve and work with, what are the barriers to securing housing that meets their needs?
- From your perspective, what are the housing opportunities does Centralia offer?

- What would you like the city to know about housing in Centralia?

**Goal: Identify outreach and engagement opportunities.**

- We want to make sure all stakeholders are involved in identifying housing needs and barriers, as well as weigh in on strategies that Centralia will pursue. How can we best engage [stakeholder group] in this process?
- Do you have any recommendations for engaging [stakeholder group]?
- Do you have any recommendations for contacts that we can reach out to?
- With people that you work with and serve, what are potential barriers to participation that we should anticipate in addressing?

## **2 Communications and Public Information Access.**

BERK will work with Centralia staff to include information about the CHAAP on the city website. BERK will develop content for the website including project process, meeting summaries and a mechanism for input. The webpage will include:

- Project background and context
- A public-facing summary of opportunities for providing input
- Hub for all project-related materials
- A web-based Housing Needs and Priorities Survey (See Item 4).

## **3 Community Interviews. September 2022 – January 2023**

The Community Interviews will be designed to increase awareness of the project to community groups, boards, and committees. The presentations will include key questions for feedback in assessing housing needs in Centralia and catalyze conversations on actionable recommendations to Centralia. Exhibit 2, below shows who BERK conducted interviews with.

- BERK will develop a handout describing the project process, feedback heard to date and summarize complex housing data from the Housing Needs Assessment. The presentation and handout may be updated over the course of the project as needed.
- The Interviews will also include up to 5 questions to ask presentation attendees to provide feedback on key takeaways and inform next steps in identifying strategies for the CHAAP.

- As needed, BERK will hire an interpreter to facilitate in-language conversations with individuals who do not speak English as a first language.
- BERK will also continue to conduct one-on-one interviews with additional individuals identified by the Centralia Housing Committee and pre-engagement interviews to further understand housing needs unique to their communities.

#### Exhibit 2. Interview Matrix

Group	Contact	Interview Date
Centralia College	Erin Baker	11/4/2022
The Gather Church (housing services)	Cole Meckle and Patty Howard	11/4/2022
Centralia Public Works	Kim Ashmore, Director	11/14/2022
T.J. Guyer Rental Property	Fred Lofgren	11/15/2022
Lewis County	Jennifer Westermann Eric Eisenberg	12/12/2022 12/16/2022
St Mary's Catholic Church	Gay Lynn Moneymaker	12/28/2022
Catholic Community Services	Wendy Werner Jessica Barela	1/4/2023 1/20/2023

### Interview Summary

BERK conducted up to 9 interviews. Key themes from the interviews are below:

- Centralia needs more housing to meet the needs of its community. This means more transitional housing within the city, 1-2 bedroom units, and an overall supply of housing in general.
- The city needs more housing incentives to promote homeownership opportunities for future residents, not house flippers.
- Future housing in Centralia must not just be for the wealthy, but for all of Centralia's populations.
- Centralia has a great PUD code.
- Coordination with Lewis County is needed in inspecting and maintain existing septic tanks.

## 4 Housing Needs and Priorities Survey. September – December 2022

BERK will develop a Housing Needs and Priorities Survey to gather information on the challenges and opportunities for housing in Centralia. The survey will be conducted both virtually and in person. BERK will promote the survey through partners and identified stakeholders.

- BERK will design a draft survey for review by the city.
- The final survey will be deployed in a web- and paper-based formats.
- BERK will also work with the Equity Institute, a collective of DEI practitioners that provide equity trainings and consultant services in Lewis County and SW Washington, to translate the survey into Spanish. They will share the survey through their social media channels.
- BERK will promote survey through engagement contacts, recommended individuals for additional follow up, and the Housing Committee. The Housing Committee and city staff will assist with marketing the survey to local leaders and organizations
- The survey will also give individuals an option for contact information to create an email list- to provide updates on upcoming engagement opportunities.
- Incentives may be provided for focus group attendees to compensate participants for their time. Any incentives given will be paid by BERK as an expense for the CHAAP.

## 5 **Tabling. September – November 2022**

Tabling will also be done up to two locations in Centralia to engage the public. Potential locations include: Centralia College, Centralia Farmer’s Market, Safeway and Centralia Timberland Library.

BERK will ask people to fill out the Housing Needs Survey and collect feedback on the CHAAP. Surveys will primarily be collected through the SurveyMonkey link. However, paper surveys will be provided if internet access is a barrier. Surveys will also be translated into Spanish, with the possibility of working with an interpreter.

## 6 **Virtual Focus Groups. December 2022 – March 2023**

The focus groups will allow stakeholder contributions and conversation on developing strategies and recommendations for the CHAAP. BERK will serve as the primary meeting facilitator.

- BERK will partner with the Equity Institute to host up to **3 focus groups** in Spanish. The purpose of these focus groups is to identify challenges unique to the Hispanic/Latino community in Centralia.
- BERK will engage the Centralia Housing Committee utilizing Balancing Act to establish a baseline understanding of how housing needs can be met within Centralia.
- BERK will also facilitate conversations with the Centralia School District on identifying potential Action Steps through key questions and the use of **Balancing Act.**

**Commented [DC1]:** @Emil - does this align with your vision for using the Balancing Act tool?

- Interpretation and additional accessibility services will be provided as needed. Incentives may be provided for focus group attendees to compensate participants for their time. Any incentives given will be paid by BERK as an expense for the CHAAP.

## **7 Housing Committee and Presentations.** *April 2023 – May 2023*

BERK will work with the Centralia Housing Committee in reviewing the key findings from the engagement process to inform the CHAAP.

- BERK will develop a 15-20 minute presentation with a handout describing the project process, key housing need findings and recommendations with rationale.
- Key dates include:
  - Planning Commission Work Session on April 13, 2023
  - City council Public Hearing on May 11, 2023
  - City Council review and approval in June 2023
  - CHAAP submittal to Department of Commerce by the end of June 2023

## **8 Equity Institute Partnership Feb 2023 - March 2023**

A key growing demographic in Centralia is the Hispanic/Latino community. The Centralia Housing Needs Assessment identified that the Hispanic/Latino community has grown from 13% in 2010 to 17% in 2020 and 13% of the total population speaks Spanish as a first language. The Equity Institute is a group of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) practitioners based out of Lewis County. They trainings, resources and engagement to communities speaking Spanish throughout Washington State.

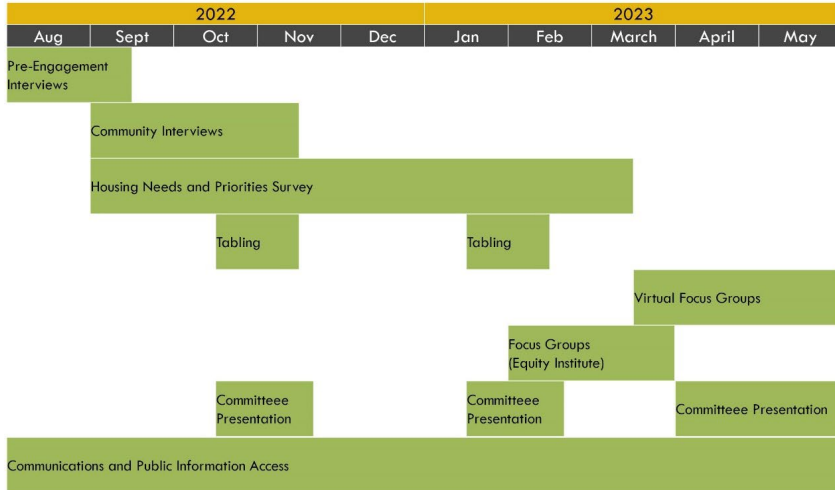
BERK will work with the Equity Institute in accomplishing the following:

- Up to 3 Focus Groups with Centralia households that speak Spanish as a primary language
- A social media campaign to market the survey (see task 4), which has been translated into Spanish
- BERK will also report out the key takeaways to focus group participants. A core part of engagement is to ensure follow up with what we heard as a means to ensure we captured what we heard.
- As an extra optional item, BERK will participate in local events with the Equity Institute to engage Centralia residents.

A full budget of the scope of work can be found in Appendix A.



### 3 SCHEDULE GRAPHIC



## APPENDIX A. EQUITY INSTITUTE SCOPE OF WORK

	Hours	Total
Hourly rate	\$75.00	
<b>Task 1. Focus Groups</b>		
	Hours	
Protocol design	4	\$300.00
Facilitation of focus group (up to 3)	16	\$1,200.00
Focus group summary	4	\$300.00
Coordination	3	\$225.00
Stipends (24 @ \$25)		\$600.00
		<b>\$2,625.00</b>
<b>Task 2. Social Media Campaign for Survey and Other Input</b>		
	Hours	
Campaign objectives and copy	4	\$300.00
Graphics/content support	4	\$300.00
Translation of open comments	2	\$150.00
		<b>\$750.00</b>
<b>Task 3. Distribution of Follow Up Material</b>		
	Hours	
Development of project input and summary	3	\$225.00
Distribution and promotion	2	\$150.00
		<b>\$375.00</b>
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>42 \$3,750.00</b>
	<b>Direct Expenses (refreshments, printing)</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>
		<b>\$3,900.00</b>