



**May 27, 2025**

**Welcome: Mayor Rich Elliott  
Heidi Behrends Cerniwey, City Manager**

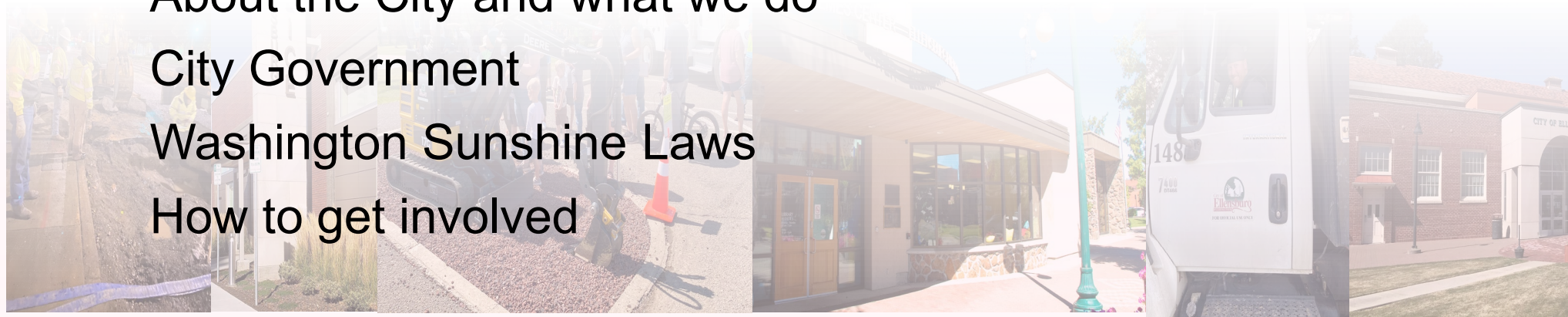
# **City 101- Introduction to Ellensburg**



# Welcome to City 101



About the City and what we do  
City Government  
Washington Sunshine Laws  
How to get involved





20,970  
population

~\$127  
million

70%  
people

273  
employees

10+  
facilities

150  
acres

6  
utilities

11,000  
customers

90.8  
street miles



# City Council: Legislative

- Seven elected representatives
- At-large (no districts); Nonpartisan
- Four-year terms
- Council elects a Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore to serve two-year terms
- Elections are held in odd years
- Rules and Procedures guide meetings and roles
- Council adopts policies, comprehensive plan, and budget
- Define powers, functions, and duties of City officers and employees

- **Washington Code City**
- **RCW 35A.13 Council-Manager**



[City Council | Ellensburg, WA](#)

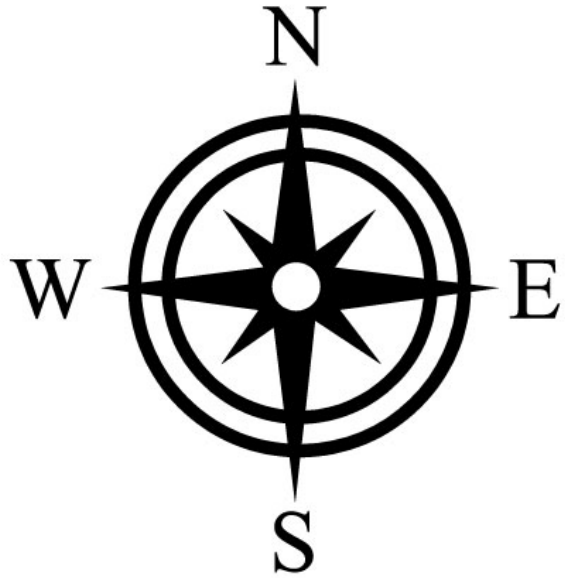
# City Council Actions

- **Ordinances** are the highest level of official City action. It is the only means by which laws can be created and budgets adopted. Ordinances require two readings prior to Council action.
- **Resolutions** are the official way of expressing the decision of the Council in terms of policy, approval, acceptance, or giving authority. Resolutions express council policy or direct administrative actions.
- **Proclamations** have no substantive power other than to express the will of the Mayor and are primarily ceremonial. Proclamations may be issued by the Mayor without limitation.
- **Ellensburg Code City (ECC)**
  - Ordinances are “codified” into local laws





# City Council's Strategic Vision 2024-2029



- Sustainable Economic Development
- Infrastructure and Energy
- Safety, Civic Engagement, and Cultural Inclusion
- Affordable Housing and Living
- Dedicated Parks and Recreation Resources

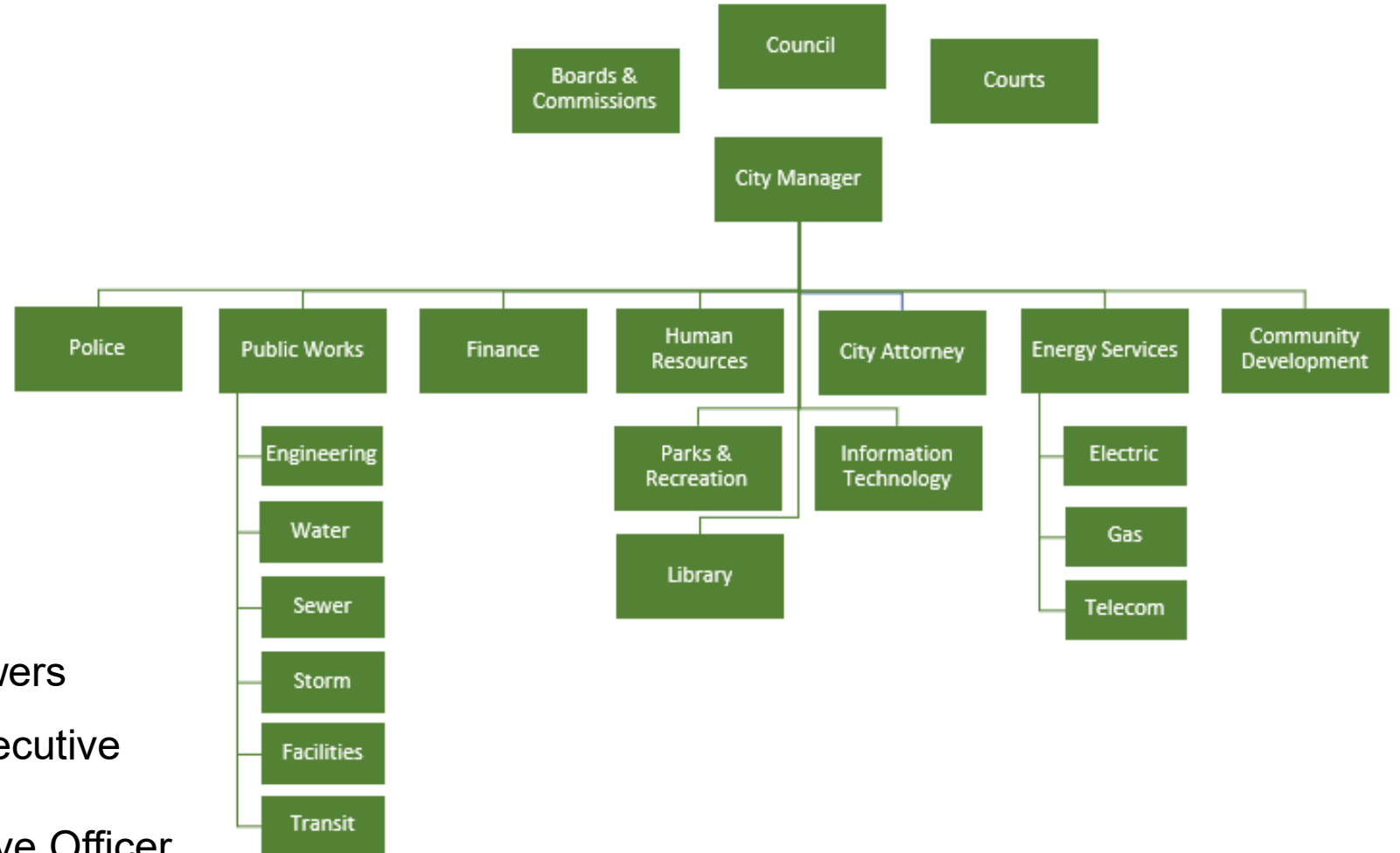
[www.ellensburgwa.gov/strategicvision](http://www.ellensburgwa.gov/strategicvision)



# City Organization



RCW 35A.13 Council-Manager



Separation of Powers  
City Manager: Executive  
function  
Chief Administrative Officer

# Judicial Branch

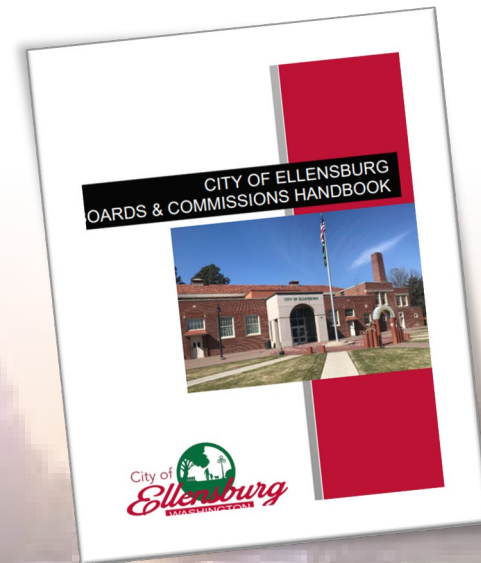
- **Kittitas County Superior Court** - adult felony crimes, civil disputes, dissolutions and family law matters, juvenile offenders, matters involving children, real property disputes, and domestic violence issues
- **Kittitas County Lower District Court – Prosecution by City Attorney’s Office**
  - Criminal misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors
  - Contested traffic infractions
  - Interlocal Agreement (ILA) for Public Defense
  - Infractions
- **Hearing Examiner** – administrative quasi-judicial land use and other matters





# Advisory Boards & Commissions

- Affordable Housing Commission
- Arts Commission
- Civil Service Commission
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission
- Environmental Commission
- Landmarks and Design Commission
- LEOFF 1 Board (new)
- Library Board
- Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Public Transit Advisory Committee
- Utility Advisory Committee



*...serve as advisory to City Council or special purpose*

# Partnerships with Others

**Kittitas County**

**Central Washington University (CWU)**

**Kittitas Valley Fire & Rescue (KVFR)**

**Kittitas County EMS**

**Conference of Governments (COG)** - .09%  
sales tax for rural counties distribution

**Economic Development** – County, CWU,  
Chamber, EDA, etc.

**Ellensburg Downtown Association (EDA)** -  
Main Street Program

**KITTCOM** - 9-1-1 dispatch

**HopeSource** - Community Action Agency;  
low-income energy program,  
homelessness and housing response;  
transit provider, Cabulance

**Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce** –  
tourism; #MyEllensburg.com

**Ellensburg School District**

**Waste Management**

**ECTV**

**Kittitas Valley Healthcare**



## What cities do:

- Essential services - water, sewer, gas, electric, etc.
- Transportation & Transit
- Clean Environment & Drinking Water
- Energy (electric, natural gas, solar)
- Public Safety
- Safe Buildings
- Quality of Life
- Community Building
- Justice
- Stable & Thriving Economy
- Land Use/Zoning/Permitting
- Balance the Budget

## What cities don't do:

- Anything not delegated by the State or US Constitution (or prohibited otherwise)
- County statutory requirements (voting, public health, superior court)
- Determine business selection, investment, and location
- Undermine property rights
- Make all the laws
- Gift public funds
- Oversee schools or other taxing districts



# City of Ellensburg 2025-2026 Biennial Budget Book

Budget Adopted - 12/16/2024



## City Biennial Budget

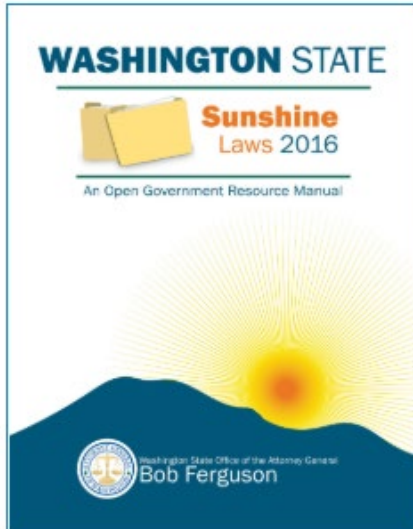
- Total 2-year Biennial Budget
- Organized by funds - 56 “buckets” with reserve policies
- Audited by the State Auditor for State, Local, and Federal compliance
- One-time revenue to one-time expenses
- Basic revenue sources: taxes, fees for service (mostly inter-departmental), fines, and intergovernmental
- **Tax-payer supported for the public good and to be available as needed** (streets, police, parks, library)
- **User supported for individual good for on-demand services** (permits, utilities, recreation, and inspections)
- The general tax capacity is heavily limited by State law – can only tax where City has authority
- Structural deficit of revenue growth not keeping pace with growth in expenditures

# Comprehensive Plan

- Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) enacted in 1990 to manage population growth and protect natural resources. It is a long-term blueprint (20-year outlook) for a community's growth and development
- GMA requires fast-growing counties and cities to maintain comprehensive plans and development regulations
  - Key goals: Reduce urban sprawl; protect farmlands, forests, and critical areas; promote efficient infrastructure investment; encourage sustainable development and housing
  - Required and Optional Elements
  - Periodic Update
  - Developed through community input!



# Washington Sunshine Laws - Transparency



- **Open Public Meetings Act**

- Must be open to the public
- Published announcements, 24-hours in advance (except emergencies)
- No secret ballots
- Meeting records (minutes, some recordings)
- Hybrid participation (generally)
- Narrow exceptions for executive sessions

- **Public Records Act (PRA)**

- Requires that all public records maintained by state and local agencies be made available to all members of the public, with very narrow statutory exemptions
- Public record is defined in RCW 42.56.010(3) as any writing that is prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local government agency, and which contains information that relates to the conduct of government, or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function



# Stay Informed

## Subscribe To The Monthly E-Newsletter



To get regular messages from the City of Ellensburg, subscribe to the monthly e-newsletter, Ellensburg Insider.



## Stay Connected



[ellensburgwa.gov/subscribe](http://ellensburgwa.gov/subscribe)



**City of Ellensburg**  
501 N. Anderson St.  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

This report includes 2021 accomplishments and outlines projects to be completed in 2022.

# Ellensburg INSIDER

City Annual Report 2021

### Working Toward A Strategic Vision

In the fall of 2021, the Ellensburg City Council developed a shared vision for the future built on strategic priorities. The City Council's Strategic Vision 2022-2027 represents the most important issues facing the City of Ellensburg and establishes precedence for expenditure of staff and other City resources. In addition to providing essential public services, the vision includes:

- Sustainable Energy
- Sustainable Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Affordable Housing
- Safe and Inclusive Community

These priorities were further refined in 2022. To learn more, visit [ellensburgwa.gov/strategicvision](http://ellensburgwa.gov/strategicvision)

### Sustainable Infrastructure

- An Interlocal Agreement was adopted for coordinated planning and development in the urban growth area which will require consistent urban development standards and impact fees to support future growth of City infrastructure.
- Funds from the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) were allocated to projects that directly benefit the community: Unity Park design and construction, Anderson Road Sewer Extension, a construction project manager, and gateway signage to improve the first impression entering the City.
- Adopted FEMA flood regulations to retain compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Perkins partnership grants funded West Ellensburg Park field improvements, Ellensburg Explorer/Explorables de Ellensburg outdoor play center (KEEN), and Reservoir Creek floodplain interpretive signs.

### Affordable Housing

The City adopted a Housing Action Plan in 2021 with strategies to create more housing, different types of housing, and more affordable housing stock. The City was awarded an additional \$75,000 Department of Commerce grant to implement the priority strategies in 2022.

Above: A house and accessory dwelling on Brentwood Street.

Housing affordability is a statewide problem. Ellensburg has taken several actions to help improve housing options. In 2017, voters approved a 0.1% (one-tenth of one percent) sales tax for affordable housing. These funds, along with City property are being used to develop affordable housing for members of our community. In 2021 there were three main projects: nearly 50 new units of long-term affordable housing, a new 10-unit affordable housing complex, and a new 10-unit affordable housing complex.

### Significant Projects Completed:

- Main Street Signalization
- Central Business District Alley (3rd & 4th, Main to Water) reconstruction
- Bridge Load Ratings Update
- North Campus Signal at 14th Avenue and Wilcox Way

Left: Nina Vichayapal, fabric collage, "Community Out!" Right: George Dial, watercolor, "Yester"

### Economic Development

- To facilitate recovery efforts, the City partnered with Kittitas County to create a County-wide economic development strategic plan with some specific actions for Ellensburg. Industry centered groups (real estate, agriculture, small business, transportation, manufacturing, technology, etc.) have been included in planning to identify priorities to enhance quality of life and a robust local economy as the community grows. Funding was provided by the sale of City business incubator earlier in the year.
- The Arts Commission (from the City's arts fund) distributed \$15,700 in public grants, purchased five pieces for the City's collection, commissioned one social equity piece, revitalized First Friday Art Walk, and funded the Art Walk audio tour.
- Logging Tax grants to support community events totaled \$46,850.

### The Public Safety Building

The Public Safety Building remodel was completed in 2021, allowing police to fully occupy and utilize the increased space, and the new training room and indoor range were immediately put to use by hosting regional training including the state-mandated 1-940 Patrol Tactical/De-escalation training. Ellensburg Police Department also initiated new organizational policies and body-worn cameras to increase officer safety, accountability, and transparency with the community.

### Ellensburg City Council

The Ellensburg City Council meets twice each month, at 7 p.m., on the first and third Monday in the Council Chambers at Ellensburg City Hall. All City Council, board, and commission meetings are hybrid.

Nancy Liliquist, Mayor
 Rich Elliott
 Nancy Goodlow
 David Miller
 Morica Miller
 Bruce Tabb
 Adam Winn

### Upcoming Projects

Major infrastructure projects scheduled for 2022:

- Two trail sections to create better connectivity: Palouse to Cascade (PTC) reconnection from Dean Nicholson Blvd. to University Way and a shared use path along Planning Road from Third Ave. to the PTC Trail.
- Improvements along Helena Ave. from Water St. to Airport Road are nearly complete and include new sidewalks, fire hydrants, Central Transit bus shelter, and bicycle lanes.
- Unity Park master planning is underway with construction in 2023.
- City entryway upgrades as Gateway I and II projects proceed along University Way and Vantage Highway to enhance the image, filter stormwater runoff, and add sidewalks and street trees.
- University Avenue/Vancouver Creek and Fifth Avenue Railroad will get new signals.
- Installation of field lights at Rotary Park youth baseball/softball complex.

### Budget & Administration

- Business Licenses: 1,757 active
- New Business Licenses: 510
- Ordinances: 15
- Resolutions: 42
- Public Records Requests: 148
- Budget: \$122 million
- Employees: 196.27 FTEs
- Payroll checks processed: 5,416
- Survey responses: 2,808
- Financial Audit: 0 findings
- Grant expenditures: \$3,340,408

### Coffee With City Council

Friday, August 19  
9-11 a.m.  
at Dakota Cafe

Stop by for a cup and conversation...

### BeHeardEburg.com

YOUR VOICE MATTERS.

Provide input

BeHeardEburg.com

### City Directory

Emergency Services 91-1

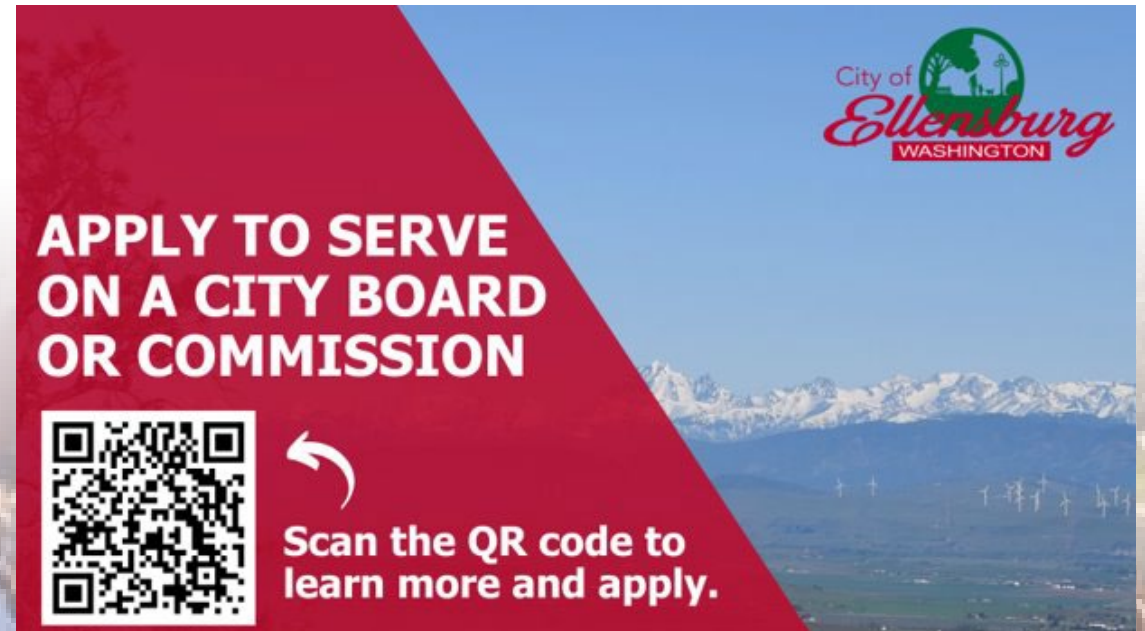
Fire Department | 509-923-7231 non-emergency  
Police Department | 509-962-7280 non-emergency

General Information | 509-962-7254  
City Manager | 509-962-7221  
Building Permits | 509-962-7231  
Hil Holmes | 509-962-7240  
Library | 509-962-7250  
Natural Gas Division | 509-962-7124  
Perks & Recreation | 509-925-8635  
Public Works & Utilities | 509-962-7230  
Utility Billing | 509-962-7201

City of Ellensburg  
501 N. Anderson St.  
Ellensburg, WA 98926  
[ellensburgwa.gov](http://ellensburgwa.gov)

# How to serve on a Board or Commission

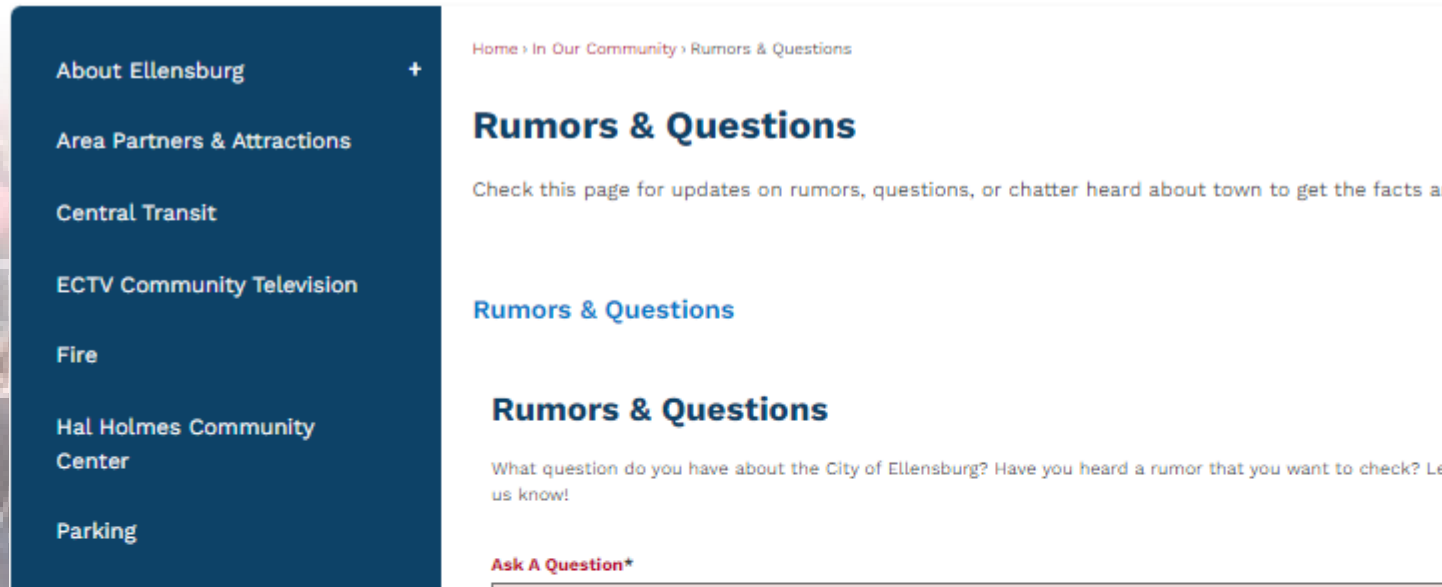
- Openings | [Boards & Commissions | Ellensburg, WA](#)
- Applications online or City Manager's Office
- Attend a meeting
- Interview by sub-committee
- City Council appointment
- Ad-Hoc Committee and Sub-committee service





# How to be involved

- Comprehensive Plan
- Attend a meeting
- Provide testimony (projects and City Council – written or verbal)
- Participate in an Open House
- Take a survey
- Let us know how to be more accessible
- Serve on an advisory board or commission
- Ask your questions or dispel a rumor...





# Thank you!

[citymanager@ellensburgwa.gov](mailto:citymanager@ellensburgwa.gov)

Slides will be posted on the City website.

Please take the survey to help us improve. Thanks!

