

DATE: June 5, 2025

TO: Environmental Services Commission

FROM: Justus Stewart, Community Development, ESI Team, Sustainability Program Manager

SUBJECT: Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update

ACTION REQUIRED

No action required. This presentation is for information only and will provide an overview of the plan update engagement to date, and draft strategies and actions relevant to the Environmental Services Commission related to solid waste, stormwater, and water use.

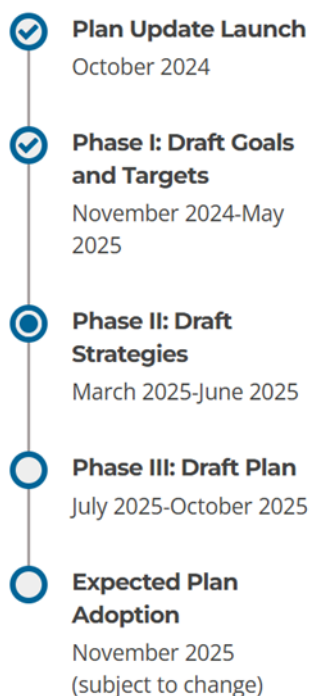
BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS

2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update

The 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan (SBP) update was initiated by City Council on Oct. 29, 2024, and is currently scheduled for adoption in Q4 2025. On March 6, Sustainability staff gave an initial presentation to the Environmental Service Commission covering the overall plan update objectives, timeline, and updated environmental goals and targets. This follow-up touchpoint will cover progress and engagement to date and briefly present on draft strategies and actions related to this commission's purview.

Plan Update Timeline

The Plan will be updated in three Phases:



Progress to Date

Bellevue has [made progress](#) towards each of our environmental goals since Council adopted the first plan in 2020. The Sustainable Bellevue Plan was made a Functional Plan in the most recent Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update (CPPU), making it an official part of the city's long-term planning policies. As part of the CPPU, the city updated the Comprehensive Plan's Environment Element, which was renamed to the Climate & Environment Element, and added several new climate and resilience policies. This reflects a strengthened focus on the city's policy framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing climate resiliency.

Since 2011, Bellevue has reduced community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 8%, despite a population increase of 25% and jobs growth of 26% (Figure 2). This translates to a 26% reduction in per capita emissions since 2011. Even with that reduction, the city is not currently on track to hit our 2030 greenhouse gas emissions goal of 50% reduction compared to the 2011 baseline.

Figure 2. Communitywide GHG Emissions Trends Over Time by Sector

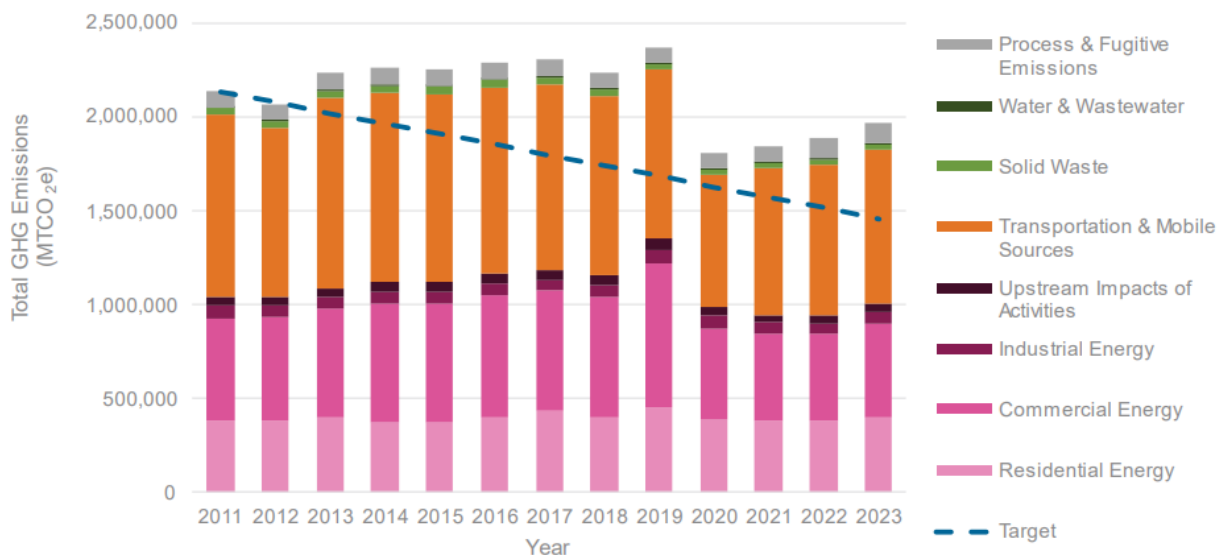


Figure 2: The city's current greenhouse gas inventory. Emissions in 2023 rose 4.5% from the previous inventory in 2022, driven in part by returns to pre-pandemic work and travel patterns.

Materials and Waste Management

In the Materials and Waste Management focus area, the city is on track to hit its 2030 target of a 50% recycling and compost rate; however, the overall trend is moving away from achieving the 2050 Zero Waste target.

With this plan update, staff are also proposing a new Materials and Waste Management metric – reduction of total per capita waste tonnage – with new 2030 and 2050 targets of 5% and 10%, respectively. The intent of this addition is to ensure that the Plan's goals and targets reflect the importance of overall waste reduction, in addition to the current metric and target focused on waste diversion.

Natural Systems

The city has already achieved its 2050 citywide tree canopy target of 40%. Bellevue City Council also adopted updated tree preservation code requirements in July of last year. Bellevue's annual tree giveaway program has provided residents and local businesses with over 3,000 free trees since its inception.

With this plan update, staff are proposing a new metric for measuring stream health, based on regular assessment of Benthic Index of Biotic Integrity (BIBI).

Outreach & Engagement

Staff are conducting extensive engagement with interested parties both internal and external. Engagement also includes multiple phases of public engagement with the general community, with a focus on reaching underrepresented community members by partnering with two community-based organizations, Eastside for All and The Little Master's Club, to co-design engagement activities.

In Phase I of the Plan Update, from January through April, staff connected with over 250 students, had over 100 participants in in-person workshops and the town halls, connected with over 50 community members at pop-up tabling events, and received over 450 survey responses. Key themes from these events include significant support for bold climate action and a keen awareness in the community of climate impacts, with 81% of survey respondents stating that they have already experienced climate impacts in Bellevue, with extreme heat and smoke events being the most experienced impacts.

Finally, the Bellevue sustainability team hosted a series of internal staff workshops during the week of April 28th. Over 60 staff members attended, representing all of Bellevue's departments, to provide input on how the plan can meet the city's goals for both the community and municipal operations. Staff also held a special workshop focused entirely on climate resilience. The actions and strategies below represent input from the community, Bellevue sustainability staff, staff subject matter experts from across the city, and the best available science and practices. The update of the Sustainable Bellevue Plan is focused on developing actionable strategies that are focused on outcomes needed to reduce emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change.

Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update - Draft Actions

After updating our goals and targets in Phase I, staff are currently focused on updating the Plan's strategies and actions. A list of **draft** Sustainable Bellevue Plan Strategies and Actions for Materials and Waste Management, Natural Systems, and Climate Resiliency can be found in **Appendix B**. Staff are currently working with internal and external partners to develop and refine these actions for implementation in 2026-2030 to bring the city closer to achieving its environmental goals.

Plan Update Focus: High Impact Actions

To support the city's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030 and 95% by 2050, the 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan is focused on *high impact actions*. An action is deemed "high impact" if it accomplishes at least one of the following:

- It substantially reduces GHG emissions to meet Bellevue's 2030 target
- It lays a foundation to reduce GHG emissions to meet Bellevue's carbon neutrality targets
- It meaningfully enhances resilience to climate hazards

The high-impact actions that are most relevant to the Environmental Services Commission include:

Organics Management

The city can support the state's recently adopted organics management law by targeting commercial and multifamily properties with outreach, education, and resources.

Bellevue Solid Waste Contract

One of the most significant opportunities for continued progress toward the city's materials management and waste goals is the citywide solid waste collection contract overseen by Utilities. As input is gathered for the Plan update, the resulting feedback from interested parties and subject matter experts are resources to assist with planning for the future solid waste contract. There are synergies with the SBP and elements in the solid waste contract such as recycling, composting, and collection vehicle specifications that could help achieve the city's waste goals.

Stormwater

The city has already established that low-impact development is the preferred approach to stormwater management where it is feasible. This plan update proposes to further support and expand on those efforts through implementation of the Stormwater Capital Investment Plan as well as new LID incentives or requirements for new construction and redevelopment.

Water Conservation

This plan proposes to enhance community resilience by increasing local water storage capacity, as well as supporting water conservation through engaging the community around low-water and sustainable landscaping practices and green infrastructure.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to engage internal and external interested parties, as well as the Bellevue community, in developing these strategies and actions during Phase II. The Sustainability team will present the draft actions to Council on July 15, 2025, and is currently scheduled to bring the draft plan to Council in October.

POLICY ISSUES

On Dec. 14, 2020, City Council adopted the [2021-2025 Sustainable Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan](#). The plan is a strategic roadmap to achieving Bellevue's 2030 and 2050 climate and sustainability goals and was set to be updated every five years. The plan contains climate action and sustainability strategies for the community as a whole and municipal operations in five focus areas: climate change, energy, materials management and waste, mobility and land use, and natural systems. Strategies in each focus area are designed to take the city closer to the respective 2030 and 2050 sustainability goals. These goals were originally developed with input from residents, city staff, community leaders, and stakeholders, and fall under the overarching greenhouse gas emissions target of 95% reduction by 2050, which was adopted by Council in October 2024 as part of the 2044 Comprehensive Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with implementing these changes.

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

Appendix B

Relevant Environmental Stewardship Initiative resources:

[Environmental Performance Dashboard](#)

[Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update Engaging Bellevue Page](#)

[Sustainable Bellevue Plan Home Page](#)

Appendix B

Draft Strategies and Actions for Materials & Waste Management, Natural Systems, and Climate Resilience

Materials & Waste Management	Draft Actions
Continue efforts to divert all possible waste from landfill.	Conduct outreach and education activities and provide resources to residents and local businesses to help them comply with the State's Organics Management Law .
Incorporate sustainability and zero waste requirements into the future solid waste contract .	Explore incorporating sustainability, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and Zero Waste requirements into the future solid waste contract .
Create and implement policies that prioritize zero waste opportunities .	Evaluate creating a Deconstruction policy .

Natural Systems	Draft Actions
Enhance new and existing stormwater infrastructure with low-impact design .	Implement land use incentives and/or code requirements to increase low-impact development (LID) projects in new development and redevelopment .
	Implement retrofit projects identified in the Stormwater Capital Investment Projects .

<p>Reduce water use across the community.</p>	Construct new water storage systems (e.g. large cisterns, water towers, and reservoirs).
	Create a pilot program to accelerate the uptake of low-water and sustainable landscaping practices, green infrastructure, and water reuse systems.

Climate Change	Draft Actions
<p>Enhance the Bellevue community's resilience to climate hazards.</p> <p>Ensure Bellevue's infrastructure is resilient to climate hazards.</p>	Communication tools for preparedness and response
	Resilience hub serving vulnerable populations
	Preparedness and response training for City and partner programs
	Community-level wildfire protection plan
	Low- or no-emissions backup power and energy storage in critical facilities
	Wildfire smoke-safe facility upgrades