

CROSSROADS

The Vision

Crossroads is a complete, urban neighborhood with convenient access to a variety of destinations that fosters diversity and embraces its natural qualities.

The future of Crossroads is built around its continued evolution as a vibrant and welcoming neighborhood area surrounded by quiet, green spaces providing opportunities for recreation and to connect with nature in a dense, urban setting. As Crossroads continues to grow and evolve, the community is building a more sustainable and climate resilient future. Crossroads is a neighborhood area of diverse and connected smaller neighborhoods providing a wide range of housing options, with many choices in ranges of affordability and for all ages. Each neighborhood has safe and easy access to a range of services, restaurants, community gathering spaces, and entertainment options available in nearby commercial and mixed-use centers. These centers of economic and social activity have a clear identity and provide affordable opportunities for small and starting businesses. Public spaces like parks, streets, trails and art reflect the community's diversity, create a sense of belonging and can be found throughout Crossroads. Residents, workers and visitors can move through the neighborhood area with ease, enjoying safe and comfortable connections to destinations in Crossroads, other parts of Bellevue and the wider region. The policies in this plan support Crossroads' continued evolution and growth to achieve its vision.

Relationship to Volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan

The Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan contains policy direction consistent with the citywide policies in Volume 1 but with details specific to the Crossroads context. Some of the features that give Crossroads its unique character are the diversity of its community and its role as a key urban center of countywide importance planned for additional residential and commercial growth with walkable access to retail, services and transit.

Community Context

The Crossroads neighborhood area serves as a business and residential center for east Bellevue and beyond. The neighborhood area is roughly bound by Wilburton to the west, BelRed and neighboring Redmond to the north, Northeast Bellevue to the east and northeast, and Lake Hills to the south.

History and Continued Evolution

Crossroads was once comprised of dense forest that was then logged and homesteaded by white settlers starting in the 1870s. The earliest settlers logged large tracts of timber on land purchased from the government. By the end of the nineteenth century, the only substantive development in the Crossroads area were sparse homesteads and the dirt roads connecting these to the mines to the southwest near Newcastle. Progressive logging and clearing prompted agricultural development, and farming became the predominant land use in the 1950s.

Starting in the 1950s, Crossroads' rural landscape started to change with the substantial influx of people moving to the Eastside. Housing developments in and around Crossroads were built during the 1950s and early 1960s, such as Chevy Chase. The names of developments built during that time reflect the area's historically forested character, as evidenced by words like Forest, Ranches, Park and Creek. From then on and throughout the 1970s, significant residential growth led to increasing demand for neighborhood retail and services. Crossroads' continued growth also prompted the development of a new shopping center, now known as the Crossroads Shopping Center, which fully opened in 1964.

In later years, consistent regional employment growth led to the development of new multifamily housing developments and office buildings in Crossroads. As the name indicates, Crossroads is a community and transportation hub in Bellevue that has a high population density which is often referred to as a "city within a city". Crossroads has been designated as a Mixed Use Center in Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan since 2015, in line with King County Countywide Planning policies, and is an area of significant regional transit investments, connected pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and planned densities supportive of transit-oriented development. Crossroads is also Bellevue's most diverse neighborhood area in a city that is one of the most diverse in King County. Crossroads has long been known for its diverse community and as an area of the city with a larger proportion of households that speak a language other than English at home and communities of color. The demographics of the Crossroads community continue to change, for instance, as the percentage of foreign-born residents has grown since 2000.

Community Profile

Population	13,725
Households	5,800
Neighborhood Area Geographic Size (acres)	1,016
Countywide Center Geographic Size (acres)	427
Countywide Growth Center Jobs *	3,857

Homeowner Status	
Own	29%
Rent	71%
Age & Disability	
Under 18	3,078
18-34	3,872
35-44	2,449
45-64	2,492
Over 65	1,834
Persons with a disability	8%
Race & Language	
White	26%
Asian	52%
Hispanic/Latine	16%
Black	2%
All Other	4%
Speaks a language other than English	64%
Commuting	
Drive alone to work	43%
Carpool, transit, bike, walk, other to work	23%
No car in household	13%

Source: US Census Bureau. 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

* Source: US Census Bureau. 2022 LEHD (Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES)

Neighborhood Conditions and Built Form

Since the start of the century, Crossroads has experienced growth of its residential population and as an employment center and is planned for continued housing and commercial growth with walkable access to retail and services. The neighborhood area consists of a mix of business districts as well as single-family, multi-family and mixed-use residential neighborhoods with most of Crossroads residents living in multifamily housing. Retail, restaurants, business services and office space are mostly located near key intersections and in the area around the Crossroads Shopping Center and Crossroads Park.

Crossroads has a street network characterized by widely spaced arterial streets that provide connections for vehicular traffic, bicyclists and pedestrians. Arterials run both east-west and north-south, bounding large blocks with limited internal street networks and connectivity within. Crossroads is served by the RapidRide B line, running between the

downtowns of Bellevue and Redmond via Overlake. With the opening of East Link light rail service 2024, Crossroads is now in proximity to light rail stations in BelRed and neighboring Redmond.

Neighborhood Challenges and Opportunities

Promoting Diversity and Community Gathering Places

Community members value the Crossroads' convenience and diversity. Diverse community organizations and spaces distinguish the Crossroads neighborhood area, including faith-based communities, language schools and cultural centers. People appreciate that it is easy to access services and amenities within the neighborhood as well as Downtown and nearby neighborhoods. Crossroads Shopping Center provides a gathering space with many locally owned restaurants, live music and a variety of community events. At the shopping center, the City of Bellevue operates Mini City Hall – a one-stop-shop extending services into Crossroads and surrounding neighborhoods – in collaboration with community partners. Aside from its variety of retail stores, restaurants and community services, people enjoy the shopping center as an important community gathering space, providing opportunities to come together and socialize without necessarily having to spend money. The community would like to see more indoor community gathering spaces available to them in Crossroads and expressed a desire for more play and creativity in the neighborhood's public spaces.

Diverse Housing Options and Business Districts

From a citywide perspective, Crossroads is home to diverse housing options within a range of affordability levels with most of Crossroads residents living in multifamily housing. With an important presence of public, subsidized, and naturally occurring affordable housing, Crossroads' housing supply provides attainable options for a variety of residents of all ages. The city plans for additional housing supply and a diversity of housing in Crossroads, as a focal point of growth in Bellevue and within the region, while preserving existing affordable housing within the neighborhood area.

Crossroads has several distinct business districts including small shopping centers providing local access to retail and services and Crossroads Shopping Center as a key cultural and entertainment hub. Planning for improved pedestrian and bicycle connections and additional residential development can allow these centers to better serve the surrounding area as a gathering space for the community. Crossroads is home to many small and family-owned businesses contributing to its liveliness and unique character. To grow a thriving and diverse local economy, there is an opportunity to support these small businesses and the commercial districts they are located in.

Connectivity Challenges and Transit Access

People shared concerns about the pedestrian and bicyclist experience on Crossroads' arterials as these roads are often busy with vehicular traffic and lack the necessary infrastructure to walk and bike safely and comfortably. Making biking and walking safer and easier and improving transit access is necessary to provide a well-connected network to neighborhoods and businesses. Creating through-block pedestrian connections and improved wayfinding are seen as important opportunities to improve connectivity and navigation in Crossroads for all. The opening of East Link light rail service and Crossroads' proximity to two stations provides an opportunity to improve the community's access to the frequent transit network.

Enhancing the Environment and Building Resilience

The opportunities that places like Crossroads Park, neighborhood schools and natural areas provide to gather, play, learn and connect with nature are important within Crossroads' urban landscape. Trails provide an opportunity to exercise in a pleasant, natural setting and allow the community to access parks, open spaces and other key destinations close to home. There is an opportunity to increase access to existing and new parks and trails, especially in currently underserved areas.

Crossroads is home to communities with an increased vulnerability to environmental and climate impacts which is exacerbated by its built environment, such as a lower urban tree canopy coverage and significant impervious surfaces. In response, environmental sustainability in Crossroads can be increased by providing more shade and reducing stormwater runoff. The community's climate resilience can be further improved by adapting public spaces and buildings to climate impacts.

An Urban Design Framework for Crossroads

An urban design framework visualizes design strategies and provides policy guidance on how to improve public spaces within Crossroads to achieve the vision. The framework builds from what community identified as opportunities and challenges for accessing and using public spaces within the neighborhood today.

Urban Design and Public Spaces

Urban design is the practice of planning and designing the physical environment of a community. Within a neighborhood area plan, urban design can improve the design and function of public spaces, including community gathering spaces, parks, plazas, streets, trails, natural areas and public art. Rather than focusing on the design of a specific place, urban design considers how experiencing different public spaces throughout a neighborhood provides for enhanced gathering and social interactions, a

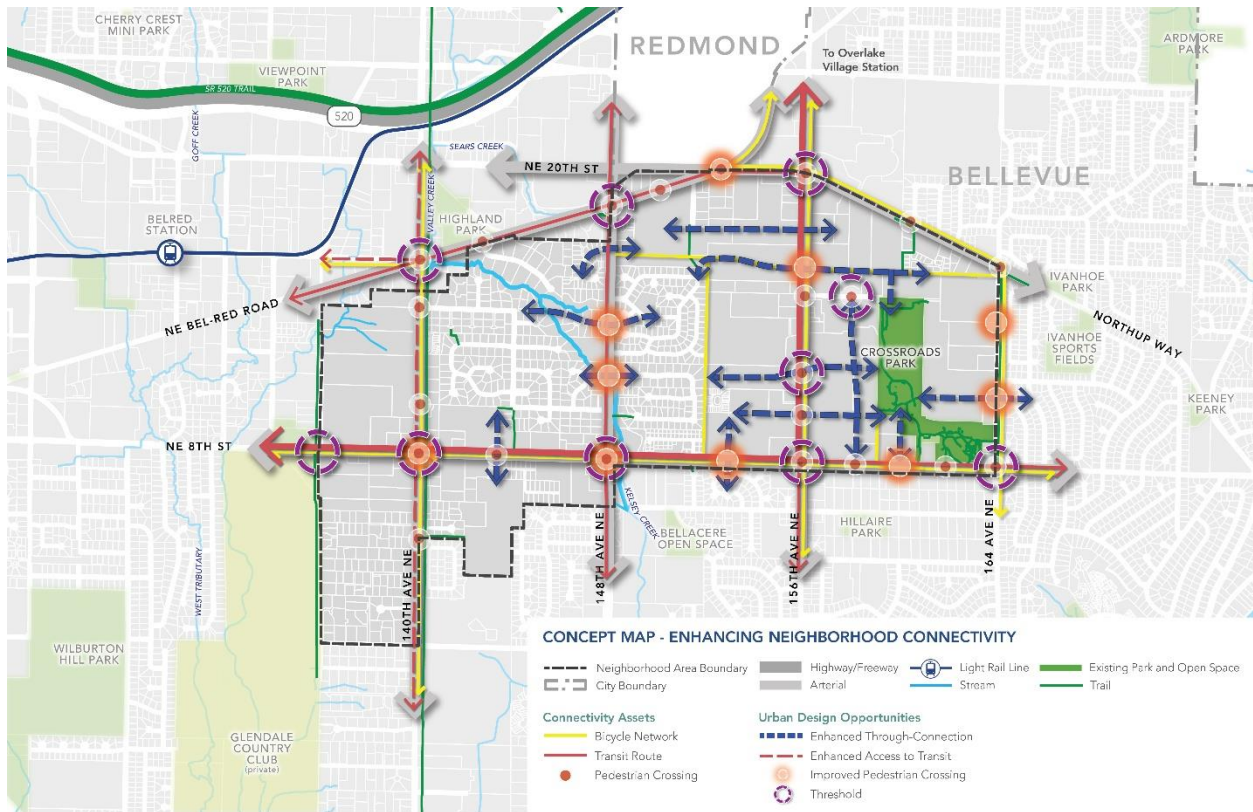
more attractive public realm, improved neighborhood connectivity, and a clear neighborhood identity.

Enhancing Neighborhood Connectivity

Crossroads' most traveled streets are its arterials, which connect to many different destinations inside and outside the neighborhood area and support high volumes of vehicular traffic. Community members identified having few access points in and out of their neighborhoods, large block sizes with few opportunities to cross arterials, and lack of safe and convenient access to bus stops and nearby light rail stations in BelRed and neighboring Redmond as presenting challenges to getting around the neighborhood.

An urban design framework for enhancing neighborhood connectivity in Crossroads entails potential design strategies as illustrated conceptually by the following concept map and supported by neighborhood area plan policies:

- More pedestrian and cycling *through-connections* between sub-neighborhoods and larger commercial areas to provide safe and convenient access to schools, parks, and other community destinations.
- Enhanced *access to transit* options including light rail, allowing community members to access opportunities and services across the city and region.
- Improved *pedestrian crossings* on arterials, such as 148th Avenue NE and NE 8th Street, that provide frequent and high-visibility opportunities for pedestrians to cross the street.
- Enhanced *thresholds* into Crossroads and at important civic and cultural locations, using wayfinding and other safety improvements to help community members navigate to their intended destination. Thresholds represent the starting point of an experience or place.



Enhancing Neighborhood Gathering Spaces

Crossroads has some recognizable gathering spaces today, including Crossroads Shopping Center, Crossroads Park, Crossroads Community Center, the Bellevue Aquatic Center, and several neighborhood schools. The community has noted challenges accessing these places by travel modes other than driving. The community also expressed a need for more of these types of parks and open space opportunities throughout the neighborhood.

Third Places

Third places are places that people go to when they are neither home nor at work that are seen as spaces to provide connection and build community. They can occur informally in any public or privately-owned place as long as it is known to the community as a safe and welcoming space.

An urban design framework for enhancing neighborhood gathering spaces in Crossroads entails potential design strategies as illustrated conceptually by the following concept map and supported by neighborhood area plan policies:

- Strengthening the role of *Neighborhood Centers* as places for community to gather and access goods and services.
- *Community partnerships* with organizations, business owners, property owners, and faith-based communities to develop their existing spaces as third places

- *Potential new neighborhood-scale parks* to increase the community's access to open space and recreation, especially in areas of Crossroads not well-served today
- *Environmental enhancements* that improve the aesthetic and functional qualities of natural features, such as Kelsey Creek
- New and enhanced pedestrian corridors that provide *better connectivity between and into neighborhood gathering spaces*
- Enhanced *thresholds* into Crossroads and civic and cultural locations, using art and other creative elements to reflect the unique identity of those who live, work, and play there. Thresholds represent the starting point of an experience or place.
- *Streetscape enhancements* to make arterials, such as NE 8th Street and 156th Avenue NE, attractive, safe, and comfortable corridors for people to walk and bike to gathering spaces throughout Crossroads



Neighborhood Policy Summary

The Crossroads neighborhood area plan policies are organized into the following subsections:

Neighborhood Identity

A neighborhood's identity is reflected in the unique aspects of both its built and natural environment. Crossroads' diverse community and range of sub-neighborhoods, wide range of housing options, and variety of small businesses are key components contributing to its unique identity. Public spaces, such as parks, plazas, trails, natural areas and streets, and their design and appearance can help enhance and articulate the distinct artistic, cultural and natural qualities of Crossroads. Concept maps visualize opportunities and provide policy guidance for improving public spaces in Crossroads. Placemaking is a strategy to create quality public spaces that strengthen community connections and includes activation. Activation is about transforming public spaces into lively places that reflect the community's diversity and bringing people together in a welcoming way through events, public art, and temporary installations.

Mixed Use Center & Neighborhood Centers

Crossroads is an important center with housing, jobs, shopping and recreational opportunities that serve the local community and the wider region. Bellevue supports Crossroads' central location, variety of housing options and easy access to a range of amenities and services, such as government services, community centers, parks and shopping. King County recognizes Crossroads as a countywide growth center. Important components of Bellevue's growth strategy, as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use element, are directing most of the city's growth to its Mixed Use Centers and supporting the health and vitality of residential areas by planning for Neighborhood Centers.

Mixed Use Center in Crossroads

Crossroads is one of six areas in Bellevue designated as Mixed Use Center, which are centers of economic and social activity anchored by major transportation hubs. At the heart of Mixed-Use Centers are Countywide Centers (see Map LU-3 in the Land Use element) designated by King County. Countywide centers serve important roles as places for concentrating jobs, housing, shopping and recreational opportunities. These are often smaller downtown, high-capacity transit station areas or neighborhood centers that are linked by transit, provide a mix of housing and services, and serve as focal points for local and county investment. Roughly the eastern half of the Crossroads neighborhood area is designated as a Countywide Center.

Neighborhood Centers in Crossroads

Neighborhood Centers are commercial and mixed-use developments located in areas that are otherwise primarily residential. These centers provide goods

and services to local residents and serve as important focal points and gathering spaces for the community. Both existing Neighborhood Centers (see Map LU-2 in the Land Use element) in Crossroads are centered around intersections of key corridors.

- 140th & 8th Commercial
 - 148th & 8th Commercial
-

Community Gathering Spaces

Community gathering spaces are indoor and outdoor public spaces that foster a sense of belonging and serve as the heart of the neighborhood, for example, through community events and social interactions. The city's policies promote indoor and outdoor community gathering spaces throughout the neighborhood area providing opportunities to socialize and connect. Community gathering spaces can occur in any public or privately-owned place, and the policies support the City working with a variety of partners. Concept maps illustrate conceptual urban design opportunities to enhance and better connect to community gathering spaces in Crossroads and making it easier for people to connect with their community.

Mobility and Access

The city's policies ensure improved access to a range of mobility options, providing convenient connections throughout Crossroads and to points beyond, for example, through enhanced access to nearby light rail service. The City promotes the provision of wayfinding and signage to make Crossroads easier to navigate and more accessible to all. Reflective of the existing street network in Crossroads, policies focus on improving pedestrian connections along arterial streets as well as providing off-street connections. Concept maps provide guidance on how to better connect community members to destinations, such as community gathering spaces, within and near Crossroads.

Environment

As Crossroads continues to grow and evolve, the City embraces efforts to increase resilience to climate impacts and protect and enhance its environment. The plan's policies focus on improved access to the neighborhood's green spaces for recreation and increased environmental sustainability. One of the most defining natural features in the Crossroads neighborhood area is Kelsey Creek. Trails, streams, wetlands and natural areas all play an important role as public spaces to connect people to nature. Adapting affordable housing and public spaces to become more resilient makes the Crossroads community less vulnerable to climate change.

Goals & Policies

Crossroads' vision is built out by elements, each with related opportunities and challenges, centered around strengthening the neighborhood area's unique identity and community gathering places as Bellevue prepares and plans for its well-managed growth. These opportunities and challenges inform both goals and associated policies and those focused on preserving the area's strengths and community assets.

Neighborhood Identity

Goal: Value and enhance Crossroads' distinct qualities as a diverse, vibrant and inclusive urban neighborhood with convenient access to a variety of destinations such as businesses, public spaces, and services.

- S-CX-1.** Recognize and affirm diverse heritages, histories and cultures within the Crossroads community through public art, activation and placemaking, especially efforts around play and storytelling.
- S-CX-2.** Explore the identification of locations and thresholds that are significant to the community and contribute to the neighborhood's identity.
- S-CX-3.** Integrate accessible signage and wayfinding into streetscapes and public spaces that use multiple languages and are culturally relevant to enhance accessibility and neighborhood identity.
- S-CX-4.** Provide aesthetic and landscaping enhancements on key corridors, including NE 8th Street, 140th Avenue NE, 148th Avenue NE, 156th Avenue NE and NE Bel-Red Road, so they become visually attractive, safe and comfortable corridors to and through the area.
- S-CX-5.** Provide for pedestrian amenities, including seating, lighting and trash receptacles, to promote a high-quality, attractive and safe pedestrian environment.
- S-CX-6.** Connect Crossroads Park with the surrounding commercial and residential areas through a safe, active and functional pedestrian environment that is integrated with the architecture, landscaping and signage of the surrounding land uses.
- S-CX-7.** Support the creation of a unique and well-defined identity of Crossroads' business districts through placemaking and activation.
- S-CX-8.** Explore the creation of a district-based organization for businesses in Crossroads to reinforce the economic vitality of the area.

- S-CX-9.** Encourage the retention of small businesses in Crossroads, including through increased access to affordable commercial space.
- S-CX-10.** Support the creation of both permanent and temporary spaces where small or emerging food businesses and vendors can develop and flourish.
- S-CX-11.** Support efforts to maintain both subsidized and naturally occurring affordable housing and work to preserve it as permanent income-restricted housing.
- S-CX-12.** Support the development of housing options for older adults and ensure nearby public places are accessible, safe and welcoming to support older adults meeting their basic needs and their ongoing involvement in the community.

Mixed Use Center & Neighborhood Centers

Goal: Support the development and enhancement of compact, livable and walkable mixed use areas in Crossroads recognizing their multiple roles in both the local community and wider region.

- S-CX-13.** Establish and sustain Crossroads' designation as a Countywide Center (see Map LU-3 of the Land Use Element) as a focal point for local and county planning and investment to support a concentration of jobs, housing, shopping, mobility options and recreational opportunities.
- S-CX-14.** Support development of a compact, livable and walkable mixed use center in Crossroads as an area planned for employment growth, expanded housing options and increased affordability.
- S-CX-15.** Encourage investment to expand housing affordability and stability while providing amenities for the community.
- S-CX-16.** Enhance existing Neighborhood Centers (see Map LU-2 of the Land Use Element) designed to serve neighborhoods, recognizing their multiple roles: serving residents' needs, acting as community gathering places and helping to establish neighborhood identity.
- S-CX-17.** Encourage a mix of residential, retail and service uses in Neighborhood Centers to promote easy pedestrian access and enhance the livability and vibrancy of the neighborhood.
- S-CX-18.** Encourage and enhance arts and cultural opportunities within Neighborhood Centers.

Community Gathering Places

Goal: Provide a variety of welcoming community gathering places throughout Crossroads to strengthen community connections.

- S-CX-19.** Acquire parcels suitable for neighborhood parks where such parcels can have active transportation access, especially west of 152nd Avenue NE.
- S-CX-20.** Partner with community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and private partners to create accessible, affordable and welcoming community gathering places, especially indoors.
- S-CX-21.** Continue to work with private partners to foster Crossroads Shopping Center's role as a community gathering place reflective of neighborhood identity and the community's cultural diversity.
- S-CX-22.** Collaborate with the Bellevue School District to strengthen school sites' function in Crossroads as safe and welcoming community gathering places.

Mobility and Access

Goal: Improve active transportation access and expand mobility options so that everyone has a safe and comfortable experience moving through Crossroads and to points beyond.

- S-CX-23.** Design city streets, shared use paths and trails recognizing the mobility needs of people of all ages and abilities.
- S-CX-24.** Expand mobility options and encourage the use of transit and active transportation to improve the quality of the travel experience for all users.
- S-CX-25.** Improve pedestrian and bicycle network facilities for access to frequent transit network stops and to nearby light rail stations, including through coordination with Redmond, consistent with the Mobility Implementation Plan.
- S-CX-26.** Improve the opportunities for pedestrians to safely cross arterials at signalized intersections, especially in Neighborhood Centers, and at designated mid-block locations, consistent with the Mobility Implementation Plan.
- S-CX-27.** Support the creation of pedestrian connections within superblocks, with a focus on integrating these connections into public property, and through large commercial blocks and developments.

- S-CX-28.** Provide signage and wayfinding to direct individuals to transit and to off-street active transportation facilities to promote and facilitate their use.
- S-CX-29.** Work with transit service providers to enhance transit passenger amenities at bus stops and stations.
- S-CX-30.** Address speeding and other traffic safety concerns through traffic calming measures that adhere to Vision Zero and Complete Streets principles.

Environment

Goal: Build a healthy and resilient community that embraces Crossroads' natural qualities using an equity lens.

- S-CX-31.** Encourage and support increased awareness and access to natural areas, especially the Kelsey Creek Basin, for their enjoyment by the community as a public amenity.
- S-CX-32.** Strive to increase tree canopy, using native and climate-adaptive species where feasible, in areas with lower tree canopy, especially Crossroads' commercial and mixed-use areas.
- S-CX-33.** Adapt public spaces to reduce vulnerability to extreme heat and extreme precipitation through increased tree canopy, climate resilience measures, and low impact development techniques.
- S-CX-34.** Collaborate with diverse partners on the provision of climate-friendly affordable housing that minimizes energy and resource use and that is adaptable to a changing climate, including heat, flooding, air pollution and wildfire events.
- S-CX-35.** Work with community-based organizations to develop community-serving facilities augmented to support community members and coordinate resource distribution and services before, during and after a hazard event.
- S-CX-36.** Support efforts to provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure in commercial areas and existing multifamily residential developments to advance equitable access.