

DATE: July 9, 2024

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

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*Community Development*

SUBJECT: Environmental Stewardship Initiative Quarterly Update

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This management brief is the second of the 2024 quarterly updates to Council on the implementation of the Sustainable Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan and includes highlights of implementation progress over the last quarter. The last Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) quarterly update to Council was on April 16.

### **Background**

The 2021-2025 Environmental Stewardship Plan includes environmental goals and targets for 2030 and 2050, for both the community and municipal operations and identifies actions in five focus areas:

- Climate change
- Energy
- Materials management and waste
- Mobility and land use
- Natural systems.

The plan consists of a suite of actions aimed to improve the environment in the five focus areas noted above. The actions help achieve the City's environmental goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, energy use, and vehicle miles traveled per person and to increase recycling, tree canopy, walkable access to parks, renewable energy, and electric vehicle use. The municipal operations section of the plan maps out how the City will continue to lead by example in areas such as buying renewable energy, increasing energy efficiency at City facilities, and greening the City's fleet. The plan will help preserve and enhance the natural environment, encourage transit-oriented development, and increase overall livability in Bellevue.

### **Council Direction**

As part of the adoption of the plan, Council directed staff to provide quarterly updates on implementation progress. Staff provides annual reporting on the environmental performance metrics during the summer update, and the other quarterly updates focus

on progress towards implementing actions. Council directed staff to pursue and build partnerships to support implementation, leverage the expertise of stakeholders and residents, seek innovative solutions and quick wins, lead by example, and move forward with urgency. In the adopted 2023-2024 City budget, Council increased the funding to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Bellevue Plan.

### **Progress Report**

The plan covers implementation from 2021-2025. The primary departments working on implementation include Community Development, Finance & Asset Management, Development Services, Parks & Community Services, Transportation, and Utilities. However, all departments have a role in supporting the implementation of the municipal operations actions. Of the 78 actions in the plan, the primary departments have completed eight, incorporated 38 into ongoing operations, and initiated 22, to date. The remaining 10 actions are in the work program for the remaining two years of the plan. Progress is summarized below in Attachment A, which provides a progress update for each action and outlines when the remaining actions are anticipated to begin.

Progress updates since the last report to Council are provided below along with more detailed updates in Attachment A.

### **Accomplishments and Milestones, Second Quarter 2024**

#### Community Actions:

##### *Engagement*

- *EarthFest:* ESI collaborated with Neighborhood Services and the Bellevue Botanical Garden to hold the first annual EarthFest celebration. The event featured garden tours, youth activities, and environmental resource booths from the ESI team, other City programs, and community partners. The event offered a chance for community members to celebrate Bellevue's ecosystems and learn more about sustainable practices to steward them for future generations. Over 300 people attended EarthFest.
- *Climate Challenge Team Leader Program:* The ESI team piloted a Bellevue Climate Challenge Team Leaders program, which concluded in June 2024, with seven team leaders successfully completing the program requirements. The program provided training for residents on climate science, the City's sustainability efforts, and climate communications, to help develop neighborhood climate champions. The program resulted in increased capacity for climate leadership and community climate action in the Team Leader cohort and the community members who participated in individual teams.

##### *Energy*

- *Energy Smart Eastside:* In the last three months, the program has fully funded the installation of 18 heat pumps (8 in Bellevue) and has an additional 33 projects in progress. Through a partnership with King County Housing Authority, heat pumps have recently been installed at Andrew's Heights, a 24-unit affordable housing building operated by Imagine Housing in Factoria. New grant funding totaling \$4 million from the Department of Commerce and Puget Sound

Energy was accepted by Council in June and will result in over 400 heat pumps being installed in low-and-moderate income households over the next 18 months. Finally, the program received a record number of applications for moderate income heat pump rebates after a joint marketing campaign was completed with Puget Sound Energy in May. Final reporting on the number of heat pumps installed because of that campaign is still pending.

- *Clean Buildings Act Technical Support program*: Enrolled 219 buildings in the program and completed 134 energy benchmarks with another 25 in progress to date. The team has completed 26 building scoping assessments and is assisting 13 buildings in applying for Washington State Department of Commerce Clean Buildings Act Early Adopter Incentives.

#### *Climate and Air Quality*

- *Air Quality Modeling*: In May 2024, the ESI team launched a five-month study to model air pollution from Bellevue's freeways and its potential impacts on growth centers based on future transportation scenarios. Examining tailpipe emissions and brake/tire particle dispersion will inform planning, development, and service decisions on future initiatives, such as the BelRed Look Forward.
- *Climate Resiliency*: The Office of Emergency Management launched the development of a Hazard Mitigation Plan, which will address climate-related risks and build on the Climate Vulnerability Assessment.
- *Department of Commerce Climate Planning Grant*: Awarded a \$295,000 grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce for planning activities to support the implementation of state House Bill 1181, Climate in Comprehensive Plans, and other associated plans. Staff is working on finalizing the scope of work for this grant.

#### *Mobility and Land Use*

- *Sustainable District*: Coordinated with Strategic Planning and Development Services staff to integrate Sustainable District priorities into the draft Wilburton Land Use Code Amendment, primarily focused on green building standards, landscaping, and open space. Staff evaluated the new LEED for Communities rating system as a potential implementation framework for the District and are vetting this approach with stakeholders.
- *Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update (CPPU)*: Supported the Comprehensive Planning team in responding to public and stakeholder feedback on the new Climate & Environment Element, including aligning draft policy language with input and guidance from Commerce, PSRC, King County, and local Tribes.
- *Electric Vehicle Roadmap*: Continued work with consultant team on developing the plan to support and prepare for the electric vehicle (EV) transition in Bellevue. The planning process will help identify locations for EV charging infrastructure for state and federal grants. The final document is expected to be completed later in the summer. Completed Phase 1 outreach activities, which included an online Community EV Adoption survey, online and in-person EV Charging Maps, intercept interviews with community members, and a focus group for property managers. The engagement activities resulted in over 620 connections with community members over the outreach period.

- *Electric Vehicle Readiness:* Continued work on a potential building code amendment for Bellevue that would enhance current state standards in WAC 51-50-0429, for requirements for EV readiness in new construction to better align with EV ownership trends in Bellevue. This project is being incorporated in the Land Use Planning Initiative process for 2024 and is anticipated to return to Council in the fall.
- *Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure:* Began analysis to determine best operations and maintenance strategy for eventual deployment of EV charging infrastructure in Bellevue. Preparing to apply for the Federal Highway Administration Charging & Fueling Infrastructure Grant program, due in late August.

#### *Natural Systems*

- *Tree Code Update:* The City Council reviewed the recommended Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) on May 21 and the proposed Bellevue City Code Amendment on June 18, which together will update tree preservation, retention, replacement and protection provisions. On June 18, Council voted unanimously to place the tree code amendments on the consent calendar for adoption, included in the consent calendar for July 9. The code amendments establish:
  - new requirements for permits when removing significant or landmark trees
  - a simplified, affordable process for property owners that allows tree removal without replacement under certain conditions
  - replacement ratios for additional tree removals, which also ensures that nonresidential properties replace all removed trees unless minimum tree density is met
  - Increased fines based on tree value for illegal removal.

#### Municipal Operations:

- *Staff Sustainability Training:* City staff hosted the first Envision Sustainability Training with the Institute of Sustainable Infrastructure. A full-day training was held for 40 staff members who learned about sustainability framework for all types of civil infrastructure projects. A total of 24 staff members completed the credentialing exam to earn Envision Sustainability Professional (ENV SP) accreditation. The remaining 16 staff members are expected to achieve ENV SP by the next Council update in the fall.
- *Building Energy Efficiency Retrofits:* Finance & Asset Management staff are in the contracting phase for an energy efficiency retrofit of the Bellevue Service Center (BSC) to bring the building into compliance with the Washington State Clean Buildings Standard and increase resiliency of the facility with a new backup generator. This project achieves ESI goals reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 71%, energy use by 24%, and enables 11% fleet electrification at BSC.
- *Solar on Fire Stations:* Staff submitted two grant applications for placing rooftop solar with battery storage on Fire Station 3 and Fire Station 10. If awarded, construction projects are scheduled for completion by June 2025.

- *Green Fleet Strategy:* Finance & Asset Management staff hired a contractor to update the 2021 Green Fleet Strategy to guide the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure at all city-owned buildings. Through a Department of Commerce grant, staff are working with contractors to install 20 new stations at BSC and are in the process of designing EV infrastructure and stations for City Hall. Budget proposals were submitted to install 2 EV stations for employee charging at Fire Stations.
- *EV Charging Infrastructure Grant:* The City was awarded a Department of Commerce grant for \$650,000 for EV charging infrastructure for employees and fleet at 9 fire stations, the Bellevue Service Center, and City Hall (as part of a regional grant submitted by King County).

Staff will continue to update Council quarterly and provide updates to the community through the monthly Environmental Stewardship newsletter, biannual Environmental Stewardship town hall, and other project updates. Staff anticipate launching the update to the Environmental Stewardship Plan starting this fall and will return to Council in Q3 seeking direction to initiate the plan update.

#### **Attachments**

- A. Sustainable Bellevue Plan Implementation Progress, June 2024.