



**Date:** January 6, 2025

**To:** Human Services Commission

**From:** Patrick Babbitt, Climate & Energy Program Manager, Community Development  
Sarah Phillips, Energy Smart Eastside Program Manager, Community Development

**Subject:** 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan Update  
For information and discussion - no Board action requested

This presentation will provide an update on the Sustainable Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan (ESP), including progress to date on plan implementation and an overview of the plan update process, which was launched by City Council in October. The presentation will provide a more in-depth overview of Energy Smart Eastside, one of the signature programs of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative, which provides outreach, education, and incentives to Bellevue residents to install energy efficient heat pumps, with special program tracks geared towards low- and moderate-income households. This presentation is for information only.

## Environmental Stewardship Plan Context

On Dec. 14, 2020, City Council adopted the [2021-2025 Sustainable Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan](#). The plan, updated every five years, sets Bellevue's 2030 and 2050 climate and sustainability goals. The plan also details implementation strategies for community action and municipal operations across five focus areas: climate change, energy, materials and waste management, mobility and land use, and natural systems.

Strategies and actions in each focus area are designed to advance Bellevue to its 2030 and 2050 goals. Goals were originally developed with input from community members, stakeholders, and City staff. All goals are intended to advance the overarching target to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 95% by 2050, a target which is reflected in policy adopted in October 2024 in Bellevue's updated Comprehensive Plan.

# MEMORANDUM



## 2026-2030 Environmental Stewardship Plan Update & Process Timeline

Bellevue City Council initiated the 2026-2030 Environmental Stewardship Plan update on Oct. 29, 2024. The update will be completed in autumn 2025. The Environmental Stewardship team will engage boards, commissions, residents, and stakeholders throughout the process.

The Plan will be updated in three Phases. City staff will engage Boards and Commissions as part of Phase I for input on the goals and targets, and Phase II for input on draft strategies and actions. Phase III prepares a draft plan for final input and adjustments before expected Council adoption.

Overall, the update process will assess progress made, introduce new strategies and performance metrics, and specify climate and sustainability actions to equitably achieve Bellevue’s 2030 goals. The Human Services Commission gave input for the existing plan.

The plan will also include multiple phases of public engagement with the general community and stakeholders, with a focus on reaching underrepresented community members. Activities will include townhall meetings, surveys, pop-up tabling, and other in-person and online events promoted via City channels and community partners. The Environmental Stewardship Team is partnering with two community-based organizations (CBOs), Eastside for All and The Little Master’s Club, to co-design engagement activities to specifically reach underrepresented community members. The CBO engagement events will take place from January to April of 2025.

### Progress to Date

Since the adoption of the 2021-2025 Environmental Stewardship Plan, Bellevue has [made progress](#) toward each of our goals. For example, Bellevue is on track to meet its 2030 goals to co-locate 75% of jobs and 50% of housing within ¼ mile of a frequent transit stop. These goals are meant to support access to opportunity and services.

The plan is composed of 78 actions. Since its adoption in 2020, the Bellevue has made significant progress on 87% of actions in the plan; ten actions were completed, 39 were incorporated into ongoing operations, and 19 were initiated but require more progress. The remaining 10 actions are in the work program for the remaining year of the plan or will be re-strategized and included in the updated plan. The most recent progress report on plan implementation is provided in Attachment A.





2021-25 Actions	Complete	Ongoing	Started	Not Started
78	10	39	19	10

Recently completed or significantly progressed actions include:

- Climate Vulnerability Assessment (completed Oct. 2023)
- Tree Code update (completed July 2024)
- Bellevue Climate Challenge implementation (completed May 2024)
- Electric Vehicle Roadmap (completed Oct. 2024)
- Energy Smart Eastside program implementation (ongoing)

In addition, the City has completed a Comprehensive Plan update and began work updating its Affordable Housing Strategy and Economic Development Plan, each of which integrates climate and sustainability principles and considerations.

Overall, Bellevue is not on track for its target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030. Bellevue is updating GHG inventory currently, and City staff will be able to provide additional data and insights at the January 6 Human Services Commission meeting.

### Energy Smart Eastside: Supporting Bellevue Residents in reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Energy Smart Eastside (ESE) is a residential energy efficiency program jointly run by the cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Redmond, and Sammamish. The program focus is to drive adoption of heat pumps for space heating and cooling. Heat pumps are a triple-win climate solution that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, increases community resilience to heat and smoke events, and reduces household energy costs.

Despite the considerable benefits, awareness, affordability and accessibility remain key challenges. 25% of homeowners have little familiarity with heat pumps, and among those that are aware of the benefits, homeowners are often surprised to find that a heat pump can cost up to 3 times more than a simple gas furnace replacement. Lack of clarity on how to move forward with a heat pump purchase, how to find a trusted contractor, and how to take advantage of rebates and tax credits to reduce the up-front cost is also a barrier.

ESE supports homeowners of all income levels in learning about the benefits of heat pumps and giving them the tools and financial assistance to move forward. Low-income households below 80% area median income can apply to have a heat pump installed at no cost, moderate income households under 150% area median income can access an additional \$6,000 in rebates on top of state and federal incentives, and all homeowners have access to manufacturer discounts, 1:1 energy coaching services, and access to a highly trained installer network.

Energy Smart Eastside helped drive a 20% increase in the number of heat pumps installed relative to gas furnaces in 2024 vs. 2023, and over 300 households (120+ in Bellevue) directly used an ESE incentive to make their purchase. ESE is funded by municipal contributions from the partner cities and has successfully raised \$7m in grant funding.

## Environmental Stewardship Plan Update Topics

### Environmental Stewardship Plan Goals

City staff are preparing to update the Plan's 2030 goals. Existing 2030 goals include:

- Jobs within ¼ mile of a frequent transit stop: 75%
- Housing within ¼ mile of a frequent transit stop: 50%
- Reduce communitywide energy use: 15%
- Energy used from a renewable energy source: 80%

Preparedness and resilience against existing or anticipated climate impacts, which was not a major consideration in the current plan, will be incorporated into the new plan. Bellevue's most vulnerable community members are often most affected by climate impacts.

### Comprehensive Plan Policies

The 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan will be updated with Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan as an overarching framework. Updated in October 2024, Comprehensive Plan policies include:

#### Climate and Environment Element

CL-1. Eliminate the release of substances into the air, water, and soil that may have harmful impacts on people, wildlife, or the environment.

CL-4. Protect air, water, land, and energy resources consistent with Bellevue's role in the regional growth strategy.

CL-13. Adopt and implement policies and programs to achieve a target of reducing citywide greenhouse gas emissions, compared to a 2011 baseline, by:

- 50% by 2030
- 75% by 2040
- 95% by 2050 and net-zero emissions

Evaluate and update these targets over time in consideration of the latest international climate science and best practices.

CL-15. Lead by example by reducing greenhouse gas emissions resulting from City operations by amounts equal to or greater than citywide goals.

CL-25. Evaluate climate vulnerabilities as part of long-range planning efforts and capital projects. Develop and implement climate change adaptation strategies that create a more resilient community by addressing the impacts of climate change to public health and safety, the economy, public and private infrastructure, water resources, and habitat.

## Role of the Human Services Commission

Throughout the plan update process, the Environmental Stewardship team is seeking input from each of the City's Boards and Commissions.

For this meeting, the Environmental Stewardship team would like the Human Services Commission's input on the following topics:

- What do you think of these climate resilience goal concepts? Will these or other goals help Bellevue take action to increase resilience in 2030 and beyond?
  - Reducing heat-related or other climate-affected illnesses
  - Vision Zero: reducing deaths/serious injuries from extreme weather to zero
  - Increasing community members connected to emergency information and service messaging
  - Increasing the portion of residents living close to a resilience hub
- How could Bellevue continue to center equity in the Environmental Stewardship Plan update to ensure that underserved communities benefit from ESP climate and sustainability initiatives?
- For the Energy Smart Eastside program, what are the opportunities to partner more closely with other housing stability and home ownership program work?

## Next Steps

The Environmental Stewardship team will continue engaging community members, stakeholders, and City staff to update goals and targets in Phase I. In Phase II, beginning in February 2025, the Environmental Stewardship team will use the feedback collected to then update draft strategies and actions. The Environmental Stewardship team will return to the Human Services Commission in Phase II to invite further input on relevant actions.

## Reference Material

- [Environmental Performance Dashboard](#)
- [Environmental Stewardship Plan Update Engaging Bellevue Page](#)
- [Environmental Stewardship Plan Home Page](#)
- [2021-2025 Environmental Stewardship Plan Summary](#)
- [Comprehensive Plan Climate and Environment Element](#)
- [Energy Smart Eastside Program](#)

**For further information on the update please contact:**

# MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &  
Community Services

Patrick Babbitt

Climate & Energy Program Manager

Focus Areas: Buildings & Energy, Climate & Resilience

[pbabbitt@bellevuwa.gov](mailto:pbabbitt@bellevuwa.gov)

Sarah Phillips

Energy Smart Eastside Program Manager

[sphillips@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:sphillips@bellevuewa.gov)