



DATE: September 24, 2024

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

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SUBJECT: Environmental Stewardship Initiative Quarterly Update

This management brief is the third 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 previous Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) quarterly update to Council was on July 9.

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 provide annual reporting on the environmental performance metrics during the end of year 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 which enabled the hiring of five new staff to advance implementation efforts.

Progress Report

The current 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 nine, incorporated 39 into ongoing operations, and initiated 20, to date. The remaining 11 actions are in the work program for this year and 2025. Progress is summarized below with Attachment A providing more details for each action and when the remaining actions are anticipated to begin.

Accomplishments and Milestones, Third Quarter 2024

Community Actions:

Engagement

- *Electric Vehicle (EV) Roadmap Open House:* Staff held an Open House at Crossroads Park on July 22 to connect with the community around EVs and share and collect feedback on the draft strategies being developed for the EV Roadmap. The event included EV drivers from the community with their vehicles, and tabling from Energy Smart Eastside, Puget Sound Energy (PSE), BellHop/Circuit, and Community Development Neighborhood Area Planning staff. Approximately 100 community members attended the Open House.
- *Sustainable District:* Coordinated with Strategic Planning and Development Services staff to conduct stakeholder outreach and solicit feedback on Sustainable District priorities as they currently appear in the draft Wilburton Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA). Priorities presented to stakeholders for feedback include green building standards, air quality considerations, and connection to district energy systems.

Energy

- *Energy Smart Eastside (ESE):* Since program inception, 352 households have used an Energy Smart Eastside incentive to install a heat pump (96 in Bellevue;

256 in partner cities), and 760 residents (235 in Bellevue; 525 in partner cities) have attended a webinar, workshop, or scheduled a one-on-one consultation to learn more about purchasing heat pumps. Notable updates this quarter include:

- ESE received a \$1.5m award from the State Department of Commerce Home Electrification Appliance Rebate program, funding implementation of 50-55 heat pumps at adult family homes servicing low-income residents. This grant is in addition to the \$3.5m Department of Commerce grant and the \$850,000 grant from PSE for Energy Smart Eastside, received earlier in 2024.
 - ESE coordinated with PSE and Hopelink to enroll Hopelink Place in a multifamily building electrification pilot. Hopelink Place is a 20-unit building in Bellevue servicing families exiting homelessness, and the PSE-funded pilot will cover installation of heat pumps in all units and will replace an inefficient natural gas heating system. Installation is expected to occur in November this year.
 - ESE's low-income program funded installation of 38 heat pumps (18 in Bellevue) in households with incomes under 80 percent of area median income. Four of these installations occurred at Options for Supported Housing, which provides staffed group homes for very low-income adults with developmental disabilities.
 - The ESE team led tours of two heat pump installations at partner city sites. These included Acres of Diamonds in Issaquah with Governor Jay Inslee and Options for Supportive Housing in Kirkland with Representative Suzan DelBene.
- *Clean Buildings Act Technical Support program:* Enrolled 275 buildings in the program and completed 142 energy benchmarks with another 65 in progress to date. The team has completed 26 building scoping assessments and is assisting 13 buildings in applying for Department of Commerce Clean Buildings Act Early Adopter Incentives.

Climate and Air Quality

- *Air Quality Modeling:* In May, the ESI team launched a study to model air quality near Bellevue's freeways and potential impacts on growth centers based on 2023, 2034, and 2044 scenarios. Examining tailpipe emissions and brake/tire particle dispersion will inform planning, development, and program decisions, such as for the Wilburton LUCA, BelRed Look Forward, and other growth centers such as Factoria and Eastgate. This study will be complete in the third quarter.
- *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. ESI staff implemented a Heat & Smoke Safety Pilot Project, delivering filter fans and safety kits to a few hundred community members in July.

- *Department of Commerce Climate Planning Grant:* Awarded a \$295,000 grant from the Department of Commerce for planning activities to support the implementation of state House Bill 1181, Climate in Comprehensive Plans, and other associated plans. The grant will fund a portion of the costs to update the Sustainable Bellevue Plan, contribute to the GHG Inventory update, and produce a Residential Electrification Strategy, and Shovel-Ready Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment Investment Plan for municipal facilities.

Mobility and Land Use

- *Sustainable District:* In addition to stakeholder engagement, staff developed a draft Sustainable District Strategy, presenting the conclusions of the Sustainable District Opportunity Assessment, and describing next steps for development of the sustainable district concept. Staff continued evaluation of the LEED for Communities rating system as a potential implementation framework to incentivize opportunities for green building and continued internal and external coordination to support the proposed Wilburton district energy system.
- *Electric Vehicle Roadmap:* Continued work with consultant team on developing the plan to support and prepare for the EV transition in Bellevue. The planning process will help identify locations for EV charging infrastructure for state and federal grants and other strategies for expanding EV ownership/usage and EV charging access. The final document is expected to be completed in September and brought to Council for awareness later in the fall.
- *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 increased EV charging in new multifamily 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 go to Council in the fall for adoption.
- *Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure:* Completed analysis to determine the preferred operations and maintenance strategy for eventual deployment of EV charging infrastructure in the Bellevue community, including working across departments to reach alignment. Continued work to prepare for various state and federal grants for EV charging.

Natural Systems

- *Tree Code Update:* Staff presented the draft updates to the tree code to Council on June 18 and then Council adopted the updates to the Land Use Code and Bellevue City Code on July 9, which include enhanced requirements related to tree preservation and replacement, tree retention, and tree protection.
- *2024 Tree Giveaway:* The application window for the 2024 Tree Giveaway closed on August 26, and staff are continuing planning for this event. The Tree Giveaway program will distribute 700 trees to residents and community

organizations across Bellevue, with a focus on communities with lower Tree Equity Scores (based on American Forests' Tree Equity tool). The tree distribution event will be held October 25 and 26 at Bannerwood Park.

Municipal Operations:

- *Municipal Sustainability Steering Committee:* The ESI Team established a committee of Assistant Directors from key departments and produced department-specific environmental reports providing tailored insights to help departments understand their environmental impact and identify specific areas for action.
- *Staff Sustainability Training:* Addressing the Sustainable Bellevue Plan action for sustainable operations training, in June, the ESI Team hosted its first sustainability training with the Institute of Sustainable Infrastructure for 40 City staff members who learned about the application of a sustainability framework for civil infrastructure projects. A total of 33 staff members (85 percent) completed the credentialing exam to earn Envision Sustainability Professional (ENV SP) accreditation, and staff are seeking to identify future capital projects which could be a fit for Envision certification. Quarterly meetings have been scheduled with the City's ENV SP staff members to build an education program to improve staff capacity for energy and GHG management in their day-to-day decision-making.
- *Building Energy Efficiency Projects:* The Bellevue Service Center (BSC) Energy Retrofit project starts construction in September 2024, which involves the conversion of gas-powered rooftop units to electric heat pumps. This building decarbonization strategy is expected to achieve a 71 percent reduction in GHG emissions. To maintain efficiency, the ESI Team is planning to deploy smart building software at BSC and City Hall for advanced equipment analytics and fault detection, which involves monthly meetings with the building engineers and preventative maintenance contractors.

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 plan to return to Council on October 29 to provide an overview of the update to the ESI Plan which will focus on future implementation actions from 2026-2030. This overview will include the plan update scope and approach, and a request for City Council direction to initiate the plan update.

Attachments

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