

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Environmental Stewardship Initiative Quarterly Update

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DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**INFORMATION
ONLY**

Tonight's Study Session will provide Council with a progress update of the 2020 environmental key performance indicators, along with an update on progress implementing the Sustainable Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Following direction from Council during the adoption of the Environmental Stewardship Plan (the Plan) on December 14, 2020, this presentation is the second of the quarterly Council updates on the implementation of the Plan. Staff last presented to Council on March 22, an overview of the 2021 Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) workplan, including an overview of the enhanced engagement approach, an update on quick wins, and next steps for the Plan implementation.

Tonight's presentation will focus on the annual review of the Environmental Stewardship Performance results, including Bellevue's 2020 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory and other environmental performance metrics, summarized in Attachment A: Environmental Stewardship 2020 Performance Dashboard.

Background

The 2021-2023 Council Vision & Priorities includes Priority #8: Implement the Environmental Stewardship Plan, which identifies actions in five focus areas:

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

The 2021-2025 Environmental Stewardship Plan includes environmental goals and targets for 2030 and 2050, for both the community and City operations. The Plan consists of a suite of actions aimed to

improve the environment in five focus areas: climate change, energy, mobility and land use, natural systems, and materials management and waste. The 77 actions in the plan are designed to help achieve the City's environmental goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, energy use, and vehicle miles travelled per person and 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 to preserve and enhance the natural environment, encourage transit-oriented development and increase overall livability in Bellevue.

Council Direction

During the review of the final draft of the Plan on November 16, 2020, Council directed staff to return for quarterly updates on progress and to monitor performance. Council directed staff to pursue and build partnerships to support the Plan implementation, leverage the expertise of stakeholders and residents, seek innovative solutions and quick wins, lead by example, and move forward with urgency into Plan implementation. In the adopted 2021-2022 City budget, Council included funding for enhanced engagement with stakeholders and residents, to support the Plan implementation.

Progress Report

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on all aspects of Bellevue residents' lives in 2020, and the City's environmental performance indicators were no exception. Recent studies of the impact of COVID-19 on emissions in 2020, showed global emissions down by 6.4 percent¹ and by 12.9 percent in the United States. Looking at the full year of 2020, Bellevue's communitywide GHG emissions decreased by 26 percent compared to the baseline year of 2011, and down 19 percent compared to the previous year. This reduction was largely driven by reduced vehicle trips, which were down a significant 39 percent per capita for Bellevue, and energy use which was cut by 14 percent.

Some interesting trends shown in the data included a modest 4.3 percent increase in residential electricity use compared to 2019, which was surprising given that Bellevue residents were at home for the majority of the year. Conversely, commercial electricity use decreased by 22 percent compared to 2019. Bellevue's communitywide recycling rate improved slightly to 45 percent, likely due to residents having easier access to recycling in their homes. There was no new data for tree canopy, resident or worker drive alone rates, and stream health for 2020, as this data is not collected annually.

For Bellevue's municipal operations, GHG emissions were reduced by 28 percent compared to 2011. As the City continued to operate essential services from City Hall and the Bellevue Service Center, building operations were adjusted to maximize indoor air quality for employees working in City facilities following COVID-19 best practices to increase circulation of outdoor air indoors. As a result, City energy use was only down by 6 percent compared to 2019, but the City's fuel use from fleet was down 40 percent compared to the prior year. Significant reductions in air travel also contributed to the City operations drop in GHG emissions. Staff estimated that the employee drive alone rate increased slightly to 48 percent for Bellevue's City employees, despite a large percentage of staff working remotely for the majority of the year. The staff who did need to work from a City facility, primarily drove alone to their workplace, due to public transit service cuts, concerns around transit safety during COVID-19 lockdowns, and reductions in vanpools and carpools.

With work from home continuing to be the norm for many Bellevue employers throughout the first half of 2021, similar reductions for greenhouse gas emissions and other metrics will likely continue for 2021. The question as Bellevue and the region emerges from the pandemic and returns to the “new normal” will be, how to keep GHG emissions reduced while reinvigorating the economy and returning to work from the office. Commuting modes will likely be one of the biggest drivers of changes to GHG emissions in the next several years, as offices and workers adjust to new hybrid work schedules and return to using public transit.

Quick Wins

The ESI accomplishments from the last quarter include the following:

- Launched the Sustainable Bellevue Partnership and held a kick-off meeting on June 23 for the Sustainability Leaders Group.
- Held an online townhall on July 13 for residents, to review the 2021 Environmental Stewardship Initiative workplan, opportunities for engagement, and 2020 environmental progress update.
- Awarded a grant for \$129,000 from the WA State Department of Commerce for energy efficiency improvements in City facilities, including multiple fire stations and City Hall.
- Completed lighting upgrades in City Hall parking garages and hired a consultant to conduct building retro-commissioning (building operations tune-ups) at City facilities, to reduce energy use through operational improvements.
- Released a request for qualifications (RFQ) for a consultant to provide technical support for buildings in Bellevue to access the WA State Department of Commerce Clean Buildings Act Early Adopter Incentives. The contract for this project is anticipated to come to Council for approval in September.
- Received a \$35,000 donation from Amazon for tree planting, as part of their community project contributions to the City.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

2021-2025 Environmental Stewardship Plan, (Res. 9859, 2020)

- The Environmental Stewardship Plan was adopted on December 14, 2020 and includes updated environmental goals and targets and 77 actions for implementation over the next five years.

Bellevue City Council Vision and Priorities (2021-2023)

- Priority #8: Implement the Environmental Stewardship Plan, which identifies actions in five focus areas:
 - Climate change
 - Energy
 - Materials management and waste
 - Mobility and land use
 - Natural systems.

Bellevue Comprehensive Plan Climate Change Policies (2015)

- EN-6. Establish an achievable Citywide target and take corrective actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as reducing energy consumption and vehicle emissions and enhancing land use patterns to reduce vehicle dependency.
- EN-7. 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.
- EN-8. Provide regional leadership on environmental issues that extend beyond Bellevue's boundaries and require regional cooperation.
- TR-140. Support means to reduce transportation-source greenhouse gas emissions.

King County Cities Climate Collaboration (Res. 8789, 2014)

- Council joined the King County Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) on August 4, 2014 by signing an Interlocal Agreement (Resolution 8798). K4C is a partnership among cities across King County working to achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions consistent with Countywide Planning Policies.

K4C Joint Commitments (February 17, 2015 and September 14, 2020)

- Council voted to sign the original K4C Joint Commitments on February 17, 2015; and to sign the updated K4C Joint Commitments on September 14, 2020, to reaffirm Bellevue's participation in the K4C and support for the regional countywide greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.

Fiscal Impact

The adopted 2021-2022 City Budget includes \$250,000 for 2021 and 2022 to implement the Environmental Stewardship Plan, \$125,000 per year from 2023-2027 (CIP Plan No. CD-46), and \$50,000 over the two years for enhanced engagement.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

- A. Environmental Stewardship 2020 Performance Dashboard
- B. CD-46 ESI Implementation CIP Project Detail Page

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

Environmental Stewardship Plan, 2021-2025

¹ [COVID curbed carbon emissions in 2020 — but not by much \(nature.com\)](https://www.nature.com/news/COVID-curbed-carbon-emissions-in-2020—but-not-by-much-1.4544244)