

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 an update on progress toward implementing the Sustainable Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan and the annual update on environmental performance indicators.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

This presentation is the third of the 2022 quarterly Council updates on the implementation of the Sustainable Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan (Environmental Stewardship Plan) and includes highlights of implementation progress over the last quarter and the annual update on Bellevue's greenhouse gas emissions and environmental performance metrics. Staff last presented to Council on April 25, 2022, with an update on plan implementation.

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 the five focus areas noted above. The 78 actions in the plan are designed to help achieve the City's environmental goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) 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

As part of the adoption of the Environmental Stewardship Plan on December 14, 2020, Council directed staff to provide quarterly updates on plan implementation progress. As part of the quarterly updates, staff provide 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 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, along with supplemental funding for “quick wins” for the plan implementation.

Environmental Performance Metrics

The environmental performance metrics for 2021 largely showed similar trends as 2020, with sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled. Attachment A, Environmental Stewardship Performance Dashboard (released July 2022) includes a summary of the key performance metrics and trends. As many residents and Bellevue workers continued to work from home in 2021 and economic activity increased with relaxed COVID-19 restrictions, greenhouse gas emissions increased slightly from 2020, but were 20 percent below the baseline year of 2011 levels.

To achieve the target of a 50 percent reduction by 2030, emissions should be 26 percent below 2011 levels for 2021 and need to continue to decline 3 percentage points per year. To achieve the 2030 target, the reductions in per capita vehicle miles travelled need to be continued, along with increasing the production of renewable energy through the implementation of the Washington State Clean Energy Transformation Act and reducing energy use in new and existing buildings through increasingly energy efficient building codes and programs and policies to reduce energy use in buildings. A suite of strategies such as working from home, restoring transit routes and ridership levels, increasing access to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit-oriented development will support continued reductions in transportation emissions.

Like 2020, COVID-19 had a significant impact on energy use and transportation patterns in 2021. Residential energy only increased by six percent compared to 2019, despite a large proportion of residents working from home, and commercial electricity use decreased by 22 percent compared to 2019. Bellevue’s communitywide recycling rate dropped to 42 percent compared to 45 percent in 2020 likely due to residents having less access to recycling at work or changing consumption and waste patterns. Bellevue Utilities will continue to support multi-family and commercial buildings with establishing recycling and organics collection, focusing their efforts of the sectors needing the most assistance.

For Bellevue’s municipal operations, GHG emissions were reduced by 16 percent compared to 2011. The City continued to operate essential services from City Hall and the Bellevue Service Center, and a portion of City staff continued to work remotely. As a result, City energy use decreased by six percent compared to 2019 and the City’s fuel use from fleet increased from 2020. Fleet fuel use was seven

percent below 2011 levels, in part due to limitations on employees driving in the same vehicle due to COVID safety precautions. Reductions in air travel also contributed to the City operations drop in GHG emissions. Staff estimate that the employee drive alone rate increased slightly to 56 percent for Bellevue's City employees, despite a large percentage of staff working remotely for much 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, and reductions in vanpools and carpools. Staff continue to monitor operations to balance COVID precautions with goals to reduce energy, fuel use, and waste. The recently completed Green Fleet Strategy also provides a plan for electrifying Bellevue's light-duty fleet, which is a key strategy for achieving the City's 2030 goal for reducing GHG emissions from City operations by 50 percent.

With work from home and "hybrid" work continuing to be the norm for many Bellevue employees in 2022, similar reductions for greenhouse gas emissions and other metrics will likely continue for 2022. However, communitywide GHG emissions reductions will need to accelerate, in order to meet the target of a 50 percent reduction by 2030, and 80 percent reduction by 2050.

Staff also recently completed an updated Urban Tree Canopy Assessment (Attachment B), using a new data source from EarthDefine and the most up to date methodology which leverages machine learning and geographic information systems. This updated assessment was performed for 2011 and 2019 and will result in a detailed report and an online tool for community and staff use. The updated tree canopy assessment shows a Citywide tree canopy of 39 percent, an increase from 37.5 percent in 2011. What this data shows, is that the overall tree canopy growth has compensated for the individual tree losses from specific projects, the latter being a concern raised by some community members. However, the tree canopy percentage itself does not tell the full story around the urban forest in Bellevue and is one macro-level metric used for monitoring overall trends. Preserving and growing the tree canopy is not only about achieving the 40 percent canopy goal, but also maintaining Bellevue's character as a City in a Park and the unique character of each Bellevue neighborhood.

For more graphs and information on all the environmental performance metrics, refer to the City of Bellevue Environmental Performance Dashboard at <https://bellevuewa.gov/esiperformance>.

Progress Report

The Environmental Stewardship Plan covers a five-year implementation period from 2021-2025. Of the 78 actions in the Environmental Stewardship Plan, the primary departments working on the plan implementation (Community Development, Finance and Asset Management, Development Services, Parks & Community Services, Transportation, and Utilities) have initiated 32 of the actions and incorporated 26 into ongoing operations less than two years into the five-year implementation program. Sixteen actions have not started yet, and four actions are complete, as shown in Table 1 and Attachment C: Sustainable Bellevue Plan Implementation Progress July 2022. The Environmental Stewardship Plan includes a timeframe for each action, which outlines when the remain actions are anticipated to initiated.

Table 1: Summary of Environmental Stewardship Plan Implementation Progress

Status	# of Actions	Description	%
Started	32	Work has started / implementation is partially complete	41%
Ongoing	26	Work has been incorporated into ongoing operations	33%
Complete	4	Work has been completed	5%
Not started	16	Work has not begun	21%
Barrier	0	Need to re-strategize approach. There is a barrier to implementing the action.	0%
Total	78		

Since the last Council update on April 25, the departments charged with implementing the plan have started the following actions: C.1.5 Environmental equity assessment, W.2.3 Assess additional waste strategies, N.1.1 Tree preservation code, and M.E.1.7 Upgrade building envelope in City-owned buildings. The Transportation department completed the Mobility Implementation Plan, which was adopted by Council on April 18, 2022. Staff have also made progress on the following actions highlighted below.

Accomplishments

The key accomplishments from April 2022 – June 2022, include:

Community Actions

- *Clean Buildings Act Technical Support program:* Enrolled 124 buildings in the program and completed 68 energy benchmarks and has another 56 in progress. The team has completed five building scoping assessments and has another 25 in progress and is assisting seven buildings in applying for WA State Department of Commerce Clean Buildings Act Early Adopter Incentives.
- *Home Energy Retrofit program:* The City of Bellevue is partnering with the cities of Kirkland, Redmond, Issaquah, and Mercer Island in the development of a heat pump campaign to accelerate the adoption of energy efficient heat pumps. The five cities held an introductory webinar for interested volunteers and are in the process of finalizing the program design with a goal of launching the program in late summer or early fall.
- *Community Climate Challenge:* Staff launched the Sustainable Bellevue Climate Challenge for Earth Day 2022, in collaboration with the cities of Redmond, Issaquah, and Mercer Island, to engage residents in taking action to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Forty-two households are currently participating in the Bellevue challenge, and the Eastside team will perform another round of outreach in the late summer and early fall.
- *Air Quality and Planning Guidelines project:* This project was initiated in January and will involve a review of research related to air quality, public health, and land use, along with local studies and data, to provide best practice recommendations for consideration for long-term planning for areas near freeways.

- *Enhanced Engagement:* Convened the Sustainability Leaders Group in March and held working group meetings on commercial and residential energy efficiency, to support the development and implementation of the Clean Buildings Incentive Program and Home Energy Retrofit program. Held a Community Townhall on July 14 to update residents on plan implementation progress and environmental performance metrics.
- *Tree Canopy:* Completed the 2019 and 2021 Tree Canopy Assessment using a new online tool from PlanIT Geo. Received direction from Council to develop an interim Landmark Tree permit requirement, in advance of initiating the tree regulation update this fall.
- *Mobility Implementation Plan:* The Mobility Implementation Plan was completed and adopted by the City Council on April 18, 2022.
- *Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure:* Staff submitted a grant application for the WA Department (WSDOT) of Transportation Electric Zero-Emissions Vehicle Infrastructure Partnerships funding opportunity, to seek funding for a publicly accessible high-speed charger to support WSDOT's goal of building out a high-speed charging network throughout the state.

Municipal Operations

- *Green Fleet Strategy:* Completed analysis of alternatives and developed final Green Fleet Strategy. Developed budget proposal for implementation of the Green Fleet strategy.
- *Energy retrofits and Clean Buildings Act:* Performing facility audits and developing energy efficiency retrofit plans for city facilities to comply with the Clean Buildings Act, which originally applied to commercial buildings over 50,000 square feet and was expanded to apply to buildings 20,000 square feet and larger. Submitted a grant to the Department of Commerce for energy efficiency incentives for the Bellevue Service Center.
- *Community solar:* As a result of Bellevue's community solar application, the South Bellevue Community Center was selected by Puget Sound Energy (PSE) as a possible site host for PSE's Community Solar program. PSE will perform further feasibility analysis to determine the suitability of the facility and location.

Budget

The Environmental Stewardship Team submitted proposals for funding for the Sustainable Bellevue Plan implementation, which are currently being reviewed by the Department Directors and City Manager's Office, as part of the City biennium budget process for the 2023-2029 capital improvement budget.

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 78 actions for implementation over a five-year period, 2021-2025.

Bellevue City Council Vision and Priorities (2021-2023)

- Priority #8: Implement the Environmental Stewardship Plan, which identifies actions in five focus areas:
 - Climate change
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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 (CD-46), and \$50,000 over the two years for enhanced engagement from the Council Contingency fund. There are also complementary resources in other departments beyond Community Development (i.e. Finance and Asset Management, Development Services, Parks & Community Services, Transportation, and Utilities) that directly implement sustainability actions in the plan.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

- A. Environmental Stewardship 2021 Performance Dashboard
- B. Bellevue Urban Tree Canopy Assessment Report 2022
- C. Sustainable Bellevue Plan Implementation Progress July 2022

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

Environmental Stewardship Plan, 2021-2025