

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC**Keep Bellevue Beautiful Update**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**INFORMATION
ONLY**

This program update will provide information about Keep Bellevue Beautiful's litter cleanup events, Adopt-A-Street, assistance for graffiti prevention and removal and abandoned shopping cart retrieval.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

The Keep Bellevue Beautiful program was created as a part of the Safe, Clean and Vibrant City initiative with Council's adopted 2023-2024 City budget. The program works with the Bellevue community to keep the city litter free. This multi-faceted program includes litter clean up events, Adopt-A-Street (launching soon), assistance for graffiti prevention and removal, and retrieval of abandoned shopping carts. The comprehensive approach results in a cleaner, more environmentally conscious Bellevue.

Removing Litter

Keep Bellevue Beautiful fosters community pride by recruiting, training, and organizing volunteers dedicated to maintaining designated segments of Bellevue streets through litter removal and clean up events. Since August 2023, these events have engaged over 300 volunteers and collected over 200 bags of litter from city rights-of-way. This summer will be the launch of the Adopt-A-Street program furthering community engagement and upkeep of the city's streets.

Signature Streets During the fall of 2023, Keep Bellevue Beautiful initiated monthly "Signature Streets" cleanups, targeting specific streets crucial for shaping the city's initial and lasting impressions. These streets have often been reported as litter hot spots by the public, making them significant areas of focus. Cleanup events have occurred in Lake Hills, BelRed, Bridle Trails, Crossroads, Northeast Bellevue, and Newport. Future clean up events can be found at <https://bellevuewa.gov/keepbellevuebeautiful>.

Adopt-A-Street Program The launch of the Adopt-A-Street program this summer provides opportunities for neighborhoods, community groups, individuals, and businesses to contribute to the cleanliness of city streets. Staff is currently instituting the necessary procedures of the program which will include:

- 1) Neighborhoods, community groups, individuals, and businesses will have an opportunity to adopt their own designated public right-of-way street.
- 2) Adopting sponsors will commit to a minimum of four clean up events per year and locations will be approved by the city to ensure safety.
- 3) Volunteers will receive safety orientations and appropriate safety and cleanup equipment, including Keep Bellevue Beautiful garbage bags, grabbers, gloves, and safety vests.
- 4) Volunteers require liability waivers and photo release waivers for participation.
- 5) Collected litter bags may be added to their regular residential garbage pickup, at no additional cost, through a partnership with Republic Services.
- 6) A new web-based mapping platform will streamline the adoption process, allowing volunteers to see already adopted streets and select desired streets easily.
- 7) Keep Bellevue Beautiful dashboard will provide transparency and showcase the positive impact of volunteer efforts.

EarthFest 2024 This event is a collaboration of the Bellevue Botanical Garden, the Environmental Stewardship Initiative, and Keep Bellevue Beautiful. The event includes a litter cleanup initiative in the Wilburton area and an array of interactive activities, garden tours, educational nature-based programs, creative arts activities, and environmental resource booths suitable for all ages. More information can be found at [EarthFest 2024 | City of Bellevue \(bellevuewa.gov\)](https://www.bellevuewa.gov/earthfest2024).

Graffiti Prevention and Removal

On May 8, 2023, the Council adopted the ordinance amending *Bellevue City Code (BCC) Chapter 9.10, Nuisances*, declaring graffiti as a public nuisance. Following discussion, Council directed staff to develop an education program and bring information back to address assistance for property owners.

Bellevue residents can report graffiti through the City website, as well as with the MyBellevue app. From June to December 2023, there were 153 graffiti complaints (including 86 reported through Code Compliance, 35 through Operations & Maintenance, and 31 through Bellevue Parks). Of the Code Compliance complaints, 41% were on private property, 21% were on WSDOT property, 18% were on Sound Transit or Metro property, and the remaining 7% were on PSE property.

Swift removal of unwelcomed graffiti is the strongest contributor toward preventing future graffiti. Bellevue's response to graffiti removal is determined by the location:

- 1) City-owned property: the City will remove the graffiti as soon as possible.
- 2) WSDOT, Sound Transit, or King County property: the City works in coordination with the respective agencies for the graffiti removal.
- 3) Private property: Code Compliance will respond to reported graffiti and contact the property owner as a first point of contact, providing information about the ordinance and informational resources to assist property owners in the prevention and removal of graffiti.

New Graffiti Removal Assistance: Keep Bellevue Beautiful staff created a brochure entitled “Graffiti: Prevention and Removal” with information and tips on how to prevent graffiti and remove it in a safe and environmentally sound way.

In the past year, Code Compliance has tracked a handful of hardship requests from residents who needed additional assistance with graffiti removal. Keep Bellevue Beautiful will begin to provide paint-over graffiti removal upon the referral of Code Compliance for single-family residential properties for individuals who meet general hardship criteria (based on income, ability, and health status).

- a. To be eligible, the property must meet all of the following criteria:
 - i. Be located within the City of Bellevue.
 - ii. Be used exclusively for residential use.
 - iii. Contain no more than four dwelling units, as defined by LUC 20.50.016.
 - iv. Contain graffiti, as defined by BCC 9.10.010.H.

Upon referral from Code Compliance, Keep Bellevue Beautiful will authorize paint-over removal of the public facing graffiti from a city contractor.

Abandoned Shopping Cart Retrieval

The Keep Bellevue Beautiful coordinator manages the abandoned shopping cart retrieval program by collecting public reports of abandoned shopping carts, while overseeing the management of the vendor contract for the retrieval of the abandoned carts from public rights-of-way. Since March 2023, over 2,603 abandoned shopping carts have been retrieved at a cost of about \$5.50 a cart. The contract for abandoned shopping cart retrieval has been renewed until March 2025.

This abandoned shopping cart retrieval program has augmented local retail efforts as many of the larger grocery stores have already implemented their own containment and retrieval services. In January 2024, Code Compliance provided additional outreach to retailers, hand-delivering letters about their responsibilities regarding shopping carts, obtaining contact information, and learning about their monitoring and retrieval programs. This outreach was well received, and local retailers shared their own experiences with locking mechanisms, containment areas, and staff resources expended for local retrieval.

Last year, Council requested additional information on the ability of the City for cost recovery on shopping cart retrieval services. The presence of abandoned shopping carts outside a shopping cart containment area is already declared to be a public nuisance (see BCC 9.10.020 and 9.10.030, read together with LUC 20.10.440, note 39). Under BCC 9.10.030 and 9.10.040, any one of the following persons can be prosecuted for a civil violation if a shopping cart is found abandoned outside a shopping cart containment area: (1) property owner, (2) tenant, (3) person causing abandonment of a shopping cart, or (4) person causing shopping cart to leave the containment area. A monetary penalty can be assessed and abatement may be required if the case for civil violation is proved at hearing.

An abandoned shopping cart enforcement program would require strengthening City code to provide clarity on labeling requirements for retailers to prove shopping cart theft, as well as establishing fees sufficient to cover costs. Enforcement would also require additional resources to process citations, prepare and prove an enforcement case, and administer collections as warranted.

Given the current level of abandoned shopping cart retrieval services, staff does not recommend an abandoned shopping cart enforcement program at this time. Alternatively, Code Compliance and Keep Bellevue Beautiful will continue to work collaboratively with local retailers on improving containment and retrieval services. This will include providing regular updates to local retailers on the number of abandoned shopping carts retrieved, as well as improving signage and labeling of carts and encouraging containment.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Keep Bellevue Beautiful is supported by the following Comprehensive Plan policies:

- N-1. Maintain neighborhoods as safe and welcoming environments for everyone to enjoy.
- UD-9. Enhance the appearance of neighborhoods with targeted city programs and right-of-way improvements.

Fiscal Impact

Keep Bellevue Beautiful is funded within the 2023-2024 operating budget.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A