

July 14, 2014

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C).

STAFF CONTACTS

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FISCAL IMPACT

Participating communities are requested to contribute a modest sum to help defray the cost of the Collaboration; by the K4C population formula, Bellevue's fee would be \$2,500 annually. In addition, the City would be expected to dedicate some staff time to the effort. Staff anticipates that these costs would be borne by the existing Environmental Stewardship Initiative budget and staffing and require no new budget allocation.

POLICY ISSUES

On June 16, 2014, City Council requested information from staff about the King County Cities Climate Collaboration ("K4C") and Bellevue's opportunities to participate in this effort.

K4C is a partnership between the County and its cities to coordinate and enhance the effectiveness of local government climate and sustainability efforts by:

- Supporting one another to execute tangible projects and programs,
- Standardizing common goals and measures for assessing progress, and
- Sharing best practices and lessons learned.

King County is recruiting all interested cities to join the K4C effort. Staff is seeking guidance on whether or not Bellevue should formalize its role in this effort.

Comprehensive Plan

Several Comprehensive Plan policies pertain to the City's involvement in this regional effort:

- "Provide regional leadership on environmental issues that extend beyond Bellevue's boundaries and require regional cooperation" (EN-8);
- "Encourage the use of renewable resources and conserve nonrenewable natural resources" (EN-4);
- "Minimize, and where practicable, eliminate the release of substances into the air, water, and soil that degrade the quality of these resources or contribute to global atmospheric changes" (EN-3);

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

- XX Action
- XX Discussion
- XX Information

Staff is seeking direction on whether Council wishes to join K4C. If so, staff will return with a Resolution for Council consideration on a future agenda.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

The intent of the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) is for the County and its cities to work together to improve their collective environmental and economic performance, with a priority focus on policies, programs, and goals related to energy and transportation systems, green building, materials management, urban forestry, and greenhouse gas emissions. A Collaboration “pledge” and objectives are provided in the K4C background document (Attachment A).

Nine cities are currently K4C members, including Issaquah, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Redmond, Renton, Seattle, Shoreline, Snoqualmie, and Tukwila. Bellevue, while not a formal partner of K4C at this time, has participated in K4C roundtables and trainings at a staff level and is considered a leader in most environmental sustainability efforts being taken up by the group. Joining K4C requires the Mayor’s endorsement of the effort, paying an annual fee of \$2,500, and signing an interlocal agreement.

The K4C collaboration relates to regional policy direction articulated in the Countywide Planning Policies, specifically EN-17: “Establish a countywide greenhouse gas reduction target that meets or exceeds the statewide reduction requirement that is stated as the 2050 goal of a 50% reduction below 1990 levels.”

A more precise countywide target currently being proposed for adoption by the Growth Management Planning Council on July 23, 2014, reads as follows:

***New EN-17** Reduce countywide sources of greenhouse emissions, compared to a 2007 baseline, by 25% by 2020, 50% by 2030, and 80% by 2050. Assuming 1% annual population growth, these targets translate to per capita emissions of approximately 8.5 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO_{2e}) by 2020, 5 MTCO_{2e} by 2030, and 1.5 MTCO_{2e} by 2050.*

More specifically for Bellevue, K4C relates to the US Conference of Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement, which the Council endorsed in 2007 (Resolution No. 7517). With this agreement, Bellevue joined numerous other cities in demonstrating a commitment to countering climate change. Particularly through the Environmental Stewardship Initiative, the City has since been taking actions to reduce energy use and GHG emissions, regularly tracking progress through periodic updates of municipal and community-wide emissions inventories. These actions are having ancillary positive benefits in saving money and fostering positive economic activity. (A briefing on the Environmental Stewardship Initiative is scheduled for Council Study Session in September.)

Pursuant to the earlier Council Resolution, Bellevue staff have informally participated and assisted in the K4C staff interchange, but the City has never “paid in” or taken formal action to join the Collaboration. Formal participation in K4C may be a helpful mechanism for moving the City’s environmental stewardship efforts forward with regional partners, and should be reviewed in light of its full implications.

Implications of joining the K4C Collaboration:

- **A “seat at the table”** -- As noted above, the Growth Management Planning Council is expected to act in late July to establish a Countywide target for reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions. The K4C Collaboration will likely be the forum for framing each individual city’s actions in response to this new policy. Being a member of K4C ensures Bellevue is actively engaged in these discussions and working with other cities and King County to jointly address ways to meet the targets in a collaborative manner.
- **Council’s Priority regarding Regional Leadership and Influence** -- Since this is a major topic of regional interest, Bellevue’s involvement is consistent with the Council priority for regional engagement.
- **Not legally binding** – Signing on to the K4C Collaboration is a voluntary, discretionary action and does not pre-empt or limit the City’s authority in any regard.
- **Provides benefits in pooling resources** -- The Collaboration delivers bi-monthly trainings for member jurisdictions’ staffs and, at times, the broader community, along with opportunities for staff to network with their peers in other cities, learning about what is working and what is not.
- **Consistent with Environmental Stewardship Initiative** – Bellevue has been pursuing a broad array of actions consistent with many of the strategies discussed by K4C, particularly in the areas of energy conservation, transportation and land use, solid waste/recycling, and government operations. The Collaboration will complement and advance these existing activities.
- **Costs** -- Participating communities are requested to contribute a modest sum to help defray the cost of the Collaboration; by the K4C population formula, Bellevue’s fee would be \$2,500 annually. In addition, the City would be expected to dedicate approximately five hours of staff time per month. Staff anticipates that these costs would be borne by the existing Environmental Stewardship Initiative budget and staffing and require no new budget allocation.
- **Ambiguity** – While much is known about the tools that can best drive GHG reductions, the exact costs, savings, or GHG impact of any particular strategy or action are moving targets that can depend on market uptake, energy prices, technology advancements, and many other factors simultaneously. As the target moves, it is helpful to iterate on ideas and leverage new opportunities for highest impact – having a common goal in mind.
- **Regulatory vs. market-based approaches** – The Collaboration recognizes the benefits of market-based approaches and strives to promote voluntary actions that produce net

economic benefits to communities. Most of the work taking place in K4C communities thus far is an example of this approach.

- **Draft Menu of Strategies/“Commitments”** – The Collaboration is working to develop a set of strategies to achieve Countywide GHG reductions. This is a work in progress and is intended to represent a shared vision of the elements that the County and cities may work together to implement. This document is being further refined following the June 12 “Elected Officials Working Summit” attended by Councilmember Robinson. The June 12 draft is included as Attachment B.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will be prepared to answer questions tonight about the implications of joining the K4C Collaboration, and is seeking direction as to whether Council wishes to join. If Council gives that direction, staff will return with a Resolution for Council consideration on a future agenda.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Background Document on the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration
- B. Draft of Joint County-City Climate Commitments

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY

Analysis of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Pathways for K4C Joint County-City Climate Commitment