



DATE: May 4, 2015

TO: Mayor Balducci and City Council Members

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SUBJECT: Governor Inslee recognizes Bellevue as “Northwest Solar Community”

Since 2012 the City has taken a leadership role in accelerating the adoption of rooftop solar photovoltaic systems through our participation in two State grant programs, the Evergreen State Solar Partnership and the ongoing Northwest Solar Communities. This participation demonstrates the City’s commitment to encouraging adoption of renewable energy, the reduction of carbon emissions, and is aligned with the Environmental Stewardship Initiative. In a recent proclamation, Governor Inslee praised the City for our leadership and recognized Bellevue as a “Northwest Solar Community” (see attached proclamation). The proclamation acknowledges Bellevue’s initiatives that contributed to an increase in residential solar installations in Bellevue and statewide.

As a member of the Evergreen State Solar Partnership and the Northwest Solar Communities grant teams, the City had the opportunity to demonstrate this exceptional leadership in a variety of ways. City staff have been active partners in these grant efforts, bringing together local governments, utilities, and solar industry stakeholders from Washington and Oregon working collaboratively to bring down the cost of solar deployment by simplifying and standardizing permitting, streamlining utility interconnection, addressing planning/zoning/siting issues, and identifying improved financing options. As part of that work, the City has taken many steps to promote the use of solar energy and make Bellevue “Open for Solar Business”:

- Installed 23.2 kW capacity solar panels on our Bellevue Service Center building.
- Adopted a number of best practices, including providing permit information online, instituting predictable fees, offering permits online, and generally cutting red tape.
- Sponsored a Solarize Bellevue group purchase campaign that resulted in over 268 kW capacity installed on residential rooftops and the donation of a free system to the Bellevue Boys and Girls Club Teen Center.
- Co-sponsored solar education events, including Solar Now! University.

The City’s efforts to support alternative energy are deeply rooted in the City’s policies, programs, and regional partnerships. From a policy perspective, Bellevue’s Comprehensive Plan’s Environmental Element supports the conservation of natural resources and promotes the use of renewable energy. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan states that the City will: “Provide regional leadership on environmental issues that extend beyond Bellevue’s boundaries and

require regional cooperation” and “Educate the public about environmental issues and illustrate how individual actions can have a cumulative effect to benefit the environment.”

Bellevue has a longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship, economic development, and innovation. Continued leadership in smart energy stewardship is happening through our ongoing support of solar activities and the soon to be launched Solarize Bellevue 2.0. In addition, the successes realized as part of our solar collaborations will also be built upon as the City pursues the Georgetown University Energy Prize further engaging the public and students in energy issues to foster innovative approaches to energy efficiency.

All of these efforts help highlight the City’s commitment and leadership in this area and continue to bolster the region and state as a leader, fostering possibilities and showing results. Energy supplies are inherently linked to Bellevue’s quality of life, economic development, and community health. Through these efforts we have recognized that local solutions can be implemented in ways that build a cleaner, stronger and more resilient regional economy.

Attachment

Governor’s Proclamation