ATTACHMENT 3

ENVIRONMENT ELEMENT SUMMARY

ENVIRONMENT VISION FOR 2035

BELLEVUE EMBRACES ITS STEWARDSHIP OF THE ENVIRONMENT BY PROTECTING AND RETAINING NATURAL SYSTEMS, AND BUILDING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE. ***As growth and development occurs, Bellevue is working to build a healthier, greener, and more sustainable future for generations to come. New buildings are designed to protect and even restore natural systems. The community highly values and celebrates the results, such as reduced energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, increasing tree canopy, and more salmon in local creeks.***

MAJOR THEMES & DRIVERS

The Environment Element provides a framework for enhancing the livability of the city and for protecting sensitive environmental features. While these themes continue to define the Environment Element, the local and global environmental landscape has changed over the past ten years, with issues such as drought, forest fire, ocean acidification, and changing weather patterns coming closer to home for local residents. Among other changes, Bellevue has sustained tree canopy losses, witnessed increasing interest and market opportunity for green building, and seen a strong interest from residents and businesses to adopt new technologies and behaviors to reduce energy consumption and environmental footprints. In the public outreach process there has been significant concern about preserving healthy natural systems in Bellevue. The community recognizes that natural, ecological systems are co-dependent with other systems and infrastructure that the city maintains. This is evidenced by public comments that connect transportation infrastructure, energy systems, and food supply issues to the overall end goal of a healthy urban environment. In addition, population growth has, and will continue to, put more demands on the natural environment.

Regionally, planning agencies have adopted new environmental policies that aim to improve and restore environmental conditions. The Multi-county Planning Policies and Countywide Planning Policies include new policies to address climate change and a reduction of greenhouse gasses. The NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permits have resulted in stronger environmental protections relating to stormwater discharges. Likewise, the city launched the Environmental Stewardship Initiative in in 2007. Through Council action, Bellevue joined the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement in 2006 and the King County Cities Climate Collaboration in 2014. Proposed policy changes enhance consistency with federal, state, regional, county, and city efforts for environmental protection.

A joint boards and commissions forum in November 2013 focused on Environmental Stewardship and helped to define the direction of the policy changes proposed.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

Greenhouse Gas Emissions. New policy EN-X1 supports establishing a citywide target and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is consistent with the Multi-county and countywide planning policies, as well as the Bellevue's participation in other collaborative climate efforts. Other related policies support increasing tree canopy, reducing energy consumption and vehicle emissions, and enhancing land use patterns to reduce vehicle dependency.

Partnerships for Habitat Improvement. New policy EN-X2 supports partnerships between the City and private landowners to steward private lands, streams, and natural resources for public benefit. This policy addresses a gap where in the past it has been challenging addressing some of the most critical stretches of stream habit and encourages public support for the protection and enhancement of private lands when there is a public benefit.

Tree Canopy Targets. The update process identified significant community interest in preserving trees and the city's overall tree canopy. Policy EN-X3 establishes a target to work toward at least 40% canopy coverage. It was recognized that an action plan would be needed and that the target could be addressed through a range of programmatic or policy approaches.

> *EN-X3 Work toward a citywide tree canopy target of at least 40% canopy coverage that reflects our "City in a Park" character and maintain an action plan for meeting the target across multiple land use types including right-of-way, public lands, and residential and commercial uses.*

New policy EN-X10 seeks to minimize and mitigate for the loss of trees from transportation and infrastructure projects.

Life Cycle Materials Management. New policies EN-X4 and X5 seek to reduce or eliminate the purchase and use of materials as a means to reduce waste and carbon emissions.

Low Impact Development and Green Buildings. Although the City's current Comprehensive Plan contains policies addressing low impact development, the 2013-2018 NPDES permit requires that LID be the preferred and commonly-used approach to site development. Some changes are recommended to better align these policies with this directive. New policy EN-X6 most directly responds to this by advocating for minimizing stormwater runoff and vegetation loss. Existing policy EN-17 continues to support limits to impervious surface areas and EN-18 and X9 support providing education and incentives to encourage low impact development. See additional discussion below. Related stormwater policies are found in the Utilities, Transportation, Parks and Community Service, and Urban Design & the Arts elements.

Policy EN-X7 recommends constructing and operating new City facilities to exceed required standards to demonstrate leadership in conserving energy and protecting environmental resources. EN-X8 support green building best practices and pilot programs.

ISSUES/MAJOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION TOPICS

NPDES policy. As noted above, one of the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan are policies that recognize low impact development as the preferred approach to addressing stormwater management. Several policies address stormwater and low impact development in a number of elements as it relates to site development, transportation, parks and utilities. One particular policy, new policy EN-X6, most directly speaks to the NPDES Permit requirement to make low impact development the preferred and commonly-used approach to site development. The combination of LID principles and best management practices (BMPs) is the Permit's overarching approach to low impact development. The three LID site planning principles are minimizing:

- Impervious surfaces
- Native vegetation loss
- Stormwater runoff

Seeing that other policies support either minimizing impervious surfaces or minimizing the impacts of impervious surfaces, such as EN-18 and UD-X9, the words "impervious surfaces" were considered redundant and removed from an early draft of EN-X6. While EN-X6, with the other related policies, may be sufficient to meet the NPDES Permit requirement, including the words "impervious surfaces" in EN-X6 would provide a single policy that reflects and provides direct and clear policy support for the NPDES Permit requirement. A possible edit to the policy that Council could consider would be:

> *EN-X6 Make low impact development the preferred and commonly-used approach to site development to minimize impervious surfaces, native vegetation loss and stormwater runoff.*

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- Any questions about what is recommended for change?
- Any additional information needed on this topic?
- Direction on specific changes/refinements to the draft policies?