

May 7, 2018

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) Update

STAFF CONTACTS

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Department of Planning and Community Development

POLICY ISSUES

Staff will provide the regularly scheduled bi-annual update on the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI). The presentation will include an update on the implementation of the ESI Strategic Plan, updated greenhouse gas emissions inventory data, an overview of the results of the STAR Communities Certification, and an update on tree canopy trends. Staff will also provide an update on their work on the Advanced Green Building Pilot Program, which was the focus of the last ESI update to Council on March 12.

Bellevue Comprehensive Plan

The Environmental Element of the Comprehensive Plan provides the key policy directives driving ESI's work. These policies call for the promotion and investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy (EN-4); development of a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target (EN-6); regional leadership on environmental issues (EN-8); education and outreach on environmental issues (EN-9); support partnerships with private landowners (EN-11); increasing the Citywide tree canopy to 40 percent (EN-12); and supporting the use of emerging best practices in the area of green building and site design through the use of pilot programs and model ordinances (EN-48).

Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement (Res. 7517)

Council signed on to the Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement in 2006, establishing a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012.

King County Cities Climate Collaboration (Res. 8789)

Council joined the King County Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) on August 4, 2014. The K4C is a partnership among 13 cities and King County working collaboratively to achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions consistent with Countywide Planning Policies.

King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPP), Environmental Element

Reduce countywide sources of greenhouse gas emissions, compared to a 2007 baseline, by 25 percent by 2020, 50 percent by 2030, and 80 percent by 2050. Assuming 1 percent annual population growth, these targets translate to per capita emissions of approximately 8.5 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e) by 2020, 5 MTCO₂e, and 1.5 MTCO₂e by 2050 (CPP EN-18).

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

ACTION



DIRECTION



INFORMATION ONLY



This presentation is for information only and will provide an update to Council on the work of the ESI since the last bi-annual ESI program update to Council on August 7, 2017.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Environmental Stewardship Initiative Updates

The presentation will provide an overview of the implementation progress of the ESI Strategic Plan. The ESI Strategic Plan is a five-year plan, for 2013-2018, and includes 57 actions for the five primary goal areas of climate, mobility and land use, energy and water, materials management and waste, and ecosystems and open spaces. To date, 64 percent of the strategies in the plan have been implemented, and 34 percent have been initiated.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory 2017 Update

Staff have recently received the data and developed the greenhouse gas emissions inventory for 2017, for both Citywide emissions and municipal operations. Citywide, emissions have increased by 3.9 percent between 2016 and 2017, primarily due to a colder winter and increased natural gas use. For municipal operations, the greenhouse gas emissions have increased by 0.8 percent from 2016 to 2017 also due to a colder winter. Overall Citywide emissions have decreased by 7 percent since the baseline year of 2006, and by 21 percent between 2011 and 2017 for municipal operations.

As part of a U.S. Department of Energy grant, ESI has been performing an analysis of the factors driving change in the greenhouse gas emissions inventory, such as weather, population growth, and job growth. The initial results of this analysis will be shared, to help illustrate the variety of factors which cause the emissions inventory to change over time. The results of this project could be used to support the development of an updated greenhouse gas emissions reduction target, per the Comprehensive Plan policy, EN-6. The project team for this grant involves cities from around the country, and the analytical model developed in this project has been presented at several conferences around the county and at the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Cities conference, demonstrating significant leadership in this area.

STAR Communities Certification Results Overview

As a follow-up to the management brief to Council on April 16 presenting the STAR Communities 4-STAR certification, staff will provide a brief overview of the STAR Communities program and Bellevue's results in the certification process. Attachment A, Bellevue STAR Community Assessment Report, summarizes Bellevue's results from the STAR Communities certification.

Tree Canopy Update

Staff will provide an overview of efforts related to urban forestry management and planning, led by the interdepartmental Tree Canopy Working Group. The City is participating in a regional effort coordinated through the King Conservation District to update our tree canopy assessment with the firm PlanIt Geo. Thirteen communities in South King County, along with Bellevue and Mercer Island are part of this effort, and several other communities in King County have also worked with PlanIt Geo to develop their tree canopy assessments. This updated tree canopy assessment will provide us with more current data on our tree canopy and help us understand how the canopy has changed since 2007. Since

so much time has elapsed since the last assessment, the new assessment will use the most current methodologies and higher resolution imagery, and will establish a new baseline using the most current approaches which align with the majority of our neighboring cities.

The Tree Canopy Working Group has been performing a review and gap analysis of best practices related to tree canopy management, and is beginning to identify possible areas for improvement. The group is also reviewing best practices related to urban forestry management and is recommending that the City develop a Tree Canopy plan, which would provide an analysis and recommendations for strategies to achieve the 40 percent tree canopy target established in the Comprehensive Plan (EN-12). Many cities in the region and nationally have Urban Forestry Management Plans, which provide a comprehensive strategy for preserving and growing the urban forest. This planning process would be an opportunity for a dialogue with residents around tree canopy issues and opportunities, satisfying a growing community interest for a discussion around the benefits and challenges of maintaining a rich urban forest in a growing City.

In addition to these efforts, the City is also involved in the King County Million Trees effort – a goal of the County to plant one million trees throughout the County by 2020. Staff are reporting our annual plantings on public property to the County, and also participating in regional coordination around urban forestry management through this working group. City staff are also working on an education and outreach campaign for Bellevue residents around the value and benefits of trees, which will be launching later this year.

Next Steps

Staff are continuing to work on developing the Advanced Green Building Pilot Program, which was last presented to Council on March 12. We are looking at collaborating with several cities in King County through the K4C to develop the permit intake and other implementation documentation, to coordinate and streamline our efforts and leverage K4C funding and support.

Staff will return to Council with the results of the tree canopy assessment and recommendations for next steps in early summer, and will return with the second bi-annual ESI update to Council in the fall.

OPTIONS

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

A. Bellevue STAR Community Assessment Report

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY

ESI Strategic Plan, 2013 – 2018