



# Bellevue Planning Commission

February 26, 2020

## PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

### SUBJECT

Environmental Stewardship Plan Update

### STAFF CONTACT

Jennifer Ewing, Environmental Stewardship Program Manager, 452-6129  
*Community Development Department*

### POLICY ISSUES

Bellevue Comprehensive Plan, Introduction and Vision: *The Comprehensive Plan sets out the community's vision for the future, lays out a groundwork of planning policies to guide city actions, and provides a framework so that city departments and community organizations work together toward common goals.*

City Council's 2018-2020 Vision Priorities #11: *Review the progress of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative and analyze additional steps that the City may wish to take to achieve its environmental goals (e.g. tree canopy).*

The Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) formally began in 2007. Its mission is to implement continuous change, learning and innovation in practices that drive the City of Bellevue organization and the larger Bellevue community toward achieving a larger vision of environmental sustainability. ESI work has been guided by the 2013-2018 ESI Strategic Plan. This plan contains 57 actions related to greenhouse gas emissions, energy, water, mobility, land use, ecosystems, open space, and materials management and waste. It addresses both our municipal operations and the larger community. The Strategic Plan is being updated in direct response to Priority #11, and the plan going forward is now referred to as the Environmental Stewardship Plan.

The Environmental Stewardship Plan is an inter-departmental environmental sustainability action plan and serves to implement policies in the Comprehensive Plan related to climate change, natural systems, materials management and waste, mobility and land use, and energy.

As part of the update, the City Council in November directed staff to seek input from boards and commissions on strategies and actions for achieving updated Environmental Stewardship Plan goals. The Planning Commission's ultimate role will be to consider amendments to the Comprehensive Plan that come out of an updated Environmental Stewardship Plan.

### DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

**ACTION**

**DIRECTION**

**INFORMATION ONLY**

This presentation is for information only and will provide an overview of the process to update the Environmental Stewardship Plan, the feedback to date through public outreach, and the draft goals and targets for the plan, presented to Council in November 2019. Staff will return to the Planning

Commission with recommended strategies and actions for the Environmental Stewardship Plan and will request input and feedback from the Commission at a subsequent study session, tentatively scheduled for May 27.

## **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

### **Environmental Stewardship Plan Update Overview**

The plan update will accomplish two things:

1. Updating the City's environmental *goals and targets*—the long-term aspirational objectives of this work as identified by City Council discussion and direction—in the following focus areas: climate change, natural systems, materials management and waste, mobility and land use, and energy.
2. Updating the *strategies and actions* to implement environmental policy and achieve the plan's goals and targets, outlined below.

The following steps outline the city's three-phase approach:

What has been done so far (first phase baseline work):

- Review progress with the ESI Strategic Plan Progress report (February 20, 2019 Council presentation; completed). See Attachment A, Environmental Stewardship Progress Report.
- Review the city's environmental goals and update as appropriate (May 20, 2019 Council presentation; completed)
- Develop recommendations for targets for each goal (November 12, 2019 Council presentation; completed). See Attachment B, Recommended Goals and Targets Report.

What is underway now (second phase review and engagement):

- Analyze best practices and additional actions for consideration in an updated Environmental Stewardship Plan
- Engage with boards and commissions for input on possible strategies and actions related to their purview
- Engage with residents, businesses, and key stakeholders on possible actions for the plan

What is coming up (third phase):

- Develop a draft Environmental Stewardship Plan for public comment
- Finalize Environmental Stewardship Plan for action by City Council

### **Environmental Stewardship Plan Update Goals and Targets**

At its February and May 2019 study sessions the City Council provided direction that they would like the city to take 1) a step forward in its environmental efforts and 2) to lead by example through municipal operations. Councilmembers reiterated the importance of setting new and updated goals, and expressed interest in comparing best practices and peer communities to Bellevue's commitments. The plan update's proposed environmental goals and targets for the focus areas are organized into three categories:

- **Stretch** targets aim to place Bellevue on a slightly more aggressive path than historic and current trends;
- **Bold** targets are more ambitious than Bellevue’s current path. These targets would be consistent with many peer cities as well as with accepted best practices; and
- **Leading edge** targets are the most ambitious option, aligning Bellevue with the most advanced cities around the world acting on climate change and sustainability.

Staff recommended targets that generally align with the **Bold** level of ambition.

**Recommended Community-wide Goals and Targets**

The recommended communitywide goals and targets are summarized below by major focus area. These targets are the framework for the Environmental Stewardship Plan, and serve to integrate all of Bellevue’s overarching environmental aspirations and goals into one plan. These recommended targets are considered aspirational and non-compulsory in nature, and they will be used to track progress over time. The target year is 2050 for communitywide goals, unless otherwise noted. Interim targets will also be developed as part of the action development process.

Also, as staff work to develop the strategies and actions for the plan, there may be an opportunity to adjust targets to achieve more or less ambitious goals based on the types of strategies developed and the level of effort required for implementation.

Focus Area	Goal	Targets
<b>Climate Change</b>	Reduce Bellevue’s greenhouse gas emissions and prepare and adapt to ongoing climate change impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce Bellevue’s communitywide greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050, compared to a 2011 baseline.</li> </ul>
<b>Natural Systems</b>	Improve and preserve the integrity and health of Bellevue’s natural systems and ensure all of Bellevue’s residents have access to Bellevue’s abundant natural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve a 40 percent citywide tree canopy by 2050.</li> <li>• Ensure that 100 percent<sup>1</sup> of Bellevue’s residents live within 1/3 of a mile to a park, open space, or trail by 2050.</li> <li>• Maintain and improve the health of Bellevue’s streams<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>
<b>Materials Management and Waste</b>	Reduce the negative impacts from consumption and waste practices and strive towards Zero Waste of Resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve Zero Waste of Resources by 2050.</li> </ul>

---

1 Staff originally recommended that 90 percent of residents live within a 1/3 of a mile of a park, open space, or trail head at the November 12<sup>th</sup> Council presentation. However, based on direction from Council to consider increasing some targets to “leading edge”, staff now recommend a 100 percent target.

2 A target for stream health will be recommended in 2020, as part of the Watershed Management Plan currently under development.

Focus Area	Goal	Targets
<b>Mobility and Land Use</b>	Minimize the environmental impacts of transportation and development in Bellevue by focusing development in growth centers and providing all residents with access to a variety of mobility options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve a 45 percent commute-trip drive-alone rate for residents and people working in Bellevue by 2050.</li> <li>• Strive to have 50 percent electric vehicles registered in Bellevue by 2050.</li> <li>• Reduce per capita vehicle miles travelled (VMT) by 50 percent by 2050, compared to a 2011 baseline.</li> <li>• Support transit oriented development and strive to achieve 85 percent of jobs and 65 percent of housing located with a ¼ mile of a frequent transit network stop (15-minute headway or less) by 2050.</li> </ul>
<b>Energy</b>	Ensure long-term access to clean energy while reducing the fiscal and environmental impacts of consumption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve 100 percent renewable energy by 2045.</li> <li>• Reduce energy use by 30 percent by 2050, compared to a 2011 baseline.</li> </ul>

The strategies and actions to achieve these goals and targets could be a mix of new or updated policies or codes along with new programs, incentives, or projects. The planning process will likely identify potential future updates to the Comprehensive Plan and/or to the Land Use code.

**Recommended Municipal Operations Goals and Targets**

Staff are also developing a suite of municipal operations goals and targets which generally mirror the communitywide targets. These targets have a more aggressive 2040 timeline in line with council direction to lead by example with Bellevue’s municipal operations.

**Progress To Date under the Strategic Plan**

How have the city and community progressed under existing targets? Several of the goals and targets for the Environmental Stewardship Plan relate to land use policies, including the goals for climate change, tree canopy, transit oriented development, and reducing energy use.

Climate Change: This focus area is impacted by land use and transportation policies and implementation, because 45 percent of Bellevue’s greenhouse gas emissions come from buildings and 43 percent from transportation. Bellevue’s development policies and codes impact the nature of the development and transportation in Bellevue, which has a direct impact on the city’s greenhouse gas emissions. Despite 11 percent population growth and 9 percent job growth between 2011 and 2018, Bellevue’s greenhouse gas emissions declined by 9 percent.

Natural Systems: The Comprehensive Plan includes a policy to achieve a 40 percent tree canopy and to maintain Bellevue’s “city in a park” character. As of the 2017 Tree Canopy Assessment, Bellevue’s tree canopy was estimated to be 37 percent. Achieving this target will involve a combination of tree retention and tree planting on both public and private property. Notably, 65 percent of Bellevue’s existing tree canopy is in suburban residential areas, and only 12 percent of the overall canopy is in the city’s parks.

Mobility and Land Use: This focus area of the Environmental Stewardship Plan includes several overarching targets which will be used to monitor implementation of Bellevue’s multi-modal and transit-oriented development policies. The Environmental Stewardship Plan recommends a target to strive to achieve 85 percent of jobs and 65 percent of housing located within a ¼ mile of a frequent transit network stop (15 minute headway or less) by 2050. This goal is based on the analysis in the Transit Master Plan of the percent of residents and workers with walkable access to frequent transit based on the fully funded scenario. As of 2012, 63 percent of jobs and 42 percent of households were within a ¼ mile of frequent transit service (15 minutes).

Energy: Transitioning to clean energy and reducing energy use are two key strategies in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The goal to reduce energy use by 30 percent can be achieved through more energy efficient new buildings and through improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings. Land use incentives for green building in downtown and BelRed are currently the primary strategies for improving energy efficiency in new buildings.

### **Next Steps**

Staff are beginning the process of engaging with boards and commissions. At the same time, staff are analyzing possible strategies to achieve Bellevue’s environmental goals. Staff will refine the list of possible strategies and perform a cost/benefit analysis of a shorter list of strategies, to identify actions with the greatest potential environmental benefit. In parallel to this analysis, staff will initiate a second round of public outreach and engagement with residents, stakeholders, and the business community to gauge support for various strategies.

Staff will return to boards and commissions later in the spring with the results of this analysis and outreach, to request input and feedback on the short-listed actions for the plan. The input will be summarized as part of the outreach and engagement process, and incorporated into the plan for transmittal to the City Council, scheduled for July 2020.

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Environmental Stewardship Progress Report
2. Recommended Goals and Targets Report
3. Environmental Stewardship Plan Update Phase 1 Outreach Summary
4. Environmental Stewardship Initiative Applicable Policy

### **REFERENCE MATERIALS**

1. [2013-2018 ESI Strategic Plan](#)