

MEMORANDUM

 Action
X Discussion
X Information

DATE: August 20, 2020

TO: Environmental Services Commission

FROM: Ana McMahon, Resource Conversation Program Manager
Liesl Olson, Management Fellow

SUBJECT: Environmental Stewardship Plan Update

Action Required at this Time

This presentation is for information and discussion only. No action is requested at this time.

This presentation will introduce draft strategies for the Environmental Stewardship Plan for feedback and discussion from the Environmental Services Commission. Staff have received direction from Council to engage with Boards and Commissions for input on the plan. A draft plan will be released later this summer, for Council review and adoption in the fall.

Fiscal Impact

The 2019-2020 City of Bellevue budget includes \$310,000 to support the update of the environmental Stewardship Plan in 2019 and the subsequent implementation of the plan starting in 2020.

Policy Issues

The updated Environmental Stewardship Plan will support the implementation of several environmental policies, as outlined below. The plan update also responds to Council's 2018-2020 priority #11 to review progress of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) and analyze additional steps that the city may take to achieve environmental goals (e.g., tree canopy).

The updated Environmental Stewardship Plan will seek to further the implementation of the following policies:

Bellevue Comprehensive Plan, Environment Element:

The following policies in the Comprehensive Plan's Environmental Element drive ESI's work.

- Promote and invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy resources as an alternative to non-renewable resources. (EN-4)

- Establish an achievable Citywide target and take corrective actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as reducing energy consumption and vehicle emissions and enhancing land use patterns to reduce vehicle dependency. (EN-6)
- Provide regional leadership on environmental issues that extend beyond Bellevue's boundaries and require regional cooperation. (EN-8)
- Educate the public about environmental issues and illustrate how individual actions can have a cumulative effect to benefit the environment. (EN-9)
- Work toward a Citywide tree canopy target of at least 40 percent 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. (EN-12)
- Reduce waste, reuse and recycle materials, and dispose of all wastes in a safe and environmentally responsible manner. (EN-14)
- Prioritize the use of products that are recyclable and made from recycled materials, or have other environmental attributes throughout their lifecycle. (EN-15)
- Work with residents, businesses, and waste haulers to continue to improve percentage of waste diverted from landfill. (EN-17)
- Implement the city-wide use of low impact development techniques and green building practices. (EN-45)
- Make low impact development the preferred and commonly-used approach to site development to minimize impervious surfaces, native vegetation loss, and stormwater runoff. (EN-46)
- Manage aquatic habitats, including shoreline and riparian (streamside) habitats, to preserve and enhance their natural functions of providing fish and wildlife habitat and protecting water quality. (EN-64)

Bellevue Comprehensive Plan, Utilities Element:

- Promote the recycling of solid waste materials by providing opportunities for convenient recycling and by developing educational materials on recycling, composting, and other waste reduction methods. (UT-24)

Discussion: Waste reduction and source separation are the city's preferred strategies for managing solid waste. Materials remaining after effective waste reduction and source separation should be handled in accordance with the King County Solid Waste Plan.

- Encourage and actively seek an effective regional approach to solid waste management. (UT-27)
- Maintain a safe, cost-effective and responsive solid waste collection system that provides convenient, efficient, environmentally-friendly and visually unobtrusive components and services. (UT-25)

King County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, 2019

The Bellevue City Council approved the King County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan in June of 2019, which has since been finalized through its approval by the Department of Ecology. This

plan includes countywide waste reduction and recycling goals, including achieving an interim recycling rate of 70% and Zero Waste of Resources with economic value by 2030.

Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement (Res. 7517)

Council agreed in February 2006 to strive to meet or exceed the Kyoto Protocol greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets (7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012) for reducing global warming pollution by taking actions in City operations and similar actions within our community.

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 17 partners 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).

Background

On November 12, 2019 the City Council directed staff to engage with the Boards and Commissions to seek input on the strategies and actions to achieve the goals in the updated Environmental Stewardship Plan. No formal action is requested from the Boards and Commissions during this process. The Environmental Stewardship Plan is an inter-departmental environmental sustainability action plan, coordinated by the Community Development department, which will include actions related to climate change, waste, natural systems, mobility & land use, and energy.

Commission Input on the Environmental Stewardship Plan

At the January 16, 2020 Environmental Services Commission presentation, staff presented on the background, timeline, and approach for updating the Environmental Stewardship Plan. This presentation also included recommendations for environmental goals and targets for the plan along with a summary of progress to date on these performance metrics. The memo for the January 16 presentation includes a discussion of the background and context for the plan, along with the recommended goals and targets. For more information, go to: [Environmental Services Commission Agenda and Minutes](#).

The Environmental Services Commission provided input to staff on the recommended communitywide goals and targets in the Environmental Stewardship Plan.

- The Commission is interested in seeing a specific target for water quality in Bellevue's streams.
- The Commission would like to see interim milestones, such as for 2030 or 2035, in addition to the communitywide and municipal targets for 2050.

- The Commission encourages staff to maintain a global view of materials management and waste actions and strategies and look beyond simply local solutions when building a list of actions and strategies.
- Single-use plastics are a particular area of concern for the Commission, and they would like to see draft actions and strategies around this issue.

Process for Developing Actions

In collaboration with the consulting team supporting the update of the Environmental Stewardship Plan, city staff and the consultants developed a master list of potential actions for the plan for each of the five focus areas (climate change, waste, natural systems, mobility & land use, and energy) for both city operational actions and communitywide strategies. This master list of actions was developed by looking at existing policies, programs, and plans along with best practices from around the U.S. and the region, along with input from city staff experts.

The consultant team performed a multi-criteria analysis of the actions to evaluate the impact, benefits, costs, and equity outcomes. This shorter list was then reviewed and discussed during a city staff workshop in December 2019, which included approximately 50 city staff from a variety of departments, including the Utilities department.

The core team of staff and consultants used this input from the staff workshops to develop a list of actions for Phase 2 public outreach and engagement, which is described below. Using input from this outreach and further city staff review and vetting, the draft list of actions is included in Attachment A. Staff is requesting input from the Environmental Services Commission, which will be reviewed and addressed as feasible, and develop a draft of the Environmental Stewardship Plan for public comment in Phase 3 of the outreach plan.

Proposed Actions to Achieve Goals

The following actions listed below are being considered for the Environmental Stewardship Plan. These actions build on existing waste reduction programs and explore new strategies to encourage continued waste diversion. These actions also enhance existing work related to the health of Bellevue's streams.

The proposed goals and targets for the focus areas are as follows:

Waste: Reduce the negative impacts from consumption and waste practices and strive towards Zero Waste of Resources.

- Achieve a **50%** recycling rate by 2030 and **Zero Waste** of Resources by 2050.

Natural Systems: 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.

- Achieve a **38%** citywide tree canopy by 2030, and **40%** by 2050.

- Ensure that **80%** of Bellevue’s residents live within 1/3 of a mile to a park, open space, or trail by 2030, and **100%** by 2050.
- Maintain and improve the health of Bellevue’s streams (stream health metric will be developed in the Watershed Management Plan).

The actions outlined in Attachment A and listed below comprise a mix of actions that are most relevant to the Utilities Department and the Environmental Services Commission:

- Recycling Education and Outreach
- Single-use Plastics Ban
- Construction and Demolition Waste Recycling
- Recycling Space Requirements
- Waste Study
- Food Waste Prevention
- Assess Waste Strategies
- Improve Stream Health
- Stormwater Retrofit

Outreach Summary

As part of the process to develop actions and strategies for the Environmental Stewardship Plan, staff conducted Phase 2 of public outreach and engagement to gauge feedback from the public on a short-list of actions for the plan. The information from this phase of outreach is available in Attachment B.

This second phase of outreach and engagement included an online survey, which resulted in over 600 responses; eight focus groups for sustainability leaders with 37 representatives from Bellevue companies, non-profit organizations, and institutions; and a community open house for members of the public to discuss potential actions with each other and city staff. In addition, two virtual outreach events were held in place of originally scheduled in-person events because of the COVID-19 pandemic. These events included a virtual presentation as part of Bellevue College’s series of Earth Week events and a virtual town hall to discuss potential strategies and actions and discuss potential COVID-19 impacts on environmental stewardship in Bellevue.

From the online survey, respondents were supportive of multi-family residential buildings having access to more recycling opportunities, increased education on sorting recycling and composting items, and preserving access to green space within Bellevue. Survey respondents were asked to select their top five priority actions for the plan; out of the list of approximately 30 actions across the five focus areas, banning single-use plastics ranked first on the list of priorities.

At the March 3rd Open House, many residents voiced support for a plastic bag ban (the Washington State Legislature recently passed a ban on single-use plastic bags, which is planned to go into effect in January 2021; however, this timeline could change due to COVID-19 implications). Residents also spoke about the need for recycling and composting outreach, especially an awareness for upstream waste production, and understanding resident’s impacts on stream health. Based on the results of the survey, the majority of residents supported or strongly supported the actions outlined in

Attachment A for both waste and stream health. Further analysis of the survey responses, open house comments, and comments from the survey can be found in Attachment B.

Considerations

The city has been working on Environmental Stewardship strategies to increase local sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the past 13 years. This plan is an opportunity to review and update the city's environmental goals and develop a set of strategies for implementation over the next five years. The city's work over the past 13 years has laid a solid foundation for progress, and these waste and natural systems efforts will continue to build on that foundation over the next five years. Future updates of the Environmental Stewardship plan will build on this foundation and focus on bringing solutions to scale.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic struck in the middle of this plan update, which has had a short-term impact on waste production because of the increase in single-use plastic items. This will likely impact waste production amounts for the next several years and may impact the timing of several waste-related draft actions in the plan, due to the expected atypical nature of the waste stream over the next several years. The development of the actions for the plan has taken the economic recovery into account, and this will continue to be a consideration moving into implementation.

Staff Recommendation

Staff are recommending the draft actions in Attachment A and seeking input from the Environmental Services Commission on these actions, and any other considerations for the plan.

Next Steps

Staff will review and address feedback from the Environmental Services Commission and other boards and commissions and will aim to release a draft Environmental Stewardship Plan later this summer. Staff will summarize input from the Environmental Services Commission and other boards and commissions and include that in the transmittal of the draft plan to Council later in 2020.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: List of Draft Actions

Attachment B: Environmental Stewardship Plan Update Phase 2 Outreach Summary

REFERENCE MATERIALS

1. [Recommended Goals and Targets report](#)
2. [Environmental Stewardship Plan Update Phase 1 Outreach Summary](#)
3. [2013-2018 ESI Strategic Plan](#)
4. [ESI Strategic Plan Progress Report](#)