

Community & Stakeholder Engagement Overview

Bellevue's Environmental Stewardship Plan serves as the roadmap for achieving the city's environmental sustainability goals. The plan covers five focus areas: climate, energy, waste, mobility & land use, and natural systems. Each focus area has high level goals, numerical targets, and strategies and actions for achieving those goals and targets.

Bellevue has a long tradition of engaging residents and stakeholders in planning for the future. Community engagement for the Environmental Stewardship Plan update is spread over three phases:

- **Phase One: Refine goals and targets (fall 2019):** Understand key concerns & priorities and share progress under the last Environmental Stewardship Plan.
- **Phase Two: Develop strategies and actions (winter-spring 2020):** Work with the community to explore key strategies and talk about the actions needed for the plan's success.
- **Phase Three: Review draft plan (fall 2020):** Share the draft plan with residents and other stakeholders for comment.

During [Phase 1 of outreach](#), we heard from over 400 residents and stakeholders from across the city. Through surveys, pop-up events, presentations and workshops for the community and key stakeholders we heard that there is a strong desire for the city to:

- Take bold action on sustainability and environmental stewardship.
- Support healthy and livable communities.
- Thoughtfully balance costs and benefits with an eye towards planning for the future.
- Seek opportunities to collaborate with business, youth, non-profits, and major employers.

That feedback, along with input from various departments and research into best practices, was presented to city council in November of 2019. At that time, city council gave direction to set the following goals and begin considering the actions the city could take to achieve them.

Climate Change: Reduce Bellevue's greenhouse gas emissions and prepare and adapt to ongoing climate change impacts.

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050, below a 2011 baseline.

Energy: Ensure long-term access to clean energy while reducing the fiscal and environmental impacts of consumption.

- Achieve 100% renewable energy by 2045.
- Reduce energy use by 30% by 2050, compared to a 2011 baseline.

Waste: Reduce the negative impacts from consumption and waste practices and strive towards zero waste of resources.

- Achieve zero waste by 2050.

Mobility and Land Use: 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.

- Achieve a 45% commute-trip drive-alone rate for residents and people working in Bellevue by 2050.
- Strive to have 100% electric vehicles registered in Bellevue by 2050.
- Reduce per capita vehicle miles travelled (VMT) by 50% by 2050, compared to a 2011 baseline.
- Support transit-oriented development and strive to achieve 85% of jobs and 65% of households located within a ¼ mile of frequent transit service (every 15 minutes) 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 40% citywide tree canopy by 2050.
- Ensure that 100% of Bellevue's residents live within 1/3 of a mile to a park, open space, or trail by 2050.
- Maintain and improve the health of Bellevue's streams.

Overview of Phase 2 Outreach Efforts

Bellevue has a long tradition of engaging residents and stakeholders in planning for the future. Community support is one of the key criteria for evaluating potential actions the city could take to reduce carbon emissions, so the outreach team created multiple opportunities for people to learn about the Environmental Stewardship Plan, ask questions, provide comments, and share their priorities.

Community Open House

On March 3, 2020 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. over 80 people joined city staff at a Community Open House at Interlake High School. The purpose of the community open house was to share the city's progress on the Environmental Stewardship Plan update, gather feedback on potential actions, and provide an opportunity for community members to discuss the potential actions.



Figure 1: An attendee places a dot to show support for one of the potential actions

Attendees were able to drop-in at any time during the evening and choose how they wanted to participate. Six stations provided background information and explanations of the potential actions the city is considering on boards. Each station was staffed by a city employee who could answer questions and provide more context. At each station, attendees had the opportunity to vote on potential actions using stickers and provide additional comments on post-it notes.



Attendees who wanted to engage in a deeper discussion on any of the five focus areas had the opportunity to participate in up to three rounds of table discussions that were facilitated by staff.

Attendees also had the opportunity to fill out comment cards if they wanted to provide more detailed feedback.

Figure 2: Attendees discuss potential actions in the Natural Systems focus area.

Virtual Events

Originally the outreach team planned for three in-person events, but the need to stay home and stay healthy in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak meant that outreach efforts needed to adapt.

Our Earth Week Talk *Climate Anxiety – Staying Engaged Without Getting Overwhelmed* was a collaboration with Bellevue College and was scheduled to take place on campus on April 21, 2020. We were able to successfully move that to a digital platform. Over 60 people, a mix of residents and Bellevue College students, participated in a lively discussion lead by special guest speaker Dr. Jennifer Atkinson of U.W. Bothell.

The outreach team also conducted a Virtual Town Hall on April 23, 2020. Over 30 people participated in a discussion on how the update to the Environmental Stewardship Plan might be impacted by COVID-19. Councilmember Janice Zahn welcomed attendees and reiterated council's support for this work. Then Environmental Stewardship Program Manager, Jennifer Ewing gave an overview of the update process and answered questions.

Sustainability Leaders

Making progress on the city's environmental stewardship goal will require collaboration with key stakeholder groups. In an effort to build relationships, share ideas, and lay the foundation for future cooperation the city convened a group of Sustainability Leaders made up of representatives from the developer, business, and non-profit environmental communities; major employers; and institutional partners. This group first met in fall 2019 for a kick-off event and workshop. During Phase Two, Sustainability Leaders had two key opportunities to engage in the update process.

Briefing

On February 12, 2020, 25 Sustainability Leaders gathered at The Global Innovation Exchange (GIX) for a Lunch and Learn. Attendees got a preview of some of the actions that would be under consideration, learn about ways to participate in the plan update and take a tour of the Spring District to see how the city is supporting sustainable development.

Focus Groups

The outreach team conducted multiple focus group sessions in March and May of 2020. The focus groups were designed to deep dive discussion on key topics – low impact development, reducing single-use plastics, trees, mobility, energy, and waste. Participants in the focus groups shared how they were addressing these issues, explored implementation, and shared ideas. City staff from relevant departments were on hand to provide information about city efforts.

Across the private, public, and non-profit sectors environmental stewardship is a key priority. For some members of the Sustainability Leaders group, addressing climate change is a core value and part of their brand identity. For others, environmental stewardship makes economic sense. Many members of the Sustainability Leaders group have ambitious goals for reducing their own carbon footprint. The Sustainability Leaders are also pragmatic and want to see the city take a thoughtful approach and make data-driven decisions.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

- Amazon
- ARCH
- Bellevue Brewing+
- Bellevue Chamber of Commerce
- Bellevue College
- Bellevue Downtown Association
- Bellevue School District
- Cascade Bicycle Club
- Chinese Information Service Center
- Climate Solutions*
- ERIC+
- Forterra+
- Forth Mobility
- GLY
- Hopelink+
- King County Housing Authority
- King County Metro
- Master Builders/Built Green
- Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center*
- Microsoft+
- Puget Sound Energy
- REI
- Republic Services
- Sound Transit+
- Su Development
- T-Mobile
- The Nature Conservancy+
- Unico Properties
- Urban Sustainability Directors Network*
- Vulcan

*Accepted invitation but unable to attend

+Interested but declined

Online Survey

An online survey on EngagingBellevue.com was open from February 21, 2020 to May 29, 2020 and received 602 responses. Survey respondents were asked to share their level of support for each of the potential actions under consideration. Respondents then chose the top five actions they felt the city should prioritize. They also had the opportunity to share comments through open-ended text questions and 200 individuals provided additional feedback on the actions.

- **Supporting Diverse Participation** – Bellevue is a diverse community and successful outreach and engagement should reflect that diversity. To assist the outreach team in understanding who was engaging in the process, survey participants were invited to share demographic information. Some highlights include:
 - **48%** of survey participants were under the age of thirty.
 - **36%** of survey participants were from communities of color.
 - **19%** of survey participants were renters.

Youth Engagement

Climate change is a pressing issue for youth; young people are acutely aware that their generation will be greatly affected by the impacts of climate change. Across the country and the globe, young people are taking action and finding ways to make a difference. To ensure that youth voices would be a part of our engagement efforts, the team established partnerships with Bellevue high school green teams, science teachers and the non-profit [Sustainability Ambassadors](#). Engagement activities with these groups included:

- **Youth Town Hall** – high school students from several schools heard presentations from city staff about how youth can engage at the local level.
- **Sustainability Summit** – high school students shared results from community projects and heard an update from city staff on the development of the Environmental Stewardship Plan.
- **Promoting the Survey** – through their school Green Teams and the Sustainability Ambassadors program, students helped to promote the survey to their peers and families.

Community Presentations

Staff also presented to various community groups including faith groups, community organizations, Bellevue schools' green teams, and the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce Policy Council.

Overview of Outreach Goals

During Phase Two of the Environmental Stewardship Plan update the outreach team sought input from the public and key stakeholders on potential actions the city could take to achieve the goals set forward in the plan.

To develop the list of potential actions for consideration, city staff from the Parks, Transportation, Utilities and Planning departments met with the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) Team and outside experts to review research and best practices. Potential actions were evaluated based on the following criteria:

CRITERION	DEFINITION
Impact	How much will this action help us achieve the goals and targets of the plan?
Cost-Effectiveness	What will it cost to implement the action? Are there potential long-term savings? What is the cost of inaction?
Ease of Implementation	Does the city have the capacity to implement the action given current circumstances?
Equity	Does the action address the needs of all populations, especially vulnerable and historically underserved populations?
Co-Benefits or Synergies	Does the action complement other work the city is doing that could boost impact?
Community Support	Is there strong support for action from the resident and business community?

Through engagement efforts the ESI Team sought to understand community support by exploring the following questions:

- What level of support was there for each action?
- Which actions would the community and stakeholders prioritize?
- What other ideas or concerns did the community and stakeholders want us to consider?

Overview of Outreach Findings

Community Support for Potential Actions

Across all outreach efforts, residents and stakeholders expressed strong support for the city's efforts around environmental stewardship. People recognize the need to take action to address the impacts of climate changes.

- Over **80%** of survey respondents support or strongly support proposed actions to achieve our Waste goal.
- Over **74%** of survey respondents support or strongly support proposed actions to achieve our Natural Systems goals.
- Between **63%** of survey respondents support or strongly support proposed actions to achieve our Mobility and Land Use goals, depending on the action.
- Over **79%** of survey respondents support or strongly support proposed actions to achieve our Energy goals.
- Over **73%** of survey respondents support or strongly support proposed actions to achieve our Climate Change goal.

Residents are keenly aware of how environmental stewardship touches their everyday lives. When it comes to prioritizing which actions the city should work on, individuals highlighted actions and programs that are seen and felt most directly. The top five actions survey respondents indicated they wanted the city to prioritize include:

1. Exploring a ban on single-use plastics
2. Improving access to energy efficiency programs for low-income and historically underserved and underrepresented populations
3. Developing a Transportation Master Plan that explores opportunities to decrease per capita vehicle miles traveled through prioritization and investment to transit and other non-motorized modes
4. Introducing stricter requirements for tree preservation.
5. Providing education and outreach at multi-family buildings on waste reduction, recycling and composting.

"Aim to make Bellevue a place where truly innovative green buildings are built, using a variety of approaches including incentives, partnerships, education, demonstration projects, and recognition. Aim higher than standards considered 'green' ten years ago, to net-zero and similar standards. Help build excitement in Bellevue about green building innovation."

▪ Survey Comment

Community Support for Various Approaches

The potential actions under consideration explore a variety of approaches to achieving the city's environmental stewardship goals:

- Increasing fees or taxes
- Mandates or regulations
- Incentives
- Partnerships between agencies, other municipalities, and the private sector
- Education & communication
- Putting resources towards expanding capacity
- Focusing on equity and historically underserved populations

No one approach is correct, and the final plan will need to pursue a variety of actions to ensure successful implementation. A review of comments received through the survey and in focus group discussions provides insight into community support for the various approaches. Community support for specific approaches varied by focus area. Survey respondents' and open house attendees' comments are summarized as follows:

- In the area of Natural Systems, commenters expressed support for a regulatory approach, particularly for achieving tree canopy goals.
- In the area of Waste, commenters expressed support for both a regulatory approach and increased education for residents on recycling and composting.
- In the area of Mobility & Land Use, commenters expressed support for expanding capacity to make public transit, biking, and walking a more accessible and convenient option.
- In the areas of Climate and Energy, commenters wanted to see a mix of incentives and regulations to encourage green building practices.
- Commenters also expressed a desire to incentivize adoption of electric vehicles.
- Equitable access to green energy programs and incentives were a prominent theme in comments.
- Many commenters saw opportunities to forge partnerships to reach Climate and Energy goals.

"Bellevue residents rely on their cars heavily for transportation. I think even people who want to bike or use public transport find it difficult because biking can feel dangerous and public transport does not reach many places in an efficient manner like it does in other cities."

▪ Survey Comment

Community Concerns

In comments, survey respondents raised some key concerns they want the city to keep in mind as we move forward with implementation of the Environmental Stewardship Plan.

- **Doing more, faster.** Many community members expressed a strong desire to see the city go further. These commenters encouraged the city to choose leading edge goals and actions and to move faster to address climate change.
- **Affordability.** Several commenters urged the city to consider how implementation of the Environmental Stewardship Plan would impact the cost of housing.
- **Taxes and Fees.** Survey respondents were split about increasing taxes and fees. A small majority were not supportive of raising revenue or charging fees to support implementation of the plan.
- **Regulation and code updates.** Survey respondents were supportive of policies or code updates related to tree preservation, green building, and increasing recycling.

“Too many of these items are for studies. We know what needs to be done. Time to do, not study.”

▪ Survey Comment

Sustainability Leaders

Over the course of several focus group discussions, the outreach team brought together representatives from the business community, developers, non-profits and other institutional partners to explore the potential actions under consideration. These deep-dive conversations allowed the outreach team to understand the implications of the actions under consideration, discover potential synergies, and explore what it might take to successfully implement proposed actions.

In general, the Sustainability Leaders expressed support for the actions under consideration. In the area of green building, several Sustainability Leaders thought the city could be even more ambitious. In the areas of Waste, Mobility & Land Use, and Natural Systems, several Sustainability Leaders offered more cautious support and wanted more details and information.

Participants in focus groups raised several key considerations for the city to keep in mind to ensure successful implementation of the Environmental Stewardship Plan.

- **Provide options.** Businesses and developers need flexibility in order to meet the goals of the plan. Participants encouraged the city to consider allowing developers to choose from a list of green building strategies, giving property owners who cannot generate energy onsite to invest in green energy projects elsewhere, and allowing developers to replace trees offsite in situations when there is not enough room to replace trees onsite were some of the ideas that came up.

- **Engage early.** Changing practices or adjusting plans requires time. Participants encouraged the city to notify businesses and developers of changes to policy early, before projects are underway. Informing developers about potential incentives early in the process could also increase the number of projects that utilize incentive programs.
- **Communicate and educate.** Participants noted that sometimes businesses and developers are unaware of best practices, city programs, or incentives that could help them adopt and apply green building strategies or improve recycling & composting. Offering classes or workshops in green building, doing more to promote incentive programs, and providing more multi-language educational materials could support wider adoption of sustainable practices.
- **Think and act systemically.** Focus group participants encouraged the city to consider how proposed actions and policies aligned with state requirements and the requirements of other jurisdictions. Conflicting or misaligned regulations can make it challenging for businesses to meet expectations. In the case of recycling and composting understanding the entire lifecycle of products is key.
- **Balance mandates, incentives, and impact.** Focus group participants were not opposed to mandates, but they cautioned the city to consider the impacts to project and operating costs and how those might drive up prices overall. Targeted incentives can help offset the impacts of mandates. Additionally, incentive programs need to be targeted where they can have the biggest impact towards achieving the city's goals.
- **Keep equity in mind.** In several conversations, focus group participants raised the importance of using an equity lens in the implementation. Ensuring low-income and underserved populations have access to programs and incentives is key. The city should also keep in mind how historical practices may have contributed to inequities and seek to address them in policy decisions.

Additional Ideas

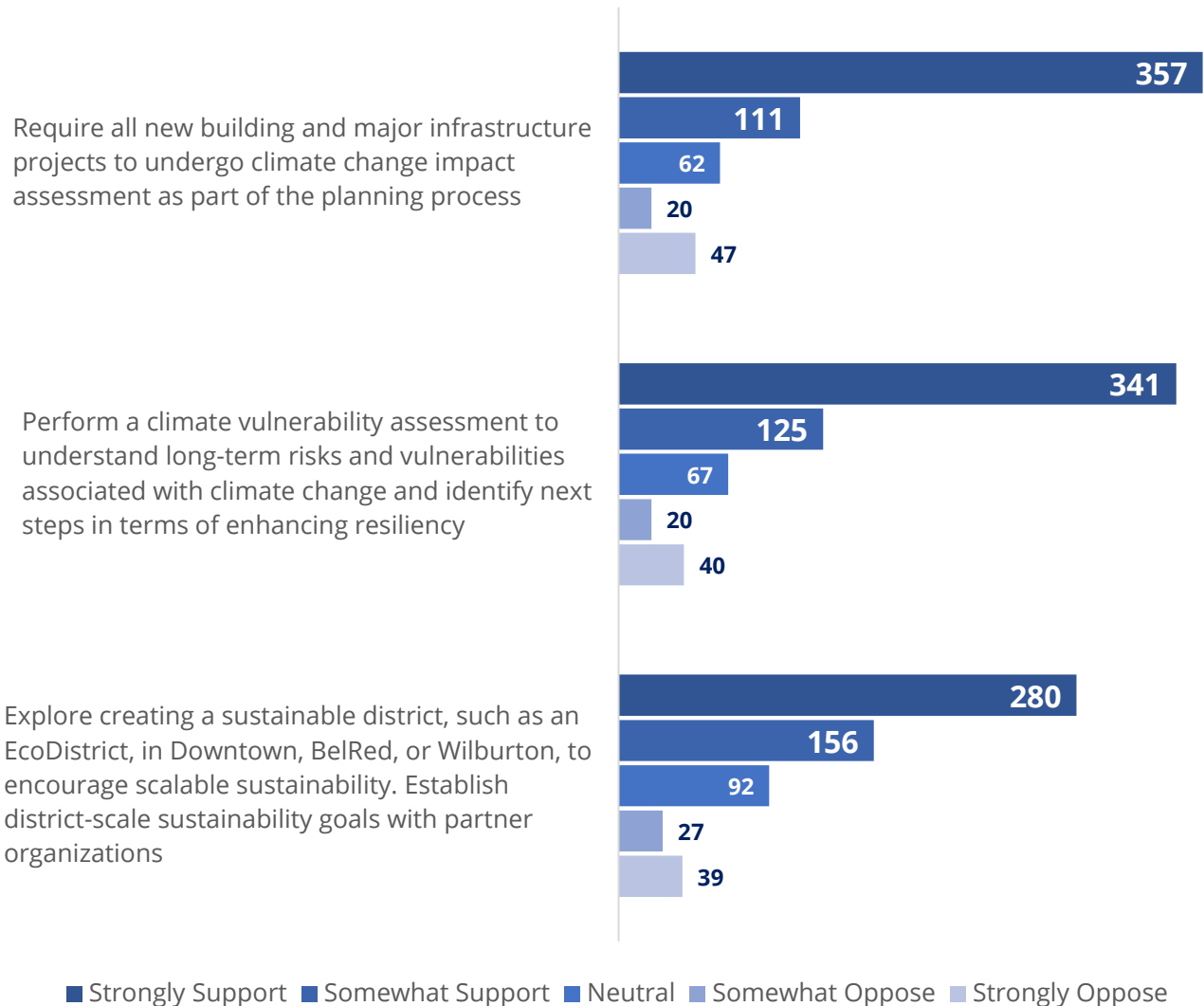
In discussions at the open house, in the focus group conversations, and in the survey comments community members and Sustainability Leaders offered many new ideas to consider. Some of the suggestions that came up include:

- Increase the tree canopy by incentivizing green roofs with small trees.
- Support creative approaches to making first mile/last mile connections to transit like using electric mini vans with flexible routes and times or autonomous vehicles.
- Encourage pilot projects that allow city staff to explore new technologies that are not yet in the code.
- Think about strategies that focus on e-bike infrastructure.
- Create an Urban Forestry Commission.

What's Next

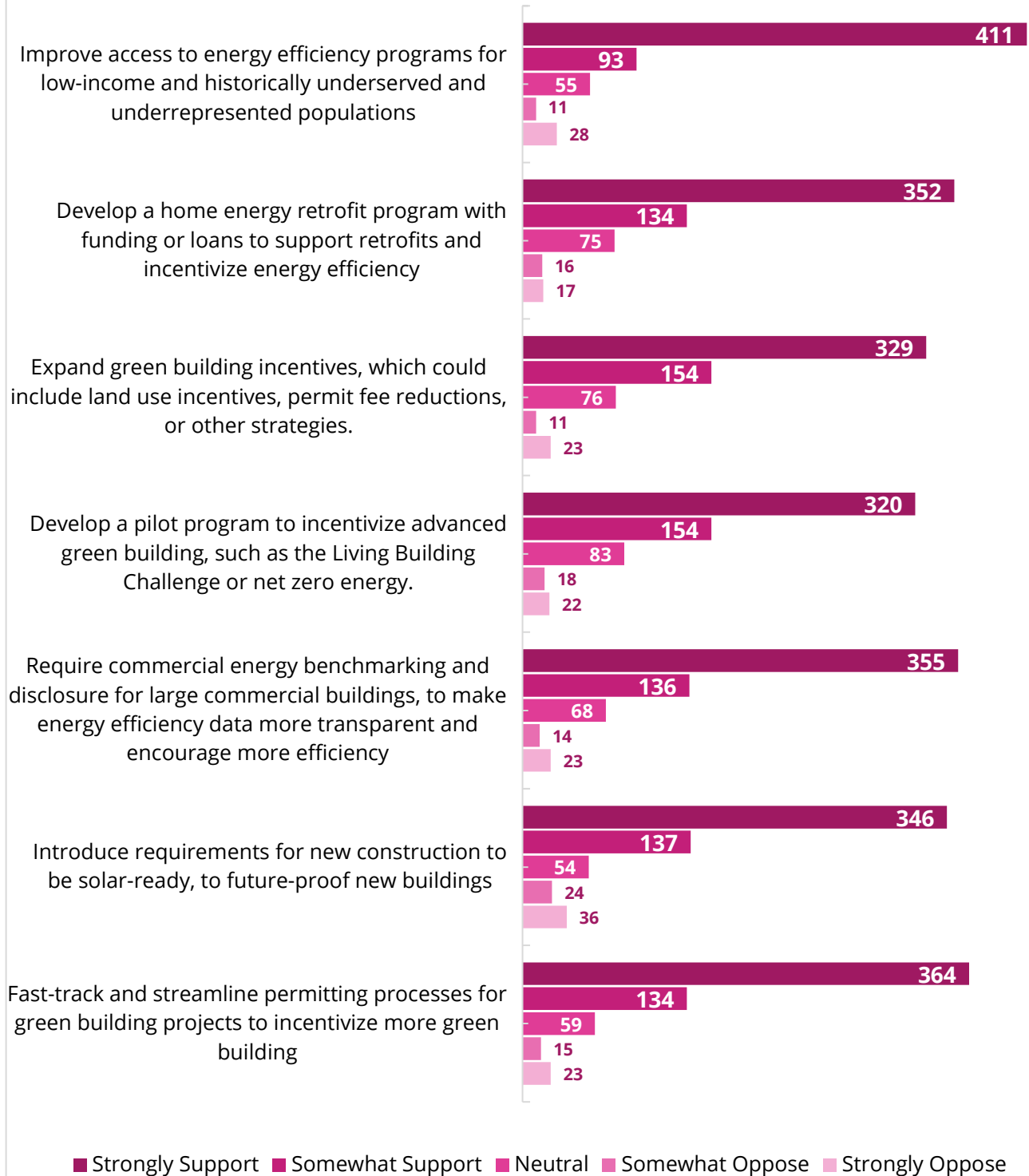
The input gathered through these efforts will be used to help inform the draft Environmental Stewardship Plan. City staff, working with consultants, will conduct further evaluation to better understand the impacts and costs of the potential actions under consideration. This fall, the draft Environmental Stewardship Plan will be shared for public comment, and community members and stakeholders will have additional opportunities to provide feedback on the draft plan, before it moves through the process of review and adoption by the City Council. The public outreach and engagement around the draft plan will also be an opportunity to continue to raise awareness about the City's Environmental Stewardship Initiative and to build support for implementing the plan.

Potential Climate Actions



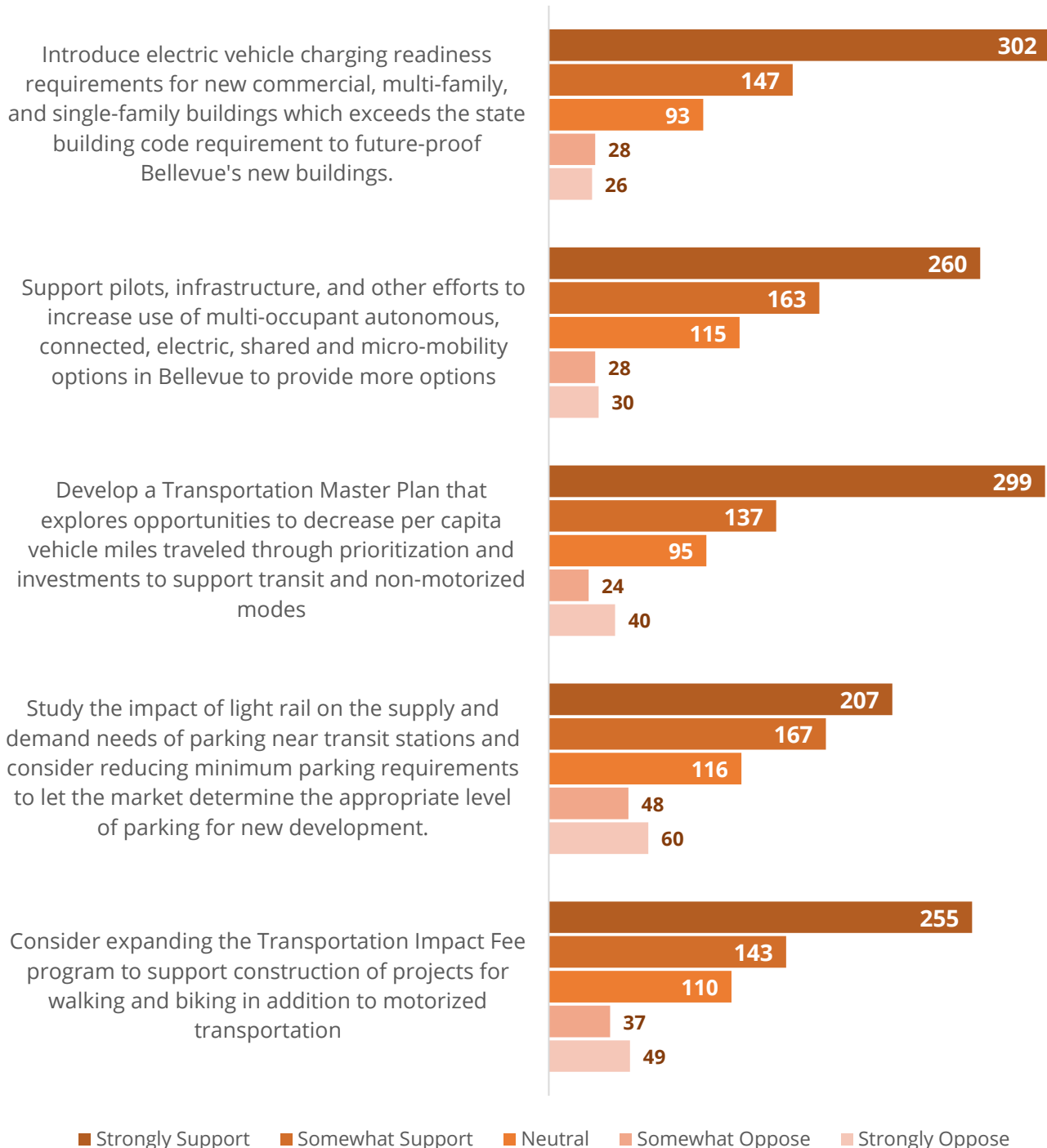
Optional question (597 response(s), 5 skipped)

Potential Energy Actions



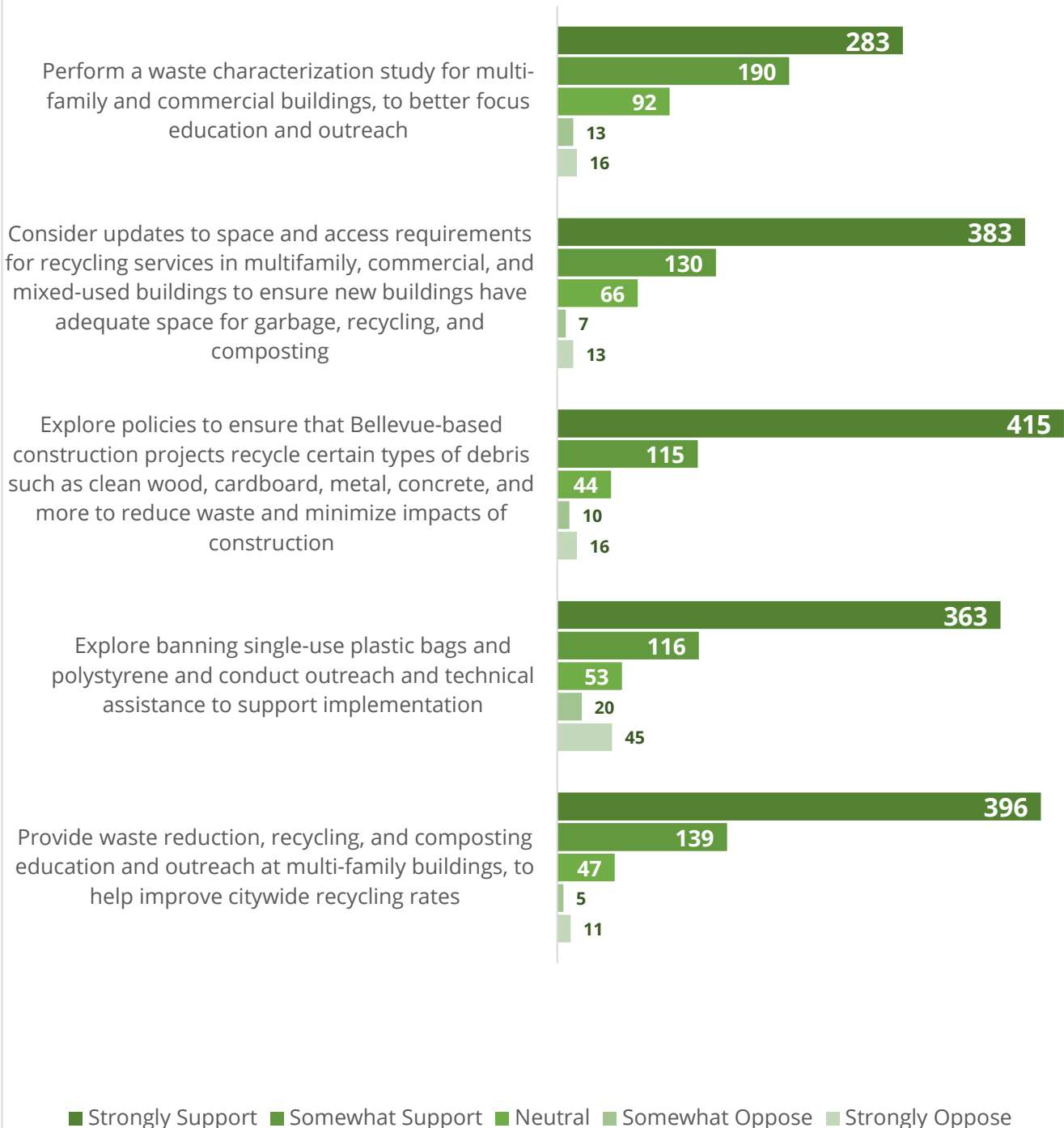
Optional question (599 response(s), 3 skipped)

Potential Mobility and Land Use Actions



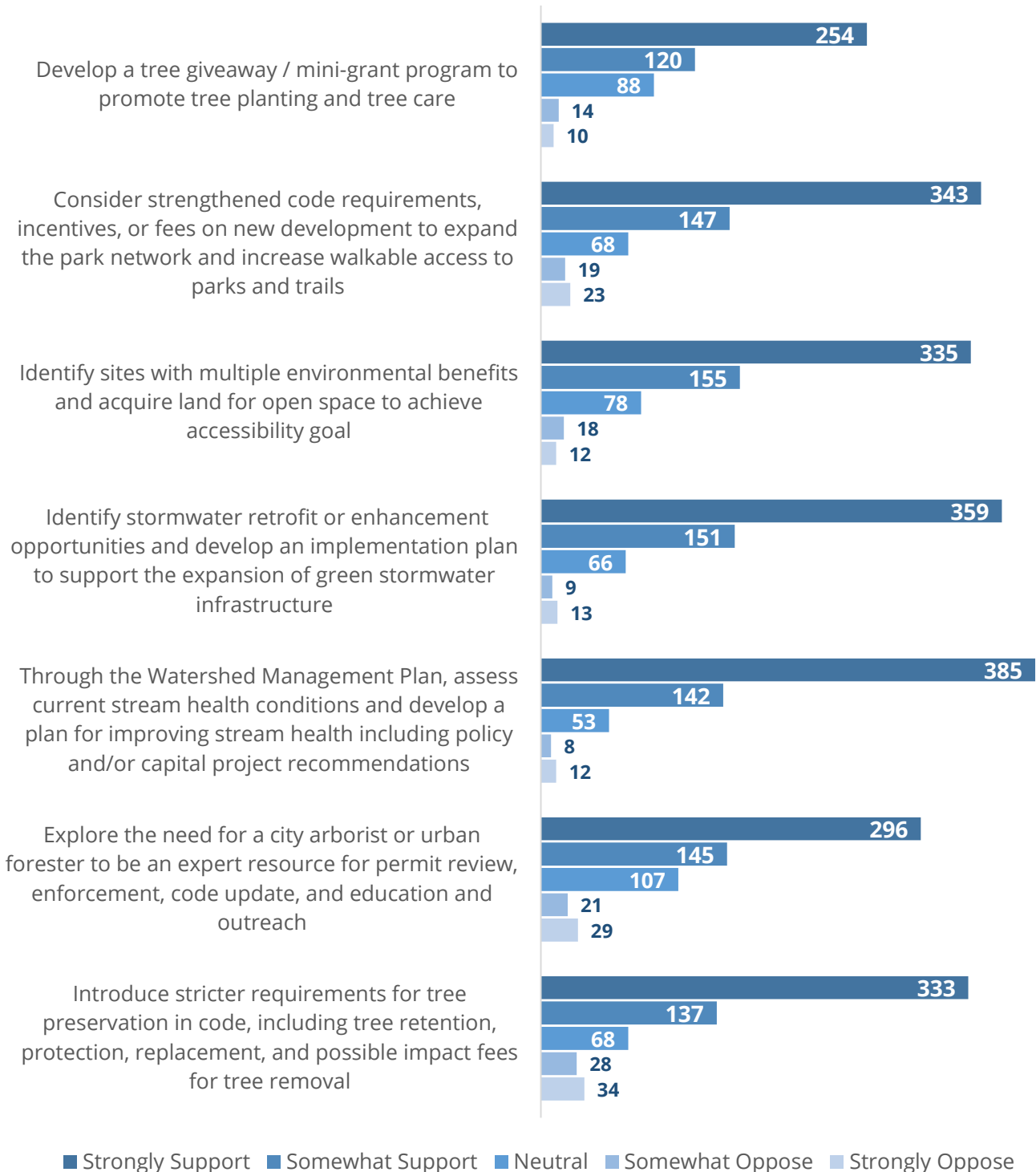
Optional question (600 response(s), 2 skipped)

Potential Waste Actions



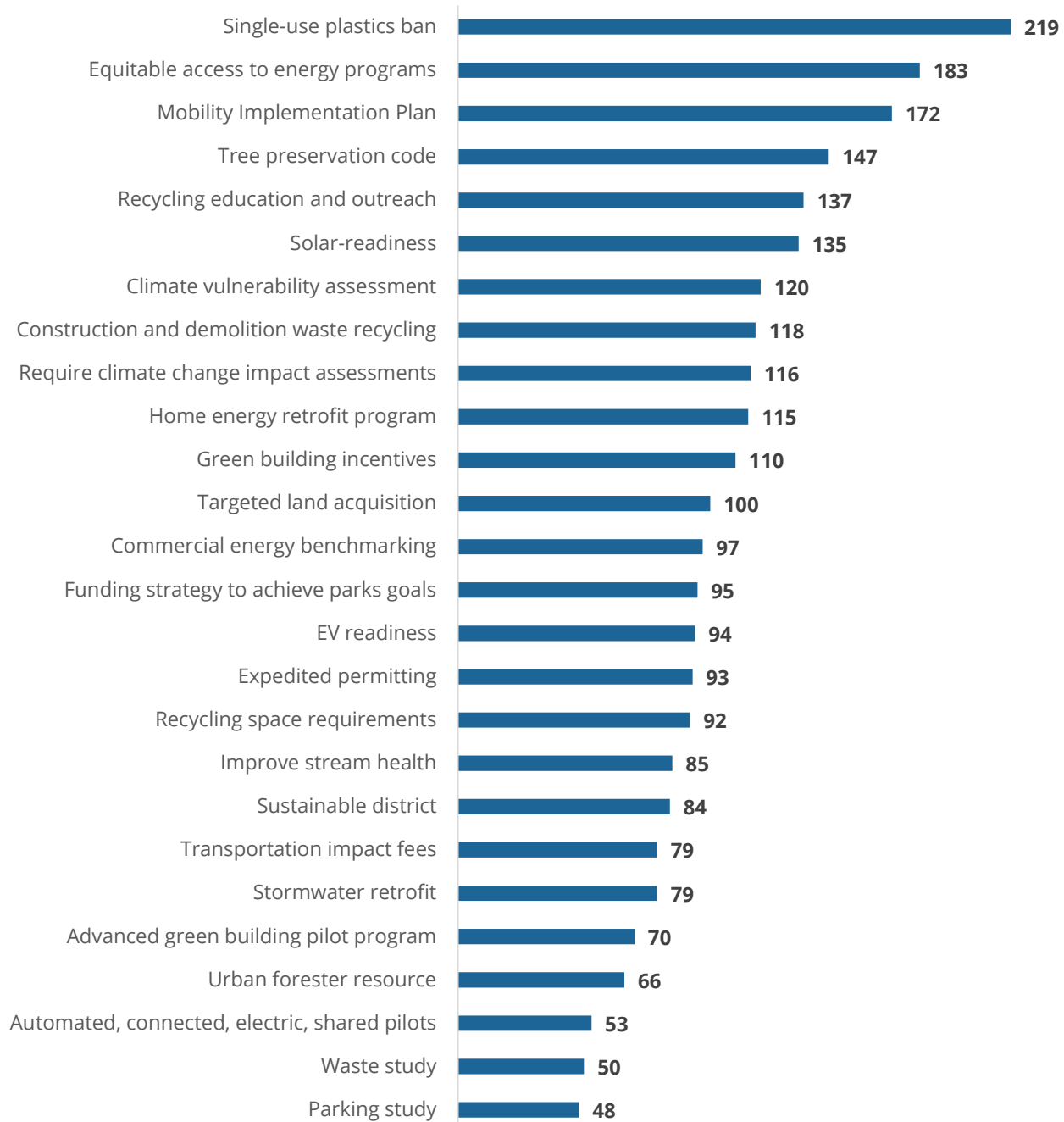
Optional question (601 response(s), 1 skipped)

Potential Natural Systems Actions



Optional question (601 response(s), 1 skipped)

Which potential action do you think is most important for the city to work on?



Optional question (580 response(s), 22 skipped)

