



2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update

Phase I Engagement Summary

February 2025



Introduction

The Sustainable Bellevue Plan, adopted by City Council in December 2020, is Bellevue's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change. The plan sets goals and targets for 2030 and 2050 with strategies and actions in five sustainability focus areas: Climate Change, Energy, Mobility & Land Use, Waste & Materials, and Natural Systems. To help the City stay on track for these long-term goals, the Sustainable Bellevue Plan is set to be updated every five years.

This report summarizes engagement activities and input received during Phase I of the 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update. Phase I engagement was conducted from September 2024 through February 2025. During this time, the Environmental Stewardship team made over 1,000 connections with community members over a variety of outreach activities, including pop-up tabling, surveys, community events, classroom visits, and partnerships with Community-Based Organizations.

Major takeaways from input received during Phase I Engagement include:

- Strong community support for the Sustainable Bellevue Plan goals and sustainability and climate action in Bellevue.
- General support for the Sustainable Bellevue Plan's existing goals, which still reflect community sustainability priorities
- Desire for more climate resilience action, including support for incorporating a climate resilience goal in the updated Sustainable Bellevue Plan.



Project Scope and Timeline

City Council initiated the 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan update in October 2024. The goal for this update is to build upon the existing Sustainable Bellevue Plan to refine Bellevue’s goals, targets, strategies, and actions in the five sustainability focus areas.

The update is broken down into four phases, with many opportunities for community members to provide input, and multiple touchpoints with stakeholders and boards and commissions.

This engagement summary covers outreach activities and input collected during Phase I of the Sustainable Bellevue Plan update. The Environmental Stewardship team will provide an additional report on Phase II outreach, as well as a final engagement summary report when the project concludes.

Project Timeline



Key Phase I Engagement Topics

The first Sustainable Bellevue Plan was developed with extensive input from community members, stakeholders, and city staff. To build upon past engagement for this update, staff identified key engagement topics to bring to the community to guide updates to the goals and strategies in Phase I.

Sustainability Priorities

What are the sustainability priorities of the Bellevue community? How well does the current Sustainable Bellevue plan reflect these priorities?

Sustainable Bellevue Goals

Do the current goals of the Sustainable Bellevue Plan align with the plan’s vision? Do the current goals reflect the sustainability ambitions of the Bellevue community? What priorities are missing from or not reflected by the current plan’s goals?

Climate Impacts and Resilience

How has climate change impacted the Bellevue community? What help may residents need to withstand climate impacts and recover quickly afterward? How much should the city prioritize climate resilience?



Overview of Phase I Outreach

Phase I engagement began in December 2024 and concluded in February 2025. Activities included a mix of in-person events, presentations, and online opportunities for participation.

Phase I Outreach Goals

- Reintroduce the Sustainable Bellevue Plan to the community.
- Inform the community of the Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update.
- Bring in new community members not previously involved in the first Sustainable Bellevue plan development or implementation work, particularly underrepresented community members.
- Assess and understand community sustainability priorities.
- Assess effectiveness of current Sustainable Bellevue Plan goals at reflecting community vision for sustainability in Bellevue in 2030 and beyond.

Outreach activities included:

- 8 visits to classrooms
- 2 youth ambassadors meetings (co-hosted with Little Master’s Club)
- 3 Recycle and Re-create workshops (co-hosted with Little Master’s Club)
- 1 community convening workshop (co-hosted with Eastside for all)
- 3 pop-up tabling opportunities at community events
- 1 Sustainable Bellevue Townhall and plan launch event
- 1 community survey

During Phase I Outreach the Team Connected with:

- 250+ Bellevue students
- 110+ participants at in-person workshops or townhalls
- 50+ community members at pop-up tabling events
- 470 survey respondents (including 2 in Spanish and 46 in Simplified Chinese)
- 1,000+ visitors to our online engagement hub

Supporting Diverse Participation

Bellevue is a diverse community of multilingual residents. The Environmental Stewardship team is committed to prioritizing diverse participation from across Bellevue's community, and, in particular, supporting participation from historically underrepresented community members. To help with this effort, the Environmental Stewardship team partnered with two Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) serving underrepresented communities in Bellevue to co-design engagement opportunities for the Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update. Details on the CBO partnerships and related engagement activities can be found later in this section of the report.

Additionally, the Environmental Stewardship team worked with Bellevue's Cultural Outreach team to conduct outreach in Spanish, Mandarin, and Korean. The Cultural Outreach team provided critical support in promoting the in-language community surveys and tabling at community events.

The Environmental Stewardship team was also particularly interested in supporting youth participation in engagement, as the Sustainable Bellevue Plan has long-term 2030 and 2050 goals that may be of particular interest to younger generations in Bellevue. The team connected with teachers in classrooms across Bellevue and gave in-person presentations on the plan update to 8 classrooms at three different middle and high schools during Phase I engagement.

Reporting on demographic information of participants in engagement can be challenging. The format for in-person or pop-up activities does not allow for easy data collection. Additionally, participants are never required to provide demographic information, either for in-person or online activities, and some participants decline to share personal details.

Survey Demographics

The online community survey provided the most structured opportunity for collecting demographic data, which allows staff to understand how participation in that activity compares to citywide demographics.

In general, participation in the Phase I community survey improved upon surveys conducted during engagement for the 2021-2025 plan in terms of engaging community members more representative of the Bellevue community as a whole. 56% of survey respondents were people of color, compared to 59% of Bellevue as a whole. 41% of respondents reported speaking a language other than English at home.

However, significant gaps in participation remained. Only 14% of survey respondents were renters, compared to 47% of Bellevue as a whole. Though the team received 48 surveys in languages other than English, no responses were received in Korean, Traditional Chinese, or Russian.



Race and Ethnicity

Bellevue as a whole:

59% PEOPLE OF COLOR

Survey respondents:

56% PEOPLE OF COLOR



Homeownership Status

Bellevue as a whole:

47% RENTERS

Survey respondents:

14% RENTERS

Community-Based Organization Partnerships

The Environmental Stewardship team widely distributed a public request for proposals from Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that serve underrepresented community members in Bellevue. CBOs were invited to submit proposals for partnering with the Environmental Stewardship team to co-design, facilitate, and coordinate engagement opportunities for the Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update. The team received and selected two proposals, from Eastside for All and Little Master's Club. The selected CBO partners and the Environmental Stewardship team collaborated to co-design final scopes of work. Details of the CBO partner co-designed engagement models can be found below, and each CBO partner will provide a full report of engagement results for the Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update following the conclusion of their work.

Eastside for All Community Convening Workshops

Eastside for All was founded in 2019 to advance racial equity and social justice in East King County. The organization supports people of color and immigrants who are most impacted by racial disparities and inequities. Eastside for All proposed an event-based engagement model with one Phase I event focused on under-represented communities. Eastside for All emphasized the importance of community engagement processes that bring community members back from initial feedback collection to review drafts and see how input is being used to shape decisions. Eastside for All and the Environmental Stewardship team will co-host a second event in Phase II centered around how feedback from the initial event was used to develop draft strategies for the plan. This second event will also allow community members to provide further input on the draft strategies to be incorporated in the Phase III draft plan.

Eastside for All invited six other CBO partners to participate and bring community members to learn about the Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update and provide feedback. These organizations were Africans on the Eastside, Indian American Community Services, United Hub, Chinese Information and Service Center, and Global Social Business Partners.

The Phase I event was held in English with community members and representatives from Indian American Community Services, United Hub, and Global Social Business Partners on February 24 at Crossroads Community Center. An additional event in Mandarin and Cantonese with representatives and community members from United Hub and Chinese Information and Service Center will be held in March 2025.

Little Master's Club Recycle and Re-create Workshops

Little Master's Club is a non-profit organization that seeks to provide an encouraging environment and open platform for young people, helping to build leadership skills and encouraging them to flourish in a multicultural society. They primarily serve the Chinese community in the Greater Seattle area, but have regular programming targeted toward many underrepresented groups, including children with special needs, low-income families, new immigrants, and seniors.

Little Master's Club proposed a multiple touchpoint engagement model leveraging their extensive network of Eastside families, centered around a community interest in waste. Little Master's Club hired a local artist, Ying Chen, to facilitate multigenerational workshops in which participants would transform garbage and discarded plastic into vases. In addition to educating participants on waste reduction and material re-use, Environmental Stewardship team members or trained Little Master's Club Ambassadors presented on the Sustainable Bellevue Plan update in each workshop, facilitated short discussion on sustainability priorities, and collected input on the plan via encouraging participants to take the Phase I Community Survey or leave written feedback on the plan vision and priorities via informational boards in English and Simplified Chinese.

The Recycle and Re-create workshops will culminate in a Market Fair Event on April 26, hosted at City Hall, where participants from all workshops will attend to exhibit the artwork, learn how their feedback has been incorporated to date, and provide further input on draft strategies.

Little Master's Club has also organized 26 Youth Ambassadors to help collect responses to the Phases I and II Community Surveys. Youth Ambassadors are 7th-12th grade students in or around Bellevue who attend monthly meetings with Environmental Stewardship team members to learn about sustainability and climate action work at the city of Bellevue. Youth Ambassadors are also trained on the Sustainable Bellevue Plan and update process, and, along with Environmental Stewardship staff, attend workshops to present on the Plan Update. Each Ambassador was also given 10 paper copies of the Phase I Community Survey to be completed by members of their community. Surveys were distributed in English and Simplified Chinese, and could be completed in either language. The Ambassadors were responsible for entering responses into the online database.

Summary of Input

Through the various Phase I outreach activities, the Environmental Stewardship team received nuanced and varied feedback from many members of the Bellevue community with unique perspectives. The Engagement Report Appendices provide more detail on input collected via the Phase I community survey and townhall event. However, input received can still be grouped into major themes, many of which appeared repeatedly across engagement activities. These themes are summarized in this section of the report.



Desire for Continued Strong Action on Sustainability

Community members expressed support for reaching the Sustainable Bellevue Plan's targets, including **80%** of survey respondents who supported bold climate action in Bellevue. **83%** of survey respondents reported that climate change was an important issue to them personally. **65%** of respondents said that the City should prioritize environmental initiatives even if they require significant investment. Community members expressed a desire to see the City find new sources of funding that would allow further investment in sustainability work.

"We need the city to place sustainability on a very high priority and create and fund action plans to 2050 that actually reduce GHG emissions."

"Secure funding for actions that meaningfully drive down greenhouse gas emissions. This might mean raising more money, reprioritizing current funds, or otherwise."

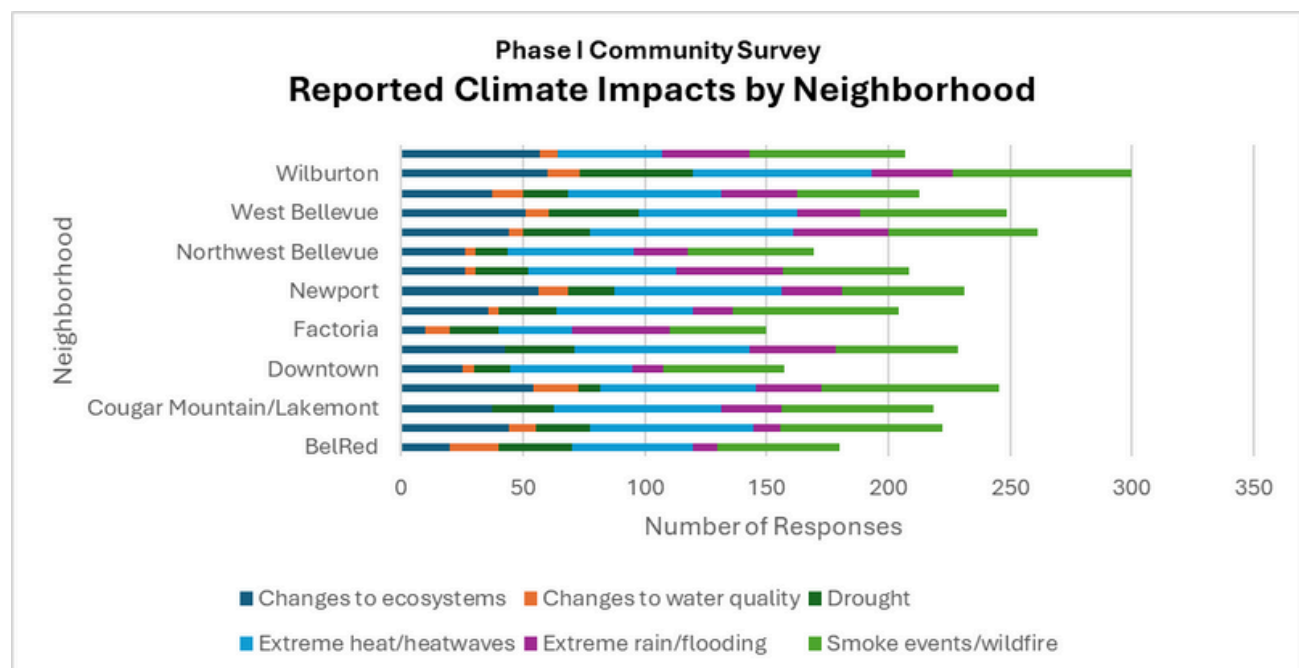
—Phase I Community Survey Free Responses

Sustainability Goals

Community members expressed a desire for more accessible presentation of the Sustainable Bellevue Plan goals. Many community members expressed a preference for the Plan to lead with what it is hoping to accomplish in qualitative terms, rather than foregrounding technical metrics. Community members also expressed a desire to see the city track changes toward the outcome we want to see (e.g. sustainable commutes), rather than the behavior or metric we are trying to reduce (e.g. drive alone commutes). In general, community members expressed support for the Plan's existing goals, and did not suggest major changes to the goals were necessary to reflect community priorities.

Support for Community Resilience

74% of survey respondents reported having already experienced the impacts of climate change in Bellevue. Extreme heat/heatwaves were impact respondents reported experiencing most, followed smoke events/wildfire. Community members expressed support for more resilience initiatives from the City, including incorporating an overall climate resilience goal into the updated Sustainable Bellevue Plan. Community members also expressed concerns about grid reliability and capacity, particularly in the aftermath of the destructive bomb cyclone windstorm in November 2024.



"I was without power for four days after this year's bomb cyclone wind event, which tells me that our city is vulnerable to extreme weather events such as wind storms."

"The city should do a better job with public outreach in the event of a storm to help people find warming centers and charging centers. For example, the charging center at city hall was wonderful....during the storm and was well-used, but there were places like Bellevue Square that were overcrowded. A "charging center map" or "warming center map" that the city can activate and share...would help those stuck without power to charge and find places to stay warm. We should also have more of these warming centers open up. I don't think many people knew that they could go to city hall and community centers."

—Phase I Community Survey Free Responses

Sustainability Priorities

Community members identified several key priorities for the 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Plan, including:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Preserving tree canopy
- Reducing waste
- Improving water quality
- Improving building
- Energy efficiency/electrification

Community members also identified significant **gaps in equity and access to sustainability programs and benefits**. In particular, community members requested more **pathways for residents in multifamily buildings to experience the benefits of electrification and energy-efficiency programs**, which have primarily focused on homeowners in Bellevue. Community members expressed a need for **barrier reduction for low-income and non-English speaking residents to participate in sustainable modes of transit and sustainability programs**, such as **improving language access in transit planning apps** and last-mile solutions that **connect neighborhoods to transit**. Community members also expressed a need for collaborative governance and decision-making processes that promote community participation in sustainability efforts.

"It is vital to recognize that climate action and sustainability are not just the government's responsibility but require active community participation. Promoting a sense of community and collaboration can be key to addressing these challenges. Moreover, transparency in environmental policies and decisions can foster trust and support among citizens."

—Phase I Community Survey Free Response (translated from original Spanish)

Next Steps

The Environmental Stewardship team will continue to hold community events and conduct outreach for the Sustainable Bellevue Plan update throughout 2025. Upcoming events include the second annual EarthFest celebration on April 19 at the Bellevue Botanical Garden.

The team will continue to review and incorporate input collected during Phase I while developing draft strategies.

The team expects to return to the community with draft strategies in spring 2025, and expects to release a draft plan for public comment in late summer or fall of 2025.