

Week 4 of Edmonds' Comprehensive Plan Visioning Process

Environment

By Susan McLaughlin, Edmonds Development Services Director

Summer is a perfect time to marvel at all the environmental assets this city is fortunate to have, including Puget Sound, sandy beaches, Lake Ballinger, marshlands, forested parks, and streams. The Environment has arisen as a repeating theme during the first two weeks of Comprehensive Plan visioning discussions on Identity and Quality of Life. Edmonds has a strong environmental ethic, and residents have expressed keen interest about environmental preservation and climate change.

You can share your interests and perspectives related to the Environment in Edmonds via a mini-survey or by participating in one of the several events scheduled next week. See details at the end of this article.

I am passionate about environmental protection, sustainable development, and climate action, the reason I chose a career in urban planning. As an undergraduate student at UC Santa Barbara, I read an essay called "Tragedy of the Commons" by Professor Emeritus Garrett Hardin. Hardin uses a simple example about sheep grazing on common land to describe the complexity of population carrying capacity relative to people's tendency to exploit shared resources in the quest for wealth and personal gain. He explains that if we act solely for individual gain, we will ultimately threaten our collective wellbeing, which will lead to resource depletion.

This societal conundrum led me to my career. I have spent over two decades trying to plan, design and build sustainable cities, with an aim to serve the collective wellbeing, while helping to protect the nation, the world, and the finite resources that we all rely upon. This means designing cities to be compact, avoiding sprawl into green fields, forests, and farmlands. It also requires supporting renewable energy, green economies, and local businesses and products. By doing this, we can also create dynamic, exciting, and interesting cities that are self-sufficient and resilient.

The City of Edmonds recently hosted two open houses on the update to our Climate Action Plan and shared draft strategies and actions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. We presented a "call to action," recognizing that we have not dropped our overall carbon emissions in the City of Edmonds over the last 10 years. Acting with urgency, we have identified new specific and progressive actions that will move the needle if we commit to them. They include, but are not limited to:

- require new commercial and multifamily buildings to be 100% electric by 2023,
- work with transit agencies to increase service and access to new light rail connections,
- support transit-oriented, mixed-use development in our commercial centers and
- develop an action plan to adapt to sea-level rise in Edmonds.

I find inspiration in statements by brilliant thinkers, and one person that has captured global interest in the realm of climate change is Greta Thunberg. She is a young activist from Sweden who is unapologetically angry about complacency around climate change.

To all of you who choose to look the other way every day because you seem more frightened of the changes that can prevent catastrophic climate change than the catastrophic climate change itself. Your silence is worst of all.

- Greta Thunberg

Let us not be silent. We want to hear from you! Share your thoughts about the environment.

Over the next few weeks, we will be focusing on key topics that touch upon various aspects of the Plan. Here is the line-up:

- Environment: August 29-Sept 4
- Culture: Sept 5-11
- Livability and Land Use: Sept 12-18

Next week we continue the community conversation with a focus on the Environment in Edmonds.

Please take our mini-survey on the Environment in Edmonds (available at <https://bit.ly/environment2024>, or by scanning the QR code below) and visit us over the next week at the events listed below to share your perspective:



Community Video Journal | Weeklong, by appointment | Want to share your perspective on what excites you about Edmonds? We are creating a video journal to share with the community and would love to hear your perspective!

Email EveryonesEdmonds@edmondswa.gov to schedule an appointment

Coffee chat with Susan (Development Services Director) | Wednesday, August 31st | Rila Bakery & Cafe at 7600 196th St. SW, Suite 500 | 9:30-10:30 am

Walk and Talk: Meet at the Marsh | Thursday, September 1st | Meet at the main viewing platform at northwest corner of marsh (near Blue Collar Doghouse) | Discussion will begin at 3 pm before heading to the second station on Dayton St. around 4 pm. Walk and Talk is expected to conclude around 5 pm.

Summer Market | Saturday, September 3rd | 5th Ave N. & Main St.

Keep an eye out for more event announcements later next week as we move on to the themed community conversation on Culture the week of September 5th.

As a reminder, the survey on this week's theme, Economic Growth, is still open and available through this Saturday, August 27, at <https://bit.ly/growth2024> or by scanning this QR code:

