



## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 25, 2024

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Eric Holmes, City Manager  
Lon Pluckhahn, Deputy City Manager

**RE:** **Green Building Policy Development Process Update**

**CC:** Rebecca Small, Senior Policy Analyst, CMO  
Chad Eiken, Community Development Director, CDD  
Geraldene Moyle, General Services Director, GS  
Patrick Quinton, Economic Prosperity & Housing Director, EP&H

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### **Purpose**

This memo serves to provide Council with a briefing of the City's Green Building Policy development process, which is about to begin public engagement. The memo will outline the GBP's objectives, development process timeline, and public engagement approach.

Staff will present a full workshop to Council on May 20<sup>th</sup>, featuring an in-depth discussion of policies under consideration and feedback heard from early engagement activities.

### **Background**

The City is developing a green building policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and promote resilience to climate change impacts. The development of this policy aligns with the City's adopted goal of carbon neutrality by 2040 and is identified as a high-priority action in the Climate Action Framework (CAF).

With buildings contributing 28% of the City's total emissions according to the 2019 GHG Inventory, such a policy directly addresses a significant emission source. Additionally, by promoting high-performance, energy-efficient buildings with features to address climate impacts such as extreme heat and wildfire smoke, the policy can advance equity

objectives outlined in the CAF, prioritizing the needs of low-income residents and communities of color most affected by climate change impacts.

The GBP development is a coordinated effort between Community Development, Economic Prosperity & Housing, General Services, and the City Manager's Office. This GBP will replace the interim green building policy that was agreed upon by Council in 2021, though never formally adopted, and has served as guidance for new developments.

### **Policy Scope**

The GBP policy will provide clear standards for the development of new municipal and private-sector buildings and provide zone-specific direction for new commercial, industrial, and residential construction. The policy will also provide a framework for the operations and maintenance of existing municipal facilities.

The overall policy direction established within the GBP will be implemented via changes to the City's municipal code, including:

- Code changes to VMC Title 17 (Building Code) for new construction,
- Likely recommended code changes to VMC Title 20 (Land Use and Development) in conjunction with Comprehensive Plan Update, and
- Possible future recommended code changes to other chapters of the VMC (e.g. stormwater, transportation).

### **Timeline**

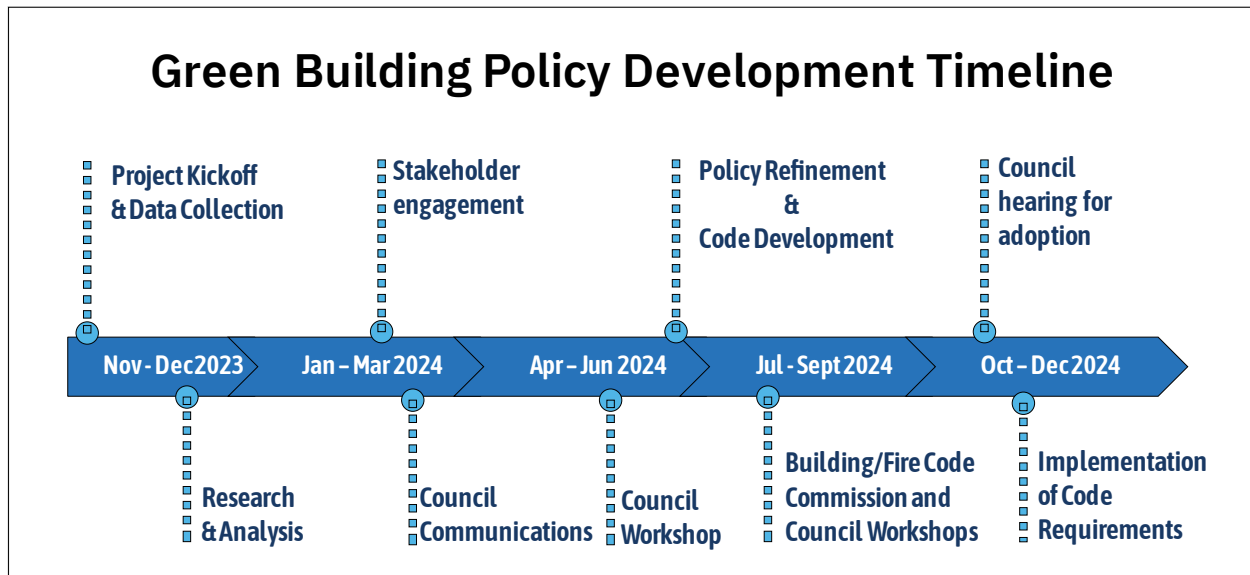
Staff selected [Sustainability Solutions Group](#) (SSG) as the project consultant to support the City on policy development and public engagement. Early efforts on the project have included development of the following:

- Project kickoff meeting (end of Oct. 2023).
- Data collection of municipal facilities and City-wide building characteristics to support later policy modeling (Nov. – Mar 2023)
- Gap Analysis of VMC to identify gaps between current regulations and regulations needed to advance the building-related goals in the CAF.
- Peer Cities Policy Review, enabling staff to understand how other Pacific Northwest cities (such as Seattle, WA, Redmond, WA, and Vancouver, B.C.) have approached sustainable building in similar climates, legislative environments, and political/economic environments.
- Green Building Strategies Research report to provide high-level information on some of the current best practices across the building industry.
- Engagement Strategy to outline the purpose, engagement objectives and techniques, and roles and responsibilities of the engagement portion of the new Green Building Policy Project. (Feb – Mar 2023)

Although early project timelines suggested policy completion by mid-summer, City staff decided to extend the consultant's originally proposed public engagement timeline and strategy to ensure thorough and inclusive participation from all stakeholders. This

extension facilitates the opportunity for deeper collaboration with the Technical Advisory Group and community-based organizations representing vulnerable populations, aiming to build agreement around challenging topics and broader public acceptance of new development standards.

With the engagement strategy extension, the current timeline estimates a Council hearing for policy adoption in October, followed by implementation of code requirements later in Q4. Staff will consider GBP code changes alongside code changes related to the update of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure alignment.



#### Next Steps: Community Engagement

The project team is developing a robust stakeholder and public engagement strategy to ensure key internal and external interested and affected parties are given opportunities to inform and provide feedback to create the best new Green Building Policy possible and to establish a community that will support the implementation of the policy.

The Engagement Strategy was informed by discussions with City staff across four departments, as well as a series of pre-engagement interviews conducted with stakeholders in the community to identify stakeholders' preferred ways to engage in process.

- **Roundtable Conversations** with development, environmental, and large property interests
- **Technical Advisory Group (TAG)**, including internal staff; will have multiple meetings between April and July
- A survey to be distributed via project mailing list
- Several **public workshops** to provide a broader forum for stakeholder groups
- Outreach via **City Communications channels** including Be Heard, newsletters, and social media.

Staff are also coordinating closely with concurrent City projects such as the Housing Action Plan, the Downtown Design Guidelines Update, and Our Vancouver (the Comprehensive Plan update) on stakeholder engagement, given the considerable overlap in stakeholders and affected parties.