

# Sustainable Decision Making at the City



The City frequently makes complex decisions and there are many competing interests in arriving at a final decision. The Sustainable Decision Making Matrix (SDMM) is a weighted decision making tool that is aligned with the major focus areas of the [Sustainability Master Plan](#). Therefore, when this tool is used, it can inform these decisions and help fulfill the goals of this plan.

Decision makers should use either [the Excel version of the Sustainable Decision Making Matrix](#) or the following Sustainable Decision Making Matrix worksheet (following) to calculate the weighted score of a particular action (project, policy, program or code). The higher the weighted score, the more a particular action is aligned with this plan's goals. The tool can be used to evaluate different alternatives or approaches to the same goal, to see if changing the approach can improve the outcomes of more areas.

After a score is completed by decision makers, it should be memorialized in a uniform way to communicate to City Council and the community that the SDMM has been used and considered to make the most sustainable decision possible. The Template Staff Report sample text below should be used and documented in all Council Staff reports and other applicable documents.

## Template Staff Report Text

*Insert action here (project, policy, program, code)* alternatives A, B and C were evaluated by staff using the City's Sustainable Decision Making Matrix (SDMM). The SDMM allows comparison of alternatives based on how they will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect natural spaces, improve community health and quality of life, improve equitable outcomes, and reduce fossil fuel use, as well as the relative overall cost considering expenses and savings.

The scores for each *Project, Alternative, action or decision* were as follows (A=#, B=#, C=#) out of a total of 90 possible points.

The following alternatives were changed (*if applicable*) to more closely align with the criteria identified in the City's Sustainability Master Plan and then scored again using the SDMM. The Alternatives were then scored as follows (A=#, B=#, C=#).

Alternative (*A, B or C*), was chosen because it was the highest weighted score, *and if applicable, it was (insert reason here)* was also was factor in the decision made. Therefore, this decision to select (*insert alternative*) complies with the SDMM that was adopted as an integral part of the City's Sustainability Master Plan.

# Action Rating Guide

## Criteria Rating Guide

### Greenhouse Gas Reduction

How much could this action directly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Kirkland?

This evaluation does not include any indirect GHG emissions reductions outside of Kirkland.

### Environmental Quality

How well could this action protect habitats, open space and tree cover; reduce consumption of natural resources; and restore ecosystems?

Action is evaluated based on its ability to protect habitats, reduce consumption of resources, protect open space and/or tree cover, prioritize infill development, and/or to restore ecosystems, in Kirkland.

### Community Health - Quality of Life (QOL)

How much would this action benefit community health, quality of life, and increase Kirkland's resilience to natural and human-caused hazards?

Action is evaluated on its benefit to health (e.g. increased air quality), quality of life in the community, and its ability to increase resilience to natural and human-made hazards.

### Environmental Social Justice

How much could this action improve equitable environmental outcomes for historically disenfranchised communities (low income, BIPOC)?

Action is evaluated on improving equitable outcomes for those in the community that have been historically disenfranchised. If the action helps lower income folks as a primary focus, it should be scored higher than other actions that don't accomplish this.

### Reduction of Energy Consumption

How much could this action directly reduce energy use, reduce energy costs and replace fossil fuel-based consumption with renewable energy sources?

Action is evaluated based on its potential to directly reduce energy consumption in Kirkland (or replace fossil fuel-based consumption in Kirkland with clean, renewable energy sources).

### Net Cost

What is the net cost (cost - savings) for the City to complete this action?

Initiative is evaluated based on its overall cost to implement and the costs relative to the expected benefits.

# Sustainable Decision Making Worksheet

Describe the proposed action in one sentence:

The sustainable decision making worksheet will be used to evaluate City actions by how they align with the goals of the Sustainability Master Plan.

## Criteria 1: Greenhouse Gas Reduction

How much will taking this action reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Kirkland?

- 0 Not applicable
- 1 Will not reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- 2 Will marginally reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- 3 Will moderately reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- 4 Will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- 5 Will extremely reduce greenhouse gas emissions

How could this action be adjusted to further reduce emissions?

### Greenhouse Gas Weighted Score

Multiply the rating by 5:

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times 5 =$$

## Criteria 2: Environmental Quality

How much will the City taking this action protect habitats, open space and tree cover; reduce consumption of natural resources; and restore ecosystems?

- 0 Not applicable
- 1 Will not improve environmental quality
- 2 Will marginally improve environmental quality
- 3 Will moderately improve environmental quality
- 4 Will significantly improve environmental quality
- 5 Will extremely improve environmental quality

How could this action be adjusted to further improve environmental quality?

### Enviro. Quality Weighted Score

Multiply the rating by 3:

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times 3 =$$

## Criteria 3: Community Health & Quality of Life

How much will this action improve health in the community, quality of life, and increase resilience to natural and human-caused hazards?

- 0 Not applicable
- 1 Will not reduce improve community health
- 2 Will marginally improve community health
- 3 Will moderately improve community health
- 4 Will significantly improve community health
- 5 Will extremely improve community health

How could this action be adjusted to further improve community health, quality of life, and resilience?

### Comm. Health Weighted Score

Multiply the rating by 3:

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times 3 =$$

## Criteria 4: Environmental Social Justice & Equity

How much will this action improve equitable environmental outcomes for historically disenfranchised communities (e.g. low income; Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC))?

- 0 Not applicable
- 1 Will not improve environmental social justice
- 2 Will marginally improve environmental social justice
- 3 Will moderately improve environmental social justice
- 4 Will significantly improve environmental social justice
- 5 Will extremely improve environmental social justice

### Social Justice Weighted Score

Multiply the rating by 3:

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times 3 =$$

How could this action be adjusted to further improve environmental social justice and equity?

## Criteria 5: Reduction of Energy Consumption

How much will this action directly reduce energy consumption and energy costs and replace fossil fuel-based consumption with clean, renewable energy sources?

- 0 Not applicable
- 1 Will not reduce energy consumption
- 2 Will marginally reduce energy consumption
- 3 Will moderately reduce energy consumption
- 4 Will significantly reduce energy consumption
- 5 Will extremely reduce energy consumption

### Energy Use Weighted Score

Multiply the rating by 2:

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times 2 =$$

How could this action be adjusted to further reduce energy consumption?

## Criteria 6: Cost

What will the net cost (cost - savings) be to the City to complete this action?

- 0 Cost is prohibitive
- 1 Cost is extremely expensive
- 2 Cost is highly expensive
- 3 Cost is moderately expensive
- 4 Cost is nominal
- 5 No cost to implement

### Net Cost Weighted Score

Multiply the rating by 2:

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times 2 =$$

What other financial routes could be used to reduce the cost?

| Total Weighted Score                               |                 |              |                |            |          |             |
|--|-----------------|--------------|----------------|------------|----------|-------------|
| Add all weighted scores together. Max score is 90. |                 |              |                |            |          |             |
| GHG Emissions                                      | Enviro. Quality | Comm. Health | Social Justice | Energy Use | Net Cost | Total Score |
|  |                 |              |                |            |          |             |
|  | +               |              | +              |            | +        |             |
|  |                 | +            |                | +          |          |             |
|  |                 |              | +              |            | +        |             |
|  |                 |              |                | +          |          |             |
|  |                 |              |                |            | +        |             |
|  |                 |              |                |            |          | =           |