



CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

DATE: April 10, 2012

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Moore, Phil Coughlan, Bliss Moore, Elaine Ott, Ellen Moore, Jim Gawel, Carol Shiflett, Bill Anderson, Dale Anderson, Dan Dzyacky

COMMISSION MEMBER EXCUSED: Steven Garrett

OTHERS PRESENT: Kurtis Kingsolver, Ramie Pierce, Allison (UWT Student), Mike Slevin, Kristi Lynett, Holly Williams, Karen Hamilton, Lisa Rennie, Bob Mack, Bill Smith, Catherine Taylor

▪ **Approval of the March 13, 2012 Meeting Notes**

The March 13, 2012, meeting notes were approved and adopted.

▪ **Review of the April Agenda**

The April agenda was reviewed and approved.

▪ **Introductions**

The meeting began with introductions welcoming Holly Williams and Karen Hamilton, newly-appointed STC members.

▪ **Complete Streets Implementation – Kurtis Kingsolver, P.E., P.W. Assistant Director**

In November 2009, the City Council adopted complete streets, and when they adopted that it applied to capital improvements. This is important as the City has a distinction between what is considered maintenance and what is considered capital, and that is how projects are funded. When looking at projects for complete streets the City looks at new construction. There are four ways in which City projects are funded:

- Maintenance projects (chip seal) – these are strictly maintenance projects; the City does not do any type of complete streets as part of these projects.
- Preservation projects (grind and overlay) – these can be funded two ways: 1) Grant funds - the majority of these projects are funded through federal/state dollars. When using grant monies, the City cannot do any type of complete streets; 2) Local funds (gas tax) – it is rare that local dollars are used for these projects, but when they are, the City may elect to build any project they choose.
- Rehab projects (rebuild roads) - these are grant funded projects and the City can build whatever they choose as long as it is listed in the grant.

Most all City projects are grant-funded. It is very rare a project is built that does not have grant dollars attached. (Example: Traffic signals costs around \$400K. The City has an annual budget of \$30K/year to build traffic signals. Typically, a grant will have a 15-20% match requirement and that is what those funds are used for). The City's full arterial capital budget is \$1.2M/year at best, and those

dollars are used to match. Local dollars are just match for projects that are built, if a project is not grant funded the City cannot afford to build.

City Projects

- Tyler Street – South 38th to South 56th Street (completed last year). Out of this \$4.7M project, \$320K was from local dollars; \$1M from Environmental Services/ surface water and wastewater; the remainder was grant funded. This project was done when complete streets was enacted, while funding for the project was granted two years prior.
- Alaska Street – South 56th to South 72nd Street (under construction). Out of this \$5.7M project, \$240K is from local dollars; \$180K from real estate excise tax; a portion from ES/surface water; the remainder (\$3.6M) from grant funds.
- Stadium Way – South 9th to Tacoma Avenue - this project was advertised in January but bids came in too high. The City will be going out for bid again with construction to begin this summer. (\$11M project). This feature project includes spectacular views, sidewalk widening, rain gardens, benches, connections to Bayside trail, north and south bike lanes.
- Mildred Street – South 12th to South 19th Street (using all local dollars). A consultant has been hired to look at what the road can handle. The City's plans are to change the road from five lanes down to three, with buffered bike lanes, medians, landscaping (making it more of a gateway). Pierce Transit likes the idea, but is concerned about fewer lanes and having buses maneuver in and out. TCC is not in favor of the idea, but are open to meeting with students and City staff to discuss further. Lakewood is currently working with Fircrest and University Place on a grant to build bike lanes that go all the way to Lakewood through their portion. They currently have monies for the design, but not for construction.

■ **Urban Forestry Title 13 Code Update – Ramie Pierce, Urban Forester**

The Urban Forest Policy Element was adopted by Council in June 2010. It is identified as Chapter 10 in the City's Comprehensive Plan and addresses urban forest pieces from realms of urban agriculture, to using stormwater techniques in landscaping, to risk management, to maintenance responsibility in the right-of-way, etc. This policy element is what drives the Urban Forestry Program; Program Elements that will be or are currently underway:

- Urban Forest Management Plan – (will begin in 2013). Emergency/storm response plan; fire management; recommendations for management of rights-of-way and City-owned properties, and other properties; planting plans;
- Inventory and Assessment – the City's current canopy cover is 19% (the policy element sets up a 30% goal by 2030); assessment includes condition of trees and identifying needed treatments (removal, pruning, etc.); all trees in the (15) neighborhood districts were inventoried and assessed in 2012.
- Regulations – updates to Title 13, and a proposed Title 18 which will address any work in the right-of-way in relation to a tree. The City currently has some outdated regulations and will look to repeal and replace those under Title 18 (to include establishing an Urban Forestry Board and Heritage Tree Program).
- Education and Outreach – (benefits of trees; ongoing) - Anti-topping campaign, website, free workshops, informational brochures, Facebook: evergreentacoma, utility bill inserts, Envirotalk.
- Urban Forest Manual – technical guidance for tree planting and growing; standard operating procedures for City staff, standards and specifications for projects.
- Incentives and Assistance – tree risk assessment, financial assistance for removal of high-risk trees in the right-of-way (currently on hold due to budget constraints); surface water credit on utility bill for planting/retaining trees, coupons for trees/supplies, sidewalk replacement, additional free workshops.
- Implementation – (ties into complete streets) - street trees on street improvement projects, reforestation/restoration on City-owned lands; demonstration projects in downtown/business districts, potential for community orchards.

Timelines

- Stakeholders meetings were held January-May 2011, to talk more in-depth about landscape changes and the urban forestry board (what it would look like/how many people, etc.).
- Planning Commission (September 2011 to Present); a public hearing is scheduled for May 2nd on the public review draft.
- EPW presentation on May 9

Goals

- Grow canopy cover
 - From 19 to 30%
 - Modify landscaping regulations to canopy cover requirements by site/land use
 - Remove single-family exemption from canopy cover requirements
 - Add credits for canopy cover enhancers
 - More weight to retention of qualifying existing trees
- Increase flexibility
 - Require canopy cover percentage (at maturity) – site varies by zone/land use; rights-of-way-30%; surface parking lots-30%
 - Credits
 - Retention of existing tree canopy
 - Green roof
 - Increased soil volume for right-of-way/parking lot trees
 - Planting evergreens, where appropriate
 - Use of permeable pavement around trees (everything but pervious asphalt)
 - Stormwater credits (which are not in Title 13)
 - In-lieu fees to be applied towards tree planting and maintenance
 - Self-managed agencies - language will be included in the landscape code for agencies like Metro Parks that have an urban forestry program, in which they would not have to comply with the City's code requirements on a project-by-project level; instead, they would be able to do that across their entire agency, and check-in with the City every six years.
- Quantity and quality
 - Canopy cover percentage vs. three trees for every 100 feet
 - More credit for evergreens
 - Guidance in the Urban Forest Manual for the design and quality of trees
- Protect intended canopy
 - Require irrigation (three options) – Two require infrastructure to be applied; the other requires hand-watering only
 - Landscape management plans
 - Clarify language and enforcement practices on the replacement of dead/damaged trees, including pruning mistakes
 - Establishing standards to be referenced by code for planting/growing trees

■ Staff Updates

- Members were asked to sign-up for the remaining Neighborhood Council presentations
- Request went out for volunteers interested in serving on the small grant funding subcommittee.
- The STC will be posting for another commission seat. The press release will be sent to all members in late May/June.
- Dale Anderson and Jim Gawel were formally acknowledged for their long-term commitment to the Sustainable Tacoma Commission.
- TEDx will be at the Museum of Glass, Tuesday, April 17; there are still seats available. Kristi will speak on “Tacoma’s Sustainability Transformation.”

■ Public Comment

Allison, UWT Master's student – Allison's thesis is on “How do we change behavior to make private citizens more eco-friendly?” Allison has been in conversations with Jim Gawel and Bliss Moore regarding plastic bag use in Tacoma, with an interest to research the history and success of anti-plastic bag programs (including plastic bag bans and plastic bag fees), and look at different ways other cities have approached the question. She would like to assess what support level the Tacoma population might have for a plastic bag program; is Tacoma in favor of a ban; what are their thoughts,

and how might they envision a plastic bag program. Phil will share with Allison what information he has on plastic bags and will present to members at the next meeting.

▪ **Objectives for Next Meeting**

- Natural Resource Economies of Metro Park Properties – John Garner
- Plastic Bags – Phil Coughlan

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, May 8, 2012, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street, Room 16.