



## CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

**DATE:** July 10, 2012

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jane Moore, Bliss Moore, Holly Williams, Ellen Moore, Dan Dzyacky, Karen Hamilton, Phil Coughlan, Bill Anderson

**COMMISSION MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Carol Shiflett, Elaine Ott

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Chris Bast, Owen Atkins, Kristi Lynett, Dale King, Lisa Rennie, Yvette Mason, Bill Smith, Catherine Taylor

▪ **Approval of the June 12, 2012 Meeting Notes**

The June 12, 2012 meeting notes were approved and adopted.

▪ **Review of the July Agenda**

The July agenda was reviewed and approved.

▪ **Coal Train Implications – Chris Bast, Climate Solutions**

Climate Solutions is a four-region (WA, OR, ID, MT) non-profit and their mission is to accelerate practical and profitable solutions to global warming by galvanizing leadership, growing investment and bridging divides. They have worked on energy efficiency, biofuel solutions, clean energy solutions (wind power, solar, geo thermal, tidal power) and are advancing these types of solutions across the NW.

Coal today

- WA and OR have committed to getting off coal and have reached agreements to shut down coal plants in Centralia and Boardman over the next 10 years.
- Because US coal demand is dropping significantly there is an explosive demand for energy in Asian developing markets.
- Coal giants have identified getting US coal to Asian markets as their top strategic priority.
- The plan is to dig up all the coal in the Powder River Basins of MT and WY, place it on trains for transport to ports and shipping to China where it will be burned (ship sizes are equal to five WA state ferries).
- At full build-out, there would be 60 trains a day coming up through Spokane down through WA Columbia River Gorge, where they will begin to spread out going to the six proposed coal export sites: Bellingham, Grays Harbor, Longview, St. Helens, Coos Bay, and Boardman. At the Boardman site, coal would be loaded on barges and shipped to the St. Helens site.

Traffic impacts to Tacoma

- With the Cherry Point/Bellingham site, Tacoma could be looking at 125-car trains, 1½ miles long with each train running 3 to 4 minutes at 50 mph; 18 trains a day (one train every 1.3 hours). Train schedules would be 24/7/365.
- Traffic delays
- Freight mobility issues
- Emergency response delays

- Accidents, noise
- Tacoma business and community impacts
- Congestion – preliminary traffic analyses have been done showing major impacts from significant increases in train traffic; a diverse group of local governments have expressed major concerns (i.e., Hood River, Sandpoint, Missoula, Skagit and Clark Counties, Camas, Stevenson, etc.).
  - Public funding implications – Note: The railroad is required to pay *no more* than 5%
    - Track extensions – may need to double or triple the tracks to handle capacity
    - Weight – will need to reinforce a lot of the existing rail beds
    - Rail crossing upgrades
    - Road repair, bridges, erosion management and environmental mitigation
    - Demands for public spending at a time when public budgets are facing historic pressures
  - Pollution
    - BNSF has estimated between 500 lbs. to one ton of coal is lost from each car (between 30-120 tons from a 120-car train)
    - There is no indication that recent efforts to reduce coal loss are being implemented or effective
    - Significant coal dust issues at terminals affect communities miles away
    - Impact on shellfish industry - how does coal dust interact with the water; are the toxins that are present in coal released through the dust
  - Health issues – Reference: [www.coaltrainfact.org](http://www.coaltrainfact.org)
    - Release of significant amounts of airborne pollutants from diesel engines and coal dust
    - Increased train traffic
    - Delays at rail crossings (tailpipe exhaust, emergency response delays)
    - Increased risk of vehicle/pedestrian injuries
    - Diesel particulate matter
  - Actions requested
    - Participate in process for projects
    - Demand complete answers to questions relating to impacts on the transportation system, traffic, particulate pollution, health, and possible demands for public funding
    - Join with government officials and agencies in requesting an area-wide EIS addressing cumulative environmental, economic and fiscal impact.

The Commission is supportive of a resolution that includes certain components looking to establish Tacoma's standing in the EIS, ensuring that all impacts to the City (environmental, health, traffic, safety, etc.) are evaluated in the EIS, if possible. And that there are some distinct issues in Tacoma (including the Port and the Utilities) where the resolution will need to be as unique as possible to ensure it expresses the Commission's viewpoint.

The EPW would like to hear comments from the Commission regarding today's presentation and general recommendations for EPA:

- Area-wide cumulative EIS – ensure that all potential impacts to the City are taken into account, including having one of the six hearings held in Tacoma (to be included in the resolution )
- Ensure that all local stakeholders' opinions are included in the composition of the resolution.

The timeline on scoping notice for Cherry Point proposals will be in early August, with hearings in late September/early October. A hearing should be scheduled for Tacoma as early as possible. The City would be looking at enforcing all local laws.

#### ▪ Staff Updates

- The City will be hosting two trainings this summer to help staff better implement the Council's sustainability priorities
  - Life Cycle Thinking 101, July 24, 8:30-10:30 am
  - Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines and Best Practices for Contracting, August 8, 10:30–Noon

- Elaine Ott has had to resign from the Commission. The vacated position will be advertised at the end of August
- Staff will be hiring an OoS intern for 15-20 hrs/week. OoS Intern, Allison, will be starting in the fall.
- Tacoma Solar Tour, Saturday, August 4<sup>th</sup>
- The City manager has organized community budget workshops (“Back to Basics”) around the City to solicit input to the next biennium’s budgeting. Staff will send out to members the online survey and schedule of remaining budget workshops.
- As a way to help implement the sustainability vision resolution, Public Works and Community Economic Development will be piloting a new question on the City’s Request for Ordinance/Resolution Form (“How does this request meet the City’s sustainability priorities?”)
- The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 pm, regarding their proposed code changes. In preparation for this meeting, Jan and Phil will be providing written comments on specific sustainability items that will be covered: 1) increased thresholds for environmental review; 2) expanded allowances for “live-work” and “work-live” uses in the downtown and mixed-use districts; and 3) the addition of a parking exemption for existing buildings in commercial districts.
- Tacoma Power just launched its Ductless Heat Pump Incentive program which will be a great fit with PSCAAs activity to remove woodstoves in some of the non-attainment areas. The program has a very strong low-income component, and depending on qualifications, some may be able to receive as much as 100% in grant monies.
- TPU and the City’s IT team have been working to create an automated process for collecting and uploading electric (and water) consumption information in a format consistent with EPA’s Portfolio Manager, enabling customers and others to benchmark their buildings.

▪ **Public Comments**

There were no public comments

▪ **Objectives for Next Meeting**

Objectives for next meeting were not identified

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, August 14, 2012, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street, Room 16.