



CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

DATE: May 8, 2012

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Moore, Bliss Moore, Elaine Ott, Ellen Moore, Carol Shiflett, Bill Anderson, Holly Williams, Karen Hamilton

COMMISSION MEMBERS EXCUSED: Phil Coughlan, Dan Dzyacky

OTHERS PRESENT: John Garner, Roxanne Mills, Kristi Lynett, Jessica Ludwig, Catherine Taylor

▪ **Approval of the April 10, 2012 Meeting Notes**

The April 10, 2012, meeting notes were approved and adopted.

▪ **Review of the May Agenda**

The May agenda was reviewed and approved.

▪ **John Garner, Metro Parks Conservation and Education Manager Presentation on Recent Report “Ecosystem Services Valuation”**

John Garner and Roxanne Mills joined in a presentation on the work Metro Parks Tacoma (MPT) has been doing to help quantify the value of a parks and recreation system to Tacoma. MPT has retained Dave Batker, who leads the firm Earth Economics, and who has done a lot of great work throughout the world in terms of evaluating ecosystem services.

MPT Economic Impact Analysis Studies

• **Phase 1 – Research Methodology**

Primary research - Surveys were taken to examine who uses the parks, what their spending patterns are, and how it drives economic resources inside the City.

- Intercept surveys – a number of parks were visited in August 2009 receiving about 800 responses (gender, age, income, residency, group size, frequency of visits, means of transportation).
- Spending habits
 - At the park (not including admissions)
 - In the City (coming or going)
 - Multiplied by frequency of visits, using resident and non-resident ratios, and applied to all parks of the same classification, or by attendance data.
- Total Direct Spending
 - Spending by residents was \$4M/yr. (66% in regional parks and facilities; 34 % in community and local parks)
 - Spending by non-residents was \$18M/yr. (69% in regional parks and facilities; 31% in community and local parks)

Secondary research

- Looked at zones of impact using the methodology developed by John Crompton of Texas A&M, where he looked at incremental property value differences. The incremental property

tax increases, based on sample neighborhood and community parks in MPT's planning areas, had a total assessed value increase of \$9M.

- Expenditures of 2009 general fund and capital improvement program were \$52M;
- The total economic impact of direct, indirect and induced spending was \$67M;
- For a total net economic gain of \$14M.
- The Phase I study brings MPT to an annual economic impact of \$46.9M.

- **Phase II – Ecosystem Services Valuation**

Looked at the value of the ecosystem infrastructure (land types) – wetlands like Wapato Lake and Snake Lake that detain stormwater and natural areas like gulches that provide for aquifer recharge (South Tacoma aquifer); also looked at the quality of land.

- Ecosystem benefits
 - Valuation for climate regulation, food provision, habitat, and informational systems
 - Quantified the value of about 3,000 acres
 - Estimate the current value at \$8.9M; potential restored value would be \$12.5M
- Health cost reductions
 - Exercise reduces adult health care costs for a savings of \$9M/yr.
 - Air purification by trees reduces toxins \$250K to \$350K.
- Social Capital
 - Volunteerism - if MPT had to purchase services for 50K hours in restoration or for donations, the total social value could be \$7M; if the out-of-door and/or summer programs had to be provided by an institution, the total education costs would be \$1.3M.

As quantified in Phase II work (\$26.8M) in addition to Phase I work (\$46.9M), the benefit MPT is estimating the system has in terms of economic contribution to the Tacoma community is \$73.8M/yr. (based on the valuation criteria available for environmental, social and economic impacts). In 2009, MPT's revenue was \$38M with (45%) \$17M coming from tax sources; an Economic Impact Studies Defined Annual Return of \$73.8M.

- **Work Plan Updates**

- Energy

- Energy audits – Elaine did research last year on the possibility of conducting energy audits at the time of home sale. At that time, she spoke with a number of banks and credit unions regarding the potential for having an incentive plan in place with financing, which would include an energy audit. The larger banks were not interested, but smaller credit unions were. The key to this program is financing, as it could cost the customer an additional \$200 for the energy audit. There was interest shown by a local credit union in partnering with the City, perhaps with some form of matching contributions.
- Community Solar - The State Legislation authorizing community solar projects appears to be somewhat vague on what entities are actually eligible. Staff/members have been working on the community solar project for the past year with the assumption that the City is eligible – that may not be the case (tax credit issue). Currently unclear on how to proceed, staff has submitted an official request to the Department of Revenue for a formal tax notion. The department's response (within 110 business days) should arrive next week indicating if they think Tacoma is eligible.

- Climate Adaptation Assessment

Staff attended a meeting on climate adaptation with jurisdictions from throughout B.C., Portland, Seattle, Bellevue, and Pierce County, where updates were presented on their climate adaptation planning. Tacoma needs to do a base level assessment, as there are some generally agreed upon projections for what could happen in our region. Though it will take a lot of work to accomplish, staff may be able to obtain a master's student to do their thesis on developing some a Smith tool and interviewing all asset managers throughout the City. Some jurisdictions are working with their local natural resource and emergency management and hazards groups. Seattle has a pilot that when working on capital projects and they need to build a little differently, they are putting in added requirements, or at are least thinking about how they are going to plan. Consulting groups – Cascadia has someone that is currently working on this; at the meeting, it

was talked about local jurisdictions maybe buying a tool in bulk from the consultants. Staff will send members a link on some of the presentations from that climate adaptation meeting.

- Sustainable Tacoma Grants

Staff may utilize leftover monies from the 2010/2011 grant programs (\$14K); however, a minimum of \$25K will need to be secured by August 2012 to qualify for a third round of grants. Staff will be submitting requests for monies from Environmental Services/Solid Waste and TPU; neither currently has a small grant program. It was suggested that members contact private companies in an effort to obtain small pots of monies; in turn the business name would appear as sponsor on brochures, press release, etc. Staff will compose a one-page proposal sponsorship for members who will then begin contacting local businesses.

- Land Use and Green Building

- South Downtown/Dome EIS - The MLK group is compiling information from several recently held community workshops. On May 24, they will hold a meeting to present their updated plans based on input from these workshops. In March, the South Downtown work group met to review and comment on the vision for their plan. They will hold a meeting in June to go over those results.
- Urban Forestry Code Updates – The Planning Commission received negative testimony in hearing public comment on the Urban Forestry Title 13 Code Updates. The STC will submit a letter of support to the Planning Commission.
- Backyard Poultry
 - The Council is in discussion to change the City's chicken laws. Specifically, they are looking at relaxing some of the current setback requirements and putting a limit on the number of chickens (currently there are no limits on hens and roosters are not allowed). They will also explore information on goats (livestock or small animals?). Seattle currently classifies goats (100 lbs. or less) as small animals as opposed to livestock. Carol will be meeting with the Goat Justice League in Seattle.
 - Staff will be attending the May 21st Neighborhoods and Housing Committee meeting regarding domestic fowl code changes. The hope is that any changes to the chicken code can be in-place for the Urban Chicken Tour, sponsored by Gardensphere.
 - BLUS will give an update on their green building work plan at the June meeting.

- Waste Reduction and Recycling

- Research mandatory recycling policies – Staff may look for a student intern to do research in looking at the pros and cons of having mandatory recycling policies in-place. Carol will be the lead on this project.
- Phil will give a presentation on plastic bag reduction programs at the June meeting.
- Develop and/or promote reduced consumption initiatives – In looking at some consumption initiatives, Carol has a master list of most of the collaborative consumptions. There are definitely people in Tacoma who are participating in collaborative consumption initiatives, but yet there is no formalized hyperlocal Tacoma web page. This may be something the Commission may want to pursue, or perhaps put together a local lending library. There is a shareable website on Facebook that came out with a guidebook on how to encourage collaborative consumption at the local level. Vashon Island has a web-based email system (vashonall.com) that has daily emails from people regarding free cycle items.

- Education and Outreach

- Sustainable Expo – Should be receiving applications for sponsorships in the fall.
- Presentation to Neighborhood Councils – Bliss attended the West End Neighborhood Council; Jane attended the New Tacoma Neighborhood Council; Phil attended the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council. All members were warmly welcomed, with residents showing interest in what the Office of Sustainability represents (what they do, what they have done and the money they have saved the City)

- Transportation

- Dan will share information on a Citywide idle ban at the June meeting.
- A member of the New Tacoma Neighborhood Council shared an interest in starting a campaign to outlaw new drive-thru's in the City, based on anti-idling laws

▪ **Staff Updates**

- Make-a-Splash Grant applications are due May 21st.
- “The Coal Hard Truth,” PLU’s University Center, May 8, 7:00 pm – presentation about multi-proposals to place coal terminals in Oregon and Washington for export to Asia, and the implications of raiiling coal through our communities; Tacoma could see up to 20 mile-long coal trains daily.
- Dave Batker, Earth Economics, will be presenting at the EPW, May 9, 4:30 pm.
- Members were shown several drafts of a Visual Identity. It was suggested that using a Visual ID would help to maintain a more consistent theme on materials that come out of the Office of Sustainability (i.e., grant brochures, banners, annual reports, events, TV Tacoma tips, etc.).

▪ **Public Comment**

There was no public comment

▪ **Objectives for Next Meeting**

- Green Building Plan Implementation – BLUS staff
- Plastic Bag Reduction Programs – Phil Coughlan
- Citywide Idle Ban – Dan Dzyacky

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, June 12, 2012, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street, Room 16.