



## CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

**DATE:** November 13, 2012

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bill Anderson, Ellen Moore, Holly Williams, Carol Shiflett, Nick Cutting, Jane Moore, Karen Hamilton, Kimberlie Lelli

**COMMISSION MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Bliss Moore, Dan Dzyacky, Phil Coughlan

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Elliott Barnett, Mike Carey, Desiree Pooley, Susan McCleary, Christina Zinkgraf, Alysén Laasko, Kristi Lynett, Bill Smith, Bob Mack, Lisa Rennie, Catherine Taylor

▪ **Approval of the October 9, 2012 Meeting Notes**

The October 9, 2012 meeting notes were approved and adopted.

▪ **Review of the November Agenda**

The November agenda was approved, with the inclusion of an update on the Wapato Lake Outreach project.

▪ **Urban Forestry/Landscaping Code Update – Elliott Barnett, CED**

Over the past few years, there has been a lot of policy development around the issue of trees (having more tree canopy and having healthier trees). To get all of these environmental benefits, it takes a lot of work to develop an effective policy.

Urban Forest – Major policy emphasis

- Urban Forest Policy Element - City Council adoption 2010
- Open Space Habitat and Recreation Element - City Council adoption 2008
- Climate Action Plan - tree planting goals call for having a healthier urban forest for tree coverage as a climate change strategy
- Surface Water Management Plan - having more tree canopy serves a real surface water function

Urban Forest Policy Element – Established a number of key policy objectives

- Recognize urban forest as an important asset; serves many functions
- Achieve 30% city-wide tree canopy coverage by 2030 (currently at 19%)
- Provide flexible regulatory approaches
- Enhance stormwater benefits through landscaping
- Integrate public safety considerations
- Enhance connections between natural and developed areas
- Implementation through cross-departmental efforts; Environmental Services has been the key initiator in working closely with the Planning Division.

Policy Implementation

- Education and outreach (benefits of trees)
- Build incentives and assistance
- Leading by example – planting, removals, demonstration projects
- Regulations – update Title 13

- Inventory and Assessment and Urban Forest Management Plan – all are part of tracking information and getting a workable benefit plan to increase canopy coverage and retain current canopy

#### Education and Outreach

- New plant storage facility at the City's landfill – smaller sized trees with better structure will be purchased and held in the new facility until they reach adequate size for planting on City properties
- Community workshops – information on proper pruning practices, planting techniques, using native plants; various other educational workshops
- Educational brochures
- Urban forest website: [cityoftacoma.org/evergreentacoma](http://cityoftacoma.org/evergreentacoma)
- Public education events – “Wake up for Wapato,” Youth Environmental Summit and Green Tacoma Day

#### Incentives and Assistance

- Tree coupons – City is partnering with local nurseries to provide coupons for discounted rates for trees; also come with TAGRO coupons
- Urban forestry technical guidance documents – contains a section specific to right-of-way development standards; City's standard operating procedures; single-family do's and don'ts on tree maintenance; and code updates

#### Lead by Example

- Demonstration projects – current rain garden redevelopment projects: 11<sup>th</sup> Street Green Infrastructure and South Tacoma Way Green Infrastructure
- Improved standards of maintenance
- Open space management
- Updated City standards

#### Regulations – Planning Commission requests refocus on positive aspects

- Strong support for goals
- City leadership
- Incentives and flexibility
  - More flexibility for tree placement and quantity
  - Expand credits for retaining existing trees
  - Provide incentives/bonuses for LID
- Quality not quantity
  - Enhance requirements for tree quality/variety (species, age, canopy size, evergreen, etc.)
  - Add specificity regarding CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design)
  - Recognize planned dense areas (focus on portions of sites not covered by structures)
  - Limited new requirements (street trees for right-of-way construction projects and new private road projects)
- Tree health
  - Expand focus on “right tree / right place”
  - Update provisions in terms of installation, irrigation, maintenance, protection, pruning
- Reduced emphasis on requirements, particularly in single-family and view areas

#### Tentative Project Schedule

- September/October – Informal community outreach (review project goals, key issues/concerns)
- November 28 – EPW for review of proposed program elements and potential code amendments
- January – Community outreach (second draft of code amendments and pre-hearing informational session)
- February – Planning Commission public hearing on draft code amendments
- March – Community outreach (review of Commission's recommendations with stakeholder groups; proposed code amendments to City Council Study Session)
- April – City Council, public hearing, EPW review, final consideration of proposed code amendments

#### Planning Commission items for review this year

- Drive-Thru Regulations Amendment – a proposal to step-up all restrictions in which drive-thrus would have to be contained within a building; existing drive-thrus grandfathered in.
- County-Wide Planning Policy – a consistency exercise where on the County level some new policy framework has been adopted; the City is reviewing the code to ensure more consistencies
- Container Port Element – a state requirement that Seattle and Tacoma do more to ensure they are facilitating the development of container port facilities
- Transportation Element – annual update of the projects listed in the transportation element
- Shoreline-Related Elements – removal of a few older policy documents in the Shoreline Master Program
- Development Intensity Designation – to review and make more useful the current system of land-use intensities
- Adoption and Procedural Amendment
- Planning and Subdivision Regulations – current state law allows short plats to go from 4 lots to 9 lots; updating the code with some new standards
- Sign Regulations – looking at digital signage
- Portable Housing Regulations – review of the report developed by City task force
- Trail-Friendly Regulations – looking at zoning regulations for properties on either side of trails (i.e., Prairie Line, Water Ditch)
- Planning Code Clean-up

#### ■ **Climate Adaptation Public Participation Grant Brainstorming – Susan McCleary, Project Staff**

World Wildlife Foundation will be awarding between two and five grants (30K–\$100K) for three to five US cities to encourage public participation and engagement around preparing for local vulnerabilities to climate change. Not a lot of cities are currently participating; this may be a good opportunity for Tacoma.

Three objectives developed so far

- Inform community of ways in which Tacoma is vulnerable to changes in climate
- Engage policymakers about these issues, and give them a forum to hear suggestions and concerns from their constituents
- Be a springboard for further strategy and resiliency planning development

Methods - Series of three public meetings (climate conversations)

- April – (Global climate change impacts) – Suggest: Pt. Defiance Zoo is looking at developing a climate footprint business award. They would be soliciting nominations for businesses that have shown carbon footprint reduction. The International Polar Foundation could present awards to the business – they are known to have excellent speakers on global impacts due to climate change.
- May – (Local climate change impacts; what are our vulnerabilities) – Suggest: Obtain Master's students from the Evans School in Seattle to do research on climate adaptation assessment; update existing CAP.
- June – (What can be done locally to reduce our contributions to climate change) – Suggest: Develop a short video that speaks to local vulnerability's; sharing with community members to obtain input

Other items

- Come up with a catchy name
- Potential partnerships – UWT; Pt. Defiance Zoo; Earth Economics
- Timeline: Monday, November 19

#### ■ **“Healthy Homes/Healthy Neighborhoods, Wapato Lake” Project Update – Christina Zinkgraf, Project Staff**

In an effort to help Wapato Lake residents improve the health of their homes and neighborhoods, local organizations have partnered to provide information on money-saving programs currently offered through the City and Pierce County. For the past month, project staff has been going door-to-door in the Wapato Lake neighborhood (2K homes) to inquire what services or information residents

need. With over 500 homes visited to-date, staff has received very good responses. Recent resident giveaways:

- 600 light bulbs (from Tacoma Power)
- 130 plastic water bags for testing the efficiency of water fixtures (from Tacoma Water)
- 40 tree coupons
- Over 40 TAGRO coupons
- Over 13½ hours conversing with residents (re: clean air/the replacement of wood stoves, the giveaway of free garbage disposals by Solid Waste - 20 residents signed-up, etc.).

Staff will continue to canvas the Wapato Lake neighborhood in December, January and again in April - July. A variety of workshops and block parties will be scheduled in January.

#### ■ **Plastic Bag Survey Update – Alysen Laasko, Project Staff**

As part of a campaign to increase reusable shopping bag use, staff conducted a pre-campaign survey at Stadium Thriftway over three days last month (two shifts daily: 11:30 - 2:00 pm / 5:00 - 7:30 pm). To entice shoppers to participate, there was a raffle for a \$10 gift card, lots of candy and signs. A total of 164 surveys were collected:

- Demographics
  - Age - Most respondents were 20-29
  - Ethnicity - Majority were Caucasian/European (120)
  - Gender – 44% male; 51% female
- Store shopping habits – Majority indicated Thriftway was not their main store, but shop there three or more times weekly (work nearby; pass by on way home, etc.)
- Consumer perception of plastic bag laws
  - 121 had heard of Seattle's plastic bag ban
  - 53 would support plastic bag law or paper fee; 41 would not
  - 56% felt their consumer rights would be violated if law instituted
- Customer bag usage
  - 86 use plastic; 53 use reusable
  - 81% own reusable bags
  - 120 reuse plastic; 88 reuse paper
- Behavior change
  - 87 remember 0-25% of the time to use reusable bag; 63 remember 50-75% of the time
  - 94 forget to bring reusable bag
  - 66 liked the idea of a \$0.05 discount
- Next steps
  - Continue to analyze the data for comparisons between questions
  - Campaign will begin the first week of December; focus on evening shift (4:00-8:00)
  - Initiatives
    - Thriftway will change to a raffle system per bag used, promoting their new reusable bags
    - Project staff will have shoppers sign pledges
    - Car stickers will go out as reminder to bring reusables
    - Educational components (posters, website link, etc.)

Post-campaign survey will be conducted to see if behavior has changed

#### ■ **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, December 11, 2012, 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm, Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street, Room 16.