



Green Events Guide

Community and Special Events



About this Guide



The City of Tacoma's Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability has provided you with this guide to help create a plan to green your event. It is required by the City of Tacoma that events that meet the *Green Event Criteria* must complete a *Green Events Scorecard Application* and implement the approved sustainability initiatives. This guide is intended to make this process as easy and cost effective as possible. By following this guide your event will have a significantly lower impact on the environment.

The *Green Event Scorecard* contains various green initiatives that can be taken in order to receive points to add up to your final green event score. These actions range from providing a required *Waste Reduction Plan* to promoting tree-friendly travel.

You must complete and submit the *Green Event Scorecard Application* to demonstrate how you will meet the minimum required green event title.



Green Event Criteria

If your event falls within one or more of these categories you will be required to fill out a *Green Event Scorecard Application* prior to your event.



- Medium to large scale events using contributions from the City (monetary or in-kind).
- Medium to large scale events on city property or using right of way permits.
- Medium to Large scale events providing food/beverage/and giveaways (vendor related).
- City Hosted Events



Below are definitions of event sizes and their requirements:

- Medium-scale events are events with 1,000-2,000 participants. These events are encouraged to achieve at least Green Merit certification in 2014.
- Large-scale events are events with over 2,000 participants. These events are encouraged to achieve Green Merit certification in 2014.

Your event may not be required to fill out a *Green Event Scorecard Application* if it has less than 1,000 participants.

Green Event Benefits

- Participating in the Green Events Program will not only result in less waste, but could also lower costs for you and your vendors at the event.
- Attendance may be positively impacted as your event gains more positive attention by being recognized as a Green Event by the City.
- The City will recognize all Green Events on the City's Green Event Webpage, which may include a link to your event's website.
- As an event-holder, hosting a green event shows environmental leadership.
- Event-holders and event-goers will realize the impact events can have on the environment, and the actions they can take to help mitigate some of these impacts.
- Reduces waste and diverts recyclable materials from going into landfills.
- Encourages other event-holders to also plan a green event.
- Expands the market for sustainable commodities/service, making them more accessible.
- Creates green job opportunities.



Green Event Objectives

- **Education-** to make the information and tools available to event-holders to help event-goers understand and minimize their environmental impact.
- **Measurement-** to provide an easy to use tool for event-holders to use to measure their environmental impact and to help reduce it.
- **Recognition-** to provide event-holders with the recognition of putting forth the effort to become a green event to the required level or beyond.
- **Regulation-** to advance the sustainability efforts of the City of Tacoma to require events held in the City to be green.



Pre-Event Actions



Events that fall into one of the categories of the “Green Event Criteria” will be required to participate in becoming a *Green Event*. This guide is intended to help make this process easy and inexpensive to event planners.

Prior to filling out the *Green Event Scorecard Application* event coordinators should:

- **Involve stakeholders-** Meet with all involved parties of your event, such as event owners, site owners, vendors and contractors to inform them of your sustainability efforts. Gather feedback and input that may be incorporated into the *Green Event Scorecard Application*.
- **Coordinate with Vendors-** Make vendors aware of your sustainability efforts and ask for their cooperation and participation.
- **Designate Roles for Volunteers-** Roles for volunteers may be assigned in your *Waste Reduction Plan* using the provided template. Other roles for volunteers should be clearly assigned and understood prior to the event. The EnviroNews Listserv is an excellent resource to use to find volunteers for your event.
- **Green Events Scorecard Processing-** Upon submission of your scorecard application, City staff will review your scorecard and respond to you with your results within one week. If your event is approved as a Green Event you will receive an e-mail with a certificate and logo demonstrating your green event participation and sustainability efforts. The logo may be used in event advertising and publications.



Event Day Actions

Green Events should be well prepared by the day that the event takes place. This guide will help to make this process easy and organized. On the day of the event, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Promotion-** Strategically place green event banners and signs, and make sure they are placed at entrances. Bring media attention to your green event initiatives.
- **Volunteers-** Make sure that volunteers understand duties assigned in the *Waste Reduction Plan*. Make sure that volunteers have the necessary supplies to perform assigned tasks.
- **Compliance-** City staff will perform random spot-checking to ensure that initiatives reported on the event scorecard are being complied with.



Post Event Actions

Congratulations! Your event is done. As a green event, it is important to complete the entire process with the City of Tacoma. Though the event is over, there are still a couple of important tasks to take care of.

- Complete a *Post-Event Wrap-Up Form* and submit it to the City to demonstrate your compliance within twenty days of your event. *It is important to complete all steps of the Green Event Certification Program in order to receive sponsorship and/or host events in the City in the future.*
- Ask everyone involved for suggestions and feedback.
- Offer an event debriefing for stakeholders.
- Inform everyone involved (management, shareholders, sponsors, contractors, event owners, and the public) about your events sustainability initiatives' success.
- Prepare a press release highlighting your event's sustainability success.



Important Things to Note

- Complete your Scorecard Application as soon as possible in order to use your event's Green Event logo for advertising materials.
- The City will respond to your application within one week of receiving it with your preliminary score.
- Events receiving city funds or an Environmental Services Sponsorship are encouraged to become a Green Excellence Event.
- It is important to complete all steps of the Green Event Program in order to continue to receive sponsorship and/or host events in the City in the future.
- A Green Event Kit is available to all Green Event Planners which includes: volunteer aprons, tip sheets, green event signs, recycling station signs, and water fountains. You may choose to use all or some of the items in the kit.
- Contact Environmental Services staff as soon as possible to create your *Waste Reduction Plan* (see page 9)
- Beginning Spring of 2015 elements of this program will be required.



Scorecard Application

Listed below are the Green Initiatives you may choose to implement at your event and their point values. The scorecard application may be found along with the Waste Management Plan form and the Wrap-Up Form on the Green Events webpage.

Below are the points available for becoming a certified Green Event. The first three initiatives are required for any Green Event.

To become a Green Merit event, you must earn 5 points.

To become a Green Excellence event, you must earn 8 points.

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Value</i>
<i>1. Use only 100% recycled paper for promotional materials or use no paper at all.</i>	Prerequisite/1point*
<i>2. Work with Environmental Services Staff to create a waste reduction plan.</i>	Prerequisite/1 point*
<i>3. Promote best alternative transportation options (if applicable.)</i>	Prerequisite/1 point*

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Value</i>
<i>4. Provide water fountains. (If hookups are available and there is adequate drainage.)⁴</i>	1
<i>5. Require that your vendors eliminate non-sustainable giveaways.</i>	1
<i>6. Provide temporary bicycle racks or choose a location where bicycle racks are provided.</i>	1
<i>7. Make your travel tree friendly by supporting the Green Tacoma Partnership. Minimum \$100 donation.</i>	1
<i>8. Include pre-consumer food waste recycling in your Waste Reduction Plan.</i>	2
<i>9. Provide volunteers to staff recycle stations.</i>	2
<i>10. Donate excess food to a local food bank/homeless shelter.</i>	2
<i>11. Submit other stewardship initiatives to the City for approval.</i>	Up to 2 points available.
Total	15 Points Possible

*You are encouraged to complete as many initiatives as you can to become a recognized Green Event. In 2015 initiatives 1-3 will be required prerequisites.

Why Are These Initiatives Important?

Some of these green initiatives are apparent as to why they are important for hosting an environmentally conscious event, while others may have you wondering. Here is an explanation behind each initiative and why it benefits your event and the environment.



1. Using 100% recycled Paper

Ideally, using no paper at all would be the best option. However, if paper is required, using recycled paper reduces the amount of new waste created from using entirely new resources.



2. Provide a Waste Reduction Plan

Planning ahead is important to reduce waste streams from your event. Creating a successful plan will be easy with help from Environmental Services Staff and the Waste Reduction Plan Template. Environmental Services Staff will help you create a waste diversion goal and map out where to put waste and recycle receptacles. Make sure to set up an appointment with ES Staff to create a plan 20 days before your event.



3. Promote Best Alternative Transportation Options

Depending on your event, there are plenty of different alternative transportation methods to promote and/or provide for your event attendees. Alternative transportation reduces the amount of single-occupancy vehicles on the road because of your event, which reduces emissions related to your event. Check out the Resources page on page 8 for more information on Tacoma's transportation options.



4. Provide Water Fountains

Providing water fountains for event guests allows them to have a drink without creating waste from either a plastic water bottle or a disposable cup. Water fountains also allow guests to have a place to refill their reusable water bottles. The City can assist with providing water fountains. Contact Environmental Services staff for details.

5. Eliminate Non-Sustainable Vendor Giveaways

Encourage vendors not to give away unnecessary items to your guests! If items are to be distributed among attendees, make sure they are thoughtful, reusable and practical, not items that will end up in the trash or worse, on the ground.

6. Temporary Bicycle Racks

Bike racks are available to use through the City of Tacoma. Providing bike racks will encourage sustainable alternative transportation. With a safe place to lock up a bike, participants will be more likely to choose to ride, rather than choose to drive. Contact (253)591-5172 for more information.



7. Donating to the Green Tacoma Partnership for Tree-Friendly Travel

Many event-goers and participants will travel by car. The Green Tacoma Partnership (GTP) is partnership with the City of Tacoma, the non-profit organization Forterra, Metro-Parks, and other organizations and partners. Donating to GTP will help to offset some of greenhouse gas emissions from that travel. Each year, GTP recruits and trains new Habitat Stewards who replace invasive plant species in Tacoma's green space with a diverse mix of native trees, shrubs and groundcover. By doing this, GTP contributes to cleaner air, cleaner water, and a healthier, sustainable Tacoma. Your donation will support both the Partnership's education and planting efforts, which result in the removal of invasive plant species, thousands of native plants planted and stewarded, and nearly 30,000 volunteer hours annually.



8. Pre-Consumer Food Waste Recycling

Pre-consumer food waste recycling is an excellent way to reduce waste streams and meet your diversion goal created in your Waste Management Plan. Make sure to inform food vendors of your sustainability efforts and require vendors to participate in behind the counter food recycling.



9. Staffed Recycle Stations

Staffed recycle stations are more likely to stay uncontaminated and generate the most recyclable material. Make sure that your volunteers stand out by utilizing the City's volunteer aprons. For helping finding volunteers use the City's EnviroNews Listserv at:

<http://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/one.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=19619>

10. Donating Excess Food

Sustainability is often thought of in only an environmental way. Though- the environmental aspect is very important, the community is also an important part of sustainability. Donating excess food from your event to a homeless shelter or food bank positively impacts the surrounding community. It also reduces waste, which is environmentally friendly. Please see the *Charitable Food Donations Guidelines* handout link to help you decide what is able to be donated and what is not.



11. Submit Your Own Stewardship Initiative

Have a great idea to green your event? Tell us about it! Your green ideas could earn you up to two points toward your scorecard total!

Resources

In this section you'll find helpful websites, contacts, and other resources to help implement the initiatives from your Scorecard Application.

Get around without a car:

Sustainable travel options

Walk: There are many dining, entertainment, and lodging options within walking distance of almost anywhere in the City. Find out what is near you before you grab your keys!

The LINK: The Tacoma LINK light rail runs every 12 minutes from the Tacoma Dome Station all the way to the Theater District on S. 9th, with stops at S. 25th, Union Station/S. 19th, Convention Center/S. 15th and Commerce St./ S. 11th. The LINK is free and a great way to get around Downtown. For more information and a map of the LINK's route check out the Sound Transit website.

Pierce Transit: Pierce Transit is Tacoma's bus service provider. A list of routes and maps can be found on the Pierce Transit website.

Zipcar: Are you a member of Zipcar? Great news! There are 4 conveniently located Zipcar stations in Tacoma. For more information about Zipcar please visit their website.

Hire a Shuttle: There are a few different shuttle services available in the Tacoma area. Research shuttle services near Tacoma to see what's available.

Environmental Services Sponsorship

The City of Tacoma may be able to help with sponsorship of cash or supplies for your event. *It is expected that recipients of Environmental Services Sponsorship become a Green Excellence event.*

To learn more about whether your event qualifies to receive sponsorship from Environmental Services and to fill out an application, visit the Environmental Services Website





Forms and Informational Handouts

You will be able to find the following forms and information sheets on the Green Events Webpage:

- Scorecard Application
- Waste Reduction Plan
- Green Event Wrap-Up
- Food Waste Recycling Fact Sheet
- Recycling Fact Sheet
- Charity Food Donations Guidelines

Contacts:

Office of Sustainability:

sustainability@cityoftacoma.org
(253)591-5172

Environmental Services:

rcoyne@cityoftacoma.org
(253) 593-7707

Bike Racks:

Tacomamobility@cityoftacoma.org
(253)591-5172

Websites:

Zipcar:

<http://www.zipcar.com/>

Pierce Transit:

<http://www.piercetransit.org/>

Sound Transit (the LINK):

<http://www.soundtransit.org/Schedules/Tacoma-Light-Link-Rail>

Environmental Services:

www.cityoftacoma.org/environmentalservices

Green Tacoma Partnership (Forterra):

www.forterra.org

Check this out!

A Green Event Kit is available to all Green Event Planners which includes: volunteer aprons, tip sheets, green event signs, recycling station signs, and water fountains. You may choose to use all or some of the items in the kit.



Acknowledgements

The City of Tacoma would like to thank the following organizations and entities for providing informational resources and best management practices.

- City of San Antonio, “Green Events Planning Guide”
- Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, “Charity Food Donation Guidelines”
- Forterra and the Green Tacoma Partnership

The City of Tacoma’s Office of Sustainability and Environmental Policy would also like to extend its gratitude and appreciation for the collaborative efforts from the following City of Tacoma departments and public agencies.

City Manager’s Office

Community and Economic Development

Environmental Services

Solid Waste Department

Media and Communications Office

Tacoma Pierce County Health Department

Metro Parks Tacoma

Scorecard Application

Please complete and return this application to the Office of Sustainability prior to your event. The City will get back to you with results within one week after receiving your application. You will receive an e-mail with an e-certificate and a green events logo that may be used for advertising.

Office of Sustainability: email: sustainability@cityoftacoma.org

Phone: (253)591-5172

Date of Event: _____

Event Organizer: _____

Event Name: _____

Event Location: _____

Approximate number of attendees: _____

Below are the points available for becoming a Green Event. There are 15 points possible.

To become a Green Merit event, you must earn 5 points.

To become a Green Excellence event, you must earn 8 points.

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Points Applying For</i>
<i>Use only 100% recycled paper for all promotional materials or use no paper at all.</i>	Prerequisite/1point	
<i>Work with Environmental Services staff to create a waste reduction plan.</i>	Prerequisite/1 point	
<i>Promote best alternative transportation options (if applicable.)</i>	Prerequisite/1 point	

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Points Applying For</i>
<i>Provide water fountains. (If hookups are available and there is adequate drainage.)</i>	1	
<i>Require that your vendors eliminate non-sustainable giveaways.</i>	1	
<i>Provide temporary bicycle racks or choose a location where bicycle racks are provided.</i>	1	
<i>Make your travel tree-friendly by supporting the Green Tacoma Partnership. Minimum \$100 donation.</i>	1	
<i>Include pre-consumer food waste recycling in your waste reduction plan.</i>	2	
<i>Provide volunteers to staff recycle stations.</i>	2	
<i>Donate excess food to a local food bank/homeless shelter.</i>	2	
<i>Submit other stewardship initiatives to the City for approval.</i>	Up to 2 points available.	
Total		0

Use the space below to provide additional stewardship initiatives for the City to consider for points.

Waste Management Plan Template

RCW 70.93.093 requires that every official gathering in a community that has an established curbside recycling service must provide recycling by vendors who are serving beverages in single use aluminum, glass, plastic bottles, or cans. Please visit [RCW 70.93.093](#) for more information.

1. The first step in creating your waste management plan for your event will be to contact solid waste/recycle to schedule a meeting with representatives. They will help you come up with a plan and fill out this form.

Contact: _____

2. What is your waste diversion goal? _____

Achieving your waste diversion goal:

3. Determine the levels of service for garbage, recycle, and pre-consumer food waste composting.

Garbage	
Recycle	
Pre-Consumer Food Waste Recycling	

4. Schedule a site visit to determine locations of containers. Bring a map with you of your event site to map where containers will be located. Attach the map to the plan.

Site visit date: _____

5. For events with food vendors; determine the number of food vendors and number of needed pre-consumer food waste recycling bins. Map locations of food vendors, and food waste composting bins also during your site visit.

6. How many volunteers will you need to staff recycle stations during the event? _____
Make sure to emphasize to volunteers the importance of staffed recycle stations and make them aware of your green event and waste diversion goals. Volunteer aprons available for staffed recycle stations.

7. For events providing a water fountain (available from the City), also put its location on the map.

8. Please provide any additional actions to take to achieve your diversion goal:

Environmental Services Sponsorship

- If eligible, fill out an Environmental Services Sponsorship Application.
- Environmental Services Sponsorship recipients must provide booth space for Solid Waste Management (recycling education and SWM services) at your event.

Post Event Actions:

- Was the site left in a neat and orderly condition? Yes/No
If no, describe the site:

- Post event inspection: Percentage of recycled material/garbage disposed.

Garbage	
Recycle	
Pre-Consumer Food Waste Recycling	

- Schedule a post event meeting with solid waste/recycle representatives.
Meeting date: _____
- Number of tons disposed/recycled will be provided by SMW in post event meeting.
- Did you make your diversion goal? Yes/No
If no, what could have been done differently?

- Congratulations, your Waste Management Plan is complete! In the space below please provide any comments/suggestions about your experience creating a waste management plan.

Event Wrap-Up Form

Please complete and submit this event wrap-up form to the Office of Sustainability within 20 days of your event.
Thank you for participating in the City of Tacoma Green Event Program. Your stewardship efforts are appreciated.

Office of Sustainability: email: sustainability@cityoftacoma.org Phone: (253)591-5172

It is important to complete all steps of the Green Event Program in order to continue to receive sponsorship and/or host events in the City in the future.

Date of Event: _____

Event Organizer: _____

Event Name: _____

Event Location: _____

What was the approximate number of attendees at your event? _____

Was your Waste Reduction Plan effective? Describe the outcome.

How did you promote best alternative transportation options to your guests?

Approximately what percentage of your guests used alternative transportation? If unknown, write N/A.

Did you provide a shuttle service? Yes No

If yes, approximately what percentage of attendees used this service?

Did you provide pre-consumer food recycling? Yes No

If yes, briefly explain the process.

Did you provide volunteered staff stations? Yes No

If yes, how effective were they?

Did you submit your own green event actions to the City that were approved? Yes No

If yes, what were they?

Please provide us with any suggestions on how we can improve this program for your future events:

