



**TO:** Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee  
**FROM:** Michael P. Slevin III, P.E., Director, Environmental Services  
**COPY:** Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee  
**PRESENTERS:** Kristi Lynett, Sustainability Officer, Environmental Services  
**SUBJECT:** Sustainable Tacoma Commission Annual Activities and Priorities Report  
**DATE:** September 28, 2022

DS  
GMS  
DS  
MPS

**PRESENTATION TYPE:**  
 Informational Memorandum.

**SUMMARY:**

The Sustainable Tacoma Commission (STC) was created by Tacoma City Council to advise Council Members and staff on sustainability initiatives, particularly Tacoma’s 2030 Climate Action Plan. The Commission reports annually to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) Committee about activities and recommendations. In the place of a presentation, this memo intends to inform the IPS Committee about the Commission in coordination with Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability staff liaisons.

**BACKGROUND:**

Formed in 2008 by Resolution 37631, the Sustainable Tacoma Commission’s purpose is to bring community expertise, accountability, and urgency to Tacoma’s sustainability goals and initiatives. The Commission’s bylaws require an annual report to the IPS Committee to ensure regular information sharing with Tacoma City Council around policy priorities, research, and recommendations. To that end, the Sustainable Tacoma Commission reports to the IPS Committee each summertime.

Before COVID-19, Commission chairpersons provided an in-person presentation to the Committee to discuss recent and upcoming Commission activities as well as the priorities of the Commission and the City. Typically, the presentation serves as an opportunity for Council Members to request specific research and policy advice from the Commission. This discussion helps guide both City Council policy and further Commission research and recommendations to support them.

To excel in its advisory role, the Commission seeks a diverse membership. The Commission is composed of 13 members with various relevant experiences that benefit our city. Members volunteer their expertise from many fields and perspectives, including climate change science, policies, and solutions; local governance; urban forestry; energy and water systems; waste and materials management; resource conservation; public and environmental health; healthy housing; environmental education; food systems and programming; urban planning; multi-modal transportation; ocean and marine sciences; engagement and advocacy; and anti-racism. Members also offer their lived experiences. Members are residents from across Tacoma’s five Councilmanic districts and seven of thirteen live in districts three, four, or five. Eight members identify as women, five as people of color, and two as seniors or youth. Since January 2021, Commission monthly meeting attendance is about 76%.

Since the COVID-19 crisis, the Commission has sought to advise Tacoma City Council and staff in pursuing a just, sustainable recovery that promotes community well-being, resiliency, and climate protection. The Commission made specific recommendations with letters regarding the following topics:

- 2021-2022 City budget recommendations (2020)
- Anti-racist, sustainable systems change opportunities for the Mayor (2020)



- Decarbonization of municipal and community buildings (2020)
- Tacoma’s climate emissions target and climate jobs list (2021)
- Tideflats non-interim regulations (three letters in 2021)
- Annual recommendations to Tacoma City Council (2021)
- Extreme heat and wildfire smoke preparedness and response (2021)
- Support for proposed tree code updates (2021)
- Support for Tacoma 2030 Climate Action Plan and Urgent Action (2021)
- Home in Tacoma project phase I and II (2021, 2022)
- Support for South Tacoma Economic Green Zone proposal (2022)
- 2023-2024 City budget recommendations (2022)

2021-2022 Sustainable Tacoma Commission recommendation letters are attached to this memo for City Council’s consideration.

In their advisory role, the Commission meets annually with City Council and Management to communicate strategic priorities, including actions and investments. To support this purpose, the Commission has made the following four requests:

1. City Manager: direct departments to identify budget proposals’ climate benefits (reducing emissions or preparing for climate change impacts)
2. City Manager: deliver a list of department-level biennial budget proposals that reduce emissions or prepare for climate impacts by June 3 to the STC
3. City Manager: prioritize and clearly communicate to Tacoma City Council which budget proposals deliver climate change benefits and co-benefits
4. Tacoma City Council: prioritize climate change investments that offer co-benefits for public health, housing, transportation, and green jobs

In addition, the Commission has developed the following five strategic and 2023-2024 budget decision recommendations:

1. Prioritize funding for 11 CAP-required staffing
  - Transit Coordinator, Pedestrian Coordinator, Landscape Architect, Arbor Crew (3), Waste Prevention Specialist, Green Economy Specialist, Climate Resilience Coordinator, Climate Data Analyst, Green Building Specialist (retain)
2. Prioritize funding for state/federal grant matches for climate-safe infrastructure
  - Sea Level Rise Master Plan, EV Charging, Public Works/Tacoma Venues & Events Facilities Energy Efficiency & Decarbonization, Multi-Family Decarbonization Retrofit Program, and transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure projects
  - Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grant, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant
3. Direct the City Manager to vet budget requests for climate benefits
  - Sustainable Tacoma Commission requests a list of budget proposals with climate benefits
4. Home in Tacoma Phase II: (a) Prioritize density, transit access, tree canopy (b) require strong health standards and electrification for new constructions, retrofits
  - Implement Community Building Decarbonization Study and Report recommendations due end of 2022
5. Direct the City Manager to appoint an action team to prepare and coordinate regional lifesaving services and communications for extreme heat and smoke before summer
  - See attached 2021 Sustainable Tacoma Commission recommendations regarding extreme heat and smoke preparedness



At the request of City Council and with support from staff, the Commission will seek informational presentations, conduct research, and deliver recommendations in coming months related to the Washington Clean Fuel Standard and Climate Commitment Act; green industries and jobs for Tacoma; Pierce Transit's system planning and services; vehicle electrification and clean fuels; waste prevention; and decarbonization of Tacoma's buildings and transportation. The Commission is interested to hear specific City Council requests for research and policy advice that the Sustainable Tacoma Commission can deliver.

**ISSUE:**

In order to achieve Tacoma's ambitious vision for a safe, equitable, and sustainable community, the Sustainable Tacoma Commission advises and reports to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee on sustainability policies and initiatives.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

This is for information only. There are no alternatives presented.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This is for information only. There is no fiscal impact.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This is for information only. There is no recommendation