



Tacoma's Climate Action Plan

Final Report

2008 - 2012

In 2008, Tacoma adopted a Climate Action Plan developed by community members to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while improving our quality of life. Five years later, we reflect on our progress in accomplishing the strategies identified in the Plan. While not all were completed, we are proud of our efforts in making sustainability a more natural part of our everyday lives. We have come a long way since the Green Ribbon Task Force began meeting in 2007. The recession hampered some initiatives, but only the most optimistic could have imagined 20 electric vehicle charging stations around town, over 30 community gardens, and curbside residential food waste collection for composting!



The following pages summarize the progress made in the five strategy categories as outlined in Tacoma's Climate Action Plan of 2008.

Some highlights...



Tacoma has over 30 community gardens.



Six Zipcars™ are located in downtown Tacoma.



Tacoma planted 1,744 new trees.



In 2012, EnviroHouse offered 53 free workshops and installed a sustainable exteriors kiosk.



Curbside organics pickup.



Tacoma was awarded Bronze Bicycle Friendly Community status in 2012.

City Leading by Example

Actions taken by the City of Tacoma to promote environmentally responsible purchasing & strategies which reduce consumption & waste

Original Climate Action Plan Strategy: Accomplishment	Progress
Adopt Environmental Purchasing policy: Adopted by Council Resolution, April 2011.	Complete
Adopt Municipal Green Building policy: Adopted by Council Resolution, April 2011, establishing green-building standards for all new or renovated City buildings.	Complete
Establish preference for contractors who use low-emission/low-carbon fuels: Language added to contract bids to encourage biodiesel use.	Some
Support state and regional product stewardship efforts: The City funds staff involvement in the Northwest Product Stewardship Council .	Good
Encourage telecommuting/alternative work schedules: Policy in place; Working with departments to identify additional opportunities.	Some
Create waste reduction/conservation policy: Commingled "Tacoma Recycles@Work" Program, updated 2011. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Instrument Recycling, implemented 2012. • Intranet site "City Exchange," implemented 2011. 	Some
Reduce energy use in City facilities - review previous audits, hire Resource Conservation Manager (RCM), conduct building commissioning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City participated in Tacoma Power's Bright Rebates (lighting conservation) program saving 21,282 KWH of energy annually and with \$5,926 in total incentive dollars received. • Center for Urban Waters, building Heat Harvester commissioned in 2013. • Tacoma Police Department: their 2013-14 budget includes LEED® EBOM certification (Existing Building: Operations & Maintenance). • Investment Grade Audits completed in the following buildings which will result in a 20% reduction in annual energy consumption when identified energy efficiencies are implemented: Municipal Complex, N Park Garage, Convention Center, Fleet Warehouse & the Tacoma Dome. • Resource Conservation Manager not hired due to budget constraints. 	Some
Participate in Tacoma Power's EverGreen Options program at the EPA Green Power Partner level:	Needs Work
Convert traffic signals to energy conserving LED: 94% of red, green, & pedestrian signals and 70% of yellow signals converted.	Good
Purchase fuel-efficient/alternative-fuel vehicles for the City fleet: 14% of the City fleet is fuel-efficient or alternative-fuel; Evaluating use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles at the Solid Waste Utility.	Good
Use renewable fuels in City-owned diesel vehicles: The City uses biodiesel (20% blend;B20) in garbage and sewer maintenance vehicles and starting in 2012, this included 10% recycled biodiesel made from locally used cooking oil and grease. The City's 2012 biodiesel use reduced petroleum fuel consumption by 100,000 gallons.	Good

Moving People and Goods More Efficiently

Transportation strategies to reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles, encourage public transportation & carpools

Original Climate Action Plan Strategy: Accomplishment	Progress
Change parking policies to discourage single-occupancy vehicles: Downtown metered parking established.	Good
Reduce or eliminate parking minimums (adopt parking maximums) required for developments: New downtown parking standards were established in 2012. Parking standards were not addressed in other parts of the city.	Good
Provide free or reduced cost parking for employees using carpools and vanpools:	Needs Work
Analyze potential for shared parking:	Needs Work
Recruit a car-sharing service: 6 Zipcars are located in downtown Tacoma. It is vital to promote and use the cars in order to retain them.	Good
Expand promotion of Pierce Transit's online Ridesharing and carpooling system: Continued promotion to large employers.	Some
Work with Sound Transit to complete the Sounder train connection to Lakewood: The Sounder now travels between Lakewood and Everett. Improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists near the downtown and South Tacoma stations has yet to be implemented.	Good
Increase the use of all public transportation modes: There has been a ridership decrease since the recent Pierce Transit cuts. Continued cuts in 2013 will make this work challenging unless Pierce Transit is financially rescued by the state or some other entity.	Some
Evaluate potential locations for new bus stops or routes: See above.	Needs Work
Work with Pierce Transit to increase frequency of bus service on arterials: See above.	Needs Work
Develop a citywide comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian system: The system has been developed in the 2010 Mobility Master Plan .	Complete
Implement Mobility Master Plan: Implementation is ongoing; 33% of the Plan's 97 miles of short term priority bikeways and pedestrian improvements will be complete by 2013, including 13 miles funded with \$2.5 million in grant money. • Tacoma was awarded Bronze Bicycle Friendly Community status in 2012.	Good
Provide financial incentive to replace older diesel Port drayage trucks: 132 trucks replaced through ScRAPs Federal Grant program.	Complete
Advocate for incentives for residents to use more fuel-efficient/alternative fuel vehicles: 19 public charging stations are available throughout Tacoma; Map of alternative fuel locations.	Good
Adopt anti-idling ordinance: Anti-idle policy adopted for municipal vehicles in 2009; Policy for private vehicles in place by 2020.	Needs Work

Enhancing Compact/Livable Neighborhoods

Improve & beautify existing communities with smart growth principles

Original Climate Action Plan Strategy: Accomplishment	Progress
Implement smart growth principles, including compact, transit-oriented development within the city, incorporating green building and green site development which is bike- and pedestrian-friendly: Implementation is ongoing. Key projects in 2012 include the MLK Subarea Plan and the South Downtown Subarea Plan.	Good
Apply a holistic approach to projects through harmonization of policy direction, municipal codes and development review processes: The city received free technical assistance from Smart Growth America to conduct a LEED-ND workshop focusing on sustainable development in the South Downtown and MLK Districts. Made recommendations to be incorporated into the Subarea Plans.	Some
Promote amenities that make high-density living more attractive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown On the Go has a new <i>Live Downtown</i> program. • Streetscape projects and trail projects • Foss Esplanade extensions • Light rail extensions 	Good
Incorporate “Complete Streets” principles in Public Works projects: Complete Streets Design Guidelines adopted in 2009; Principles incorporated into city street designs including Pacific Avenue and Stadium Way; Received 2 awards for the 2009 Complete Streets Guidelines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tacoma is the fourth community in the nation to receive Greenroads® certification, a sustainability certification program. 	Good
Create a web-based housing match program:	Needs Work
Inventory and map existing affordable housing options:	Needs Work
Initiate a regional Transfer of Development Rights program with Pierce County: Adopted ordinance in 2012 and signed interlocal agreements with Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties; Awaiting transactions.	Good
Adopt the Open Space Habitat and Recreation Plan: Adopted in 2008; Implementation is ongoing through Green Tacoma Partnership and land acquisitions for conservation.	Complete
Fund the Open Space Habitat and Recreation Plan: The potential transfer of the Open Space Habitat and Recreation program to the Environmental Services Department in 2013 is intended to produce a better match of staffing and funding with open space management.	Good
Increase tree planting on public and private property: From 2009 through March of 2013, 1,744 trees have been planted. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 167 Tree Coupons for private property have been distributed to residents. 	Some
Develop an urban trees and open space inventory: There is an inventory of the business districts and a citywide canopy cover analysis; Lacking resources for further work.	Some

Energy Efficiency in Our Buildings, Homes, & Industry

Reduce energy consumption & expand use of renewable energy

Original Climate Action Plan Strategy: Accomplishment	Progress
<p>Tacoma Power to meet energy conservation and renewable energy goals of Initiative 937: Tacoma Power exceeded its I-937 energy conservation goal of 9.3 average megawatts (aMW) for 2010 - 2011 by 6.27 aMW. Tacoma Power's total energy savings from 2007-2012 is 30.6 aMW (2012 figure is preliminary).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tacoma Power also exceeded its 2012 renewable energy target of 3% of retail load (143,341 megawatt hours) by approximately 10%. 	Complete
<p>Develop green building program: hire Green Building Advocate, determine barriers and identify incentives including expedited permitting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2011 and 2012, training for building and land use staff was focused primarily on sustainability training classes/conferences. Staff trained included plans examiners, land use planners, plan review engineers, and building inspectors. This training has enabled staff members to collectively act as green building advocates (versus hiring one dedicated Green Building Advocate) to the development community, and to be able to review and inspect a Green Building just as quickly and efficiently as any other building. Staff is active in the Tacoma and Olympia LEED User Group. LEED is an internationally recognized green building program. One barrier to green building is State Water District requirements prohibiting the reuse of water for potable purposes. Other barriers may exist based on site specific characteristics. Tacoma Public Utilities has many incentives for increasing the energy efficiency of existing buildings. Other potential incentives include density bonuses, property tax incentives, height bonuses, expedited plan review, parking reductions, alley access waivers, and marketing & publicity. Staff is continuing to explore incentives that can also be used to meet other building needs, such as permitting additional height or side yard setback allowing additional insulation to be installed in the roof and exterior walls. The new Development Services website, to be released in the first quarter of 2013, contains Green Tools, summarizing resources and tools to be used by developers for sustainable development. 	Some
<p>Encourage installation of renewable energy: As of the end of 2012, Tacoma Power has installed solar electricity capacity of 253 kW.</p>	Some
<p>Achieve maximum possible energy savings in residential, commercial and industrial sectors: See above. Tacoma Power exceeded its I-937 biennial target for 2010 - 2011. Of the 15.6 aMW of energy savings achieved, 8.77 aMW came from the residential sector and 6.87 aMW from the commercial/industrial sectors.</p>	Good
<p>Consider providing tax abatement for buyers performing conservation upgrades:</p>	Needs Work
<p>Require energy audit at time of home sale:</p>	Needs Work
<p>Reduce home heating oil use:</p>	Needs Work

Reuse and Recycle ... from Buildings to Food Waste

Commercial & residential reuse, recycling & waste reduction

Original Climate Action Plan Strategy: Accomplishment	Progress
Change solid waste rate structure to encourage more recycling and waste reduction: Volume based rates implemented.	Complete
Explore home composting programs: Home compost bins were sold in 2010. A follow-up study showed the bins were still in use in 2011. Compost bin sales continue at cost to city residents and EnviroHouse continues to present free compost workshops several times per year.	Complete
Implement natural yard care education: Surface Water Utility, the Health Department, and EnviroHouse provide many natural yard care workshops each year. Natural yard care has also been part of the Wapato Healthy Homes Healthy Neighborhoods initiative and outreach.	Good
Increase sorting capability of recyclables at the new landfill transfer station: There is continued improvement in the arrangement of recycling drop boxes and traffic flow to facilitate increased recovery of materials. Cardboard separation has been initiated along with enhanced separation of metals and dimensional lumber.	Good
Identify and implement additional residential education and other programs to divert organic waste: Implemented residential food waste collection in yard waste containers. This service is available at no additional charge to all 54,000 single family/duplex households.	Good
Develop a commercial food waste recycling program: Studies are underway to evaluate the best approach; Efficiencies in the residential program are being studied for expansion into the commercial sector. A pilot program began in 2011.	Some
Continue mulching mower sales assistance program: Unable to get electric mower vendor for this promotion. Should be removed from plan.	Discontinue
Improve operational efficiencies in Solid Waste management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of city-wide residential every-other-week garbage collection in 2013 to increase operational & environmental efficiencies. • Identified potential savings of \$9,800 annually by converting light fixtures to fluorescent and LED; estimated 43% drop in energy consumption. • Required the contract for new waste & recycling containers include recycling of broken containers; 157,000 lbs. were recycled in 2012. • Enhanced glass and metal separation at Recycling Center according to value to optimize revenue. • Successfully diverted 5 tons of small electronic appliances and computer peripherals as a result of a new electronics recycling contract. 	Good
Increase commercial and residential recycling: Installation of a Styrofoam Densifier allows Styrofoam recycling. 10.6 tons were diverted in 2012.	Some
Secure and encourage additional processing capability of organic material in the Tacoma area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received grant to conduct a feasibility study to explore the best beneficial options for utilizing organic waste, including digestion at the City's wastewater treatment plant for fuel and compost production. • Initiated study to assess in-sink disposers as viable option for food waste diversion with potential for increasing energy & TAGRO by-products. 	Good

Promote adaptive reuse of historic or older buildings: A combination of “live-work” space can be a viable and more affordable option for using/occupying older buildings. Codes were changed to eliminate off-site improvement and parking requirements for existing buildings. The City now offers a low interest loan program for upgrading life safety/fire sprinklers of existing buildings.	Some
Encourage deconstruction and recycling of structures to be demolished: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan has been drafted to encourage waste management plans for major building, remodeling and demolition permits. • A recycling resource directory is provided to all demolition permit applicants. • Staff are evaluating options for implementing codes and standards for recycling. 	Some

As we look to the future . . .

We will know later this year if we have lowered our greenhouse gas emissions. A detailed inventory will be conducted and compared to our emissions from 2006. That information will be included in this report when completed.

Creation of Tacoma’s Climate Action Plan in 2008 was a bold and progressive step. We were and continue to be at the forefront of communities around the country engaged in taking responsibility for our planet’s health. We have learned, evolved, and grown because of that Plan. As we look to the future, we will evaluate the next steps in advancing strategies critical to our local and global community.

These include:

- ◆ Analyzing strategies not completed for relevancy and impact
- ◆ Working with the greater Tacoma community to identify sustainability priorities
- ◆ Developing a new sustainability action plan

If you would like to learn more and be kept apprised of these future planning efforts, please visit www.cityoftacoma.org/sustainability to sign up and receive more information.

