

Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

Tuesday, October 11, 2011

12:30-2:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Andre' Baugh, Karen Gray, Mike Houck, Michelle Rudd, Chris Smith, Irma Valdez

Commissioners Absent: Lai-Lani Ovalles, Gary Oxman, Howard Shapiro, Jill Sherman

BPS Staff Present: Susan Anderson, Director; Julie Ocken, PSC Coordinator; Megan Stein, Program Manager, Sustainability at Work; Arianne Sperry, Solid Waste & Recycling

Chair Baugh called the meeting to order at 12:36pm and provided an overview of the agenda.

Items of Interest from Commissioners

Commissioner Smith: Noted the class from PSU (Intro to Urban Planning) in today's audience.

Commissioner Rudd: The Oregon Urban Land Institute is sponsoring a program this Thursday morning, "New Housing Horizons for the Changing Population". From the ULI website: "In the wake of the financial crisis and the great recession, sweeping demographic and structural changes are reshaping the housing market. Generation Y and the retiring Baby Boomers will be the catalysts for the next wave of housing development. Who makes up these groups? What are their housing needs and preferences? What can they afford or rent or buy? How can developers, governments and employers help create the types of mixed-use, transit-served communities - both urban and suburban - that will respond to these trends?"

Director's Report

Susan Anderson

- Welcome to PSU class
- The Portland Plan draft will be out this Friday. We will send PSC members the link to the report and will have hard-copies available for Commissioners. There will be 3 PSC meetings for the Portland Plan hearings in November: 8th at Jefferson High School; 15th at Parkrose High School; 29th here.
- West Hayden Island project Open Houses: tomorrow, 10/12 at 5pm (Expo Center) and Saturday, 10/15 at 9am (Oxford Suites on Hayden Island).
- The city-wide single-use bag ban is in effect starting this Saturday, 10/15. As a part of this, BPS is working on a strategy to make reusable bags available for low-income and senior households.
- The EcoDistrict Summit is 10/26-28. Susan Anderson will be on a panel the morning of 10/26 titled "Cities as Centers of Sustainability Innovation".
- Cully Main Street and Local Street Plans project open house is on Thursday, 10/27 at Rigler School, 5-8pm. The event features a discussion and overview of project plans as well as an opportunity for community feedback.

Consent Agenda

Consideration of Minutes

From 09/27/2011 PSC meeting

Chair Baugh asked for any comments or edits by Commission members.

The Consent Agenda was approved with an *aye* vote.

(Y6 – Gray, Houck, Rudd, Smith, Valdez, Baugh)

Regular Agenda **Sustainability at Work**

Action: Briefing

Megan Stein

Presentation:

- <http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=41664&a=369610>

Sustainability at Work is a service to help businesses help make their operational practices more sustainable. It is a BPS program supported by a variety of partners, with sustainability advisors assisting businesses in a one-stop-shop.

Advisors can assist with both one-off and in-depth assistance for businesses creating a sustainability plan. The program offers connections to resources, peers, and recognition opportunities.

Sustainability at Work launched in August 2011, but it began as the BEST program three years ago as a pilot program.

The original idea for BEST was thought of in 2006. We knew:

- Cities are responsible for 75% of the global carbon emissions
- Most emissions result from energy consumption in our buildings, transportation & waste disposal
- The day-to-day decisions that businesses make in their operations will greatly impact our success

BEST wanted to deliver policies and programs that would aid businesses in greening their operations; ultimately reduce their carbon footprint.

BEST made it easy for companies to identify opportunities, access resources and recognition opportunities. It was named after the annual BEST Awards - Businesses for an Environmentally Sustainable Tomorrow.

Program staff recently conducted an evaluation to review the program message and offer. It wanted to identify opportunities to improve the program, expand and reach more businesses. In the process, it has combined with two other programs, Recycle at Work and Portland Composts! - which had been partners to the BEST business center. This was a further opportunity to streamline services for businesses.

In the evaluation phase, the program staff heard from over 300 participants and 30 partners. Based on the survey, they found that the majority of businesses participants who took the survey were located in the central city. 100% of participants were English-speaking; 20% spoke Spanish in their business; and 10% spoke other languages too.

Staff received recommendations to work on 8 specific program changes:

- BEST had originally worked with Early Adopters; they now need to target the Late Majority to get more people/businesses on board.
- Address Social Sustainability - they had idea tested this with program participants, and the majority were eager to see the program look at social sustainability in addition to environmental sustainability. More work will be done to include social sustainability in the program with input from participants.
- Create one program brand, with a broader platform than just environmental sustainability.

- Create transparency. Develop actions businesses can take and make resources available online.
- Offer more active project management for people/businesses who want more hands-on assistance. Before providing recommendations, staff works with businesses to prioritize which align best with their goals and what are achievable. They should schedule regular times for follow-up to create a stronger partnership and help businesses build capacity
- Measure program performance and move to outcomes - what can be accomplished with the business. Switched the actions list to a yes/no response to be able to make broader statements about businesses' achievements. Established performance metrics for Energy, Waste & Materials, Transportation, and Water.
- Increase recognition opportunities - move to a point-based system. The Climate Champions recognition had 30 businesses certified in 3 years. The new format of recognition is flexible, and actions have points associated with them. Certification good for 3 years, with the Gold being similar to the BEST Awards - showing a business' comprehensive change.
 - Recognition includes a window cling and seal for the company's website and promotional materials. Plaque are given for gold certification, and there is an online directory (a new feature) so people can search other businesses, market what they've done, and learn from other businesses.
- Expand outreach and marketing. By combining programs, combined program staff is larger and is able to serve more businesses. Staff are now assigned to businesses districts throughout city to get to know businesses associations' needs and how we can best serve them. There are continued partnerships with PDC - including the Saving Green program to serve micro-enterprises (5 employees or fewer) and Green Grants to businesses in URAs - targeting Late Adopters to raise sustainability knowledge and make funding available.

Upcoming... the 20th Anniversary of the BEST Awards is in April 2012. There are opportunities to integrate the event into the new program. The ongoing relationship with businesses puts us in the unique position to help tell the business story and connect peers.

Commissioners noted they are interested and please with the program - especially with how it is improving by incorporating the various services together. Regarding the social sustainability aspect, staff (via the survey) is asking about changes such as hiring practices, equity, and community engagement. The 135 actions are mostly simple, cost-free practices, so all businesses can progress their sustainability work.

Some people don't get that "sustainability just for sustainability" is an incentive. People aren't necessarily hooked in to the sustainability idea. In working with new businesses and associations, staff are starting out by listening and learning who the players are to compliment the work that is already being done. The ultimate goal is to connect businesses, people-to-people who have come through program and can share stories/progress.

Small businesses, which are a huge percentage of Portland businesses, can help progress PDC's Neighborhood Economic Development initiative, so further connection between Sustainability at Work and PDC is notable.

Curbside Food Scrap Collection

Action: Briefing

Arianne Sperry

Document:

- September 2011 Curbsider

Presentation:

- <http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=41664&a=369611>

Residential curbside collection service starts on October 31. For the first time, Portland residents can add food scraps to their green yard debris rollcart. This bin will have weekly cart pick-up, with garbage pick-up being moved to every-other week.

The roll-out is based on previous policy documents:

- Portland Recycles! Plan was adopted by Council in 2007. The Portland Recycles! Plan promotes a more sustainable solid waste and recycling system on many levels, including energy and resource use, greenhouse gas as well as other air emissions, worker safety, and local jobs. The Plan also set a 75% recycling goal and laid out a path to get there through new recycling and composting programs.
- The 2009 Climate Action Plan includes a section on Consumption and Solid Waste, including three goals for 2030: reduce total solid waste generated by 25 percent, recover 90 percent of all waste generated, and reduce the greenhouse gas impacts of the waste collection system by 40 percent.
- Food that breaks down in the landfill emits methane, a greenhouse gas that is 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Thus, the new curbside collection program helps us further our recycling as well as climate action goals.

Other than the recycling rate goal, composting takes food scraps and creates a valuable agricultural product that helps improve the health of our soils and gardens. Adding compost to soil helps prevent erosion, retain water, and block diseases and weeds. Through this program we're creating something of value out of our table scraps. Also, in the landfill, food breaks down and produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas that causes climate change. Each ton of food that is diverted from the landfill averts the release of emissions equivalent to one ton of carbon dioxide. We estimate that through the new curbside program, we could potentially avert somewhere in the neighborhood of 25,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions each year. That's the same carbon effect as reducing vehicle miles traveled by 43 million miles each year.

Curbside food scrap collection is a new program for Portland, but it is well established. 700-1000 Portland businesses are already participating, and residential pick-up is already being used in 90 communities throughout US including Seattle and San Francisco. Portland has had capacity issues until now, so we couldn't start the residential program until now. The program is only for single-family and 4-unit or fewer multiplexes for now. A pilot for multi-family housing will start in the upcoming year. It will be more complicated with the wide range of housing and different operational structure at each.

In May 2010, a pilot program started with 2000 households in four Portland neighborhoods. The pilot was the same program that was recommended and adopted in the Portland Recycles! Plan: weekly collection of yard debris with food scraps, and every-other-week garbage. The pilot also tested every-other week recycling with half the households, which wasn't as successful.

Pilot routes were chosen based on haulers who volunteered. Staff chose sampling of residents that was diverse so they could check messaging and how we can help people through the process of changing.

The pilot neighborhoods were diverse - Roseway, Centennial, Richmond, Arnold Creek. Staff tested messaging and program feasibility. There was an extensive evaluation program that included surveys, focus groups, and field teams collecting data.

- Program participation: 66% of households are collecting food scraps every day
- Efficacy: almost half the food scraps are being diverted from the garbage
- Satisfaction: 87% of pilot households are satisfied with the new program

- Almost half the food scraps generated in the pilot area are being collected and made into compost. In just the first year, this is a really strong outcome. We think that as residents get used to this, we'll see the rate increase over time, similar to how we've seen the recycling rate go up over the years. Fifteen years ago, our recycling rate was at 47%, and now we're at 67%.
- After living with the program for a year, 87% of pilot participants report being satisfied with the new system.
- Only 7% of pilot customers needed to move up to a larger container.
- The amount of garbage collected from the pilot households dropped almost 30%. This is compared to pre-pilot baseline data in the pilot areas as well as data collected in adjacent control routes during the pilot.
- Initial objections were about odor and sanitation - so staff has provided residents tips for how to keep containers/pails clean.

City Council adopted new garbage rates in August 2011 with the start of the program on October 31st.

Media efforts have included advertising in community newspapers, ads on transit, radio including Spanish, a scheduled pumpkin carving event with PSU on October 28, collaboration with grocery stores, mailings to customers, and the program-specific Curbsider mailer.

Packet with the new collection schedule, kitchen pail, and other information will be delivered in the upcoming weeks.

This is a big change for people's daily habits. Staff is walking people through how they can be successful with the new system, and we've bolstered customer service by adding staff and extending call hours. An outreach campaign planned for spring. The every-other week garbage change helps keep rates low and increases participation in program. In focus groups, people said they wouldn't have been motivated to try the program if the every-week garbage collection was continuing.

Another new feature is an online e-schedule for residents to plug their address into and see when the various bins will be picked up. And they can sign-up for a weekly e-mail reminder.

Staff has worked closely with the 19 haulers who provide residential service in Portland, and we've worked closely with them to develop the program. The incentive for the haulers is that it costs less to dump compostable materials than it does pure waste, so their cost of service can decrease. Food scraps are processed in the Portland region. Companies that own processing facilities pay for materials that come in, and then they own the compost.

We will still encourage people to compost in yards. But now people will be able to compost other items that aren't good for backyard composting. Many people could be close to having nothing left in the garbage with this program.

Adjourn

Chair Baugh adjourned the meeting at 1:44pm.