



**City of Tacoma  
Sustainable Tacoma Commission  
Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** June 20, 2024

**Commission Members Present:** Matthew Benedict (in-person), Evlondo Cooper (Co-Chair), Mike Chang (in-person), John Doherty (in person), Margaret Schwertner, Laura Svancarek (in-person), Casey Twiggs (Co-Chair), Lowell Wyse (in-person)

**Commission Members Excused:**

Lexi Brewer, Joy Muhammed, Adam Reichenberger, Sheena Hewett

**Others Present:**

Office of Environmental Policy & Sustainability: LaKecia Farmer, Kristi Lynett

**Call to Order & Roll Call**

This meeting was called to order by Commission Co-Chairperson Casey Twiggs at 5:02 pm

**Unanimous Approval of June 20, 2024 Meeting Agenda**

**Unanimous Approval of May 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

**Public Comment**

Jp Kemmick gave public comment expressing his interest in learning and hearing about STC goals.

**Staff Updates**

- Comp Plan and Transportation Master Plan engagement
- Solid Waste positions are open and close in 2 weeks

**Subcommittee Reports**

LaKecia reached out to planning department to come talk to commission about permitting process, set for August.

**Other Business Items**

**Community Tree Program**

Lisa Kenny, Mike Carey, and Lowell Wyse of the Tacoma Tree Foundation presented on the Community Tree Program.

**Climate Action Plan Progress Report - Letter**

The commission unanimously approved the subcommittee's draft letter below:

Dear Chair Walker and IPS Committee,

On behalf of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission (STC), we would like to extend our gratitude for the recent accomplishments that have been made regarding the requests made last year concerning the Climate Action Plan (CAP). While we celebrate these achievements, we recognize that there are still critical areas requiring further action and attention. This letter aims to outline these areas and propose suggested steps to ensure continued progress towards our shared goals.

- We are pleased that funding has been secured for two critical positions: **the Climate Resilience Manager and the Landscape Architect**. These roles are essential to developing and implementing strategies to enhance our city's resilience to climate impacts and ensure sustainable urban planning.
- We are encouraged by some of the progress made in **protecting important habitat within our city**. Although not realized in 2023, the recent WA Commerce grant awarded in 2024 to develop the Climate Ready Habitat Protection and Enhancement Strategy signifies a significant step forward in this regard.
- While there has been commendable focus on **waste prevention**, particularly with the acquisition of the EPA grant for a waste prevention specialist and community ambassador, we believe there is still room for improvement, especially in addressing food waste. The implementation of the **Salvage and Deconstruction Resolution** is a positive step towards reducing waste, and we encourage further efforts in this area.

As we consider the Climate Action Plan Progress Report of 2024, we acknowledge the significant strides taken, but also wish to highlight a few areas where further investment is needed.

1. Given the increasing impacts from **heat and smoke**, we urge the City Council to commit to providing **available and accessible safe spaces for communities to gather this summer**. We acknowledge that the efforts to provide filter fans and communicate responses to the impacts of heat and smoke are ongoing.
2. We believe that **additional arborists** are necessary to effectively manage all public trees, including street trees, in Tacoma. We appreciate the recent updates to the tree Right of Way (ROW) code and the addition of a landscape architect to guide permit compliance.
3. **Transportation** emerges as a key priority as the largest emitter of climate pollution. We must address emissions through:
  1. **Freight electrification and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure**, especially in South Tacoma, a neighborhood identified as having increasing emissions in an already polluted area
  2. **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)** to ensure safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure for sustainable transportation options, especially for vulnerable populations in affordable housing. This is congruent with current efforts underway such as Home in Tacoma Phase II. **TOD requires active transportation staff, local transit coordination, and vital grant match dollars.**
2. Additionally, we must explore more sustainable strategies so that our **city purchases and contracts** align with our environmental and equity objectives including Tacoma's Green Economic Development Strategy.

Looking ahead, we believe it is essential for STC to have a role in making **climate considerations in the budget review process** as mentioned in the Climate Accountability and Sustainability Commission

Charter amendment proposal. We also seek clarification on the next steps for the **Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability (OEPS) Director and the organizational reporting structure**, as we feel that the current climate emergency requires clear and comprehensive departmental responses and accountability.

In closing, we remain committed to working collaboratively with the City Council to achieve our shared vision of a sustainable and resilient Tacoma. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to this important cause.

Yours sincerely,

Evlondo Cooper, Co-Chair

Casey Twiggs, Co-Chair

### **Public Comment**

JP Kemmick gave public comment on the Community Tree Program regarding the sale of city-owned property and impacts on the Climate Action Plan.

### **Tentative Objectives for the Next Meeting (July 18, 2024)**

- Tacoma's Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Master Plan

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by Co-Chair Evlondo Cooper at 6:35pm

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be held hybrid on Thursday, July 18th, 2024, at 5:00pm, on zoom and at Tacoma Municipal Building, room 248.

*Evlondo Cooper III*

*Casey Twiggs*

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Evlondo Cooper and Casey Twiggs, Co-Chairs

*LaKecia Farmer*

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LaKecia Farmer, Staff / Note Takers