



SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission is to bring community accountability, transparency, and vigilance to the long-term implementation of Tacoma’s 2030 Climate Action Plan, and to oversee, coordinate, communicate, and encourage public involvement in sustainability initiatives consistent with the City’s vision and definition of sustainability.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

The following Rules of Procedure of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission (“Commission”) were adopted by the Commission at its February 10, 2015 meeting, and were amended by the Commission most recently at its February 15, 2024 meeting. These Rules of Procedure are authorized by City of Tacoma Resolution 37631 and replace and supersede any previously adopted rules of the Commission.

The rules and regulations contain the following items:

- I. Election and Terms of Office
- II. Duties of Officers
- III. Establishment of Subcommittees
- IV. Office of Environmental Policy & Sustainability
- V. Meetings
- VI. Records
- VII. Annual Report to the City Council
- VIII. Miscellaneous
- IX. Amendments to the Rules of Procedure
- X. Expectations and Roles

I. Election and Terms of Office

- A. The Commission shall elect annually from its members a Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs (Officers).
 1. Nominations and Elections – Officers will be nominated at the first meeting of each year. Elections will be held at the following meeting. New officers will assume duties immediately following their election.

Adopted February 10, 2015
Amended January 12, 2016
Amended February 28, 2017
Amended September 19, 2017
Amended April 25, 2019
Amended February 20, 2020
Amended April 15, 2021
Amended February 17, 2022
Amended February 15, 2024

2. Officer Qualification Considerations – The Officers should:
 - a) be interested in holding the position(s);
 - b) be able to devote sufficient time to Commission business;
 - c) be committed to attending as many Commission meetings as possible;
 - d) be prepared to make presentations to the City Council, community members, committees, neighborhood groups, and service clubs regarding Commission responsibilities, projects, plans, and policies;
 - e) have sufficient experience on the Commission to understand its role and functions and to have a basic understanding of the City's 2030 Climate Action Plan and sustainability policies, programs, and activities;
 - f) be adequately skilled in meeting facilitation and agenda building; and
 - g) be committed to developing and maintaining relationships with staff, Commissioners, and other Commission partners to promote ethical, equitable, and productive participation.
- B. The term of office shall be for one (1) year or until the next group of Officers assume their duties. In case of any vacancy in office, the vacancy shall be filled by an election at the first regular meeting after the occurrence of such vacancy.

II. Duties of Officers

Officers – The Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs) shall preside over all meetings of the Commission and assist staff in development of agendas and other official Commission communications. The Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chair of the Commission is authorized to sign documents and correspondence on behalf of the Commission. The Officers are tasked with meeting with staff to prepare and evaluate activities, including the work plan, meeting agendas, and Commission attendance and performance. Decisions about Commission meeting facilitation, document signing, and Commission correspondences should be done with the consent of other Officers, where the Chair is the final decision-maker.

III. Establishment of Subcommittees

Subcommittees – The Commission may establish subcommittees of up to 6 members. Subcommittees are ad-hoc and issue-oriented in nature. Subcommittees shall serve at the

discretion of the Commission and their duties and responsibilities shall be established by the Commission. The activities of any Subcommittees shall take place in meetings where minutes are taken or kept as public record by other means, such as email. Subcommittees provide input and recommendations to the full Commission for consideration and may not take binding action on behalf of the Commission.

IV. Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability

The Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability shall provide staff support to the Commission, including but not limited to providing clerical support, preparation and maintenance of records of meetings, hearings, official actions, and all public records. Staff support is subject to the limits of the budget for the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability as approved by the City Council.

V. Meetings

- A. All meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public and subject to the requirement of the Washington State Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), Chapter 42.30 RCW and as may be hereinafter amended.
- B. Notice of all meetings shall at a minimum be in the form and distributed in the manner required by OPMA with additional distribution at the Commission's discretion to individuals and organizations listed on the Commission mailing list that shall be maintained by the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability.
- C. Regular Meetings – Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 5:00 p.m. in Room 248 of the Tacoma Municipal Building, or in another location designated by the Commission. If the regular meeting day falls on a legal holiday, the Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs of the Commission shall fix another day therefore and give notice of a special meeting.
- D. Special Meetings – Special meetings of the Commission may be held at such times as the Commission may determine. Special meetings will be called and notice provided in a manner consistent with these Rules and with OPMA.
- E. A quorum for the transaction of official business shall consist of a majority of the Commission members duly appointed and acting in office at any given time.
- F. Every official act taken by the Commission shall be by motion by an affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum. In the event that a member disqualifies themselves or passes, this is to be registered as "abstaining". Notwithstanding Robert's Rules of Order, the Officers shall vote on all resolutions or motions.

Adopted February 10, 2015
Amended January 12, 2016
Amended February 28, 2017
Amended September 19, 2017
Amended April 25, 2019
Amended February 20, 2020
Amended April 15, 2021
Amended February 17, 2022
Amended February 15, 2024

G. Regular Meeting Procedures.

1. Order of business:

- a) Roll call
- b) Land acknowledgement
- c) Consideration of business items in the order set forth in the meeting agenda*
- d) Approval of meeting minutes not previously approved
- e) Public comment
- f) Staff reports
- g) Subcommittee reports
- a) Other business
- h) Public comment
- i) Objectives for next meeting
- j) Adjournment

*For regular meetings, the preceding order of business may be modified with a vote of a majority of the quorum present during consideration of business items set forth in the meeting agenda.

2. Conduct of meetings:

- a) The Chair, Vice-Chair, or a Co-Chair of the Commission shall preside over all meetings of the Commission.
- b) The Chair, Vice-Chair, or a Co-Chair introduces the agenda items.
- c) The Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability Staff, if appropriate, summarizes the staff report or other information prepared or received by the staff on the agenda item.

d) The Commission may ask questions of the staff or others in attendance at the direction of the Officers. Comments by the public may be permitted, but only at the discretion of the Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs.

e) The Commission takes appropriate action, if an action is required.

VI. Records

A. The Commission's meeting minutes and supplemental records shall be kept on file in the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability and managed, retained, and made available as required by law. These supplemental records may include but not be limited to the following:

1. Description of agenda items, including all submitted information therewith.
2. Reports of the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability, and Subcommittees as presented to the Commission at a meeting thereof, including such material submitted in writing and in map form.
3. Written communications to and from the Commission.
4. Facts concerning the matters before the Commission.
5. Record of relevant actions taken by the City Council (ordinances, resolutions, results of hearings, etc.).

B. Minutes of Commission meetings shall be filed with the City Clerk and shall be opened to public inspection.

VII. Annual Report to the City Council

The Commission shall annually report to the City Council regarding accomplishments and the status of planning efforts undertaken in the previous year, and if applicable, the outlook of planning issues for the coming year. Said report should, at the discretion of the Officers, take the form of a letter, a memorandum, a summary report, or a copy of relevant minutes of the Commission's meetings, and will be posted on the City's website by June of each year.

VIII. Miscellaneous

A. Code of Ethics – Members of the Commission are subject to the requirements of the City of Tacoma's Code of Ethics contained in Tacoma Municipal Code Chapter 1.46 and as hereinafter amended.

Adopted February 10, 2015
Amended January 12, 2016
Amended February 28, 2017
Amended September 19, 2017
Amended April 25, 2019
Amended February 20, 2020
Amended April 15, 2021
Amended February 17, 2022
Amended February 15, 2024

B. Terms of Service – A member shall hold office until the expiration of their term, resignation from the Commission, or removal from office. It is desirable that the member hold office until their successor is appointed when possible. In an effort to promote both stability within the Commission and to encourage rotation of the membership, the City Council sets a guideline of two full terms per member but, at its discretion, may reappoint members to serve more than two terms.

1. End of Service –

a) Members may forfeit their membership through:

i. Upon a member having three (3) unexcused regular meeting absences in a 12-month period, the Commission shall notify such member of a hearing to determine whether the absences are to be excused and the potential for termination of their membership. If the Commission determines not to excuse such absences, then the Commission shall determine the question of whether the Commission shall recommend to the City Council that such member should be deemed to have forfeited their office and a new member be appointed to fill the unexpired term. Requests by members to be excused shall be stated by the member at a Commission meeting or be submitted to the Commission or be directed through the Sustainability Officer or their representative who shall then present the request to the Commission. The Commission shall then approve or deny the request.

ii. Finding of a violation of Code of Ethics after final adjudication.

C. Contact Information – The contact information of members of the Commission is considered public information and may be made available for public access.

D. Conferences – Members of the Commission may attend, at their own expense, conferences, meetings, and training courses closely related to Commission business.

E. Communication – Commissioners should be aware of open government requirements related to Commission business, including communications, and potential perceptions of their non-Commission activities as a community member. Commissioners are responsible for clearly communicating about their role as a Commissioner and community member, and about the conduct of Commission business. The City offers quarterly trainings about open government requirements, and the Commission’s staff liaison can provide additional information about laws and practices applicable to Commission business.

- F. The Commission may communicate directly with individuals and organizations internal and external to the City of Tacoma in support of its role to advise and make recommendations to the City Council and/or City staff for the purposes of requesting information relevant to or providing information related to City policies and activities. Sharing recommendations or opinions on behalf of the Commission may only be done so if a formal action has been taken, and formal written communication should be signed by an Officer(s). Communication by the Commission must be in accordance with the City Council’s policymaking role. Where feasible, it is preferred that communication be made a public record and done in coordination with Commission staff.

IX. Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

These Rule of Procedure may be amended by the Commission by a vote of the majority of the quorum at any regular or special meeting. The Rules of Procedure shall be reviewed annually prior to Officer elections, if possible during the final meeting of the calendar year.

X. Commissioner Expectations and Guidelines

Generally, the time commitment required for active participation as a Commissioner is between 4-8 hours per month, including the duties below.

- I. During Meetings
 - a. Prepare for the meeting by reading appropriate materials and the last meeting’s minutes.
 - b. Arrive on time. If this is not possible, communicate with Officers and staff.
 - c. Listen and communicate respectfully to fellow Commissioners, staff, and the public.
 - d. Participate by sharing facts, thoughts, and questions.

- II. Other Meetings and Events
 - a. Attend relevant City Council, Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee, and other Committee meetings as appropriate.
 - b. Attend other City Commission meetings as appropriate.
 - c. Attend, if available, the South Sound Sustainability Expo.
 - d. Participate in other outreach events, such as giving presentations to the Neighborhood Councils or sharing and gathering information from other organizations.

- III. Communication to Individual Council Members and the Public
 - a. Be clear to your audience about whether you are communicating as a community member or a Commissioner. Sharing recommendations or opinions on behalf of

Adopted February 10, 2015
Amended January 12, 2016
Amended February 28, 2017
Amended September 19, 2017
Amended April 25, 2019
Amended February 20, 2020
Amended April 15, 2021
Amended February 17, 2022
Amended February 15, 2024

- the Commission may only be done so if a formal action has been taken, and formal written communication should be signed by an Officer(s). Information sharing may be allowed, but coordination with Commission staff is preferred.
- b. The Council has no role in permit decisions, therefore the Commission should not adopt recommendations in the permit review stage.

Commission Roles

- I. Request research and analysis on sustainability issues from sustainability staff.
- II. Provide policy, program, and budget recommendations both written and verbal to City Council and City staff, through or in coordination with Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee, and other relevant Committees and Commissions.
- III. Request updates from staff on implementation and results of City sustainability policies and programs.
 - i. Communicate barriers to and benefits for implementation to City Council.
- IV. Provide annual climate action progress reports to the public through the City Council, Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee, and other relevant Committees and Commissions.
- V. Coordinate, communicate, and encourage public involvement in sustainability initiatives.
 - i. Serve as a forum for regular public comment and community involvement.
- VI. Develop an annual work plan identifying Commission goals and implementation plans, including discussion of timelines and responsibilities. Items requiring sustainability staff support will be identified and prioritized. Discuss and evaluate work plan progress as needed.