

# City of Lake Oswego Sustainability Advisory Board

Proposed City Council Sustainability Action Goals for 2011



December 11, 2010

December 11, 2010

To the City Council:

The members of the Sustainability Advisory Board offer the following goal recommendations for the upcoming year, 2011. While the goals for the coming year are considered short term they need to be considered within a much larger goal context. The SAB has adopted four overarching goals (mega-goals) which we see as imperative to maintaining the long term quality of life in Lake Oswego and by reflection, the rest of the world. These long term goals may take another 40 to 50 years to realize or perhaps longer, but if the city's annual goals help move us, step by step, towards these ends we may actually get there. Every year we wait will make the journey that much more difficult and painful. 40 or 50 small steps will be much more attainable and will make the required changes we will all have to make, more tolerable. The SAB will propose a series of short terms goals (action goals) that will address at least one of these mega-goals, but it is more likely they will address more than one if not all.

### **Mega-Goal Number 1 - Lake Oswego has a Net Carbon Footprint of Zero.**

This goal will effect a multitude of decisions, strategies, actions, and policies. It will force carbon emissions to be a part of virtually every conversation. It is obvious that every action of the City will not be carbon free. That will means that other actions will have to be restorative to balance out the equation. The City has already taken action to this end; a carbon baseline calculation is already funded and in the works. We know where we have to go but to know how long the journey we have to know where we are.

### **Mega-Goal Number 2 - Lake Oswego Water Consumption is Nature Neutral**

The long term goal is to achieve a pre-development water cycle state. Rain falls from the sky and moves through and is utilized by the natural and built environment; eventually flowing into our rivers and on to the sea. We will no longer need to pull water from our rivers or aquifers to meet our water needs. The current annual water consumption in Lake Oswego is approximately 2 billion gallons per year. The average annual rain fall is approximately 6 billion gallons per year.

It should be noted that this mega-goal has a direct impact on mega-goal number 1. One half of the city's electrical consumption is directly related to water treatment and distribution.

## **Mega-Goal Number 3 - Lake Oswego Produces Zero Waste**

The long term goal is to send no waste to a land fill. Human use and consumption are redefined as a circular process not a linear process. Reduce, reuse, recycle applies to everything. Much of the foundation for this goal has been built, the structure above just needs to be built. Lake Oswego's new Commercial Composting Pilot Program will help to design that structure. Elimination of waste will also have a significant effect on mega-goal number 1. True waste is not just a waste of material but a tremendous waste of energy.

## **Mega-Goal Number 4 - Lake Oswego is a Toxin Free Environment**

The long term goal is to eliminate harmful toxins from our environment. Actions in this area will need to be both remedial to remove existing toxins and preventative to keep new toxins from entering the environment. Actions in this area also relate to Mega-goal Number 3

## **Action Goals - 2011**

### **Action Goal Number 2011-1: Living Building Challenge**

Set public policy that all new Lake Oswego public buildings meet the Living Building Challenge as created by the Cascadia Chapter of the USGBC (United States Green building Council). In addition, the policy should include requirements that any renovations of existing city-owned buildings attain LEED Platinum certification at a minimum.

#### Budget Issues:

At this point in time, Living Building certification is a significant increase over a LEED Gold base building. This increase varies depending on the type of building, the use, etc. On the other hand energy and water savings can be significant as well. The City is a long term property holder so longer pay-backs should be acceptable. It is safe to assume that LB costs will come down as more buildings are built to this criteria and energy and water costs will rise in the future. This will result in shorter payback periods and increased savings for the City. Green buildings are already producing data that indicates employee productivity is better, absenteeism is reduced and turnover is lower as well. The attached matrix was prepared by the Cascadian Chapter of the USGBC and provides a good sense of the construction cost increases related to Living Buildings.

### **Action Goal Number 2011-2: Green Homes**

The City develops a pilot program to assist homeowners in upgrading existing homes to meet the four Mega-Goals. The program targets a single pilot project for the first year. This program would certainly utilize existing programs offered through larger government agencies and utilities. In addition the program may create a City sponsored fund that offers low interest loans to home owners who in turn repay the loans via their property tax assessment. In theory, energy and water saving will offset some or all of the assessment. A similar pilot project is underway in Portland, *Clean Energy Works*. Berkeley has a more limited program that applies just to solar installations.

#### Budget Issues:

If well conceived, this should have a zero sum financial impact on Lake Oswego tax payers. The rotating loan fund concept is essentially self-funding. The City funds the loan pool with an initial bond sale. Pre-subscribing home owners to the program would help support the bond offering. The interest on the bond is paid with interest from the home-owners loan, which in turn, is funded by energy savings. As the bond matures, a new bond is floated to perpetuate the program. The bond could be small initially with larger subsequent bonds as the program proves itself.

There will likely be administrative costs associated with a program like this so a funding mechanism will need to be created. Presumably a fee structure similar to a loan fee would be warranted. It could either be paid up front or wrapped into the loan.

### **Action Goal Number 2011-3 : Green Businesses**

This action goal is essentially the same as 2011-2 but geared towards commercial buildings.

### **Action Goal Number 2011-4 : Expanded Water Conservation Incentive Program**

Expand the existing water conservation incentive program 5X. Currently, the City has a successful, albeit limited, water conservation incentive program. The City has allotted \$30,000 the last two years to support toilet conversions to low flow units. In addition, the city funds water audits and conservation give-a-ways in the form of low flow shower heads, aerators, leak detectors, and irrigation aids. Citizens have taken advantage of

the program both years with this year's allowance well on its way to full utilization. The water savings from just this modest investment is between 5 and 6 million gallons annually. Although this sounds like a lot, it is less than 3/10's of 1% of our annual water use. To make a significant dent in water consumption, the incentives need to be increased significantly. The incentive funded in this program can certainly be linked to the pilot program referenced in 2011-2 and 3.

Budget Issues:

The current \$30,000 incentive fund works out less than 1 penny per CCF (748 gallons). If a household utilizes up to the maximum for the Second Rate Tier (25 CCF) per bimonthly billing period, that is only 25 cents (12.5 cents per month). Considering a typical household bi-monthly combined bill is probably well in excess of \$100, 25 cents is negligible. If a water conservation surcharge of 5 cents per CCF is added to the water rate the revenue dedicated to conservation incentives could be increased significantly with minimal financial impact on the rate payer; literally pennies per day.

**Action Goal Number 2011-5 : Green Chemistry Building and Vehicle Maintenance**

Establish Green Chemistry Maintenance Program for all Lake Oswego city buildings and vehicles. Establish cleaning and maintenance protocols for city buildings and vehicles that minimize or eliminate where viable, the introduction of toxins into the environment. The city's Sustainability Plan generally calls for this action but provides no detail. This Action Goal should establish a detailed protocol and research specific materials for procurement.

Budget Issues:

Budget impact is minimal if anything at all. Green chemistry based products are plentiful in the marketplace and typically there is no premium for these products.

**Action Goal Number 2011-6 : Pilot Program - Pesticide/Herbicide Free Public Space.**

Establish a pilot program to maintain a public landscaped space without the use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and herbicides. This pilot project could be and probably needs to be relatively small. The landscaping around a particular building, landscaped medians, or some similar space would be enough to experiment with different techniques and monitor results.

### Budget Issues:

It is likely that labor cost for maintenance will be higher but costs for typical chemicals used in landscape maintenance will be eliminated. This may be a good opportunity for either volunteer services and/or alternatives to traffic fines. Run a stop sign, weed a flower bed.

### **Action Goal Number 2011-7 : Zero Waste Public Events**

Establish a policy, with the needed protocols, that all Lake Oswego Public Events shall be zero waste events. All waste produced at public events will be reused, recycled, or composted. This is a logical continuation of the waste reduction goals within the City's Sustainability Plan. This will be an ideal opportunity for the City to lead by example.

### Budget Issues:

Creating the policy will be relatively simple; creating protocols will require some staff time. It will also require more staff planning time at the front end each public event. However, if the protocols are well thought out and detailed, this will help reduce the burden on the events. This is also a cost burden that will diminish over time as the protocols become routine.

### **Action Item Number 2011-8: Neighborhood Recycling Pilot Program**

Establish a pilot program for a neighborhood recycling center. Currently, there are many items that do not qualify for curbside recycling; certain plastics, motor oil, hazardous materials, etc. By creating a convenient neighborhood centric recycling model for these items it is likely that more will be kept out of the landfill and/or less will accumulate in households. Given the space requirements, schools may be the best potential test location. With the potential loss of the city's current recycling center in the Foothills as this area is redeveloped, the time is opportune to consider and try another pedestrian friendly model.

### Budget Issues:

If the local waste haulers and recyclers such as Allied Waste and Far West Fibers are involved, public expenditures may be minimal. Some staff planning and liaison time is anticipated but not much. It is also anticipated that members of the SAB would participate

### **Action Goal Number 2011-9 : Natural Step Training**

Provide training for a wide variety of concerned citizens and participants from the public sector in the fundamentals of the Natural Step. The intent is to train the trainers who will, in turn, take what they have learned and pass it on to their constituent group. The anticipated participants should include key city staff from all department, representative members from all the Advisory Boards and Commissions, representatives from each of the neighborhood association boards, members of the Chamber of Commerce and other key local business organizations.

#### Budget Issues:

This action is already in the works and will be funded by Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funds.

### **Action Goal Number 2011-10 : Neighborhood Association Sustainability Summit**

Establish an annual Sustainability Summit to expand awareness, foster cooperation, and stimulate action within and between neighborhoods. This should happen after the Natural Step training to allow time for that information to flow back into the neighborhoods. This event can be considered

#### Budget Issues:

Assuming public facilities are used, there may be minor costs associated with event set up and break down, etc. In addition, a modest amount of staff time will be needed in the planning and execution of the event. It is likely that this may fall primarily under the umbrella of the SAB with its members and staff.

### **Action Goal Number 2011-11 : Community Adaptation Plan for Climate Change**

Establish a community based framework plan to cope with the changes that will come with climate change. It is likely that environmental, social and economic change will accompany climate change. In the vein of, "hope for best and plan for the worst", our city needs to seriously consider how the repercussions of climate change could affect Lake Oswego. Where are our most vulnerable areas and what can be done to mitigate these effects? What can we do, what must we do to develop a resilient community which is able to adapt, absorb, resist, or even embrace change. Some changes may come quickly even abruptly (a flood or fire) others may come slowly (a drought or continued contraction of school age children.) A possible framework model

may be adapted from Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change developed by the International Institute for Environment and Development. A group was formed to review the creation of a new Neighborhood Action Plan template, with a combination of city staff, a Council liaison, and members of the community. A similar task group may be the correct approach for this framework plan as well

#### Budget Issues:

The primary budget issues lies in staffing by the city. There were certainly significant staff hours allocated to the development of the Neighborhood Action Plan and the need for this action goal may be similar if not greater.

Thank You

#### SAB Members

Grant Watkinson - co-chair

Bruce Brown - co-chair

Dorothy Atwood

Matt Briggs

Gregory Monahan

Sarah Asby

Vidya Kale

Daniel Gottlieb

Gary Bachofner