

Hillsboro Environmental Stewardship Committee



Meeting # 1, 2023 – 2024

October 19, 2023/4:00-5:30 PM
Hillsboro Civic Center, Room #113B/C

Attendees: Anthony Martin, Mac Martin, Fawn Bergen, Nina Carlson, Hannah Cruz, KJ Lewis, Laura Trunk, Audrey O'Brien, Vinod Singh, Kieran Sikdar, Jeff Pazdalski, Allison Puch-Cahuich, Brittany Contreras, Tasha Johnson, Allison Bergseng, Robin Straughan, Jason Robertson, Dacia Bakkum
Absent: Jessica Dorsey, Mia Hocking, Tina Bailey, Tina Chang, Zuly Munoz

Welcome/Introductions

ESC Chair, Anthony Martin welcomed the group and asked for a round of introductions.

Annual Report & Work Plan/Meeting Schedule

Jason Robertson provided an overview of the Hillsboro 2035 Environmental Stewardship focus area annual report and work program.

- There is data available for 17 of 25 indicators (inaugural year for reset).
- Five indicators are under development and three indicators are recommended for retirement.
- 43 of 45 Environmental Stewardship actions are underway or completed and just two have not been started.
- 17 Environmental Stewardship highlights are featured in the Annual Report.
- Implementation partners include City of Hillsboro, Clean Water Services, Energy Trust of Oregon, Hillsboro School District, Metro, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, TriMet, Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District, Washington County, and Westside Transportation Alliance.

Meeting Schedule & Work Plan

*Please note, program topics, locations, and agendas are subject to change.

- **Meeting 1:** Thursday, October 19, 4-5:30pm, In Person/Hillsboro Civic Center, Discussion topics: City Environmental Assessment; Internal Committees, Preliminary GHG Data Indicator Discussion Natural Resources Conservation Set
- **Meeting 2:** Thursday, December 7, Virtual/Zoom, Discussion topics: Hillsboro School District Sustainability Initiatives, Community GHG Emissions Inventory Report, Energy and Mobility Indicators
- **Meeting 3:** Thursday, March 21, 4-6pm, In Person/Genentech Tour, Discussion topics: Partner Survey and Indicator Status to Date, Energy and Mobility Indicators (Part 2)
- **Meeting 4:** Thursday, May 16, 4-5:30pm, In Person/Location TBD, Discussion topics: Hillsboro/Metro Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP), Partner Survey Preview, 2035 Community Plan Update and Engagement Ideas, Material Recovery and Renewal Indicators

- **Meeting 5:** Thursday, June 6, 4-5:30pm, In-Person/The Venetian, Discussion topics: Overall Implementation Progress, Good Eats, Action Highlights, and Partner Updates

Natural Resource Conservation Indicators

Indicator	Status	Recommendation
# acres in Tualatin River watershed sub-basins owned or under easement for natural resource preservation	Ongoing. Original indicator expanded beyond city limits to entire watershed (beyond Hillsboro City Limits) and combine upland and riparian in one place.	<p>Keep as-is. Revisit in the future as “net annual increase” may be unattainable at some point.</p> <p>Notes: Riparian acreage under conservation/merged with upland acres; reached out to all partners who collect this information including Clean Water Services, Metro, Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District, US Forest Service and US Fish and Wildlife. Need to track larger areas – not just areas within Hillsboro’s boundaries.</p>
Abundance, population size and distribution of native amphibian species at Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve, Rood Bridge Park and Orenco Woods Nature Park	Ongoing. Expanded to include areas beyond JBWP. Rood Bridge and Orenco Woods site are sometimes inaccessible which can distort comparative figures.	<p>Keep as is if access issues can be resolved.</p> <p>Notes: Annual counts; One challenge is some areas may flood and cannot be counted annually. Red legged frogs are the best indicators of amphibian health. Northwestern salamanders and newt populations are also steadily increasing. Need to look at the populations over the longer term since populations of animals will fluctuate from year to year due to weather, drought, etc.</p>
# native plants installed by City of Hillsboro and Clean Water Services partners	New. Good info but relies on one person reaching out to multiple partners to retrieve and ensure no double count.	<p>Check with Laura Trunk re continued viability. Consider # of acres planted with native species as future alternative.</p> <p>Notes: Includes number of plants CWS installed for their sites; COH counts are in</p>

		addition to numbers CWS provided; all watershed wide plantings.
# acres of lawn or turf converted to pollinator-friendly vegetation	New. No valid way to collect citywide but could potentially tracked for City owned and managed properties. Not launched in 2023.	<p>Laura and Robin to discuss viability.</p> <p>Notes: We can track publicly owned locations, but it would be very challenging to track private property. New PW staff coming on board next year – may be able to help track; If we can't track by end of year; set aside until later date. Maybe this isn't an indicator but consider for an action in the updated 2035 Plan. Consider tracking/including % of acres of pollinator/native plants in new parks and subdivisions. As urban forestry plan developed there may be other indicators we can create like tree canopy cover. Will likely take a couple of years. City natural resources plan not started yet. (Action in 2035 Plan)</p>
# of backyard habitat certifications within Hillsboro	New, solid.	Keep as is.
Days with 'Moderate' and 'Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups' air quality, and annual average concentrations of arsenic, benzene, acetaldehyde, formaldehyde, and naphthalene as compared to the ambient benchmark concentrations	Ongoing but reports lag by a year. Hoped to expand, but no new monitoring stations or capabilities added to Hillsboro yet (tracking local particulates). Today, indicator unduly influenced by external fire smoke.	<p>Keep as is for now.</p> <p>Notes: Hillsboro was not selected for additional air monitoring sites. Challenges with indicator include air quality issues such as those caused by wildfire smoke that are out of our control. Is there a way to get data on the number of people with asthma? Washington County Public Health monitors climate and public health and produces an annual report that includes air quality related illness. We could consider reporting on the cross over with public health (asthma) and climate change.</p>

Gallons per connection per day potable water system loss	Ongoing. Hillsboro water exploring other ways of measuring.	<p>Keep as is for now.</p> <p>Notes: Water Department using new process to audit water loss and can provide data on gallons of water used, water loss, and the number of water connections.</p> <p>CWS water reuse expanding to Hillsboro (purple pipe). Most purple pipes connections are for irrigation (parks, golf courses, etc.). Currently looking at Merriweather Golf Course.</p>
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City Updates

Robin Straughan, City of Hillsboro Sustainability and Resiliency Manger provided updates about the City’s Environmental Assessment, new internal committees that will help guide implementation, recommended steps to implementation and how they connect to key City work. Robin also discussed new work around climate action planning.

Environmental Assessment Timeline

Initial discussions about environmental management strengths and needs began in 2016. Discussions continued looking at ways to improve coordination and outcomes until COVID arrived. In 2021, Portland State University Center for Public Service was brought onboard to conduct an internal assessment since they have expertise in both natural resources and organizational development.

They started by looking at what the City currently does today and researched what kinds of environmental work three other benchmark cities (Gresham, Bend, and Eugene) are doing. PSU staff then gathered common themes of what internal and external stakeholders see and feel about the City’s environmental work and, using this data, developed recommendations on opportunities the City should explore.

The assessment was completed in fall 2022 and presented to Council last December. The assessment has been one of the Council’s priorities for the past two years.

Hillsboro’s Current Environmental Work

Below is a list of environmental services provided by the City. Much of this work includes natural resources or environmental considerations, and crosses over many departments.

- The City must comply with all state, regional and federal regulatory requirement including in comprehensive planning and interaction with statewide land use goals
- Water treatment, distribution, quality, and conservation
- Wastewater management (done in conjunction with Clean Water Services)

- Watershed/stormwater management (in conjunction with Clean Water Services)
- Public works (streets, sidewalk, storm, and sanitary sewer), transportation, programs, and infrastructure
- Solid waste planning and services as well as waste reduction strategies
- 2018 Energy Management Plan (City operations)
- Emergency planning and response
- 2010 Sustainability Plan (City operations)
- Management of some environmentally sensitive lands
- Hillsboro 2035 Environmental Stewardship goals

Benchmark Cities

Below is a snapshot of the organizational approaches taken by three benchmark cities that have similar environmental responsibilities as Hillsboro.

City of Eugene

- City of Eugene has two key departments that include all their environmental services, such as Parks, Open Space, Maintenance, Engineering, Wastewater, Urban Agriculture and Recycling.
- They utilize cross-department teams to manage stormwater and some other natural resources.
- Their City Council adopted a Climate Recovery Ordinance in 2014 and their latest climate action plan in 2019.
- They have a robust urban forestry program funded through stormwater and road revenues.
- The Rivers to Ridges Partnership is a voluntary association of organizations that work collaboratively to protect, restore, and manage public open spaces. The association has 19 partners, including non-profit, public, federal, and state organizations.

City of Gresham

- The City of Gresham has one large department that covers all their environmental programs including Transportation, Water, Parks, Natural Resources, and Recycling.
- They also have the People's Utility District, which is an independent water district that provides drinking water services to approximately half of Gresham residents.
- Gresham has a new community advisory group tasked with evaluating Gresham's parks and recreational services and creating recommendations to improve community outcomes.
- The city is on the forefront of wastewater sustainability and has either the first or second net-zero energy wastewater treatment plant in the country.
- The city is in the final stages of developing their first community climate action plan.

City of Bend

- The City of Bend has a Public Works "department" which is the informal name for a group of departments that serve this function. They have a lot of coordination between Utilities, Engineering & Infrastructure Planning, Transportation & Mobility.
- Their Parks and Recreation district is operated separate from the City.
- The Neighborhood Greenways project involves the design and construction of a network of greenways for walking and biking. This is a project of the Engineering and Infrastructure Planning Department.

- Bend developed their community climate action plan in 2019 and the Council appointed the Environment and Climate Committee to oversee and guide the implementation of the CAP.

Natural Resources Assessment Report - Opportunity Focus Areas

The report includes 10 opportunity focus areas, with nearly 20 different actions or strategies within the recommendations. Portland State University recommends ensuring the overarching priority across these opportunities is to bring a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) lens to all this work.

Opportunity Focus Areas

- Clarify regulatory and operating authority with important partners, such as through intergovernmental agreements.
- Create an environmental stewardship leadership vision and accompanying system for alignment, planning, coordination, and accountability across all the departments that interact with natural resources.
- Conduct a city-wide assessment of urban forest resources, tree protection policies and ordinances benchmarked on comparable cities; Prepare an urban forest plan, policy, and program.
- Seek opportunities to better connect fire response, fuel management, landscape resilience, air quality and community development and planning.
- Consider a unifying city policy, plan or initiative expressing how Hillsboro is mitigating and adapting to climate change that sets a framework for action and decision making for sustainable city operations and environmental services.
- Create a management plan with clear roles, responsibilities and capacity for city-owned natural resources addressing restoration, habitat needs, climate change, homelessness and increased public use.
- Assess the level of city environmental service attention, gaps and needs across the community to see what parts of the city are left out and identify priorities for action.
- Further integrate sustainability into city operations to ensure the City's sustainability goals are met.
- Establish a stronger linkage between future planning with action today by implementing the 2018 comprehensive plan.
- Create meaningful forums for engagement and community partnership around natural resources with a changing community.

Steps to Implementation

- *Hire a Sustainability and Resiliency Manger.* The City redefined the Sustainability Manager lead position to Sustainability & Resiliency Manager to include climate change mitigation and adaptation work the City is doing as well as operational sustainability. Robin Straughan was hired as the City's new Sustainability and Resiliency Manager in March 2023.
- *Create internal Environmental Policy & Technical Teams.* Robin is leading the collaborative development of a city-wide implementation program for the Environmental Assessment with assistance from 2 new internal teams. One will focus on environmental policy development. The other will focus on technical programming. These committees will work on developing the

environmental leadership vision and system of alignment across departments, in addition to providing leadership on several other report recommendations.

- *Utilize the City's Equity Toolkit and Community Engagement Framework.* The new committees will use the City's Equity Toolkit and Community Engagement Framework to guide their work. This will help ensure that equity is at the forefront of incorporating the report recommendations and developing new programs and projects.
- *Community Engagement.* Like using the equity framework, the City will also create meaningful forums for engagement and community partnership around natural resources with a changing community.
- *Develop a City Plan for Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation.* The City will focus on updating the sustainability plan strategies and goals as part of a comprehensive climate action plan (CAP). The City is currently in the first stages of this planning effort – completing a community greenhouse gas inventory which is foundational for a CAP.
- *Develop an Urban Forestry Program.* The City is currently developing an urban forestry program. Phase one of an urban forestry study was just completed and the City hopes to hire an urban forester by early next year to continue the work. That position will be added to the Environmental Technical Committee once on board.
- *Develop a Natural Resources Management Plan.* The City will next focus on the development of a natural resources management plan, looking at all the city's natural lands and their stewardship.
- *Assess Environmental Service Level Gaps.* Along with the Natural Resources Management Plan, the City intends to assess the various levels of environmental service attention to look for needs across the whole community (including those frequently overlooked or underserved with natural resource amenities) and identify priorities for action.

Links to Key City Work

There are well-established environmental focused priorities and practices across the City, from the City Council to the Hillsboro 2035 Community Plan, to department specific initiatives. The lists below include existing projects as well as newer strategies that are underway or in development that are tied directly to the assessment opportunities.

City Council Priorities

- **Environmental Stewardship**
- Community Engagement
- Racial Equity
- Hillsboro 2035

Environmental Stewardship Focus Area

- Livability and Recreation focus area
- Health and Wellness focus area
- **Environmental Stewardship Committee**
- Community Engagement Committee

Public Works

- New IGA with Clean Water Services
- Urban Forester position
- Sustainable development practices

Parks and Recreation

- Urban Forest Study
- Proactive Emerald Ash Borer practices
- Tree grants
- Bee City and Tree City USA
- Integrated Pest Management Plan

Sustainability

- Sustainability goals and policies
- **Environmental Stewardship Committee**
- Greenhouse Gas Inventories
- Climate mitigation and adaptation planning - PCAP & CCAP
- Internal Environmental Committees

New City (Internal) Environmental Committees

The graph shows how the committees' function with the City structure. The City Council sets the priorities around environmental sustainability. Deputy City Manager Rahim Harji serves as the executive sponsor of the program. Robin Straughan serves as the program manager. Two new committees are being formed to oversee policy development and technical implementation of recommendations and many staff will provide subject matter expertise and support.



Climate Action Planning

Following up on the priority project to integrate resiliency into sustainability planning, the City is now completing a community greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory, priority climate action plan or PCAP, and comprehensive community climate action plan or CCAP. This will enable us to tap into new federal funding opportunities for projects that mitigate climate change. This work is being led by the City's Sustainability team in partnership with a contracted consulting firm and will include many of the opportunities listed in the assessment. Climate projects currently underway:

- Community greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory
- Priority climate action plan (PCAP)
- Comprehensive climate action plan (CCAP)
- Enables eligibility for significant federal funding sources targeting climate change mitigation
- Must align with regional and state priorities
- Opportunities for collaboration with other communities
- Focus on actionable plan strategies and measures

The City's CAPs will follow a very specific process to align with eligibility for federal funding. This is a snapshot of the tasks to show the comprehensive nature of the plans to ensure that they will be actionable.

- **Task 1:** Community GHG Inventory
- **Task 2:** GHG Emissions Projections
- **Task 3:** Stakeholder Outreach to Community Partners, Utilities, Institutions (PCAP); community and committees (CCAP)
- **Task 4:** Quantified GHG Reduction Measures; Disadvantaged Communities Benefit Analysis
- **Task 5:** Review of Authority to Implement; Identify Relevant Partners & Secure Commitment
- **Task 6:** Workforce Planning Analysis – Assess Readiness to Implement GHG Reduction Measures
- **Task 7:** Regional Coordination Plan and Intersection with Other Funding Availability
- **Task 8:** Produce Final Draft Plans and Reports; Status Reports Delivered to EPA
- **Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory Complete by December 2023**
- **PCAP Due Spring 2024**

- **CCAP Due Summer 2025**

The priority climate action plan must focus on climate mitigation and include close alignment with the regional PCAP being developed by Metro. The comprehensive climate action plan or CCAP – will include a community engaged process, more regional coordination, and climate adaptation strategies as well as City operational resiliency. It is anticipated that the ESC will help provide input during the CCAP development process.

Councilor’s Corner

Anthony provided several City Council updates including the following:

- The City adopted a new [camping ordinance](#), which will disallow camping in environmentally-sensitive areas
- As part of the expanded N. Hillsboro (NOHI) industrial area, additional work will be done to extend the Crescent Park Greenway
- Updated [housing needs analysis which confirmed the City need additional residential lands](#)
- The second 5-year update of the [Hillsboro 2035 Community Plan](#) will begin early next year. The Civic Leadership Academy is working on a community engagement strategy to help reach more people in Hillsboro.
- The City of Hillsboro adopted a [land acknowledgment statement](#) recognizing the **Atfalati-Kalapuyans** as the ancestral people of the Tualatin Valley and the role government has played in colonization of indigenous people.
- Council has a desire for the Port of Portland to claim a more active role in using unleaded fuel.
- Industrial Noise Standards and Short Term Rentals Work session – [Read the Staff Report](#)
- The City budget is in a good position financially; credit to good management and planning.
- Cost of service study on sewer/storm water rates. [Water rate information.](#)

Member Updates

The Planetcon recycling event went well. The next event will be in April 2024. We are always looking for volunteers – please reach out to Tasha Johnson if you’d like to help.

Next meeting:

Thursday, December 7, 4-5:30pm, Virtual Meeting/Zoom