

Greenest City Action Team
Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2009
12:00 pm to 5:00 pm
12th Floor Boardroom, Vancity Credit Union, 183 Terminal Avenue

Attendees:

Mayor Robertson, Co-Chair, City of Vancouver
David Boyd, Co-Chair
Councillor Andrea Reimer, City of Vancouver
Councillor David Cadman, City of Vancouver
David Thomson, facilitator
Alex Lau
Donna Clark (for Mossadiq Umedaly), BC Hydro
Gordon Price
Karen Cooling
Linda Coady
Linda Nowlan
Lindsay Cole
Mark Holland
Michael Magee, Chief of Staff, City of Vancouver
Mike Harcourt
Moura Quayle
Penny Ballem, City Manager, City of Vancouver
Robert Safrata
Sean Pander, Sustainability Group, City of Vancouver
Tamara Vrooman, CEO, Vancity Credit Union
Laura Chan, recorder, City of Vancouver

LUNCH AND OPENING REMARKS BY MAYOR ROBERTSON

Mayor Robertson thanked everyone for coming to this meeting. It is great to have expertise and brilliance to bring together great ideas to go forward. Mayor Robertson also thanked Tamara Vrooman for hosting the first meeting and for being part of team.

WHY THE PLAN AND ACTION TEAM

The focus of this meeting is on environmental realm and outcome. Like HEAT, the Greenest City Action Team (GCAT) will have a dramatic impact with action items completed within a few days or weeks. The GCAT will have a global impact and will be proactive in making this the greenest city.

BACKGROUND ON THE CITY'S ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION - DAVID BOYD

David Boyd thanked everyone for bringing great energy to the meeting. David mentioned that Vancouver is the greenest city in Canada but not the world. He provided an overview of the Greenest City Backgrounder (Appendix A) and asked everyone to add a ninth item to the list "Nature and Greenspace".

INTRODUCTIONS BY TEAM MEMBERS/COUNCILLORS. "THE TOP 2 DEFINING FEATURES THAT DISTINGUISH VANCOUVER AS THE GREENEST CITY IN THE WORLD IN 10 YEARS"

David Thomson, facilitator for GCAT, asked everyone to introduce themselves and also list the top 2 defining features that distinguish Vancouver as the greenest city in the

world in 10 years in their introduction. As a reminder, please submit biography to Maria Dobrinskaya and they will be circulated to the group members shortly.

Moura Quayle - (1) we will have increase eco literacy by 50%, and (2) we will have crack the nut in philanthropist, NGO, etc, to create a new model for working that alignment.

Mark Holland (1) have a sustainable food system, where growing is a small part. Processing and packaging, Vancouver should be considered the most sustainable food system in the world. (2) Retrofit buildings in district utility. Mode share, bike, and walk.

Mike Harcourt (1)Transportation - building rapid transit line, have more buses, move to higher density, transit quarters, need \$450 million extra federal, municipal, provincial investment per year. Build Rapid Transit lines, several ferry lines, etc. (2) Stimulate green economy and green energy. Pipe lines. Greenest and sustainable in 10 years.

Robert Safrata - (1) Free transit in the region. (2) Second is LEED gold buildings are not that costly to build.

David Cadman - (1) Make it more bicycle friendly. Already committed to GHG reductions - show that and work with provincial government. Need about 13% reduction. Need a lot more bicycles. (2) Regional Waste Diversion - need to partner with the region, otherwise it is hard to be a green city if the region is not together on this. Need to work in collaboration. Already committed so can be measurable.

Sean Pander - from City of Vancouver's Sustainability Group to hear what the ideas are.

Alex Lau - (1) Clean technology. (2) International ideas - work internationally and exchange ideas.

David Boyd - provided introduction. He co-authored David Suzuki's book and also is currently working with the government in Sweden on green initiatives.

David Thomson - provided introduction. His vision is to really engage citizens in green initiatives. He also believes in political decision making processes that are fast and non bureaucratic.

Andrea Reimer - (1) to not have lawns (2) Kids walking, biking or transiting to school. Most kids live close to school where they do not need to be dropped off by a car.

Karen Cooling - (1) Waste - there is too much waste, need to reduce. People are paying the price the dump things. Instead of having a landfill, have a recycling/reuse location so items can be recycled and/or recreated into something else. Everything that comes in find a use afterwards so that it is 100% recycled. (2) Get lawns off drugs and plant natural gardens. Get rid of lawns, promote bees, etc. Have a neighbourhood competition.

Linda Coady - (1) Citizens' activation. Demonstrate, break down silos and use digital media - track and demonstrate citizens' activation. (2) Index - Can we measure progress and work on an increased investment in green economy.

Donna Clark - sitting in for Mossadiq Umedaly from BC Hydro. (1) When Vancouver is known as greenest city in the world (2) Have a transit system that is smart and free.

Linda Nowlan - (1) Need to have the greenest laws, cutting green tape - for green development. Remove barriers to becoming green. (2) Vancouver to have the greenest kids going to greenest school. With 60,000 children, over 50% should be walking, cycling or transiting to school to reduce carbon footprint. School programs could include food, agriculture, and garden projects. Create energy efficient schools - geo thermal schools.

Lindsay Cole - (1) Building code change - leadership to push the province and federal government for green building code, one that is more than LEED gold. (2) Have citizens enrolled and engaged in being green - e.g. Portland.

Laura Chan - here as a recorder for this meeting. (1) Start young and teach school children how to be green and they in turn teach their parents how to be green. (2) Have a better public transportation system that is faster and more convenient than taking the car.

Mike Magee - (1) Values are enlightened and wants to be the greenest city in the world. (2) Political leadership - develop culture in the city to be intolerant to non-green actions and be the greenest city.

Gordon Price - (1) Not to be a "Motordom" City where auto and dealership seems to rule like a kingdom. For example, the expansion of the sea-to-sky highway is when motordom wins again. Instead, have a cultural shift like in the Burrard Street Bridge where there will be an expansion for bicycles and pedestrians. Fight motordom. (2) Maintain and expand the water and mountains.

Penny Ballem - (1) Normalization of the greenest way of living. Normalization that tobacco is bad - need to take method to normalize responsibility and accountability to living green. (2) Health care industry has a carbon footprint. It's a non renewable industry with a lot of barriers. Supply change and lead in the health industry to be green.

Tamara Vrooman - (1) Engagement piece must be followed, momentum is key, the answer for residents who move here is that Vancouver's green and there are job opportunities here. (2) Power of engaged citizen and purchasing power of engaged citizen. Choices available to the consumers should be aligned to green choices - food, transit, etc. Good to have consumers demanding for green choices.

THE GAMEPLAN - NEXT 4 MONTHS AND TODAY - D. BOYD, DAVID THOMSON

David Thomson thanked everyone for their ideas. He reviewed the Greenest City Action Team Terms of Reference (Appendix B).

Mayor Robertson - recapped that they are looking for two outputs - quick starts are action items that can be implemented this year, and 10 year action plan. The Quick Start report will be ready by early April/end of March. What can be implemented and completed by year end? Need to have this ready before the world arrives. What can be felt and tangible when the world comes here? The second report will be ready by end of June, which is a ten year blueprint to be the greenest. The ten year plan is more detailed and will drill down to all the components to get to the top and how to do that. Would like to share broadly to the world. Collect all ideas and confident that they are tangible action items, and achievable.

GCAT will meet on a monthly basis. Late March will focus on long term action like climate change, energy and financing. End of April will focus on transportation, food, nature, and water. Late May will focus on green economy and nature. Mid June will focus on pulling the report together.

Comments from Action Team Members:

Penny Ballem - to get immediate action is to focus on points of leverage to create immediate shift in behaviour and expectation. Issuing permits, etc.

City of Vancouver Sustainability Group - what are they up to? What are their inputs, don't want to duplicate work that has already been started. Need to work with them to get the ideas into action.

Mike Harcourt - Vancouver energy and increase density - Metro Vancouver to pull together. City of Vancouver's Sustainability Group should work with the team. Take advantage of the work Vancouver has already done. Mike suggested the members to read through Cities Plus 100 Year Plan and an "Urban Sustainability" book put out by Metro Vancouver. We should not follow the conventional path. There are 60,000 school children - start them into green thinking.

Councillor Reimer - Could email the City's Plus document and a Sustainability Group report highlighting projects that have been done. The backgrounder is a summary of the document.

Moura Quayle - experiment with how we can work as a group. SharePoint site? Twitter? Discussion platform? How do we connect with people e.g. UBC staff and connect with the right people. Integrate the network of expertise of all members of GCAT.

Gordon Price - What is the process? Incorporate community feedback. Task force to put together?

Mayor Robertson - technology, open source government, model the way forward for the city and bring in points and opinions.

Mark Holland - Sean Pander working on strategy. Very innovative and desire to move forward. Ability to move forward and to say things are constrained. Can help the City move forward. Now is the time to pull things from outside and get things moving.

Councillor Reimer - mentioned there is a video camera set up outside to interview the action team members. Interviews will be posted on Youtube channel to inspire and generate responses. Can mention what is your vision for Vancouver, why you are here, in hopes that people will be sending back videos in response. Anything about Greenest city.

OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES FOR 'QUICK ACTIONS' - D. BOYD, D. THOMSON
BRAINSTORM: ACTION TEAM MEMBERS' BEST THINKING ON SHORT TERM (1 YEAR)
ACTIONS THAT WOULD SET VANCOUVER ON A TRAJECTORY TO BECOME THE
GREENEST CITY IN THE WORLD

Both David Boyd and David Thomson asked the action team members to individually write down 'Quick Start' ideas for the 10 areas, one idea on one piece of paper, for 10 minutes and place them under one of the group headings:

Group 1 - climate, transport, energy

Group 2 - water, food, nature, waste and environmental health

Group 3 - green economy, neighbourhood initiative

Next, the action team members self select which group they would like to expand on to combine ideas, add ideas and prioritize where feasible. For each idea, decide: Does this idea fit within City of Vancouver's jurisdiction. If not, where does it fit? Who can act as ambassadors? Is it short term or long term? What is the effectiveness? Is it efficient - lowest possible cost? Equity - are the costs and benefits equally distributed? The above is a rough parameter to get things going. Try to use best practices, examples, benchmarks and financing ideas. Each group will have one hour to do this.

After an hour, we will regroup to review each group's ideas, review then and discuss what else is missing if any.

INITIAL PRIORITIZATION OF OPPORTUNITIES

Group 1 - climate, transport, energy

Climate

- Green buildings - fast track buildings for energy retrofit, green retrofit and green building. Fast track new or retrofit building.
- Energy efficiency requirements triggered by sales or major home renovations (building permits)
- POSTR Post Olympic Street Reallocation. During the Olympics, downtown and the Olympic venues will be transformed. Streets will be reallocated for transit and feet, primarily.
- Expand cycling education program

Transport

- Free transportation in downtown core - to be
- Experiments with car free zone
- All door boarding for buses
- Conversion and reduction of City vehicle fleet,
- Paralympic City - harness Paralympic energy to improve access to a greater degree in public realm.

- 1 - 2% of parking converted to public transport each year
- Limit large delivery truck to downtown core with hub and restrict hours
- Maintain Olympic transport regime after Olympics
- Pedestrian only corridors

Energy

- Map of district energy in the city and clarify city's role in energy management and heat recovery.
- District energy - Women's and Children's Hospital, Northeast False Creek
- German model of feed-in tariffs for renewable energy - solar, wind, geothermal
- Implement on-site energy requirement.
- Thermal imaging to identify energy wasters
- Implement mandatory measurement of energy efficiency for grow-op renovations.
- Bio energy task force for waste products
- Encourage staff innovation.

Miscellaneous

- Work with 5 to 10 large emitters to reduce emitters
- Green procurement policy
- Buy solar panels for city buildings and schools.

What's missing for group 1?

- Missing tangible measurable index.
- With Vancouver Port and YVR, what's the greenhouse reduction plan? The ships that are waiting out there are emitting more pollution than vehicles.
- Trip coordinator to assist kids in walking to and from school.
- Ride share system during the Olympics

Group 2 - water, food, nature, waste and environmental health

- Take unused lawn at City Hall and convert it into a demo community garden as an example to the public
- Review City's land ownership and convert certain percentage to community garden
- Food policy - update and expand in 2009
- Farmer's market group and food policy team co-host supply and demand discussion. Restaurant work with farmers to determine what to grow
- Get rid of farmer's market red tape
- Ban pesticide and eliminate use on city property
- Boulevard and round-about - neighbourhood scaled deployment of ecosystem -
- Ban waste - plastic bags, packaging reduction.
- There are large amounts of good things that are thrown. Set up protocol and practices - pair them up with the right to walk in and decide if items can be reused and furniture repaired. Reinstate big object pickup program.
- Water heating - commit to water metering
- Water savings kit - nearly free but need to know where to get it.

What's missing in group 2?

- Team up with VANOC to eliminate paper cups and market own corporate cup refilled for discount.
- Food - Quest - get refrigeration capacity to maintain and supply food. Otherwise, most goes to waste.
- Ban paper cups, non reusable food takeout, and plastic bag
- Plastic bottles and aluminium cans are not thrown because they are picked up by those who collect for recycling fee. E.g. United We Can.

Group 3 - green economy, neighbourhood initiative

- Fast-track LEED Gold building, density bonuses, tax holiday
- Bold land use - Great Northern Way Campus, Northeast False Creek, district energy, street car, mixed use, and relationship with universities
- Funds - green community neighbourhood fund, support homeowners to make footprint smaller.
- Conduct green tape review of city bylaw - produce greenest city and not become barriers. Work with front line staff as they know best.
- Sustainability Practitioner - integrating goals to employee performance plan, green purchasing policy. Take key drivers and do score cards to get levers. It'll be assessable to public. Build on existing initiatives.
- Adopting "eco" budget model as they do in European cities.
- Revolving fund for green retrofit
- Funding for escrow
- Transaction based activity to build buildings, increasing parking fees
- Promote Vancouver brand and green businesses
- Transformers - top 5 green projects - have a competition and get media attention
- Relocation incentive for green businesses - bring them into town
- Prize for home renovation/home building - people want to live in them - funded by selling. Leverage other green homes and demo to other residents
- Promote green hotels - using international certification. Europeans are willing to pay more for green hotels.
- City of Vancouver local audit of impacts and suggestions by neighbourhood to improve standards
- Neighbourhood competition in the city - citizens' engagement.
- Community workshop, public forum
- Citizen forester program - cultivate trees
- Citizen engagement public process
- Like in San Fran - Neighbourhood Sustainability Centre - dedicate city owned building as "Greenest City" centre to house NGO's and act as environmental library, resource centre and "how to be green".
- Not forget to use existing tools to profile activity in the city - Earth Hour, One Day, etc
- Kids - contest for school kids - what's your greenest city idea? Use their art in branding.

What's missing in group 3?

- Where will the money come from - auditing own investment stream and how to reinvest back into the city.
- Calgary and Edmonton have income via energy and used to reinvest
- Mayor's city awards in each category - profile best practices, great publicity, for neighbourhood, person, etc. E.g. best in category each month

SUMMARY OF THE DAY'S OUTPUT

Need to get into things into action. Focus efforts to get the fastest action and focus to get the biggest and most reaction.

Get focused and prioritize the groups' list. The City has the capacity to implement. City has tools and support but need the community to implement. How do we take it to action?

City of Vancouver's Sustainability Group - what is the relationship to other dept? There are champions in other dept ready to go. Example two with this team, two with that team. Scorecard - decide what you want to be measured on.

Decisions are hard but need to back them up and engage citizens. Media told them they have been let down. Need to get political system on our side.

Questions raised at the end of the meeting include:

Penny Ballem - What are the benchmarks? Where do people expect to find real progress?

Mike Magee - What are the criteria that we're judging ourselves against? Need measurable metrics. Where are the big wins for us? Big emitters for GHG in the city? Should they be focused on? Go for big wins. Big win, big leverage

Tamara Vrooman - The plan should achieve the vision? City can't do it on their own? What is city's role come June? Biggest fear is biggest report that doesn't get done.

David Boyd - Greenest city - what does it mean? Compare with the decathlon--10 events over 2 days. Don't need to be the best in every single event/category - but can't afford to be the weakest in any category. Craft our own benchmark with 10 indicators and 10 benchmarks.

David Cadman - do strategic analysis of partnership. E.g. partnership with Science World for Sustainability Centre for education. Vancouver should be the place to go for the greenest city. Place to educate and transformation change for Asia Pacific since we're the hub. Set up partners and receive guests. University partnership?

Robert Safrata - costs needs to be figured out.

NEXT STEPS; FEEDBACK AND CLOSING COMMENTS

Councillor Reimer provided different ways for public engagement:

Email address - greenestcity@vancouver.ca
Facebook - Vancouver Greenest City Action Team.
Twitter - will get code and go live tomorrow
Youtube channel - inspire people and get them thinking.
In person public meeting? Send your idea to Councillor Reimer
Vancouver.ca website - Have Your Say - Greenest City Action Team.

The next meeting at the end of March will focus on long term action plan for climate change and financing mechanisms. Please hold March 25 and March 27 from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm until a date has been confirmed.

If, after this meeting, there are more quick start ideas, please submit them to David Boyd (drboyd@uvic.ca) by March 15.

The plan is to have the first draft report on 'Quick Starts' a week before the next meeting for review and comments.

Suggestions for next meeting: Prepare notes, thoughts and ideas before the meeting, enter notes digitally instead of on flip charts.

For the next meeting, Sean Pander will work on metrics for each of the nine areas.

Any last comments? Do you announce the plan all at once or roll them out one at a time?

Karen Cooling - Embrace that it's a 10 year process so that there's always a story every couple of weeks. Always giving people a heads up on what's going on. Need to do cultural shift change. Need to have a communication strategy to this. People need to know about it, care about it and participate.

Mayor Robertson and David Boyd- need to start driving this. Start them and get going. E.g. green tape review, car free days, City is already doing discussion with large emitters, green procurement strategy. Need to start communicating GCAT initiatives, plan, and action.

E.g. Burrard Street Bridge - need discussion specifically on this high profile initiative before it goes live. Anyone who is interested should talk to Penny Ballem and Gordon Price.

E.g. Car free days - need ambassadors for this before it goes live.

Contact information will be circulated.

Mayor thanked everyone for ideas and to keep the energy rolling. Need to know what can be drawn out with networking.

Robert Safrata - create ambassadors like Al Gore speaking about global warming.

Meeting adjourned 5:15pm.

NEXT STEPS; FEEDBACK AND CLOSING COMMENTS

Councillor Reimer provided different ways for public engagement:

Email address - greenestcity@vancouver.ca

Facebook - Vancouver Greenest City Action Team.

Twitter - will get code and go live tomorrow

Youtube channel - inspire people and get them thinking.

In person public meeting? Send your idea to Councillor Reimer

Vancouver.ca website - Have Your Say - Greenest City Action Team.

Meeting adjourned 5:15pm.