

## **Greetings from the Vision2Action Symposium!**

### **The Architecture 2030 Challenge: An Opportunity for Sustainable Thurston Symposium Report to the Community**

For those who were there: Thank You for your attendance and participation in the recent Vision2Action Symposium focused on **The Architecture 2030**

**Challenge: An Opportunity for Sustainable Thurston**, held on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the Saint Martin's University. This is a concise synopsis of the proceedings. **Please take a moment to complete our follow-up survey about the event ([Click Here](#)).**

We had a great turnout with about 50 folks in attendance from a broad mix of affiliations including City and County Staff, business and non-profit leaders and a range of other neighbors, students and stakeholders in the future of our County. We were able to record the event, so those who were unable to attend or would like to revisit the conversation will be able to watch video and/or listen to podcasts of key parts of the event. We will make the event media resources available on our website in the next couple of weeks - [www.vision2action.us](http://www.vision2action.us).

#### ***Exciting Outcomes***

The attendees helped make this symposium a unique experience, interpreting the Architecture 2030 Challenge for the built environment in light of Thurston County's urban and rural realities. They generated realistic discussions and action plans addressing whether and how the goal of carbon neutrality should be adopted, a step now being considered for inclusion in Sustainable Thurston's draft vision, goals and targets. The symposium produced some significant outcomes, including an outline of plans for 3 more Vision2Action Symposiums in the coming year, including *Developing Green Urban Density, Planning a Sustainable Path with Neighborhoods, and Healthy Energy Housing Retrofits for Rentals*. It was an exciting event which inspired many to get involved and look toward bolder strategies, such as carbon neutrality, that will be required to address climate reality and economic challenges in our region.

#### ***Keynote Presentation and Panel of Local Experts***

The symposium opened with an inspiring presentation from keynote speaker Vincent Martinez from Architecture 2030 Inc. and the Seattle 2030 District. Martinez spoke of the need and opportunity of incorporating carbon neutral targets for commercial and residential developments and renovations. He offered examples of cities that have taken this to heart by establishing 2030 Districts, including Seattle's voluntary program that helps firms distinguish themselves while working with government to streamline regulatory processes. The presentation emphasized the surprisingly positive effects that carbon neutral targets are having in various places and on a national scale to reduce carbon emissions from the built environment and revitalize construction jobs. However, we still have a long way to go in the US, and globally the outlook continues to be grim, so we should seize every opportunity to strive for carbon neutrality in our development strategies in order to increase the success of this initiative.





A panel of local leaders followed Vincent to connect the conversation to Thurston County’s regional realities, including: Thera Black, Planner from Thurston Regional Planning, Jerome Parker of the Olympia Planning Commission, Stan Bowman, State Director of the American Institute of Architects, and Doug DeForest, a regional expert on the building industry. Their presentations highlighted the Sustainable Thurston regional planning process which covers a much wider scope of

interconnected issues than previous regional conversations (e.g. Growth Management). All the speakers emphasized land use challenges unique to our region and the need for urban density as the underlying issues if Thurston County wants to develop on a sustainable path. Projected new construction and renovation of the built environment in the next 25 years is a great chance to meet the Architecture 2030 carbon neutrality goals. Robert Coleman from TCAT presented the new GHG Inventory for Thurston County, which identifies the built environment - housing, commercial and industrial development – contributing 52% of carbon emissions, the largest source in the County. Leadership at the state level including green, energy-efficient office buildings, our state energy code and other policies for the building sector are largely aligned with A2030, help make a carbon-neutral Capitol city a real possibility.

We learned from Jerry Parker about the comprehensive plan process unfolding in the City of Olympia, which exemplifies the opportunity and challenge of gaining public support for bold development plans in our region: they only received one comment related to climate change! The Tumwater Brewery District and Lacey’s Woodland District development plans were hailed as emerging success stories in community engagement. Planners and Task Force Members have embraced the multi-disciplinary Sustainable Thurston process, and associated Urban Corridor Projects – as an opportunity to hear and understand the motivations of a wide range of stakeholders and make sure everyone is included. The big challenge is to better understand our real estate market and make the business case for private sector architects and developers to implement the type of development we want to see. Doug DeForest representing the building industry noted that current regulations often restrain mixed use, urban density development, and that zoning regulations and codes need to be changed to create the circumstances to allow the building industry to build what the public wants. Calls for climate action, regional visions, even green policies and incentives are great, but the public must start asking elected officials for leadership on dense, mixed use, carbon neutral development, or it won’t happen. Education and outreach to specific audiences *on their terms* is key.

We heard from Stan Bowman how Architects are leading and taking ownership of the outcomes for carbon neutrality. He called on property owners, elected officials, organizations and businesses to ask themselves what is their part to solve in the whole life cycle of the built environment? He offered strategies that together can help us meet our state goal of 70% less impact by 2025, including conservation, energy efficiency, and on-site renewable energy, highlighting passive resilience such as solar orientation, natural ventilation, and daylighting. “You can’t manage what you don’t measure” he said and emphasized the need for smart metering of building components and outcome-based performance codes to help building operators and tenants do their part. These solutions are not science fiction, the designs and technology exist and are being deployed now.

### **World Café Breakout Sessions**

The panel presentations and a tour of the LEED Platinum Cebula Hall set the stage for our afternoon world café break out sessions where the symposium attendees discussed a wide range of specific strategies and examples to better understand the process of change, including both incremental vs. transformative changes. There was a collective realization that both types of change are necessary and many ideas were generated about how to encourage a transformative approach to sustainable development in Thurston County, including:

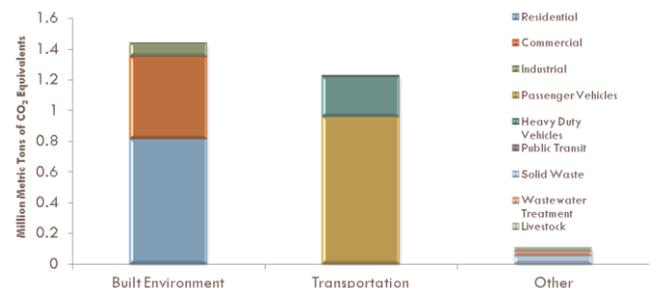


- Having clear understanding of the benefits and challenges for all parties related to sustainable development initiatives
- Create a regional mindset and community support for transformative change through education, advertising, and marketing – make sustainability fashionable
- Research exceptional case studies to leverage from areas similar to Thurston County
- Improve zoning and codes to better encourage sustainable development
- Implement incentives, low interest loans, and better financing for sustainable initiatives
- Tie incentives and rewards available to developers to the types of design and development that we want to see
- Foster cooperation among members of the development community (downplay competition) to give our community a competitive advantage in relation to other metropolitan areas.

The final component of the symposium included one-hour subject specific worksessions that generated action items and agendas to move the concept of carbon neutrality forward in the areas of existing housing stock, urban and commercial development, and neighborhood planning. For the specific action plan details (includes action team list and target audiences & partners), see Appendix A below. The outcomes of these worksessions are as follows:

### **Existing Housing Stock:**

The Thurston County Greenhouse Gas Inventory shows the built environment is responsible for 52% of emissions in Thurston County, with residential contributing the most, more than commercial and industrial combined (light blue bar in table 1). Planners project that 60% of the housing stock on the ground now will still be in use 25 years from now. So energy efficiency retrofits of our existing housing may be our single greatest potential intervention point to reduce energy use and carbon emissions. We want to build upon the success of Thurston Energy and other incentive-based programs that help homeowners retrofit their homes (owner-occupied = 68% of existing housing). Yet, the discussion primarily focused on new ideas for voluntary, market-based tools to encourage landlords to retrofit their renter-occupied housing units (the other 32%), such as a “rental rating database,” sort of like an “Angie’s List” for high-performing



From Fact Sheet “Community-wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Thurston County (2010)”  
by Thurston Climate Action Team

rentals. It would rate homes by energy cost savings, indoor air quality and walk score to help renters find the healthy homes they want. This, combined with incentives, education and other marketing opportunities could help tip the balance of incentives currently faced by landlords, and create demand for a network of contractors who provide such services, creating construction jobs in the process. We also agreed to other action steps: (1) to create homeowner & renter education to increase energy literacy (i.e how to save energy at home); (2) outreach to specific subsectors of the landlord / property management market with info and services tailored to their needs; and (3) work with a landlord rental property organization to promote win/win landlord & renter benefits. (4) We agreed to pursue a new partnership with local housing organizations focused on these goals.

### ***Urban and Commercial Development:***

The urban and commercial development worksession explored whether there is a business case for developers and builders to implement the type of commercial and mixed-use urban development projects needed to meet the ambitious density and energy reduction goals being discussed by Sustainable Thurston. Failures in public process, inconsistent regulations across the region, market realities and other factors have put a drag on such projects, but with a new approach there could be significant new opportunities for attracting the kind of development we want to see. Participants recognized that a key challenge lies in engaging the development community with other stakeholders through events like this one, to create a shared vision and practical solutions that will enjoy public support while also making financial sense for investors & developers. They suggested a short, focused Symposium in the near future to engage a conversation on what incentives, codes & regulatory changes, and process improvements would make development easier. Participants identified several priority actions, including: (1) direct outreach to the development community to better understand the challenges and opportunities for mixed use sustainable development, (2) working at a neighborhood or district level in and around proposed project development sites to get input and build support for a development vision and designs, and (3) using the existing TRPC urban corridor projects as pilots for improving the regional commercial and urban development process. Other ideas were to explore the potential of district energy systems and eco-districts; create a template for the ideal combination of housing, services and amenities needed for a sustainable urban core, and pursue it in a specific part of town; and stop worrying about Downtown Olympia so much and focus on other parts of the Urban core & corridors.

### ***Neighborhood Planning:***

The neighborhood planning worksession focused on how to increase public engagement and support for adopting carbon neutral goals in regional and neighborhood development plans. The key next step actions identified for this initiative included: (1) defining geographic neighborhood areas and expanding the coalition of neighborhoods program to include all the cities in the region, (2) utilizing various collaboration tools and frameworks to encourage the expression of neighborhood identities, member participation, and collaboration between neighborhood leaders and the city in development planning, and (3) investigating how individual neighborhoods can help decide how some city funding is allocated to specific sustainability projects in their areas. Some of the attendees in this worksession personally volunteered to be involved in planning a future symposium on this topic and suggested we reach out to the City managers, existing neighborhood associations, and urban designers to best carry this conversation forward.

At the end of the day, this Vision2Action Symposium was a great success thanks to our fabulous keynote and panelist speakers as well as the active participation of all attendees. While many specific action items were discussed, Symposium organizers emphasized that it is up to the participants to carry these strategies forward and encouraged everyone to take ownership of the desired outcomes. The conversation around carbon neutrality goals and strategies will continue in future symposiums over the next year as the Sustainable Thurston project continues to develop their regional sustainability visions and goals. The outcome of this symposium has shown that carbon neutrality is an important strategy worth investigating and there is ample opportunity for implementation in the Thurston County Region.

We would like to thank the organizations who helped make this event possible by sponsoring the event: Thurston County Solid Waste, Thurston Climate Action Team, Thurston Regional Planning Council, providing the base of support for the event. Thanks as well to the American Institute of Architects - Washington Regional Council, and Cascadia Green Building Council who helped put on this event and publicize. Of course none of this would have been possible without the gracious hospitality of Saint Martin's University School of Engineering who led participants on a tour of their new LEED Platinum Building, Cebula Hall. Finally, a hearty thank you to our Intern the past two Symposiums, Krystle Keese, who worked tirelessly and so professionally to ensure a successful event each time.

And to everyone else, thank you again for your participation in our event and we hope to see you at future Vision2Action Symposiums.



Thurston Climate Action Team



Saint Martin's UNIVERSITY



AIA Washington Council



NORTHWEST Eco Building Guild™



**Vision to Action Worksession: Existing Housing Stock**

Identify at least 3 priority short-term actions needed to enable transformative change, and/or to prepare us for a future Symposium on this topic – and who will/should implement those actions.

|   | Action Item                           | Description   | Timeline | Responsible Parties                          |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|----------|--|
| 1 | Homeowner Energy Education            | Homeowner education courses to increase energy literacy   |          | Thurston Energy and other non-profits        |
| 2 | Outreach – Landlord                   | Look at landlord market in several sectors and develop strategies to outreach each one for energy efficiency retrofits  |          | TRPC? EDC? HATC                              |
| 3 | “Angie’s List” of energy retrofits    | Start a listing of the homes and rentals that have had energy retrofits. Provide a rental rating, list the benefits, promote energy efficient homes (this is benefit to land lord) – Renters have access to lower cost operation homes – See concept paper by Northwest EcoBuilding Guild |          |  |
| 4 | Rental Ratings                        | Rate homes by: walk score, air quality, and cost savings  |          | ?? is there an existing platform we can use? |
| 5 | Landlord rental property organization | Establish a landlord rental property organization that will focus on renter benefits (no controlling tenants) – build on quality relationships  |          |  |

Identify a core group of people to continue work on this topic, and key players & target audiences to involve.

Vision2Action Ad-Hoc Committee: Existing Housing Stock

| Name                            | Role   | Contact Information            |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Albert Rooks                    | Climate activist, Passive House building materials supplier    | albert@smallplanetworkshop.com |
| Nathan Krebs                    | Northwest EcoBuilding Guild, works at Community Action Council | Natek24@hotmail.com            |
| Ramsey Zimmerman                | Thurston Energy  |                                |
| Janet Knoblach                  | Home 101 – Teaching building science to homeowners             |                                |
| Lee Doyle                       | Public education initiatives                                   |                                |
| Chris van Daalen, Joseph Becker | Northwest EcoBuilding Guild                                    |                                |

Key Players / Audiences to Involve:

| Organization / Individual  | Connection to the Issue<br>(Why they should be involved) | Who will contact | By When |
|--|--|------------------|---------|
| Albert's Idea (national association non-profit property owner name?) | One of the biggest markets for multi-family retrofits    |                  |         |
| Certified emergency response teams                                   | Use their model and theme for landlord/rental programs   |                  |         |
| Community Action Council of Lewis Mason Thurston                     | Low-income weatherization program                        |                  |         |

Key Players / Audiences to Involve: Existing Housing Stock (continued):

| Organization / Individual                                    | Connection to the Issue<br>(Why they should be involved) | Who will contact | By When |
|--|--|------------------|---------|
| WSU – Mike Lubliner, Luke Howard                             | Coop Ext. energy program – expert technical assistance   |                  |         |
| Thurston Energy, Economic Development Council – Michael Cade | Energy efficient development, business community         |                  |         |
| Homes First – Trudy Soucoup                                  | Affordable rental units                                  |                  |         |
| Rebuilding Together  | Volunteers to help retrofit low-income, elderly homes    |                  |         |
| Housing Authority of Thurston County – Teresa Slusher        | Outreach to landlords                                    |                  |         |

**Vision to Action Worksession: Urban and Commercial Development**

Identify at least 3 priority short-term actions needed to enable transformative change, and/or to prepare us for a future Symposium on this topic – and who will/should implement those actions.

|   | Action Item   | Description   | Timeline | Responsible Parties |
|---|---|---|----------|---------------------|
| 1 | Engage Development Community  | One – on – one surveys, group meetings  |          |                     |
| 2 | Use Urban Corridors as a pilot  | Use brewery district and lacey woodland loop as examples of how to  |          |                     |
| 3 | Have a short symposium focused on engaging commercial and urban developers with these ideas | Open the conversations to discuss what incentives, codes & regulatory changes, and process improvements would make development easier |          |                     |
| 4 | Engage with the residential developer of downtown building to understand lessons learned    | Identify the challenges of developing in Olympia downtown, what could be done to make this easier                                     |          |                     |
| 5 | Work with prospective areas to discuss potential changes                                    | What is there, what is ideal – what do they really want, what are folks willing to give up  |          |                     |

Identify a core group of people to continue work on this topic, and key players & target audiences to involve.

Vision2Action Ad-Hoc Committee: Urban and Commercial Development

| Name             | Role | Contact Information |
|------------------|------|---------------------|
| Thera Black      |      |                     |
| Jack Zieger      |      |                     |
| Chris van Daalen |      |                     |
| Doug DeForest    |      |                     |

Key Players / Audiences to Involve:

| Organization / Individual                           | Connection to the Issue<br>(Why they should be involved) | Who will contact | By When                            |
|---|--|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Local businesses, local neighbors, local developers | Varies   | Committee        | Before next Symposium on the topic |

## Vision to Action Worksession: Planning for Carbon Neutrality

Identify at least 3 priority short-term actions needed to enable transformative change, and/or to prepare us for a future Symposium on this topic – and who will/should implement those actions.

|   | Action Item   | Description   | Timeline | Responsible Parties                     |
|---|---|---|----------|---|
| 1 | Define Geographic “Neighborhood Areas”                                | Zone for neighborhood centers   |          | Neighborhood leaders, City              |
| 2 | Give neighborhoods power to choose some of their neighborhood changes | Investigate ways neighborhoods can participate in city funding allocation to proposed projects in their area (have a list of appropriate projects they can choose from) |          |   |
| 3 | Collaboration Tools – List serve, signage                             | Use various collaboration tools to encourage neighborhood identity; Electronic town halls might help encourage neighborhood participation and engagement                |          | TRPC?                                   |
| 4 | Expand Coalition of Neighborhoods                                     | Expand the Olympia Coalition of Neighborhoods to include the other cities   |          | City of Olympia Neighborhoods Program?? |
| 5 | City and Neighborhood Collaboration                                   | Provide a nice facility for neighborhoods and city to collaborate and work together to define their neighborhood places   |          | Neighborhood Leaders, City              |

Identify a core group of people to continue work on this topic, and key players & target audiences to involve.

Vision2Action Ad-Hoc Committee: [Planning for Carbon Neutrality]

| Name                       | Role  | Contact Information    |
|----------------------------|---|------------------------|
| City Managers (7)          | Determine what their interest and will to collaborate   |                        |
| Neighborhoods Associations | 1 model to reference for expansion into other cities  | Neighborhood Coalition |
| Urban Designer             | Neutral party with professional perspective on what is feasible and best options for specific neighborhood transformations – look into further as to what this person can do for us |                        |

Key Players / Audiences to Involve:

| Organization / Individual | Connection to the Issue<br>(Why they should be involved)          | Who will contact | By When |
|---------------------------|---|------------------|---------|
| Neighborhoods Coalition   | Role in neighborhood level planning                               | Philip Schulte   |         |
| Jim Diers                 | Possible Panelist – Former Department of Neighborhoods in Seattle |                  |         |