

## Regional Open Space Conservation Plan Advisory Committee

### *Action Items and Summary Notes*

Monday, December 19, 2016, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

#### Participants

Hilary Aten, PCC Farmland Trust	Colin Hume, Department of Ecology	John Owen, Makers
Jonathan Decker, Great Pen. Cons.	Marina King, PSRC	Kathy Peters, Kitsap County
Josh Giuntoli, WA Conserv. Comm.	Ikuno Masterson, Snohomish County	Jacob Pederson, Pierce County
Erika Harris, PSRC	Mark Mauren, Ueland Tree Farm	Tracy Stanton, Bullitt Foundation
Sono Hashisaki, Tulalip Tribes	Susan Meyer, EPA	Skip Swenson, Forterra
Michael Hubner, PSRC	Michael Murphy, King County	Terry Williams, Tulalip Tribes

#### Action Items

- 1) PSRC sent final draft meeting materials out to the committee. The advisory committee was asked send additional feedback to Erika by December 27.
- 2) Committee members interested in seeing a demo of the Open Space Assessment Tool should attend the meeting or webinar on January 10 from 10:00 to noon at PSRC. Erika has additional information.

#### Summary Notes

- 1) **Introductions.** Terry Williams (Tulalip Tribes, co-chair) called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. The participants listed above introduced themselves.
- 2) **Welcome.** Terry Williams (Tulalip Tribes, co-chair) welcomed the group and talked about the importance of integrating hazard mitigation, economic, cultural and environmental resource planning; the connection of habitat from the glaciers to marine waters; and planning for future climate scenarios. He also talked about the Tribes' net gain policy for important natural resources and landscapes. Alaska and Pennsylvania have done a good job of using climate scenarios for forecasting, and we should learn from their work.
- 3) **Committee Charter.** Erika Harris (PSRC) briefly reviewed the proposed charter for the committee. The group agreed to the ground rules as presented, with the addition of adding tribes to the purpose statement.
- 4) **Regional Open Space Strategy (ROSS) and Open Space Assessment Tool (OSAT).** John Owen (MAKERS Architecture & Urban Design) presented information and findings from ROSS. The Executive Summary for the ROSS final report was included in the meeting materials and the presentation will be available on the Open Space Planning webpage. Tracy Stanton (Bullitt Foundation and Urban Waters Partnership) presented information on a new tool called the Open Space Assessment Tool. The committee was invited to a more in-depth demonstration of the tool that will take place on January 10. Email Erika if you are interested. The group had the following questions and comments:
  - A couple of issues for agriculture are that population growth is encroaching on farmland and sea level rise and flooding is damaging cropland. Soils have been depleted due to many years of farming. We should look at soil types. Developments can also provide habitat. We need to have measurable objectives.

- Even with all of our conservation efforts and investments we are losing forest and agricultural land cover, and impervious surface is increasing. We want to slow and reverse the trend.
- What is driving the trend of land conversion? Conversion to residential is the biggest driver. Economic and other conditions are difficult for farmers. Regulations are driving up the costs of farming. We need to avoid dis-incentivizing farming and forestry.
- Part of the problem is that we don't quantify the value that the resource provides.
- Has there been discussion of a food security plan? It would make the value of agriculture more apparent. Although it wasn't a food security study, American Farmland Trust and UW did a regional food shed study. The OSAT includes food production as an open space service.
- A focus on the return on investment rather than the costs is helpful. Many entities still need to realize a financial return on their property, so we will either have to monetize the benefits up front, or make clear what the avoided costs are.
- Much of the Tulalip economy depends on marine water resources, and cold storage and processing facilities are needed to support that industry. The Tulalip Tribes are looking into expanding those facilities so that they can support agriculture too. That will enable farm and marine food producers to do joint planning.
- This group should connect to PSRC's food policy group.
- On an asset sheet, a property is only valued for its land, not its other values. The Natural Capital Project (<http://www.naturalcapitalproject.org/>) gets at this to some degree.
- Conservation efforts will also help to offset climate impacts. FEMA will fund pre-hazard mitigation.
- USDOT only takes into account safety and mobility. Would like to see them take into account stacking benefits. FEMA does some of this type of work.
- We may need to farm in new places because of soil quality and water inundation. What are these secondary places? We will also need the transportation system to support these new farms.

5) **Why a regional open space conservation plan?** Erika asked the group why they thought we should develop a regional open space conservation plan. She gave examples of coordinating conservation efforts on lands that span multiple jurisdictions and sharing of best practices in conservation and open space planning as benefits of this project. The committee provided the following answers:

- Encouraging coordination between departments that touch on open space planning within the same jurisdiction (surface water, parks, long-range planning, transportation, natural resources, etc.)
- Understanding where the most important open spaces are to inform transportation planning, especially new and expanding roads.
- Assisting with economic development for rural communities (such as the Mount Rainier Coalition). The community lost \$80,000 per day when Mt. Rainier closed down. Planning for a new trail could help in some areas.
- Silos and the color of money are issues.
- Floodplains by Design is an example of breaking silos, however has not been easy for them to work differently. A support structure for those agencies trying to work differently would be helpful. A regional open space collaborative could help with this. Portland's Intertwine is a good example. Also the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort.
- In Snohomish County, some of the federal agencies are looking at harmonizing their funding and regulations to accelerate conservation and restoration. This should also help decrease permit costs for the agencies.

6) **Key questions, advisory structure, and work plan.** Erika reviewed the purpose, key questions, advisory structure and draft work plan that was sent to the group a week before the meeting. The group had the following questions and comments:

- Will the plan be both a spatial and verbal plan? Yes. It will have a large mapping component.
- Add goal or task on informing land use planning and VISION 2040 update. A key assumption has been that this effort would inform the update of VISION 2040.

- What are the problems and barriers to overcome? More specifically, what are problems/barriers at the implementation vs. case statement or systems scale – which is where many of these plans seem to get hung up. This question is somewhat embedded in question 5.
  - Watershed health and functions should be assessed at different elevations. This will help inform how to manage forests and watersheds.
  - Communication will be key. How do we get to all of the stakeholders?
  - Look at incentive strategies for landowners. New tools may need to be identified. This probably falls under key question 5. Keep in mind that many tools have been identified and prioritized in numerous regional plans. Overcoming the challenges to creating them may be the better pursuit than another investigation of incentives/tools.
  - It will be helpful to identify barriers to implementation. Are there regulatory elements that are barriers? The appraisal process is one barrier. For example, the highest and best use is usually residential development.
  - Reach-scale planning is helpful, especially for state and federal governments.
  - One of the things this group could help out with is to put together a plan with a clear, cogent statement about what is important for the region. This will help us speak to our boards and external parties. It will also help provide a consistent message for any organizations with aligned interests.
- 7) **Definitions.** Erika asked the group to look at the definitions provided at the meeting, provide input on those definition, and add other terms that should be defined for the plan. Clearly defining terms will provide a solid foundation for the plan. The group will provide input via email and continue to identify terms over the spring.
- 8) **Data sources and stakeholder mapping.** Erika asked the group to look at the data and information sources and list of stakeholders that were provided at the meeting. The committee will provide additional information via email.
- 9) **Wrap up and adjourn.** Erika summarized next steps and adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm. The next meeting time will be determined in the spring.

<p><b>Questions:</b> Contact Erika Harris at (206) 464-6360 or <a href="mailto:eharris@psrc.org">eharris@psrc.org</a>.</p>
--