CARBON NEUTRAL SEATTLE
NEIGHBORHOODS   WHITE PAPER

Introduction

We envision a Seattle in which carbon emissions are reduced and local community resilience is strengthened through policies, projects, and programs that: foster civic engagement; strengthen local economies; facilitate lifelong learning; promote human and environmental health; reduce and remediate environmental impacts throughout all of our city's neighborhoods; and ensure equal access to employment, resources and services.

The programs recommended by the Neighborhoods Sector would advance these goals by promoting clusters of coordinated projects and policies that can be launched within 1-3 years, have little or no monetary costs, and build on existing successes. These project clusters would go a long way toward establishing the physical, relational and cultural infrastructure required to move Seattle towards carbon neutrality.

Strategy/Program:
IMPROVE LIVABILITY AND RESILIENCY IN NEIGHBORHOODS

Strengthen Local Economies

Diversified and self-sufficient localized economies are key to both environmental and economic sustainability, as well as the well being of our neighborhoods. The following proposals would create new careers, promote locally owned small businesses, and encourage local production and purchasing, while strengthening community ties and reducing transportation emissions.

- Encourage the emergence of more small commercial pockets with "mom and pop" stores in residential areas, through zoning regulations, financial incentives to small business owners, and the creation of guidelines to ensure new small businesses contribute to neighborhood's health and vitality.

- Implement neighborhood and regional Buy Local programs through new city ordinance.

- Retrofit all city buildings (residential and commercial) for energy efficiency, using the local workforce and a revolving source of low-interest credit, such as City bonds, to allow homeowners to pay the cost of upgrades over time, through their utility bills (e.g., PACE).

- Expand farmers markets to all city neighborhoods, by changing permitting rules for public spaces. This would address unequal neighborhood access to fresh food, improve public health, reduce car rides, and strengthen neighborhood economies.

Enhance Neighborhood Walkability

Promoting neighborhood walkability would place desired resources and businesses within a shorter distance, and make walking more appealing, safe, and rewarding. The

following projects would enhance walkability, improve human health, build community, reduce CO_2 emissions, and strengthen neighborhood economies:

- Install public green spaces within walking distance of every Seattle residence. This could include the restructuring of traffic patterns to create more neighborhood parks and pedestrian zones or car-free streets.

- Encourage installation of community art, benches, information kiosks and native plants in neighborhood corridors, to enhance their aesthetic appeal and give them local character.

- Make information on local businesses and resources widely available via walking maps and "walk score" website.

Food Security and Availability
A large portion of our carbon emissions comes from the transportation of foods from far away as well as from non-organic production methods.   Investing in local (organic) food production reduces CO2 emissions, while also increasing food security, improving health, and supporting the local economy.

- Expand and promote urban farming zones in community gardens and city parks, to serve as a primary food source for neighborhood residents. Beyond the P-Patch concept, these urban farms would provide food for the larger community and create local jobs.

- Expand farmers markets to all city neighborhoods (*see above under Strengthen Local Economies*)

Strategy/Program:
IMPROVE COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION, AND TRANSPARENCY
Openness and transparency are important tools for understanding where the challenges and opportunities are in existing systems. If we don't measure and have feedback, it is impossible to prioritize and plan. Ensuring information and educational resources can be found, and that priorities are clearly defined, can empower individuals, groups and businesses to make informed decisions or come up with innovative solutions.

Tools for Building Community
Community building work is needed to develop grassroots support toward a carbon neutral future and provide support and context to neighborhood residents as we endeavor to embrace new knowledge and habits:
- Collaborate with neighborhood organizations to create and manage a central clearinghouse website and/or physical office locations that will facilitate neighborhoods' work toward carbon reduction and resiliency. Offer information to residents, list volunteer opportunities in each neighborhood, provide online tools for neighbors to communicate, facilitate an intra- neighborhood skill and resource exchange, and provide tools for community-building leaders/volunteers (i.e., "block

captains").

- Support work of community-builders and organizers in each neighborhood via stipends and seed-grants, possibly using local property tax.

<u>Education and Transparency</u>
All of our investments toward a carbon neutral future depend on buy-in and participation by the public. These in turn are contingent on effective, concerted and sustained efforts of public education and promotion of the new opportunities available to our communities as we create a sustainable future.

- Require SCL, SPU, SDOT, DPD and other city departments to more regularly and openly publish information on energy, water, waste and transportation use. Push for neighborhood or zip code level data on a monthly basis. *This type of information is required to help measure, track and inspire progress of all efforts.*

- Consolidate and clarify existing City resources to provide clear, prioritized information on the best and most effective ways to save energy, water, fuel and money.

- Create, promote, and implement local Greening-Your-Business programs.

Strategy/Program:
REFINE MOBILITY WITHIN AND BETWEEN NEIGHBORHOODS

The need for to move people, and the goods and services that power our local economies, beyond walking range, will continue to exist. Our challenge is to facilitate this mobility in the most energy efficient ways possible. The following proposals would support inter- and intra-neighborhood mobility needs while reducing carbon emissions and enhancing the quality of life within our neighborhoods:

<u>Transit/Transportation Issues</u>
Properly time traffic light*s* to reduce idling when city bridges are open (and elsewhere). Institute stricter anti-idling rules, improve signage at bridges, and conduct an anti-idling campaign to also reduce acceleration and deceleration. Time lights so that cyclists -- and pedestrians -- have a safe head start on other traffic.

- Improve and increase transit availability *between* urban villages/neighborhoods.

- Increase and promote incentives for households with one or no cars (e.g., transit discounts, tax breaks)

- Promote bicycles ridership:
  - Incentivize electric bikes and ensure that as the new Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure is rolled out, the City takes into account electric bicycle charging.

  - Provide better services for bike riders, such as covered bike racks and

separated bike lanes that connect urban villages to each other and to the urban center.