

Youth Committee's Main Vision

Vision Statement:

We believe Seattle City Council needs to support sustainable behavioral changes in youth to reduce the Seattle Public Schools' carbon footprint. This will be accomplished through promoting alternative transportation, encouraging waste reduction programs, and increasing environmental education.

Issue Discussion:

America's youth culture supports materialistic consumption, producing large carbon emissions. Society and the media are ever present in each teenager's life. These advertisements and campaigns affect student's values. For example, in our culture, when a student turns 16, he/she immediately applies for his/her driver's license, buys a car, and starts speeding around the city. To change this, we are going to have to challenge the assumption that driving and owning material goods in excess is important. Additionally, some politicians and tax payers do not think it is worth their money to combat carbon emissions when there are more important issues present. Another obstacle is students' lack of participation due to apathy and their prior commitment to other extracurricular activities.

Immediate Opportunities:

- 1) Transportation
- 2) Waste Reduction
- 3) Education

Outlined proposal:

- 1) Transportation (Lauren Honican, Emma Jornlin, and Lillian Brown)
 - a) Elementary
 - i) Walking school buses
 - ii) Bike to school
 - iii) Carpool
 - iv) No idling policy
 - b) Middle School
 - i) Bus cards available
 - ii) Bike to school
 - iii) Carpool
 - iv) No idling policy
 - c) High School
 - i) Bus cards for minimal fee
 - ii) Bike to school
 - iii) Carpool
 - iv) No idling policy
 - v) Increase 2-hour parking zones
 - vi) Parking pass
- 2) Waste Reduction (Emma Jornlin)
 - a) Elementary

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- i) Waste reduction program (recycle and compost).
- b) Middle School
 - i) Waste reduction program (recycle and compost).
- c) High School
 - i) Waste reduction program (recycle and compost).
- 3) Education (Lauren Honican)
 - a) Elementary
 - i) Hands on learning (e.g. worm bin, garden...)
 - ii) Talking about what they can do to make a difference
 - iii) Teacher training
 - b) Middle School
 - i) Environmental science class (awareness → action, international → self)
 - ii) Field trips (e.g. recycle plant, cedar grove, landfill)
 - iii) Teacher training
 - iv) Motivational/inspirational conferences
 - c) High school
 - i) Environmental science classes
 - (1) More in-depth studies
 - (2) Conduct research on local source and present findings
 - ii) Teacher training
 - iii) Motivational/inspirational conferences
 - iv) September “Green Fair” for families with local environmental organizations’ booths

Transportation

Summary:

Reduce student driving by making it less convenient for them to drive and more convenient for them to use greener transportation methods (e.g. bus, bike, walk, carpool). Our long-term goal is to promote environmentally friendly methods of transportation that students will make a part of their life-style.

1) Goals

- a) Short-Term (~1 year)
 - i) Bus cards available to all students at a nominal fee (e.g. \$20 for the year) similar to the UPass system. (Exemptions: students on free and reduced lunch will receive free bus cards.)
 - ii) Increase 2-hour parking zones
 - iii) Require student drivers to purchase a semester-long parking pass to park on school grounds (\$100/semester). (Free parking pass for handicapped students.)
 - iv) Survey Seattle students about what obstacles prevent them from biking to school.
 - v) No idling policy.
 - vi) Encourage walking or running to school by continuing the Safe Routes to Schools Program. (Please see Seattle Youth Commission's proposal.)
- b) Mid-Term (~1-3 years)
 - i) Increase parking pass rates over time to continuously discourage students from driving.
 - ii) Analyze bicycle survey and develop a plan to increase percentage of biking students.
- c) Long Term (~3 years+)
 - i) Increase bus frequency during school start and end times to make buses more convenient to students.
 - ii) Install new and expand existing bike lanes, specifically around schools.

2) This is within the City's jurisdiction because they dictate parking zone policy, own Metro, and have the authority to expand bike lanes.

3) Policy tools

- a) Incentives
 - i) Discounted annual bus cards
 - ii) Bike 50% of the year and receive a P.E. credit.
 - iii) 10% reduced parking pass for carpools of 5
- b) Disincentives
 - i) Increase 2-hour parking zones
 - ii) Parking pass fees
- c) Pilot program
 - i) Test entire proposal at two different high schools for 1 year and collect data.
 - ii) If successful, begin to implement at other Seattle Public Schools.

4) Barriers

- a) In the past, free metro bus cards have been distributed to all high school students living outside a 2-mile radius. This strategy was ineffective because numerous passes are not used or used very infrequently because parking is free. By charging a nominal fee, we believe this will ensure student use. Also, the time it takes to bus to school is a setback

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- for many students. In some Seattle neighborhoods there are even bus routes that only run once an hour.
- b) The main deterrents to biking to school are safety (few bike lanes), weather, hills, and the cost of owning a bike. Student bike groups are important encouragement, yet not enough. For biking to become an increasingly popular mode of transportation, we need an expansion of bike lanes to increase safety.
- 5) Stakeholders
- a) Students to buy and use bus cards and/or parking passes.
 - b) Metro to provide discounted bus cards.
 - c) Seattle Public Schools to install and enforce parking pass system.
 - d) The City of Seattle to increase 2-hour parking zones around schools.
 - e) Major Taylor Project and Cascade Bicycle Club to provide bikes and assistance.
 - f) Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to continue the Safe Routes to Schools Program.
- 6) Economic impacts
- a) Positive
 - i) The city and/or metro will gain revenue by selling discounted bus passes to students, because they are currently provided at no cost and the bus system is already in place.
 - ii) The city will also gain revenue through parking tickets with an increase of 2-hour zones.
 - iii) Schools will gain revenue from parking passes.
 - b) Negative
 - i) The city will need to sponsor the expansion of buses on existing routes and bike lanes in the future.
- 7) Impact other sectors
- a) Transportation
 - b) Clean Energy – push toward future innovations
 - c) Neighborhoods – communal transportation
- 8) Populations
- a) Negative
 - i) Bus cards and parking passes will be an additional expense to students.
 - ii) Disrupts students' normal way of life in the short-term.
 - iii) Regular metro commuters because metro bus routes will be more crowded.
 - iv) Parents may drive students to school more often.
 - b) Positive
 - i) Environmentally-friendly transportation life-style changes.
 - ii) Improve student health.
 - iii) Parents will no longer have transportation responsibilities for their kids.
 - iv) Increase community and environmental awareness.
 - v) Safer for bikers with less cars on the road.

Waste Reduction

Summary:

Install recycle and compost programs in Seattle Public Schools that demonstrate ample student and faculty support. Not only will over 27 tons of compost (and even more recycle) be diverted from the landfill annually, but also students' leadership skills and environmental knowledge will develop and advance.

1) Goals

a) Short term

- i) \$100,000-\$150,000 needs to be set aside or collected by each school, enough to make \$2,000 available to each Seattle Public School that has not yet initiated a composting program. \$2,000 includes the cost for the first year of materials and Cedar Grove pick-up services.
- ii) The City can restore the amount of funding through Seattle Public Utilities from the current \$20,000 to \$100,000.
- iii) In order to receive the \$2,000, each school will be required to register with Washington Green Schools and fill out an application. Luckily, SPU already has an application in place. However, we believe that all schools willing to fill out the application should receive either a grant or loan.
- iv) The school district can require student drivers to purchase parking passes, whose funds can then be used to fund composting programs.
- v) Or, each individual school's Earth clubs can start fundraising to raise the money themselves. This process could be aided by the city

b) Mid-term

- i) Seattle Public Schools and/or the City of Seattle need to set up a program that will train students and faculty on how to use the composting system. This includes educating everyone about what composting is, what items are compostable, and how their individual actions can influence greater environmental change.

c) Long-term

- i) A program that educates students about how to conduct waste audits in order to determine whether the recycling and composting programs are effective.
- ii) Long-term support system (such as a class or partnership), in order to make sure students remain interested in operating the program themselves.

2) The act of placing a composting program in each school is only partially within the City's jurisdiction, as the program can only be effective in the long-run with continued student leadership and interest. However, the City does can assist individual schools in starting a composting program and supporting those schools, in order to make sure the program stays in place permanently.

- a) The City has the ability to finance the initial year of a school's composting program, using the grant system that Seattle Public Utilities already has in place.
- b) The City has the power to make each public school require its student drivers to purchase parking permits. If the permits cost \$100/semester, it would only take ten students to raise the initial \$2,000 required for the first year of composting services.

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- c) The City also has the option of providing loans to individual schools, rather than grants. If the program is successful in reducing trash pick-ups, this will save the school \$300/month, which translates to \$2,700 over a 9-month school year.
 - d) If the City chooses not to take this action, they could at least support individual Earth clubs in their fundraising efforts by publicizing them to the rest of the City.
 - e) The City also has the resources to provide education and support to each composting program. Employees from the waste management sector can visit schools to give speeches, educate students and staff about the benefits of composting, and give tours of sites such as Cedar Grove, local dumps, and waste management offices.
- 3) Policy tools
- a) Plans
 - i) In order to make composting programs possible in each school, there needs to be \$2,000 available to fund the initial year.
 - ii) After this, a plan needs to be in place for each school to reduce their trash waste in order to make composting services cost neutral.
 - iii) If a school successfully reduces their waste, they can save their school \$2,700 a year!
 - b) Incentives
 - i) Students are perfectly capable of leading composting programs themselves; however they need incentives in order to do so over a long period of time.
 - ii) Tours of waste facilities
 - iii) Education provided by the City/SPS
 - iv) Free sweatshirts or water bottles (Garfield High School has given out free sweatshirts that say “Saving the World: Compost Club” on them, which have helped make the program popular)
- 4) Barriers
- a) In the past, a composting program has not been initiated in many schools due to the cost and work that is required. It costs approximately \$2,000 for the first year of services, and the program will continue to cost money until the school is able to reduce their waste (and in turn, their trash pick-ups) enough to make the program cost-neutral.
 - b) Composting requires student leadership, which is difficult to maintain for consecutive years. Students are responsible for monitoring and emptying compost bins each lunch period, as this is not written into the custodians’ contract.
 - c) It is vital for students to be a part of this program so that they can learn about waste management and exercise leadership skills, however it is difficult to maintain interest and enthusiasm each year without continuous support from outside sources.
- 5) Stakeholders
- a) Students to monitor during each lunch period.
 - b) Faculty members to allow students to come to class 5-10 minutes late so they can collect waste and empty bags into the dumpster after lunch. Another faculty member to be the club’s advisor. They must encourage students to use the program
 - c) Cedar Grove will receive more business

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- d) Garbage men will receive less business
 - e) Taxpayers, if we plan to use the City's budget to fund grants or loans for the initial year of services. However, this money will repay itself if successful (schools can reduce trash pick-ups and save their school \$2,700/year).
- 6) Economic impacts
- a) Negative
 - i) Initially, the composting program adds additional costs to the City or school district's budget
 - b) Positive
 - i) However, the program saves money within the first two years if successful. Thanks to reduced garbage pick-ups, Garfield High School is saving approximately \$300/month or \$2,700/year.
 - ii) Once the other 96 schools find a way to make composting programs sustainable, they will be capable of saving the school district a significant amount of money each year.
- 7) Impact other sectors
- a) Zero Waste – students will reduce their school's waste output and learn the impact that reducing/redirecting their waste to reusable systems has on the environment.
 - b) Green Jobs – students who volunteer with their school's composting program can gain community service hours and will receive training on how to manage environmentally focused projects.
- 8) Populations that will be impacted:
- a) Students and faculty members will be most impacted by this policy. Everyone will have the opportunity to learn about where their waste goes, what products are biodegradable, and what they can do to decrease the amount that goes into landfills.

References: Nicole Lakky with Seattle Public Schools, Veronica Fincher with SPU, Cedar Grove, Garfield High School's Earth Service Corps Club

Environmental Education

Summary:

Install environmental education classes in all Seattle Public Schools. This will raise students' awareness about environmentalism throughout the world and display how students' actions can directly affect change. In the end, the expansion of environmental education will create sustainable life-style changes in Seattle students.

- 1) Goals/Actions
 - a) Short-Term (~1 year)
 - i) K-12 teacher waste reduction program training at teacher meeting.
 - ii) Increase elementary school hands-on learning experiences in environmental education (e.g. gardening, composting with a worm bin...).
 - iii) Increase middle school environmental studies in existing classes.
 - iv) Increase environmental emphasis in all classes.
 - b) Mid-Term (~1-3 years)
 - i) Each year add an environmental science class to 2 Seattle Public High Schools.
 - ii) Inspirational and motivational environmental conferences for middle and high school students.
 - iii) September (beginning of school) "Green Fair" for middle and high school families featuring environmental organization booths to sign up and get involved.
 - c) Long Term (~3 years+)
 - i) Every Seattle Public High School will have an environmental science class.
 - ii) Increase the number of environmental field trips (e.g. recycle plant, cedar grove, land fill, sewage treatment plant) in middle and high schools.
 - iii) Each year add an alternative energy class to 2 Seattle Public High Schools.
 - iv) In the future, make environmental education class a graduation requirement with a service-learning component.
- 2) How is this within the city's jurisdiction?
 - a) This is within the city's jurisdiction because the city can influence the Seattle Public School Board and sponsor environmental conferences.
- 3) Policy tools
 - a) Incentives
 - i) One occupational education credit for each: environmental science and alternative energy classes.
 - b) Pilot program
 - i) For one year at two Seattle Public Schools: survey students enrolled in environmental classes and collect data. If successful, continue installing environmental science classes in 2 Seattle Public Schools per year.
- 4) Barriers
 - a) Institutional – the Seattle Public School District.
 - b) Financial – the cost of one teacher for a whole year, supplies, and a classroom.
 - c) Social – some think kids will not engage in required classes.
 - d) Has this recommendation been made in the past? If so, why wasn't it implemented?

Researching

- 5) Stakeholders

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- a) Seattle Public Schools – installing classes, teacher training
 - b) Local environmental organizations – “green fair” and environmental conferences
 - c) Local environmental companies – field trips
 - d) City – financial
- 6) Economic impacts
- a) Positive
 - i) Increase Seattle’s competitiveness with other cities throughout the world by enhancing the education of our students in one of the leading industries – environmentalism.
 - b) Negative
 - i) Increase the Seattle Public Schools’ yearly budget.
- 7) Impact other sectors? How? What are the opportunities for integration?
- a) Green jobs
 - i) The beginning of a “green job” will begin with the environmental education students receive throughout their K-12 education. Some professionals working in the environmental field could be keynote speakers at student environmental conferences or guest lecturers in classes. Students could also assist in the work force with these professionals to gain field experience. It would be a symbiotic, community relationship.
 - b) Transportation
 - i) With an increased level of awareness, some students may opt to drive less, reducing the amount of congestion on the streets.
 - c) Zero Waste
 - i) The higher level of student environmental awareness will decrease consumption and thus waste.
 - d) Clean Energy
 - i) An alternative energy class will engage students in the research and building of sustainable energy methods earlier in their academic career, creating more students who are interested in pursuing a career in alternative energy and thus spike more innovations.
 - e) Neighborhoods
 - i) With an increased awareness of the state of our global environment, neighborhoods could see a huge reduction of litter and pollution.
- VIII. Populations impacted? How? Disproportionately?
- 1) Negative
 - a.
 - 2) Positive
 - a. The schools in which environmental science classes are first installed will benefit earlier than schools in which do not obtain such classes until a later year.
 - b. Neighborhoods in which schools sponsor environmental education classes will see huge benefits in the reduction of litter, cars, and pollution.