

Zero Waste Policy and Strategic Plan Meeting Notes
Palo Alto Zero Waste Task Force
July 14, 2005
Palo Alto Art Center/Meeting Room

The purpose of the meeting was to review Draft 9 of the Palo Alto Strategic Plan

Discussion on Process

- Karen Holman expressed concern that a number of Task Force members had not attended meetings.
- Bob Wenzlau offers to create summary to the Strategic Plan so that interest and purpose of the committee is not lost. Summary to include identifying problems, communities challenge and outline a higher level policy/strategy. Bob will draft up document to be approved by committee. Anyone interested in helping Bob draft up this document was asked to contact Bob.
- Emily Renzel distributed a letter out lining her issues with the latest Palo Alto Zero Waste Strategic Plan (Draft 9, 7/9/05).
- Emily Renzel made a motion and seconded by Walt Hayes that buildings or processing facilities related to solid waste, would not be supported by the Task Force Committee, that was recommended to be built on any dedicated parklands within the Palo Alto City limits. A drop off recycling center mentioned in the Bxybee Park, Palo Alto Baylands Update (June 1991) must not be greater than one half an acre and be an “open air operation” before it can receive any recommendation. **Motion passed.**
- Descriptive narratives take away from the process.
- Have we gotten input from the restaurant and grocery sectors? It was reported that a focus group was created and a meeting held obtaining their feedback. It was asked that their feedback be shared with all Task Force members.
- It was asked that the Task Force members be allowed to comment on the Operational Plan before it goes to Council. Staff supported this idea.
- It was suggested to start with the meat of the document and then add supporting information.
- It was suggested to move the “Vision” to the front of the document.
- Concern was expressed on the relationship between the policies, vision and strategies statements. Clarity on the purpose of each one of these sections needs to be understood.
- It was asked that the survey results be distributed to all Task Force members. It was agreed that they would be attached to the Strategic Plan.
- Suggested improving or adding language explaining how these surveys played a role in creating the policies.

Comments to Section One of the Strategic Plan

- Gary Liss asked to help stream line the meeting today that any word-smithing corrections are forwarded to him after the meeting.
- Simply the introduction. Discuss only sustainable and waste goals.
- Debbie Mytels (Acterra) suggested that the number one goal should be the language on page 2, line 12: “Zero Waste seeks to eliminate waste wherever possible by encouraging a systems approach that avoids the creation of waste in the first place.” There was general agreement.
- Susan Arpan suggested that the Staff Report could cover the background information (Sec 1.1 and 1.2).
- Karen Holman suggested that the introductory language say, “Here’s what we’re doing now...Here’s what we need to do...and Here are the steps to take...”

- What does “strong support” mean on page 3, line 8? Gary Liss explained over 50%. Suggested that be added.
- It was questioned if random sampling would have improved the results. It was expressed that the surveys were an influence and did play a role in creating the policies.
- It was suggested to note at the start of section 1.5 that over 2,000 surveys were distributed through out Palo Alto. It was also questioned on how accurate were these numbers.
- Walt Hays suggested that Section 1.5 describing the survey be located in an Appendix. There was general agreement.
- Emily Renzel felt that the word “survey” connotes a random sample and this survey was not. While there is language pointing that out, concerned that decision makers might give survey data too much weight .

Comments to Section Two of the Strategic Plan

- Suggested expanding verbiage about what the non-city programs (page 5, line 42)(44,019 tons) were.
- Questioned whether we needed the first twelve lines. Suggested starting with 2.1 Current Solid Waste and Recycling Facilities.
- Questioned whether section four ”Policies of Zero Waste” should be next? There was support in keeping it there because the problems needed to be defined.
- Suggestion was made to remove the language that describes the “Waste Generation Studies”. Support was given in keeping this information but could be moved into a matrix.
- Simply section and be bold in defining problems.
- Bob Wenzlau suggested that we need to define the problem How much we generate and where it goes. He expressed concern about the level of detail.
- Bud Mission expressed Mission said that the City’s Waste Generation Studies include detail of our waste composition.
- Thought titles could be improved.
- Suggestion was made to move 2.4.1 up to 2.1
- It was suggested that we could do a better job if we define who the reader is going to be.
- Would a “Executive Summary” help?
- Pie charts were helpful. It was asked if the master categories could be reflected in the pie charts.
- Need to describe what a “roll-off” is.

Comments to Section Three of the Strategic Plan

- It would be helpful to have a glossary for the terms used.
- Suggest that chart 5 (page 15) be moved with other charts.
- It was suggested to double space between categories and remove numbering. Gary Liss said that would be done for the final version.
- Could the evaluation of the C&D materials be better evaluated?
- List only what’s not working.
- Are #6 containers being accepted at the drop-off?
- Will the Waste Generation study look at materials that will be salvaged? Staff response-yes.
- What are the services that a Resource Recovery Park could include. Should discuss. Did not want it to be an “ESC II”. Suggestions welcomed on what language to use.
- Gary Liss indicated that Zero Waste Resource Recovery Parks are key, so that facilities are co-located in the community.
- It was noted that some people did not complete the Commercial survey because they could not relate to it.
- A comment was made that the sustainability section was distracting. Comments were made supporting the sustainability section.

- Acterra likes what Gary has done. Zero is zero and should we go to the front of the pipe? Should the definition be changed? Discussion took place, which justified current description.
- Page 2, line 13 should be included in bullet.
- Zero waste should only be defined once.
- Follow consistent flow of priorities.
- Mayor Burch suggested that anything that goes into landfill should be considered failure.

Comments to Section Four of the Strategic Plan

- Emily Renzel suggested that the framework of Objectives, Goals and Policies follow the waste stream pipeline i.e. don't generate it, reduce it, recycle, etc.
- A lot of redundancies in this section.
- Difficulty in distinguishing difference between Sections 4 and 7.
- In response to questions about the policies in the Strategic Plan, Liss said they are a culmination of the policy option review, residential and commercial surveys, etc. The strategies are focused on the next five years. He used the Canberra, New Zealand Plan as a prototype.
- Suggested that the following order would be best: Vision, Policy and then Strategy.
- Holman suggested that Section 4.1 on page 17 be combined with 1.2. Suggested that there should be a "Purpose" statement for this group that identifies the problem, goals and policies.
- Suggested combining mission and vision.
- Suggestion that Mission be outlined in the Staff Report.
- State purpose of group-now and in the future.
- Bud Mission asked the group to focus on Section 4.2 and provide input to Gary.

All Further Comments

Send all further comments to Gary by e-mail.

Other

Gary Liss would distribute Task Force rankings
 Staff can send latest Task Force members list.
 The format of the policies could be improved.

Attendees

Walt Hayes- TF Co-chair, PA resident
 Bud Mission- TF Co-chair, Roche Palo Alto
 Debbie Mytels (for Michael Closson)- Acterra
 Scott Nixon- Agilent
 Bob Wenzlau- Terradex, PA resident
 Tom Moutoux- Foundation for Global Community
 Greg Mize- Roche Palo Alto
 Karl Knapp- City of Palo Alto Utilities
 Irene Sampson- League of Women Voters
 Ramsey Shuayto- Stanford Research Park
 Cole Shuayto- Stanford Research Park
 Karen Holman- PA resident
 Emily Renzel- PA residents, Parks representative
 Wendy Hediger- City of Palo Alto Public Works Refuse
 Russ Reiserer- City of Palo Alto Public Works Refuse

Michael Jackson- City of Palo Alto Public Works Refuse
Susan Arpan- City of Palo Alto Economic Resources
Gary Liss- ZW Consultant
Bern Beecham- Council Member, City of Palo Alto
Jim Burch-Mayor, City of Palo Alto
Julie Weiss- City of Palo Alto Environmental Compliance.