

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

POLICY ASSIGNMENT REPORT

Clark County Youth Commission

Presented to the Clark County Board of County Commissioners

July 2, 2008

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the youth of the county, the Clark County Youth Commission (CCYC) is eager to present the following report concerning the Environmental Sustainability Policy in the county. The Youth Commission hopes this report will help create a healthier community, create public awareness, and uphold our beautiful Clark County for generations.

At the beginning of our term in September, the Clark County Youth Commission met with Bill Barron who proposed looking into Clark County's Sustainability Policy. After meeting with him, there was overwhelming agreement to look into the policy; needless to say, we were all stoked! We reviewed the current policy at a couple of eight-hour weekend workshops and discussed the different aspects of sustainability and how it should be applied to our county. With newly gathered information, we learned not only what sustainability is, but what it takes to change a culture to be more sustainable and eco-friendly.

PROCEDURE/ PROCESS

This is the process that the Clark County Youth Commission has taken during the past six months while working on the Sustainability policy report. Here are just a few examples of what we have accomplished.

SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

The Youth Commission held two Saturday workshops. The first one was find out more about what sustainability is and brainstorming ideas. We reviewed the current county policy, worked in small groups researching articles, and facilitated our own extended discussion on some key sustainability issues. The second Saturday was some more brainstorming and narrowing the scope a bit so the subject was more manageable for us to tackle.

VOTING ON FOCUS AREAS

During our regular meetings we voted on what areas we were going to focus on for the report. We had come up with a list of focus areas that we were wanting to take a closer look at. We realized that it was still too big and we needed to narrow it down to a more manageable scope. We discussed what each topic meant and what kind of information was within that area. Then we voted on the ones we either knew about or wanted more information on.

NARROWING TO A MANAGEABLE SCOPE

During one of our regular meetings we narrowed our list down to the five main topics that are included in the report. They are changing people and culture, transportation, energy, environmental building standards, and local and sustainable food.

RESEARCH

- During the past few months we have put together two notebooks and other materials for our research.
- We invited Mark McCauley Director of General Services, Pete DuBois Sustainability Coordinator, and the bio-diesel program at Heritage High School to one of our meetings. We wanted to hear from Pete and Mark about what the county was already doing or were planning on doing. We heard that the bio-diesel program at Heritage is currently working with C-Tran to sell the bio-diesel they make. They also discussed that they are using Evergreen school district used cooking oil to make the bio-diesel.
- We created surveys and not only surveyed the youth of Clark County but we surveyed county employees as well.

Discussing and Write-up

Since school has been out, we have been meeting and discussing what our research says and what how we should present it to you. We have met almost daily as small groups, sometimes for 6 hours at a time. We have also written pieces of it during this time. We sometimes stopped to discuss particular topics and then we would write some more.

YOUTH COMMISSION ACTION

To learn more about people's opinions and educate the others on sustainability, the Clark County Youth Commission felt it necessary to step into the field and investigate. While working on recommendations to the board on how to act, the Commission decided to take action ourselves to attempt to change people's attitudes and awareness about sustainability. Since one of the most important ways to change a culture is to start with the kids, we decided to encourage a shift in culture within county government by targeting the children of Clark County employees.

TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY

Clark County's Take Your Child to Work Day 2008 was a success in many ways, but the Youth Commission sees it as a sustainable success. At this year's Take Your Child To Work Day, the County was kind enough to lend us some space to set up our sustainability booth and host and lead activities with kids.

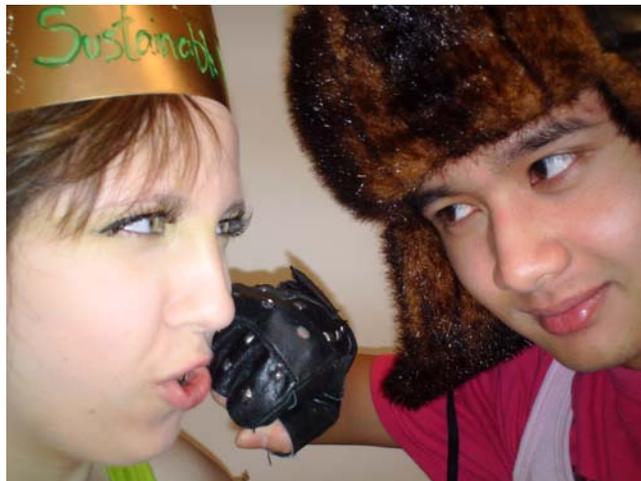
Our purpose was to:

- ❖ Bring awareness of sustainable issues in the county,
- ❖ Provide fun, educational games for the children of Clark County,
- ❖ Survey Clark County employees on their knowledge and opinion of sustainability.



Our booth featured several interesting things; these included sustainable facts sheets, detailing what you could do in everyday life to be more sustainable, and the Wheel of Sustainability, where kids could come spin the wheel, answer a question, and get a little packet of seeds with trivia attached to the front, regardless of whether the answer was right. But the stars of the show were our own superhero mascots: Sustainability Woman and Energy Hog! As their names imply, Sustainability Woman spread the good word of sustainability and ecologically friendly practices, whereas Energy Hog spread filth, injustice, and greenhouse gases. Sustainability Woman and Energy Hog each had scripts of things to say to the passersby and their kids, and would often engage in battle: Energy Hog would try to hurt Sustainability Woman with incandescent light bulbs (her main weakness!), but she would come back with recycling and sustainable practices and send him running! The children enjoyed interacting with them.

Not only did we provide the Wheel of Sustainability game, but there was also a recycle race! In this game, Sustainability Woman and a few kids would band together to race against Energy Hog and his minions to see who could recycle all of the things in their pile of recyclables and trash. The recyclables were sorted by their category (paper, plastic, glass, etc.) and put into county recycling bins, while trash was put off to the side. Of course, Energy Hog lost the race every time, and all the children got to get their pictures taken with Sustainability Woman, standing with a foot on Energy Hog in triumph!



That was the most fun part, but we also had a more serious job to do. While we sat at our booth, we surveyed the parents of the children playing our game about sustainability, and what they knew about it.

We had a lot of fun doing this event and suggest that similar initiatives be explored by the county in future years. If you get the kids, you get the parents.

SURVEYS

CLARK COUNTY EMPLOYEES

As a part of our Environmental Sustainability Policy research, the Clark County Youth Commission felt it necessary to survey Clark County employees on their opinions of Clark County's current policy with anonymity. When the opportunity came to surface with the available booth in Clark County's Take Your Kid to Work Day, the Youth Commission seized it. We surveyed fourteen (14) Clark County employees from an array of departments including Community Development, Community Services, Environmental Solid Waste, Facility Management, Finances, IS, Juvenile Court, Public Works, and Superior Court.

Some general conclusions include

- that awareness is essential
- that the benefits do outweigh the costs of implementing or applying sustainability
- that more sustainable practices need to be sought after: simple things such as –
 - more recycling and composting bins,
 - more energy-efficient lighting,
 - more carpooling,
 - the option of working from home.

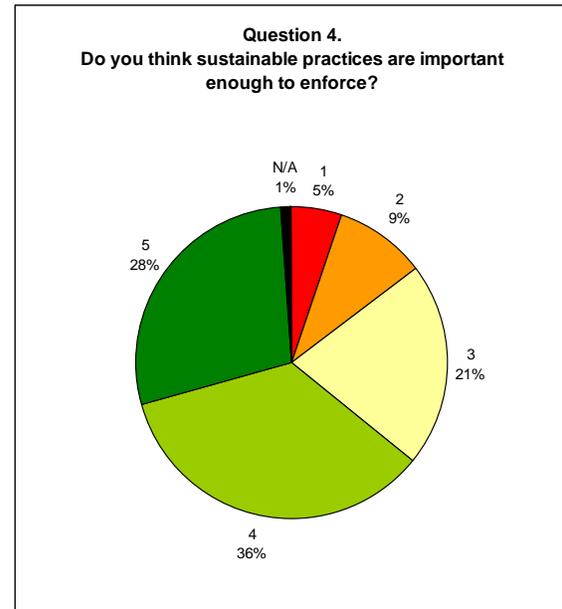
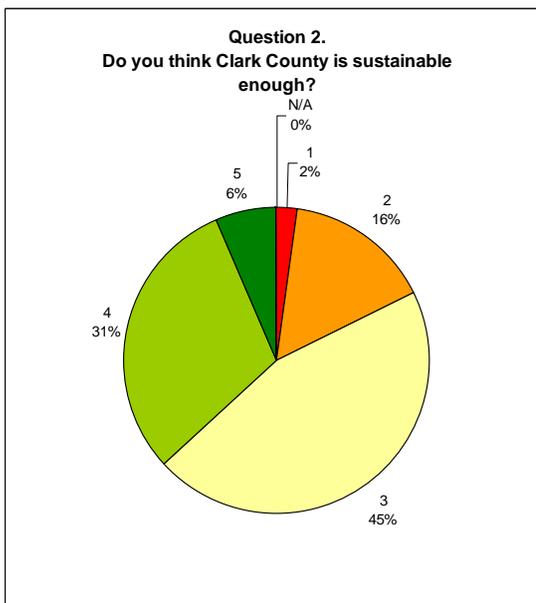
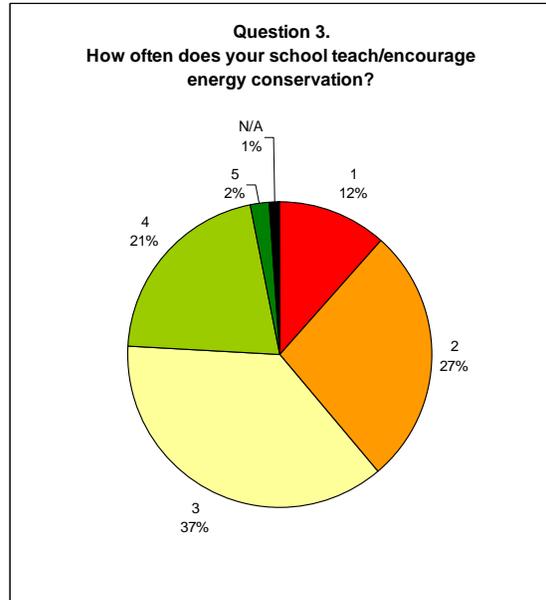
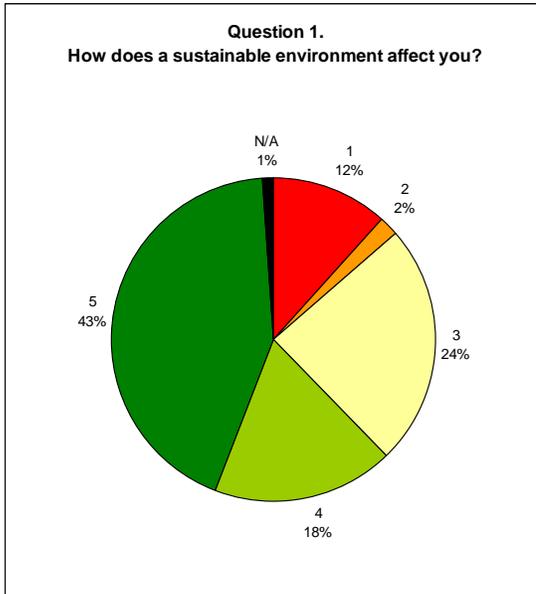
CLARK COUNTY YOUTH

In our time spent putting together our report, we decided to survey a few groups of youth to find out where people stand on the issue of sustainability in Clark County.

The survey count came out to 95 total surveys, and the age group ranged from 11 to 19. The areas surveyed were:

Ridgefield High School (1 survey)	View Ridge Middle School (1 survey)
Frontier Middle School (10 surveys)	Fort Vancouver High School (6 surveys)
Mountain View High School (1 survey)	Clark County Skills Center (1 survey)
Washougal High School (1 survey)	Hockinson High School (12 surveys)
Pacific Middle School (50 surveys!)	Hudson Bay High School (2 surveys)
Options youth program (8 surveys)	The NAACP Banquet youth attendees (2 surveys)

The following pie charts show the responses to four questions. In each case, respondents were asked to choose a number from one to five, with five indicating the most positive response in terms of sustainability.



The surveys also included some open-ended questions. From the responses to those, we learned some interesting things. Many of the students surveyed, while generally receptive to green ideas, did not show much awareness of what sustainability was, beyond recycling and saving water. When asked what they or their families did in connection with sustainability, most answers revolved around those things, although a few mentioned lowering CO2 emissions.

When asked how the county could be more sustainable, most people replied that they didn't know, but a few of the other ideas included:

- more public recycling options,
- gas efficiency in work vehicles,
- improved waste management,
- energy saving lights and timed traffic lights,
- more recycling.

Some of the funnier responses included "find better reasons to put more people in jail" and "get a sustainably good personality".

While most youth were receptive to recycling programs, the majority of youth reported that their schools either didn't have recycling programs at all or had very underdeveloped programs.

Other observations:

- Most youth surveyed agreed that they would be willing to give up small things in their everyday life to be more sustainable.
- But when asked if more public taxes should be used to support sustainability, the answers were evenly split.
- And what was also interesting was that the answers to this question seemed to be more passionate. It was either an eager "Yes!" or an indignant "No!" One went so far as to say "Hell no!" That's passion!

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

According to the articles we researched, for a citizen to change their behavior, they must have:

1. knowledge about the change and why they ought to change their habits
2. a personal motivation for putting the effort into it.

Just knowing that you should do something differently won't make you want to alter your lifestyle.

- People know that eating dessert for every meal is unhealthy and not a good idea, but many people continue to eat unhealthily.
- People know that recycling and practicing sustainable things is something that should be done, but they don't always participate.

This is a change that we need to make. The citizens of Clark County need to learn more about sustainability and be persuaded to take part in making the county and world a better place.

Changing a culture is a very difficult task. It is changing the very attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of hundreds or thousands of people. As we learned from one of our research sources, to implement a successful change in a culture some things need to happen:

1. **EDUCATE.** The first and most important is to educate the population. If people don't know about why they should or should not do something, the chances that they will put the effort into change are slim.
2. **DEFINE.** Next the new culture needs to be defined. People need to know what the common vision or values of the change are.
3. **ALIGN.** The next step is to align it. Let the people choose whether to be for or against it. There just needs to be a group of people that are certainly for the change. Without them it is hard to teach the public and get them on board with the change.
4. **DEVELOP SKILLS.** Next the skills need to be built and problems need to be solved. In the case of sustainability, for example, people who do not know what they can do with their old orange peels need to be taught to compost. Then they would have to build a compost

area and learn how to tend it and what needs to be done. What skills are needed to be successful?

5. **COMMUNICATE.** Throughout this entire change there needs to be communication constantly. From the people who want to implement the change to the ones who are still deciding whether they are for or against the cause.

Cultures that remain static most likely do not take these steps and processes into account which results in little or no change. Because Clark County wants to improve and continue being a quality county, it seems appropriate for these to be thought about and followed.

Small changes matter

For people to successfully make a change, whether big or small, they need to take tiny steps towards the goal. People won't suddenly change to reuse everything they use, recycle everything, compost and all that comes with being more sustainable. But if people were to make small steps, like bringing their own coffee cup to their favorite café, it would reduce the waste as well as promote sustainability within their neighborhood.

It just isn't enough anymore to put on the table options or availability, you have to make it known and show the incentives or reasons why people should do something you think is right. Every one knows how driving causes pollution. Carpooling with coworkers, riding a bus, and even walking or "biking it" to work could suffice for healthy alternatives to getting to work than everyone driving individually; reducing the amount of cars on the road reduces the amount of carbon-dioxide released.

BEHAVIORAL/CULTURE CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Create opportunities for people to learn about sustainability.

There should be opportunities for people to be able to learn about sustainability, what means and how they can become sustainable. If someone doesn't know what it means they aren't going to be receptive to the change.

Make sustainability awesome.

Young people now days want something that sparks, that is cool. They want to rebel against what others say. Something that we have talked about is how do we get people to change. Well, you need to make it awesome. It needs to be directed at our youth because they are the ones that will be easily affected; they are the ones that are coming up behind us. They are our future. As an example, a former Youth Commissioner, Nicko Fusso, started a company, still active today, that

popularized the slogan “Sustainability is sexy.” Its message and its merchandise became very popular on college campuses throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Get people to relate to sustainability personally.

What usually changes your opinions? How can someone change your mind on an issue? You probably need to relate to it in some way personally. It has to personally affect you in some way. Well, that is probably the same thing with most people. In order to create a change in a cultural behavior you need to find some way to make it personal for them.

Get to the kids, you get to the parents.

We believe that if you teach the children in school or in any situation you will get to the parents. If a child has just learned something they usually run home and excitedly tell the parents what they learned that day. If they were taught about recycling, the children start pestering the parents to start changing so that they are recycling now.

Create green jobs.

What we are recommending is that you create new jobs that relate with sustainability. We are coming to an age where sustainability is the big topic. It is where some of the new technology is coming out. It is a prime area to create jobs here in the county for people who need work.

- One of the specific recommendations concerning this is to have jail inmates and juvenile justice youth make bio-diesel as a choice of service. They would learn all of the basics in creating it and once they got out they would have viable job skills especially if the county converted its vehicles to bio-diesel. Heritage High School is already selling the bio-diesel they make to C-Tran.
- A related idea is to have youth who are incarcerated in the juvenile justice system attend service learning courses about environmental sustainability and green industries as part of their school curriculum. When they rejoin the community, they have skills and knowledge that will help them compete in the new job market.

ENVIRONMENTAL BUILDING STANDARDS RECOMMENDATIONS

LEED's standards should apply to everyone constructing a new building.

Newly built buildings should all be LEED certified. Right now Washington has a requirement, enacted since 2005, that "all major public agency facilities with a floor area exceeding 5,000 square feet" needs to meet LEED's standards or exceed LEED's standards. These buildings include state funded school buildings. Each LEED certified building not only helps the environment but also benefits each building by conserving energy and water as well as lessening the effects of water pollution from each building. Having a LEED certified building would not only benefit the environment but also benefit the employees of the building as well. Building a LEED certified building does not cost as much as some builders think, it is about a two through five percent increase on the capital price. Most of the increase comes from re-designing the old conventional building to a LEED certified friendly building. Once a LEED's certified building is built, they are shown to save as much as 20% in energy and water costs, a 38% decrease of waste water and a 22% in construction waste. The owners of the LEED building gains in the long run as well as employees for having a clean work environment and of course the environment is cleaner. All new buildings should be constructed by LEED standards.

Buildings should be on or near a possible mass transportation route for access.

The Youth Commission believes that newly developing environmentally friendly buildings should be built near public transportation sites or local bus routes. We believe that having access with public transportation will help play a role in developing Clark County. Having businesses near public transportation will also offer employees an incentive to take public transportation to reduce the amount of cars on the road as well as saving employee's money on gas. With the rise of inflation as well as gas prices, the working community is starting to feel the economic pinch in their financial needs, new and alternative ways to travel to work will help strengthen our public transportation system as well as the county overall. Clark County has already seen a massive explosion in urban growth as well as an influx of business plazas arriving; all Clark County needs now is to provide a strong public transportation to these places to offer growth and more development.

Support green materials (reusable building materials).

Reusing materials is efficient as well as cost saving. Common parts of a building that could be reused to help build another building could include things like energy efficient windows, fluorescent light bulbs and lighting fixtures, office furniture or even greenery around the building. The more items that are reused, the less material goes into our landfills. This also means that materials would not

have to be used to make more products, thus reducing the amount of pollutants put out by factories. Reusable building materials should also be available to be reusable with homes too. Typically businesses do sell out their fixtures and furniture but some residents or businesses are unaware of what is available to be reused.

Encourage or influence partial LEED standards on already built buildings.

Clark County could start to phase in LEED standards to other businesses to help local businesses as well as large businesses achieve an environmental safe standard. By encouraging businesses to convert to greener options, not only are the businesses helping out with the environment and saving themselves money but Clark County could set an example for other counties. Nothing can stop Clark County from being the friendliest sustainable county in the United States. Clark County could be the example of what a green and sustainable community looks like.

In addition, older buildings with older appliances typically use more energy. A slow phase-in of LEED standards could mean adding a few energy efficient windows, insulation to keep warm temperatures in the winter, or even retrofitting old energy sucking appliances to help further boost savings.

- A way to help encourage businesses could be offering small tax breaks so local businesses can afford new appliances or options to go green.
- Another strategy to help change businesses to a greener option could include small money grants to various businesses and nonprofits. In return, the organization would have to replace or retrofit appliances or company fixtures to a more environmentally friendly option. A number of improvements can be made such as adding new thermal windows, motion light sensors, proper insulation, sealing cracks, purchasing new energy efficient appliances, or even non toxic paint for a new decorative color without the poisonous gases from regular paint.

Did you know that building using green standards is cheaper than usually estimated? The cost is 5% more than using non-sustainable practices.

ENERGY RECOMMENDATIONS

Educate the public on everyday energy conservation.

One idea the Youth Commission has to influence the public to convert to sustainable concepts is to make advertisements. Right now Clark County is trying to increase the public's knowledge about sustainability. However, there have been no advertisements concerning sustainability. During one of the Youth Commission sub-committee meetings we discussed the various ways to advertise.

- One of the methods we came up with was to advertise in movie theaters before the movie starts.
- Create fake movie posters about sustainability that can include a protagonist who is sustainable and an antagonist who rejects the idea of sustainability but ultimately suffers at the hand of the protagonist.
- Advertise on food items such as popcorn bins or soft drink containers.
- Advertise along county roads with billboards. Each billboard could advertise tips to conserve energy or new ideas (The slogan could be "got green?")
- Advertise on local television. One good candidate for advertisement is the channel that has young children's shows, since they get a lot of traffic.
- Advertise along businesses, it could be a poster or sticker.
- Advertise on clothes, each article of clothing could give a short blip of the positives of buying the shirt or pants.

Take advantage of Clark County's geographical benefits.

Consider developing the facilities and technologies for wind power and turbine wave power energy generation.

Implement a plastic/non-biodegradable bag tax.

To encourage using reusable bags, charge a small amount per plastic bag issued in:

- Grocery, convenience and drug stores
- Food services businesses

The revenues from the tax could be used to fund sustainable projects and technologies.

LOCAL/SUSTAINABLE FOOD RECOMMENDATIONS

Promote local businesses that use local/sustainable food and products.

There are many benefits to using locally grown foods and products. With fruits and vegetables, the less they have to travel a great distance to the supermarket the more natural and fresh they become. Fruits and vegetables that have to travel a great distance are usually coated with beeswax, resin or even petroleum. With locally grown foods, not only are the people benefiting from real fresh fruits and vegetables but local farmers are able to thrive and survive.

Right now Burgerville is one of the best chains in the northwest to take advantage of locally grown foods and use them in their menus. One example of the usage of locally grown foods is their delicious and famous seasonal shakes, the berries are 100% grown in Oregon and are distributed to various Burgerville chains. Economic impacts may potentially occur also, inflation of food prices could lessen due to lower shipping costs. More of the money spent to buy food will be used on local businesses.

Encourage local agriculture and community gardens.

What we would like to see is that there are more areas where the community can come and plant. "Come and Plant" would be the slogan. There would be community gardens, orchards, and share cropping available for county residents. Fresh fruit and veggies for all! People come and get basic free seeds or they can buy extras. They can get a basic plot, or they could buy more land. Then they would plant and grow food for themselves or they could donate to a local food bank/homeless shelter. We know that you already have in plan this idea. We would like to see it continue.

Replace grass by county buildings with indigenous plants.

One unique and interesting concept the Youth Commission has come up with is the complete elimination of grass on lawns. Lawns take up a lot of water to keep green, no matter what time of day it is. They require machinery to cut, money to buy machinery, operational costs, gas money, which damages atmosphere.

A COMMUNITY WITHOUT LAWNS?

Imagine a Clark County where there is almost no grass (except at parks, of course). All the grass in front of buildings and houses has been replaced. It has been replaced with indigenous plants. What are indigenous plants? Indigenous means: belonging to a place: originating in and typical of a region or country

(Encarta ® World English Dictionary ©). This means plants from around here. Picture beautiful gardens full of Bog Laurel, Bracken Fern, Cusick's Sedge, and other native plants. These areas would be shaped to show off the beauty of the northwest while sustaining themselves.

NATIVE PLANTS ARE BEST

Plants that are native to our area would only have to be taken care of for the first few years, being watered, pruned, and protected from invasive species overtaking the gardens and pathways. But after that, the plants can sustain themselves, since they are used to our environment. They would hardly ever need to be watered, only on very hot summer days. These plants would be better than grass; more ecological, economical, easier to take care of, and aesthetically pleasing. These plants would be plants to be proud of.

GET COUNTY EMPLOYEES INVOLVED

And, what if county employees even got in on the gardening? Gardening is proven to help relieve stress. If employees helped to upkeep the garden, they could get some fresh air (much needed when your main work environment is an office or cubicle), and every time they see the garden, they can take pride in knowing they put in a helping hand to make their workplace and their county even more beautiful. Even if they don't help, just seeing the lush, green plants and being able to walk around in the gardens would brighten their day.

Provide compost options for Clark County employees at work.

We recommend that you take some of the land around the buildings and have an area where food that would normally be thrown away can be taken to the compost bin. Then after some time, have a Clark County employee garden where, if they so choose, the employees, during paid time or green breaks, can plant and grow a garden using the compost they have created. With all the food grown, they then could donate the food to the local homeless shelter or food banks.

Providing an opportunity for Clark County employees to use their own compost bins, such as one bin per office or team, could prove beneficial to environmental sustainability. Having their own compost bin, the employees will be able to recycle what would be usually not recycled, providing a cost-effective option for disposing of waste products in a non-harmful way.

The employees could also have gardens in which they could be given paid time to work in the garden or a day or two of paid vacation time, providing an incentive for employees to be sustainable. Food grown in the employee's gardens could be given back to the community through local food banks. There could

even be a small competition with a prize to get Clark County employees excited about the idea; a competition might include who could provide the most organic food (in weight or store cost) to local food banks.

Have people grow their own food.

If people could grow their own food, it would reduce the cost of living and increase community health because more healthy organic fruits and vegetables would be easily accessible to the community. People could get rid of a lot of their grass which only exists to look pretty, and replace it with vegetables.

They could also be encouraged to replace their lawns with indigenous plants. The indigenous plants would not have to be watered after a while because they are used to the climate around here.

A majority of families that aren't living in the upper-middle class can't always afford fresh veggies and fruit. As we all know, Top Ramen has no nutritional value, and school lunches aren't much better either. You have to be extremely poor to qualify for free lunch, and those who are stuck with reduced lunch still can't afford it sometimes. Even if they could, fruits and veggies are most often in short supply. Whoever heard of apples that are smaller than tennis balls? More often than not, the apples and oranges are small and under ripe, and don't provide all the nutrients a growing child needs. Home grown veggies would provide much needed vitamins and minerals for low income families. The government could even provide seeds, since they do get expensive. \$1.95 for assorted flowers? For shame! If we could get people to gradually shift to a more everyday agrarian lifestyle, everyone would be happier and healthier.

It would be extremely easy to grow organic vegetables. All you need is everything Mother Nature gives you: water, soil, and sunlight. No pesticides or herbicides. Fresh grown food would be immediately eaten, so they wouldn't need to be pumped full of additives and preservatives or dyes.

Everything is locally grown. With fresh veggies everyone will feel happier and be healthier.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Expand Clark County employee opportunities/willingness to use mass transport.

Having the availability to use something is not enough to make someone take advantage of it. Giving Clark County employees the opportunity to ride the bus for free is like giving a three year old a bicycle before they know how to ride it; they are given the opportunity to try something new without even knowing how to use it. Attempting to ride a bus is like attempting to ride a bike for the very first time, no one is there to help support you or give you companionship on a task that may seem very scary to you. The bus is looked upon as scary because they are riding with complete strangers and have absolutely no idea on when they should press the yellow strip to request a stop and they are afraid to ask the driver where it is, out of fear of seeming incompetent and being embarrassed.

To break that fear, Clark County could advertise a free introduction to riding the bus class to its employees. Clark County could even have some days where designated or non-designated groups of employees could take a half a day workshop where they learn how to take a bus, what buses apply to them, their routes and their stops on a C-TRAN tour; paid time is suggested to get Clark County employees to *want* to take the tour. This would provide them with a better sense of the bus system, and encourage them to stop driving their cars and hop on a more affordable and environmentally friendly mode of transportation. Maybe even a game, such as a scavenger hunt or relay race between departments could take place with the bus system to get them more familiar with C-TRAN; a sustainable prize could even be given, such as flowers or fluorescent light bulbs.

The Clark County Youth Commission is aware of Clark County's attempt to get their employees to "bus it" to work through their monthly and daily bus passes, and gives them kudos.

Make it easier to ride the bus.

For the general public some of the major issues with mass transportation are that it isn't reliable. The routes don't go where they need them to, there aren't enough routes and the buses aren't frequent enough. There aren't enough stops and accessibility is brutal. Why would the general public want to ride the buses? What we are recommending is that you use your influence on the C-TRAN board to make these issues better. That mass transportation is more reliable and more frequent so the men and women of this county can go to work and be on time.

We also recommend that more park n' rides are created so people can drive to the buses and then take the buses to where they need to go. Let's say you build a park n' ride in Hockinson. The people of Hockinson could drive to it, park and then get on a city bus and come into town, instead of waiting in traffic for an

hour and wasting gas. Some other areas in the county that need better accessibility are Amboy, Woodland, Brush Prairie, Ridgefield, and Yacolt.

There also should be classes specifically directed at adults who have never ridden the bus and are afraid to ask for help. The class should include how to mount a bicycle on the bike rack, what routes best suit the new rider's needs, and anything else that needs to be known when learning how to ride a bus.

Expand the county employee carpooling system.

Carpooling with coworkers sounds like a great idea doesn't it? With your best buddies it could, but with acquaintances in your department, maybe not as fun. To break the awkward feeling of being picked up by someone you kind of know, Clark County departments could develop the carpooling system further. A map of all employees wanting to be involved either as a driver or a passenger could be made and then employees who are close together could be grouped in a carpooling team. Of course, it might be a good idea if they arrange between them who would drive what days, or if one person is designated as the driver, the employees can designate their own way of paying the driver back. Now that a team has been established, they should be given a time to meet-and-greet, that way it breaks the awkwardness and gives them the opportunity to get to know each other. Either a tax break or free/reduced parking should be given as an extra incentive to Clark County employees who have proof of carpooling; like any human, this would help give them a reason to *want* to carpool.

The Youth Commission recognizes that many of these ideas are already in the county's trip reduction plan.

Mass transportation should be focused on Clark County.

Future funding and planning efforts around mass transportation should direct the bulk of the resources into links within Clark County, rather than links connecting Clark County and Portland.

Between having waterfalls, lakes, mountains, forests, rivers, fields, and much more, Clark County has one of the most geographically diverse landscapes in Washington. We need to take advantage of our blessings and exploit their beauty through making it more accessible; families and individuals are not given the option of using public transportation to Vancouver Lake or Sandy swimming hole, so they have no other resort than their car.

Focusing mass transportation on Clark County will be able to get as many citizens mobile as possible who are not currently using public transportation than focusing on getting citizens to and from Portland for example. Some buses only go so far, and if they do, hardly cover a general blanket of the area. Buses that have stops only in the part of town where there are stores do not cover the

residential parts of town. Having more locations where a bus can be caught will encourage more people to ride the bus.

All mass transportation should use bio-diesel fuel.

Instead of using fossil fuels which increases the bus fare, the buses or other mass transportation should be converted so they can use bio-diesel. It is a much cleaner source and it's easier to make. Biodiesel can reduce the direct tailpipe-emission of particulates, tiny particles of solid or liquid suspended in a gas, on vehicles with particulate filters by as much as 20 percent compared with low-sulfur diesel.

Reduce the amount of parking spaces.

In reducing the amount of parking available, we should start with Clark County buildings; this will increase the probability of carpooling or using public transportation. Having fewer spaces creates a less chance of getting a parking space; less chance of getting a parking space creates a better chance of carpooling and use of public transportation. It subconsciously alerts the driver's mind to find alternative modes of transportation.

Make it easier to walk and bike.

Two commonly overlooked means of transportation should not be forgotten, bicycling and walking. If people live close enough to their work they could walk or bike home, but often don't. There could be various reasons for this: they get off work when it's dark; they have to pick up their children; they have to get to appointments during the day; they need to travel quickly between home and work.

The County's current trip reduction plan addresses some of these issues. But some other ideas could also be considered.

- Providing Clark County employees and citizens with safety tips for walking, maybe even some self-defense courses or coupons for such, would make the people feel more confident walking home at night.
- Providing coupons or discounts to people for safety equipment, either for the common walker or bicyclist would encourage them to take advantage of the situation and walk or ride home at night; free helmets for bicyclists should be taken into consideration.
- More lights on streets should be provided so the common walker, employee or not, could be able to walk home at night and see where they are going.

- More, and safer, bicycle lanes and sidewalks should be constructed so bicyclists could stay on the roads and walkers on the sidewalks; one reason why people don't walk would probably be because of the cyclists on the sidewalks, and the reasons why the cyclists are on sidewalks is because they feel there is either no, or inadequate bicycle lanes being provided for their safety.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

In the Youth Commission's recent eight-day work session to compile and finalize our report, we had a visioning process. This visioning was of what we thought a sustainable Clark County would look like 25 years from now. We sat down and wrote all our ideas, and then discussed them together. After much agreeing, disagreeing, and silly banter, we came up with a few lists. This section is here to tell you about what we believe Clark County should look like in 25 years.

The Youth Commission envisioned that in 25 years, Clark County would be a beautiful green place. The new center of this wonderful sustainable Clark County would be like Pioneer Courthouse Square, and would originate from one of the many gravel pits in Clark County. This place would be called "The Gravel Pit". A sloping, beautiful epicenter of culture, there would be large steps and stones for people to sit on and talk, and lush green areas of indigenous plant life. In the very center at the bottom would be a huge fountain that people could play around in the hot summer, and street vendors like the Weiner Wagon would sell their fares at the top to be eaten anywhere in this little slice of Clark County heaven. =)

In 25 years, Clark County will have lots of green plants, growing abundantly wherever you go. After a few years, indigenous plants wouldn't have to be watered anymore, and would flourish on their own. Picture a wildlife reserve where a dirty strip mall used to be somewhere along the middle of Mill Plain and Fourth Plain boulevards. There would be paths for people to walk on while the new rapid transit light rail system runs overhead to take you to other beautiful parts of Clark County that aren't easily accessible by mass transit right now. Among the beautiful nature, urban culture would also be noticeable, in cool skate parks and extreme sports hang outs, where kids, teens, and adults alike would go to get some fresh air and exercise while admiring the great outdoors.

When you go out to get a refreshment or have lunch, all the restaurants will have biodegradable eco-friendly products that either are made out of recycled material or can be recycled. Even the buildings are made out of recycled materials, and are all LEEDs certified, and can be taken apart and used again for future building projects.

As you eat in these recycled buildings, you're joined by students who grab a quick snack and return outside to their classes, where their being taught about how they too can be sustainable while making bio-diesel, like Heritage High School does. As an added bonus, all plastic is now recyclable, and Styrofoam is a thing of the past.

To get around to these wonderful buildings and establishments, Clark County will have a great transportation system like Europe to serve all its residents and citizens. This includes great infrastructure and understanding of when and where residents need public transportation. A great way to encourage more residents to take public

transportation is to convince businesses to have more locker type compartments to stow away bikes, scooters, or even roller blades.

If people decide not to take public transportation then they can all hop in their highly developed electric cars or highly developed hybrid cars for some inter-county travel and fun! Mopeds are popular for traveling within town and since they do not suck up much gas, they are extremely popular with youths and adults of all ages. When they reach their destination they may charge their car at the meter. On their way to their destination they will pass lots of beautiful recycled county art by local artists. The art pieces will be in all shapes and sizes as well as colors.

Stoplights have become smarter in the future as well. All the stoplights have smart sensors that will not turn a light red unless there is someone actually at that stoplight. Overall, this helps with consuming less gas while getting people to their destination a little quicker.

People of the future are not only treated with an environmentally friendly atmosphere, but they themselves wear green clothing. All clothing made from cotton will not have any toxic chemicals when grown or made, and other clothing material will be friendly towards the environment, made out of hemp, corn, or flax fibers. All the undesired clothing can all be recycled and made into new clothing.

500 miles away in an isolated field there will be wind powered nuclear mills. These mills consume hydrogen molecules and the mill has a machine that throws helium molecules at the hydrogen molecules and makes a boom! Then the energy is transferred to all of Clark County where the energy is needed.

Back in the city there will be tighter built houses. These houses mean smaller spaces between them, minimizing space usage. In these neighborhoods there will be stores, supermarkets, malls and restaurants that the people can walk to them without driving and have a good time. Each of the buildings will have a flat top where grass and plants that will grow and create different energy and oxygen.

When we build schools we will try to use the best used material so it will give students a good environment to work in. It will also be sustainable using previous school's pieces. When students go to school they can take buses that run on magnetic lines, moving the buses by using opposite magnets on a track if the school is too far away to walk.

In the major foot traffic areas, there would be Piezo Pads, which are floor boards that when stepped on, create friction and kinetic energy that is stored up and used to power things in the city.

RANDOM YOUTH COMMISSION THOUGHTS

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO GET CLARK COUNTY EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN SUSTAINABILITY?

Like any human being, people need to feel that they could gain something from doing something they would normally not do, so their needs to be an incentive given to Clark County employees to encourage them to be sustainable.

- ❖ **Look for incentives** for those who carpool or “bus it” to work; sometimes it isn’t enough to be given free parking or free bus passes, sometimes it may be.
- ❖ **Advertising more sustainable practices** that could save employees money, maybe in a packet, could give employees encouragement to be sustainable.
- ❖ County employees that use **daily bus passes** could turn these in, attached to the employee’s business card, for a raffle.
- ❖ As previously mentioned, Clark County could provide employees with a **paid tutorial** of the bus system to encourage the use of the bus and to reduce the fear of it as well.
- ❖ As the famous saying goes, “out of sight, out of mind;” this applies to being environmentally sustainable as well as anything else. Providing employees with **more sustainable options**, such as compost bins, recycling bins, and fluorescent light bulbs, could give them a subconscious habit of being sustainable and becoming environmentally conscious.
- ❖ By **offering an opportunity** of paid time for gardening or helping install fluorescent light bulbs or anything else sustainable, Clark County employees will be more apt to be more sustainable.

HOW DOES THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN POSITIVELY AND NEGATIVELY AFFECT SUSTAINABILITY?

As everyone is aware, Clark County, as well as all of the United States, is undergoing an economic downturn. The downturn is a time that is both positive and negative when it comes to effecting a more sustainable environment.

Good affects of the downturn include more bus riding and biking due to higher gas prices. Now that gas prices are reaching skyrocket records, American citizens are looking for more affordable modes of transportation. With people being more aware of gas prices, they may think twice when attempting to get in their car, turn that key, and go to that store that is three blocks away. Instead, they are taking a subconscious environmentally friendly mode of commute, walking; not only is walking more environmentally friendly, it gives the average Joe an opportunity to breathe that fresh Clark County air, appreciate what Washington has to offer, and gives them a chance to work off that ice-cream they are about to eat. Now that gas prices are at unimaginable rates, families are spending less time driving and more time with the family; this

provides the opportunity for children to engage in a more healthy and more connected family bonding time that they may remember for the rest of their lives; instead of in the car looking out to the cars in front of them in rush-hour traffic, they are making great memories of playing Yahtzee with the family or laughing as their parents do something they might find embarrassing if they were in public. All of which are great outcomes of a less than perfect time for our economy.

Now for the negative effects. Inflation is rising pretty much everywhere but in our paychecks. Money makes the world go round and if someone doesn't have money, then they can't really afford the upfront costs of starting a sustainable life. Solar panels and other great accessories for remodeling cost more than they used to. Faced with a choice between providing basic needs for their families or choosing to start a sustainable lifestyle, we all know what most people would choose. Not only are gas prices rising, so are food costs, nowadays it is cheaper to purchase unhealthy foods, and organic products and foods are glanced over because they cost more. Resources are becoming less and less available, so even if a family could scrounge up a few extra dollars to be sustainable, they might not be able to find what they need to get started.

HOW DO WE INCREASE KNOWLEDGE?

Based on our survey results, the word "recycle" came up more than a couple times, it came up at least two-hundred times. Reduce-Reuse-Recycle is pretty much the only thing people know about being environmentally sustainable, but being sustainable can't hold on just RRR, it needs more. Clark County citizens need to be taught exactly what else there is they could do to help the environment. Based on our results, people are more than willing to recycle to help the environment, but we need to give them some helpful tips on other sustainable lifestyle choices.

- ❖ At local stores, information should be given with products that explain how to use that product in a sustainable manner, if the product could be used as such. Having the information available *and* known helps people when it comes to wanting to make a change in their lifestyle.
- ❖ Classes in schools teaching more sustainable practices and their health and economic benefits would prove beneficial. For example, at Spring Fest, a county-sponsored event, when kids were asked about the food pyramid by the Power Panther, they knew all about it and how healthy and important it is for them. If taught these practices, youth are more likely to absorb the knowledge and apply it to their lifestyles.

MINORITY VIEWPOINT

Although the Youth Commission supports the application of a bag tax, one Youth Commissioner researched the issue and concluded that it may be unwise at this time.

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF SEATTLE'S POTENTIAL SALES TAX ON GROCERY BAGS?

"Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels and City Council President Richard Conlin on Wednesday [April 2, 2008] proposed a green fee on disposable shopping bags and a ban on foam containers in the food service industry"

"The proposed fee is 20 cents each for disposable bags at the city's grocery, drug and convenience stores."

"Nickels and Conlin said the bag fee and foam ban will cut down on waste, reduce the use of environmentally harmful plastics and cut the production of greenhouse gases."

"Seattle Public Utilities officials said they estimated that 360 million disposable bags are used in the city every year and that most are made of plastic. Almost 75 percent of the bags come from the city's 575 grocery, drug and convenience stores, officials said."

"City officials said the green fee is intended to encourage the use of reusable shopping bags and that they will set aside \$1 million to distribute the bags and promote their advantages."

"The proposed ban on foam containers used by the food service industry would include such items as plates, trays, clamshells and hot and cold beverage cups used at restaurants, delicatessens, fast food outlets and coffee shops, and meat trays and egg cartons used at grocery stores."

"The legislation would also require that by July 1, 2010, all food service businesses currently using disposable plastic or plastic-coated paper products convert to packaging that is compostable or locally recyclable."

"More than 20 U.S. cities have banned polystyrene food packaging, including Portland, Ore., San Francisco and Oakland, Calif., and Suffolk County, N.Y."

- <http://www.kirotv.com/news/15774371/detail.html>

The benefits are substantial, both environmentally and economically; as Nickels and Conlin infer, the tax and ban "will cut down on waste, reduce the use of environmentally harmful plastics and cut the production of greenhouse gases". The intent of this act is not for the money, but to create a social awareness of the need to be environmentally friendly. The money will go toward sustainable practices and the promotion of sustainable awareness.

The drawbacks of such an imposed tax could prove to be just as valid as its benefits. Citizens may shop in a neighboring city just to spite the law as some have already threatened. Some citizens feel that taxes should be used in more effective purposes such as traffic cams; another money maker for counties. With everything being taxed, it is going to make living in a time of recession even worse; a tax in Clark County would, at this time, prove unwise and unwelcomed by Clark County citizens.

CLOSING REMARKS

The Youth Commission would like to thank you for giving us thought provoking assignments and also for continuously supporting us. We hope this report helps you with your decisions on sustainability. Thank you for your time.