

**CONNECT Economic and Environmental Development
Working Group meeting**

Thursday | September 3, 2020 | 1:00pm
Via Zoom



Municipal Attendees: Patty DeMarco, Forest Hills; Mindy Ranney, Mt Lebanon; Tara Yaney, Edgewood; Brittany Reno, Sharpsburg; Phyllis Anderson, Oakmont; Andrew Flynn, Mt. Lebanon; Ron Borczyk, Ross

Other Attendees: Breen Masciotra, PAAC; Kelsey Ripper, Friends of the Riverfront; Annie Quinn, 3 Rivers Wet Weather; Jim Price, Sustainable Pittsburgh; Kinsey Miller, Tree Pittsburgh; Ashley DiGregorio, PRC; Chris Sandvig, PCRG; Alyson Fearon, Allegheny Land Trust; Wasi Mohammed, Pittsburgh Foundation; Megan Guy, Pittsburgh Water Collaboratory; Matt Erb, Tree Pittsburgh

GSPIA/CONNECT: Lydia Morin, CONNECT; Tess De Jong, CONNECT; Sarah Downing, CONNECT; Eric Raabe, CONNECT; Ally Walker, CONNECT

Introductions and agenda overview

Update on Regional Recycling Research (Ally Walker)

- The presentation portion (not Q&A) was [recorded](#)
- [View the slides](#)
- Why recycling? How this report evolved out of the July 2019 Visioning Session when top priorities were identified
- Found from municipal websites that communication is lacking – using different terms for items, inconsistency with accepted materials
- 29 of 45 municipalities this report looked at had a recycling ordinance, and the average year of adoption was 1995
 - Less than half of the ordinances that mention ongoing public education act on it
- What information is missing: which materials processing facility and which landfill our materials go to
- What we can do: form a formal exploratory committee, learn to speak the same language, public education, commit to consistently collecting data in a unified database, and maintain a functioning waste authority to keep to these recommendations
- aew65@pitt.edu

Comments

- Have you guys connected with the Air & Waste management association HQ'd in Pgh <https://www.awma.org/>?
- A suggestion about graphs like the recycling decline. Start with zero, it may make the graph less shocking, but it will make solutions more accessible.

- How do we understand wholistic view of the stream? The many streams are overwhelming for people.
 - Recycling used to be anything that went into my bin. Now that's all changing
- Items don't have to be thrown out, they can be designed to reuse. Once you see this, you have more economic development options
- What it comes down to is we don't own the MRF infrastructure. What I think Ally is saying as a recommendation for an authority, we lack the market share to influence how our infrastructure in the region is used and how it allows us to build a program that fulfills our residents needs
- How can partners help to consolidate some of the influence for administrators in the area? What is our role, we want to help
- Solid waste management needs to/will look different in the 21st century. The "infrastructure" of materials management has yet to evolve in Pennsylvania
- For any regional effort, working with the COGs is very important, so it is good CONNECT is already working with them

Carbon Credit Briefing (Alyson Fearon)

- View Allegheny Land Trust's [PowerPoint slides](#)
- The presentation portion was [recorded](#) (start at 11:07)
- What is a carbon credit? A "made-up" metric (like a gallon or mile) equal to 1 metric ton CO₂. What's a forest carbon credit? 1 metric ton CO₂ sequestered by trees and soil. You can buy/sell them on carbon emissions markets
- In a regional carbon emissions market, the emitters and the solutions are closer together. Some emissions are unavoidable. If you have a climate or sustainability goal, you can have offset projects, all within the same geography. CONNECT has communities on both sides of the transaction
- Large corporations tend to buy credits. Brokerages, local governments, environmental organizations, and land trusts (like Allegheny Land Trust) sell them.
- Selling carbon credits can be a way to fund your green projects without being dependent on tax bases/more taxing
- City Forest Credits' Carbon+ Credit also gives you tools to help you quantify your energy savings, rainfall interception, and air quality (all things our region is facing)
- A non-traditional funding mechanism is impact investing – working with an investor instead of using municipal funds
- Can work with partner to understand the market, understand how contracts work, and know how to sell credits, and they will get some proceeds of the sale.
- A realistic assumption is you can get \$30/credit. It is a one time sale
- We are sequestering over 16mil gallons of water a year in ALT's conservation area

- You need to prove the trees would be lost if they weren't otherwise protected through protocol. This can be difficult on municipal land
- ALT fully intends to remain a resource for CONNECT members

Comments

- Should or can this be incorporated into Climate Action Plans? It can be part of the tool kit. Can it go beyond municipal borders?
- CONNECT only has so much capacity, but we love working with partners working really hard on something
- Great presentation, I think there is a lot of opportunity with this and existing trees. However, a lot of funding for new tree planting often comes with carbon credit restrictions.
- This has huge potential implications for Sharpsburg's urban/riparian forest, which is largely located on the site of an in-progress 60-acre mixed use development (Riverfront 47). Going to send this info to the team.
- afearon@alleghenylandtrust.org

Regional Climate Action Planning brief progress report (Eric Raabe)

- The presentation portion was [recorded](#) (start at 22:43)
- I have working with CONNECT, the PA DEP and ICLEI for a year now!
- This is the program: <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/climate/Pages/Local-Climate-Action.aspx> CONNECT just got in for this year and it started a few weeks ago. LCAP (local Climate Action Plan) to measure greenhouse gas (GHG) at local gov level
- Last year, 6 CONNECT communities participated and measured emissions from different sectors. But this year, CONNECT is participating as an entire region with 30+ municipalities. We are trying to get data for all of them for a full inventory, we've already sent data requests to electricity, natural gas, wastewater, and transportation. Water and solid waste are last.
 - Please take our survey so we know where/to whom to send requests! We can't move forward without this data. docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdw3MyzNFDT3G4IWjoOPK5-Ubn8ETbQi2BoxtANBZM-TiI2lg/viewform

Concluding comments

- These are all things that would be much more effective if we did them together at the same time
- Plug [GSPIA CONNECT Capstone projects](#) (Regional solutions for hard to recycle items; Launching a regional climate action planning process)

- I am happy to share our Forest Hills experience with any community or Council. Especially if you are considering a new building or a major update of a building, The Forest Hills Net zero building is well documented at this point.
- Down the road these projects will require state legislation. Patty DeMarco can help with writing waste to energy language and get people to come speak – she wrote legislation in Connecticut and the attorney she worked with is still there.

Adjourn 2:10pm