



**COMMISSION  
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

**Item No.** 9c

**BRIEFING ITEM**

**Date of Meeting** September 24, 2019

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**TO:** Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

**FROM:** Elizabeth Leavitt, Senior Director Engineering, Environment & Sustainability  
Arlyn Purcell, Director Aviation Environment & Sustainability  
Sandra Kilroy, Director Maritime Environment & Sustainability

**SUBJECT:** Sustainable Project Framework Briefing and Recommendations

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this briefing is to present the findings and recommendations for the Port's Sustainable Project Framework Initiative. Staff conducted this initiative in response to the Commission directive to integrate sustainability into capital projects in a way that incorporates the following goals (including Century Agenda) into decision-making processes:<sup>1</sup>

- Reduce GHG emissions and increase energy system resilience
- Protect public health and the environment
- Advance innovation
- Leverage partnerships
- Support local economic development
- Advance race and social justice.

Recommendations include new procedures to evaluate sustainability in capital projects, including screening projects as a way to focus limited resources on projects with the greatest opportunities and using a more systematic and structured approach for evaluating and implementing sustainability strategies for each project. In addition, staff will present an opportunity to use an innovative new tool designed to reduce embodied carbon in construction materials. Lastly, staff will present estimated resource needs along with a proposed implementation plan and schedule.

The Energy and Sustainability Committee, chaired by Commissioners Felleman and Calkins, has been briefed on the proposed Sustainable Project Framework and recommends proceeding with the development of a policy directive based on these staff findings. The policy directive is scheduled for introduction on October 8, 2019 and adoption on November 12, 2019.

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<sup>1</sup>Motion of the Port of Seattle Commission Implementing Recommendations of the Energy and Sustainability Committee and Setting Strategic Greenhouse Gas Reduction Priorities. Adopted October 24, 2017.

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### **FINDINGS AND PROPOSED APPROACH**

Staff conducted extensive research and analyses over the past year including evaluating our current approach to integrating sustainability into Port capital projects, interviewing staff, reviewing a range of sustainability certification systems and determining which ones apply to Port goals as well as projects, and developing new procedures to integrate sustainability into Port projects.

Based on the outcome of this research, staff recommends several key policy elements and procedures to integrate sustainability across capital projects in an efficient and effective manner. These new procedures begin with a tiered approach for capital projects that focuses on evaluating projects that are expected to provide sustainability benefits in key areas such as reducing carbon or energy use. Under this system, projects would fall under one of three categories:

- Tier 1: Smaller projects that would only follow Port standards and specifications
- Tier 2: Medium-sized projects that have opportunities for sustainability benefit would be subject to targeted analyses and strategies
- Tier 3: Large projects with significant opportunities would require a full sustainability certification along with other sustainability strategies as applicable

The tiered approach will apply to all capital projects, including projects that wouldn't traditionally be subject to LEED. The criteria used to classify projects among the tiers will be adjusted and revised as the Framework is piloted throughout 2020.

For projects determined to be Tier 2 or 3, staff will convene a committee of internal subject matter experts (referred to as the Sustainable Project Assessment and Review Committee or SPARC) at the beginning of the project to review and brainstorm sustainability options for those specific projects. These options will comprise the Sustainable Design Approach for that project, which would be provided to Commission along with the request for design funds.

If the project moves forward to design, sustainability staff would work with the project team to evaluate the costs and benefits of the sustainability options during the design process. The project team would then finalize the recommended sustainability strategies into a Sustainable Design Strategy for that project. This document would include the description of the strategies, the costs and benefits, any potential trade-offs, and project-specific sustainability targets. The strategy would be provided to Commission as the project team requests approval to begin construction.

### **NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION**

Staff will also present a new and innovative opportunity to provide incentives to reduce carbon in construction materials through a partnership with the University of Washington's School of Architecture, SKANSKA, and Microsoft. Staff recommends working with these regional leaders to develop and pilot their new tool, the Embodied Carbon in Construction Calculator (EC3) tool.

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This tool calculates embodied carbon from a range of construction materials and can be used to compare materials across potential suppliers based on the potential for reducing embodied carbon in the construction materials.

### **COST ESTIMATES**

Staff estimate that the proposed new procedures will require two additional FTEs, one for Maritime and one for Aviation to assist capital project teams in researching and identifying new sustainability options, conducting additional carbon and energy calculations, developing targets, and tracking projects through the process. The requested FTEs are included in the proposed Maritime and Aviation 2020 operating budgets.

As shown in the proposed framework, staff anticipates no increased costs in 2020 for Tier 1 projects and potential for some increased costs for Tier 2 projects. Similarly, there may be additional costs for Tier 3 projects, depending on the new sustainability strategies or attributes that would be in addition to those required to achieve LEED.

### **SCHEDULE AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

If Commission approves the proposed approach, staff will finalize the proposed framework guidance materials and implementation plan by the end of Q4 2019. Beginning in Q1 2020 (and subject to availability of staff resources), staff will conduct hiring processes, revise tracking systems, and begin implementing new procedures, including those necessary to efficiently operate the EC3 tool.

### **ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING**

- (1) Sustainable Project Framework slides

### **PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS**

October 24, 2017 - Motion of the Port of Seattle Commission implementing recommendations of the Energy and Sustainability Committee and setting strategic greenhouse gas reduction priorities.

July 11, 2017 – The Commission was briefed on the estimated 2018 needs for staff and consultant resources to implement key components of the Energy and Sustainability Policy Directive.

April 11, 2017 – The Commission amended the Port of Seattle Century Agenda to include greenhouse gas reduction goals consistent with those adopted by regional municipalities. The April 11, 2017, motion also included direction to the COE to develop a 2018 budget proposal for implementation of the Policy Directives.

February 28, 2017 – The Commission was briefed on the recommendations of the work groups established by the Energy and Sustainability Committee.

January 26, 2016 – The Commission chartered the Energy and Sustainability Policy Committee.

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**PREVIOUS ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE POLICY DIRECTIVE BRIEFINGS**

January 24, 2017 – Sixth meeting of the Energy and Sustainability Policy Directive Committee was held.

- Group presentations of proposed final policy directives.

November 28, 2016 – Fifth meeting of the Energy and Sustainability Policy Directive Committee was held.

- Report outs from work groups. Next steps and schedule discussed.

October 11, 2016 – Fourth meeting of the Energy and Sustainability Policy Directive Committee was held.

- Workgroups breakouts including Regional Alignment, Energy Production, Energy Conservation, and Environmental Equity to begin work on potential Policy Directives.

September 13, 2016 – Third meeting of the Energy and Sustainability Policy Directive Committee was held.

- Focused on committee process and policy proposals by subject matter. Advisors chose work groups based on subject matter.

July 26, 2016 – Second meeting of the Energy and Sustainability Policy Directive Committee was held.

- King County Cities Climate Collaboration, or K4C, briefed us on the goals as developed by 11 cities within King County.
- Port staff provided an updated Port environmental scorecard for review and a briefing on Port solar projects.
- Got Green provided a briefing on Environmental Equity principles.

June 14, 2016 – First meeting of the Energy and Sustainability Policy Directive Committee was held.

- Provided information about the Port of Seattle’s current greenhouse gas reduction goals and what work we are doing to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.