



## CASE STUDY

# Gresham Vista Business Park Eco-Efficient Action Plan

In response to the shifting business landscape of the 21st century, many businesses are adopting eco-efficient strategies to gain a competitive advantage and attract an innovative, educated workforce. As the region implements the 2040 plan for growth, Metro is working to help communities increase sustained economic competitiveness and prosperity. Both local and international trends indicate that eco-efficient businesses can realize improved financial and environmental performance by choosing operations that produce more with less – less water, less energy, less capital, less land, less waste. These efficiencies are achieved through high-performance infrastructure, 21st century site design, and revitalization through redevelopment and the effective use of existing urban areas.

Metro highlighted these sustainable business strategies in the **Community Investment Toolkit: Eco-Efficient Employment** and in 2012, launched a pilot program to encourage implementation in local communities. The Eco-Efficient Pilot Program delivers long-term value by facilitating collaboration among business owners, property owners, nonprofit organizations, and various public agencies and departments. As a regional convener, Metro provides technical support in developing action plans for implementing eco-efficient strategies and helps build capacity and partnerships in local communities.

## Gresham Vista Business Park

At 221 acres, Gresham Vista Business Park is one of a few undeveloped large-lot industrial sites in the Portland metropolitan region. It presents a significant opportunity to redefine the Port of Portland's pre-development activities to promote triple-bottom-line benefits on industrial sites and to attract innovative industries. With its size, location, and the benefits of onsite utilities, including the PGE substation and wetland areas, Gresham Vista has the potential to leverage these assets and realize operational and resource efficiencies for current and future users. The action plan developed for the business park illustrates how public-private partnerships in the region can use eco-efficient strategies to build vibrant, sustainable communities. This case study summarizes their experiences for use by other communities who may wish to consider similar strategies.

## Nuts and bolts

*The eco-efficient action plan process for Gresham Vista Business Park drew everyone to the table. The on-the-ground actions proposed for sustainable development and 21st century design will help attract innovative industries and serve as a model for other large-scale industrial sites in the Portland metropolitan region.*

– Shirley Craddick  
Metro Councilor

- **The Eco-Efficient Pilot Program** utilizes a community driven, engagement-based framework. The pilot program enabled a consulting team to facilitate decision-making and provide technical assistance to pilot communities interested in eco-efficient strategies. The pilot plan framework acknowledges that collaboration and partnerships between public, private, institutional, and nonprofit sectors are often necessary to realize eco-efficient strategies. As a result, the framework is strongly structured around engagement and outreach to encourage interaction between various stakeholders, facilitate development of common goals and vision, and forge interactions that may develop into partnerships.

The pilot program framework includes workshops with pilot community working groups, a preliminary feasibility assessment, and stakeholder interviews to identify strategies from Metro's Eco-Efficient Toolkit that are most viable to implement in the specific study areas. Working groups also identify proponents, partners, and stakeholders that can take the lead, and recommend a series of next steps to achieve implementation. The consulting team developed preliminary assessments to address technical feasibility of potential strategies when specifically applied to the pilot community sites. The pilot communities then developed and made a commitment to an action plan.



- **Gresham Vista Working Group** The eco-efficient action plan was developed through a series of workshops with the Gresham Vista working group comprising the Port of Portland, the City of Gresham, and local businesses.

Ken Anderton, Senior Business Development Manager, Port of Portland  
Joe Mollusky, Real Estate Program Manager, Port of Portland  
Tom Bouillion, Planning Manager, Port of Portland  
Ryan Parker, Development Project Manager, Port of Portland  
Dorothy Sperry, Environmental Affairs Manager, Port of Portland  
Jamey Berg, Environmental Specialist, Port of Portland  
Richard Vincent, Environmental Program Manager, Port of Portland  
Lise Glancy, Government Affairs Manager, Port of Portland  
Janet Young, Economic Development Director, City of Gresham  
Ron Papsdorf, Government Relations Manager, City of Gresham  
Jim Swier, ON Semiconductor  
Theresa Haskins, Business Markets Manager, PGE  
Ross Waggoner, General Manager, Frontier Communications  
Miranda Bateschell, Metro

Implementing eco-efficient business strategies in the Gresham Vista Business Park can help to support long-term value:

**Partnerships** The Eco-Efficient Pilot Program facilitated collaboration among business owners, public agencies, and departments within the Port of Portland. The Port is uniquely positioned to lead collaborative strategies and model approaches for realizing sustainable, high performance infrastructure and 21st century design to attract the next generation of business to employment areas across the region. This type of revitalization and innovation leverages the Port’s capacity, and may not be possible for an individual developer or land owner. Gresham Vista showcases public-private partnerships through collaboration with the City of Gresham and other businesses and stakeholders.

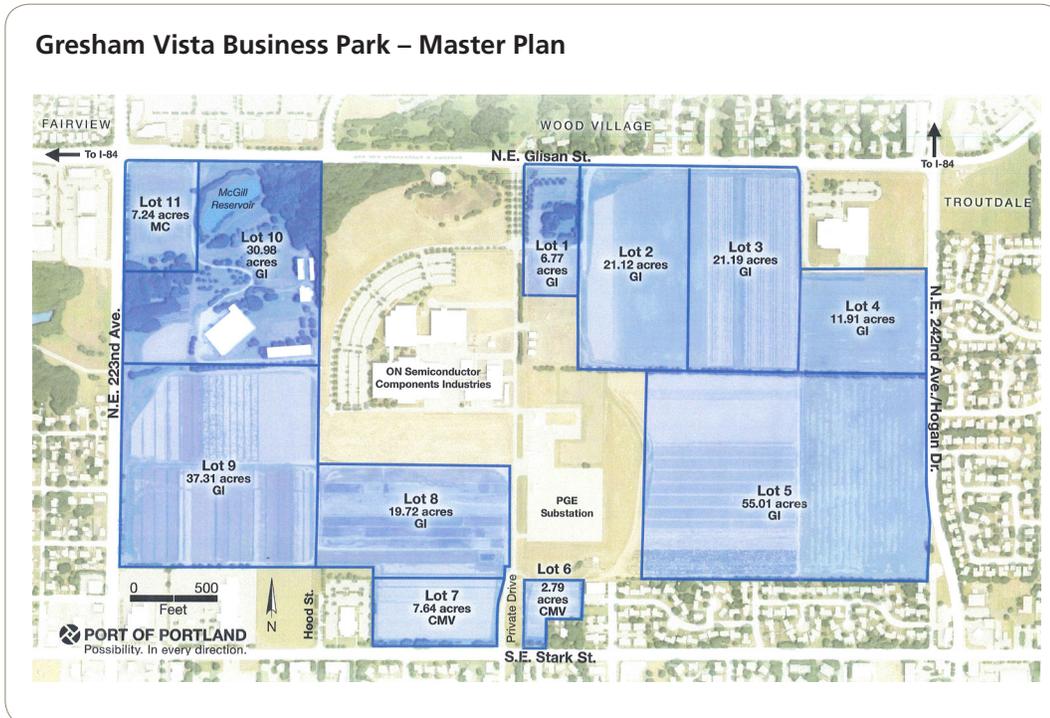
**Development and operational advantages** Eco-efficient strategies have the potential to streamline regulations and permitting, and reduce and improve the predictability of operational costs for Gresham Vista businesses and property owners. The timing of the Port’s pre-development activities is key to optimizing infrastructure and development standards. Green buildings and infrastructure can help to reduce costs for energy, water, stormwater, and waste, increasing the competitive advantage of the site and attracting new industry.

**Identity and green brand** The pilot program working group articulated the need to develop a unique identity and brand for Gresham Vista to attract users. By developing a collective vision and committing to specific actions, the Port can position Gresham Vista as a unique opportunity that is consistent with 21st century needs and attractive to businesses and workforce.

**Pilot community**  
An employment area selected by Metro to develop an eco-efficient action plan.

**Lead agency** The agency in an pilot community that leads the project, establishes the working group, and commits to managing implementation and measuring progress to be shared with Metro and other communities in the region.

**Working group**  
Members are actively involved in the pilot community, represent interests of constituencies or members, and commit to assisting the lead agency with implementation.



## Putting it together

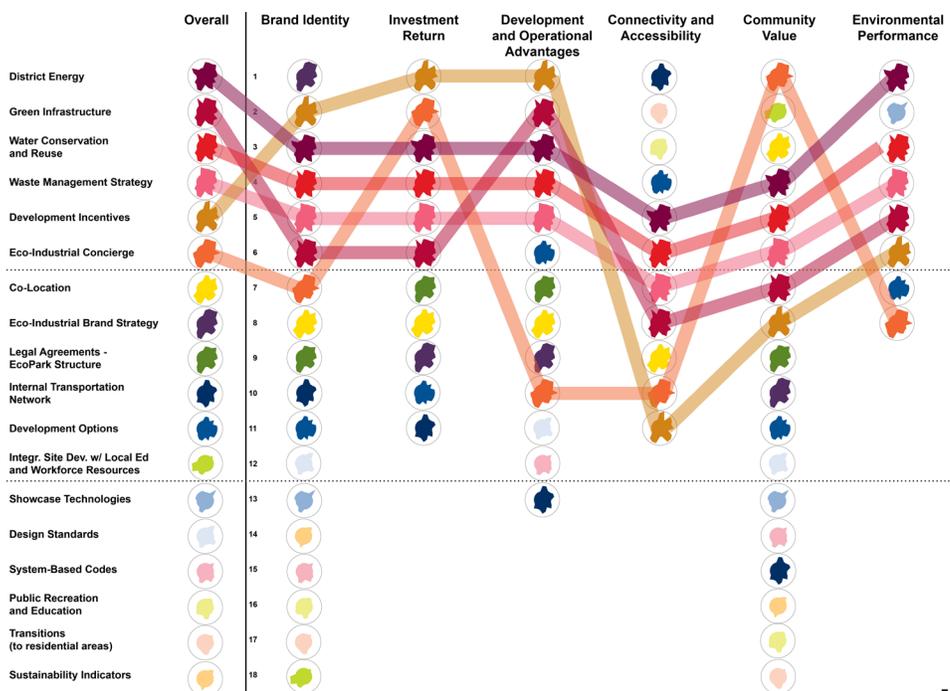
### Partners in Project Green

Partners in Project Green is an initiative to transform one of Canada's largest employment areas into an eco-business zone by using economic development and climate change initiatives to green existing businesses and attract new industry. The 30,000-acre industrial area around the Toronto International Airport provided employment for more than 355,000 people, requiring large amounts of energy and emitting approximately 1.7 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year. In 2008, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Greater Toronto Airports Authority began providing technical assistance to existing businesses to realize the financial benefits of addressing environmental issues through targeted sustainability programs, including feasibility assessments, building retrofits, purchasing and development practices.



- ▶ **The Gresham Vista Eco-Efficient Action Plan** provides goals and criteria for sustainable business growth, and establishes stakeholder-driven priority strategies, committed leads for actions, and next steps. It is a roadmap to achieve on-the-ground implementation of triple-bottom-line projects resulting in economic, social, and ecological benefits.
- ▶ **Vision and goals** Through workshops and drawing from policy and previously developed materials, the working group developed the following goals for Gresham Vista Business Park:
  - Establish a strong brand and identity that is attractive to users, employees, and differentiates the site
  - Ensure a return on investment including financial feasibility, revenue, and meeting target industry clusters
  - Offer development and operational advantages for users that maintain flexibility and leverage the large lots
  - Provide connectivity and accessibility of utilities and transportation network to users
  - Create a regional model for a sustainable development that is a good neighbor to surrounding communities and improves employment opportunities
  - Set a high standard environmental performance for air quality, energy management, natural resource, and waste minimization goals
- ▶ **Feasibility and assessment** The Gresham Vista working group developed a framework for a triple-bottom-line assessment for potential pre-development activities to improve the positioning of properties. This framework was developed from a basis of existing Port of Portland goals and policy, and through facilitation by the consulting team during the workshops. The framework was then used to evaluate potential strategies. Based on this evaluation, testing market viability of the priority strategies with stakeholder interviews, and feedback from the working group, priority strategies were identified as most viable and advantageous for the Port to pursue at Gresham Vista. They also have the greatest opportunity for meeting the goals and criteria in the framework as shown in the figure below.

### Strategy summary and evaluation



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**Immediate actions and next steps** Achieving the goals and vision for a sustainable, thriving business park at Gresham Vista relies on the partnership and collaboration of a range of public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders, including the City of Gresham, existing site users PGE and ON Semiconductor, and Metro’s waste management and transportation programs. The Gresham Vista Eco-Efficient Action Plan is organized around the priority strategies and is intended to act as a roadmap to identify next steps and timing, responsible leads and team members, and required resources.

There are several actions that can be led by the Port in cooperation with public, private, and nonprofit partners to immediately catalyze implementation of the priority strategies for Gresham Vista. The action plan identifies several steps that should be completed by the end of 2013 to advance the priority strategies. The Port of Portland has committed to leading the Gresham Vista Action Plan, and will report to the working group periodically over the next six months. The priority strategies are related to the capital improvement strategy and described below with immediate action items. Secondary strategies will include eco-concierge, water conservation and reuse, waste management, and a district energy strategy.

### 1. Integrated site master plan

- Finalize an integrated vision statement for the site
- Refine and re-run the triple-bottom-line model to evaluate and inform site investments, including a review of criteria, potential addition of indicators or targets, and review of the priority and scoring methodology in relationship to goals
- Review the site master plan with an integrated, systems approach, and finalize in coordination with potential end user type scenarios
- Coordinate master plan with potential end user types, locations, and attributes

### 2. Green infrastructure

- Obtain Port of Portland decision on direction for stormwater infrastructure approach based on triple-bottom-line evaluation
- Establish an implementation framework to guide development that establishes roles of Port, the City of Gresham, and property owners
- Meet with the City of Gresham to discuss potential pre-permitting and new wellfield protection standards
- Establish an investment plan to identify costs, benefits, and incentives

### 3. Development standards and incentives

- Coordinate with the City of Gresham on pre-permitting and expediting
- Craft a few development and end user scenarios to sharpen the brand and marketing of the site, identify the likely benefits and attributes desired and best locations for specific user types, and refine the master plan to respond to desired user group needs
- Complete a feasibility study for integrated infrastructure systems to identify and avoid fatal flaws
- Identify specific development and operational cost savings, incentives available, and how to access

### Priority strategies

- **Integrated site master plan**
  - district energy strategy
  - water conservation and reuse
  - waste management
  - multi-modal site access
- **Development standards and incentives**
- **Eco-concierge**
- **Green infrastructure**

### The Maplewood Project

More than 40 local governments, businesses and community organizations partnered with the District of North Vancouver, B.C. in an intensive three-day integrative planning charrette to map resources and assess opportunities in a predominately industrial, 500-acre area of land just north of Vancouver. The process explored resource flows of energy, material and water in the area, and evaluated infrastructure systems for inefficiencies and improvements. The partners of the Maplewood Project produced an integrated site master plan that helped identify opportunities to create a potential tax revenue stream increase in the range of \$21 to \$26 million.



## Keep in mind

### TaigaNova Eco-industrial Park

The City of Wood Buffalo in Alberta, Canada, partnered with the Wood Buffalo Housing and Development Corporation to incorporate high-performance infrastructure and 21st century design strategies into the bylaws and development guidelines of the TaigaNova Eco-industrial Park. The city requires construction and environmental management plans to measure and mitigate development and life cycle impacts of a project. Guidelines also require developers to assess site resource flows of energy, fuels, lubricants, water, materials, products and waste, along with resource needs such as training, logistics and transportation to help identify opportunities for synergies and efficiencies. To respond to individual property needs, the city's design standards are flexible, only requiring developers meet 22 of the 43 standards.



- ▶ **Collaboration** Eco-efficient employment strategies focus on business and infrastructure efficiencies, making both public and private organizations responsible for certain actions. Using the workshop framework ensured diverse stakeholder interests were included in the planning phase, and helped build a sense of ownership needed for implementation. The workshop process occurred over a four month period, which helped the project maintain momentum. That said, it is important for communities to be attuned to their particular set of stakeholders and time available for eco-efficient planning to determine whether a slower pace is needed to increase comfort with decision-making and/or reduce demand on participants schedules. Establishing a few members of the working group as a core team is helpful in setting up the project, identifying the right stakeholders, and checking-in with participants throughout the project.
- ▶ **Readiness assessment** This is a key element in the process as it further refines the project and determines whether it has the foundation necessary to bring a working group together to develop an action plan for the specific employment area. While brief, the assessment covers key information to determine the likelihood the action plan will take hold once the pilot project process is over. Key elements include assessing the activity of the market, recent planning efforts, and the interest and energy level among local businesses and property owners. Holding an assessment meeting is integral to lining up different objectives, clarifying desired deliverables and outcomes, and shaping the project proposal.
- ▶ **Applicability** While the application of the Eco-Efficient Toolkit, strategies, and pilot program may vary significantly depending on local political, regulatory, and physical conditions, there is great value in sharing lessons and resources regionally. For most local communities, the knowledge that eco-efficient strategies have been successfully implemented elsewhere is invaluable to support the possibility of implementation in their own community. In many cases, technical assistance and facilitation support may be the needed impetus to catalyze action and implementation. The pilot communities agreed that the pilot program framework can be of value for multiple sites and projects. Participants feel as though they could easily use the same process for different types of projects and in different communities around their jurisdiction.
- ▶ **Suitability** The process seems best suited for local governments or employment- and development-related nonprofits (e.g. chambers of commerce or community development corporations) to act as lead agency while engaging a broad range of public, private, institutional and utility representatives. Identifying the right working group members at the beginning is important in making the process work and establishing action items with dedicated responsible parties. Think through the desired outcomes to ensure the right mix of stakeholders is represented. The working group process can be valuable for understanding the needs of multiple stakeholders and getting everyone moving together in the same direction. There is tension between keeping the working group small enough to get through the process efficiently and effectively, while including an array of stakeholders. Interim stakeholder interviews and surveys can help bring in additional voices while keeping the working group a manageable size.
- ▶ **Technical expertise** Some level of consultant support and independent facilitation may be necessary to ensure a productive outcome. Participants viewed the dedicated facilitator as the central piece to getting so much work done in so little time with a diverse group of people. Providing preliminary feasibility assessment whether through stakeholder interviews, working group surveys, or triple-bottom-line analysis is also critical in moving the working group to make decisions and develop the action plan. Engaging regional and local representatives from places that have implemented these strategies may be a valuable asset to explor-

ing alternatives and identifying specific action items. An introductory meeting to review all of the relevant Metro resources available to the community could also help the community expand the list of potential strategies.

**Functionality** Throughout the series of workshops, working groups used Metro’s Community Investment Toolkit as a reference guide that provided additional practical ideas for consideration. With a specific project and/or development site identified, participants found the toolkit more accessible and usable. The toolkit case studies were critical in understanding strategies and providing some level of assurance that strategies they have not yet personally tested have proven feasible in other communities.



The City of Portland has a district cooling system that offers on-demand chilled water through an underground distributed piping network to meet the air conditioning and cooling needs for all the buildings of the Brewery Blocks in the Pearl District. Brewery Blocks circa mid 1990s (left). Brewery Blocks circa mid 2000s (right).

*Doing nothing is not an option. The longer we do nothing, the more it will cost our region and the nation, both environmentally and economically. Protecting the environment is essential for our economy and our future.*

Peggy Fowler, CEO  
Portland General Electric  
The BEST Business Center,  
accessed August 11, 2010  
[bestbusinesscenter.org/about-us/](http://bestbusinesscenter.org/about-us/)

### Tips for implementation

- Consider employment areas that are ready for investment and have plans and policies already aligned around economic development and sustainability.
- Use the Readiness Assessment form to select, refine, and prioritize projects.
- Identify key community and business leaders committed to the success of the selected project area to serve on the core project team.
- Spend enough time refining the project with the core team and identifying the right stakeholders to participate on the project’s working group.
- Survey the toolkit to identify eco-efficient strategies and see how other communities have successfully implemented the tools under consideration in the project area.
- Assess strategies through interviews, surveys, and triple-bottom-line assessments even if based on order of magnitude estimates.
- Identify next steps, timing, responsible leads, team members, and required resources for each action item.
- Consider hiring a consultant, engaging Metro, or seeking input from other communities with eco-efficient planning and implementation experience.
- Appoint an independent facilitator to keep the working group on task and encourage decision-making.

## Metro

### *Making a great place*

Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy, and sustainable transportation and living choices for people and businesses in the region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges and opportunities that affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to providing services, operating venues and making decisions about how the region grows. Metro works with communities to support a resilient economy, keep nature close by and respond to a changing climate. Together we're making a great place, now and for generations to come.

Metro Council President  
Tom Hughes

Metro Council  
Shirley Craddick, District 1  
Carlotta Collette, District 2  
Craig Dirksen, District 3  
Kathryn Harrington, District 4  
Sam Chase, District 5  
Bob Stacey, District 6

Auditor  
Suzanne Flynn

Stay in touch with news,  
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[www.oregonmetro.gov/  
connect](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/connect)

## Resources

- **For more information and a copy of the Gresham Vista Eco-Efficient Action Plan, contact:**

### **Metro**

600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232  
503-797-1839  
[www.oregonmetro.gov/communityinvestment](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/communityinvestment)

- **For more information on implementation of the action plan, contact:**

### **Port of Portland**

7200 NE Airport Way  
PO Box 3529  
Portland, OR 97208  
503-415-6000  
[www.portofportland.com](http://www.portofportland.com)

- **For more information on the EcoDistricts Assessment Methods, visit:**

[www.pdxinstitute.org](http://www.pdxinstitute.org)

- **For more information on examples of eco-efficient employment projects from other communities, contact:**

### **Partners in Project Green**

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority  
5 Shoreham Drive  
Toronto, Ontario  
M3N 1S4  
416-661-6600  
[www.partnersinprojectgreen.com](http://www.partnersinprojectgreen.com)

### **The Maplewood Project**

District of North Vancouver  
Sustainable Community Development Department  
604-990-2387  
[www.district.north-van.bc.ca](http://www.district.north-van.bc.ca)

### **TaigaNova Eco-Industrial Park**

Wood Buffalo Housing and Development Corporation  
9011-9915 Franklin Ave.  
Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2K4  
780-799-4050  
[www.wbhadc.ca](http://www.wbhadc.ca)  
TaigaNova Development Management Team  
780-799-4074  
[www.taiganova.com](http://www.taiganova.com)