

Environmental Quality Commission



SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Date: 1/27/2020
Time: 3:30 p.m.
City Hall – Belle Haven Conference Room
701 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

A. Call To Order

B. Roll Call - Gaillard, Kabat, London, Martin, Payne (Vice Chair), Price (Chair), Turley

C. Regular Business

C1. Review and discuss Climate Action Plan Subcommittee’s recommendations and consider a recommendation to City Council for sustainability related priorities for 2020 and a new format for climate action plan 2.0 ([Attachment](#))

D. Adjournment

At every Regular Meeting of the Commission, in addition to the Public Comment period where the public shall have the right to address the Commission on any matters of public interest not listed on the agenda, members of the public have the right to directly address the Commission on any item listed on the agenda at a time designated by the Chair, either before or during the Commission’s consideration of the item.

At every Special Meeting of the Commission, members of the public have the right to directly address the Commission on any item listed on the agenda at a time designated by the Chair, either before or during consideration of the item.

For appeal hearings, appellant and applicant shall each have 10 minutes for presentations.

If you challenge any of the items listed on this agenda in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or prior to, the public hearing.

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MEMORANDUM

Date: 1/27/2020

To: Environmental Quality Commission

From: Climate Action Plan Subcommittee

Re: Review and discuss Climate Action Plan Subcommittee's recommendations and consider a recommendation to City Council for sustainability related priorities for 2020 and a new format for Climate Action Plan 2.0

The Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) climate action plan (CAP) subcommittee continued vigorous work on research and modeling of an impactful new CAP for Menlo Park, commensurate with the City Council's unanimous declaration of a Climate Emergency.

Having reviewed CAPs from 11 other North American cities, and considered best practices for climate action, proposed by relevant research organizations such the Rocky Mountain Institute (www.rmi.org) and ICLEI (www.iclei.org), we presented our recommendations for CAP goals and strategies at our October EQC meeting. For review, the subcommittee recommended that City adopt the following GHG targets:

- Zero carbon emissions by 2030, achieved through:
 - 90% reduction of CO₂ emissions from 2005 levels
 - 10% of CO₂ eliminated through direct carbon removal

After receiving the EQC's input and approval in October, staff then presented our recommended goals and strategies to City Council at a study session on December 10, 2019. Individual City Council members provided input at that time, with the overall guidance being that they supported the Zero by 2030 goal.

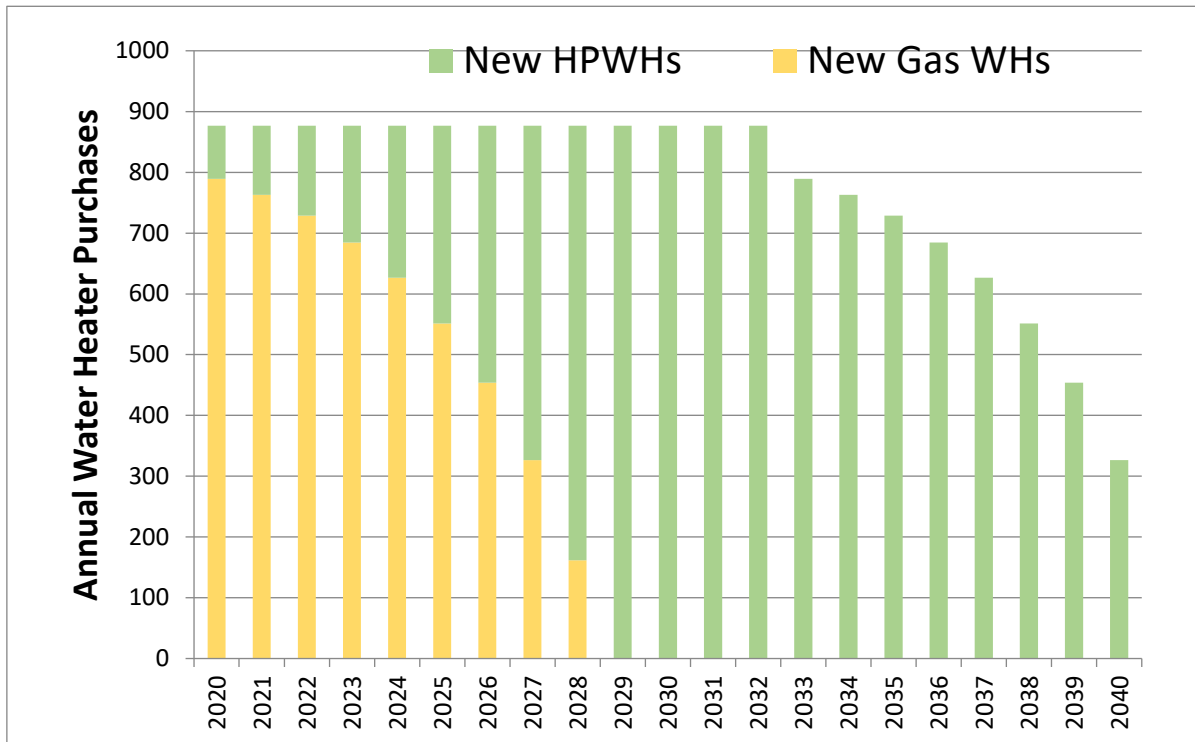
In order to achieve Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030, the EQC further recommended 10 specific strategies:

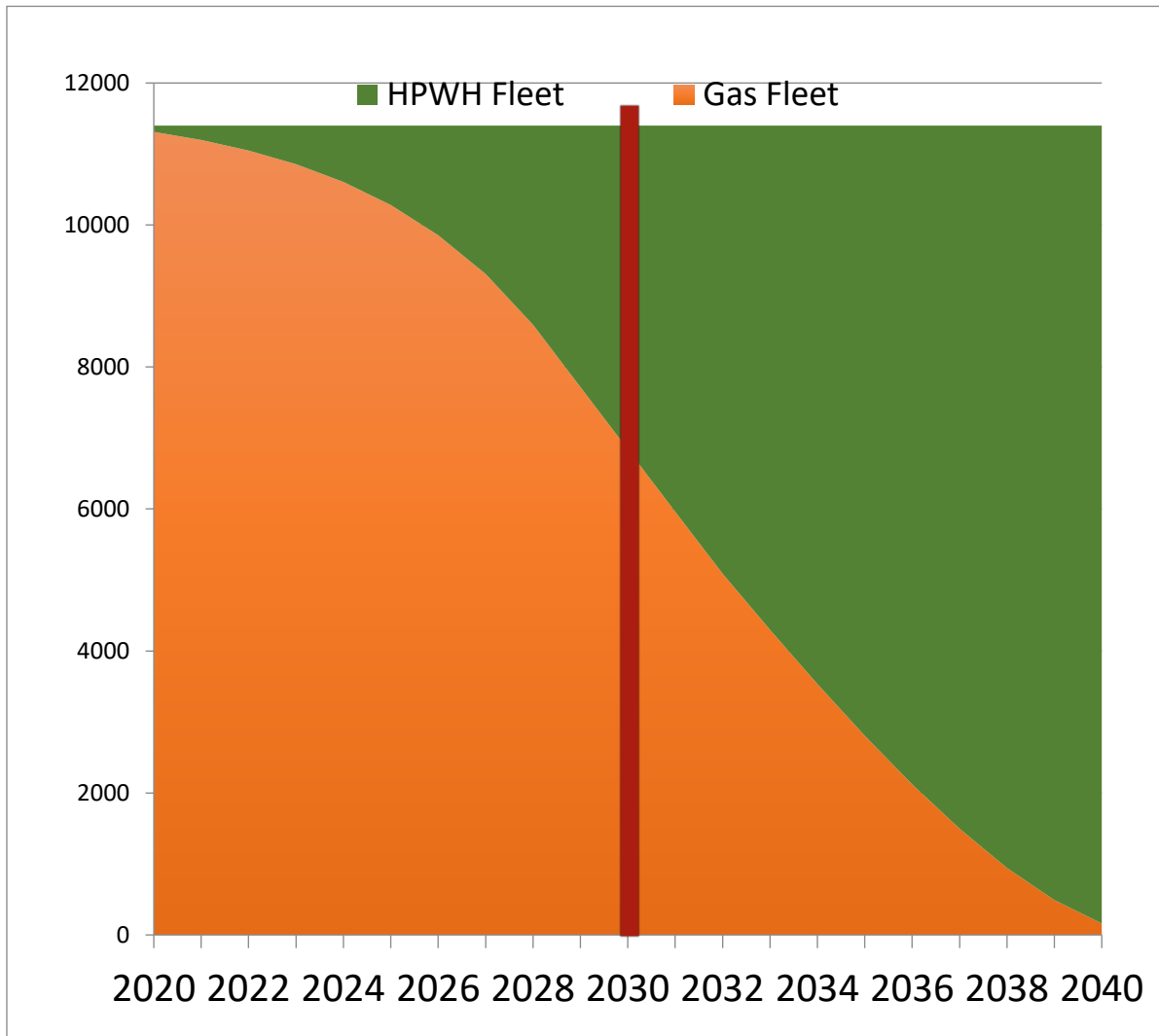
1. 100% carbon-free electricity
2. Completely electrify existing buildings
3. Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
4. Electrify vehicles, reduce gasoline sales & increase EV infrastructure
5. Reduce carbon emissions from construction
6. Electrify all municipal buildings and fleet vehicles
7. Reduce emissions from waste through Zero Waste Plan and catalyze a circular economy
8. Avoid installing new appliances/structures that will be abandoned due to climate change
9. Sequester residual carbon emissions through direct carbon sinks
10. Prepare the City for climate change through adaptation measures

Building on feedback from the EQC, staff and Council, the subcommittee developed several models that show the long lasting tail of emissions from each fossil fired car, water heater or furnace that gets bought and operated in our community until it can be decommissioned. The results were sobering.

Take the example of water heaters. In our model, we assumed that 95% of water heaters in Menlo Park are currently powered by natural gas and that the only market signal used to encourage conversion from gas to electric heat pump versions (much cleaner due to the

renewables sources of our grid electricity) was a generous incentive program. We used baseline assumptions about incentive-induced conversion rates from Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), which has had a generous incentive program in place for 18 months targeting conversion of gas water heaters to heat pumps. With those assumptions, we were able to estimate how quickly Menlo Park might be able to convert its fleet of residential water heaters from gas to electric, in order to achieve its goal of 90% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

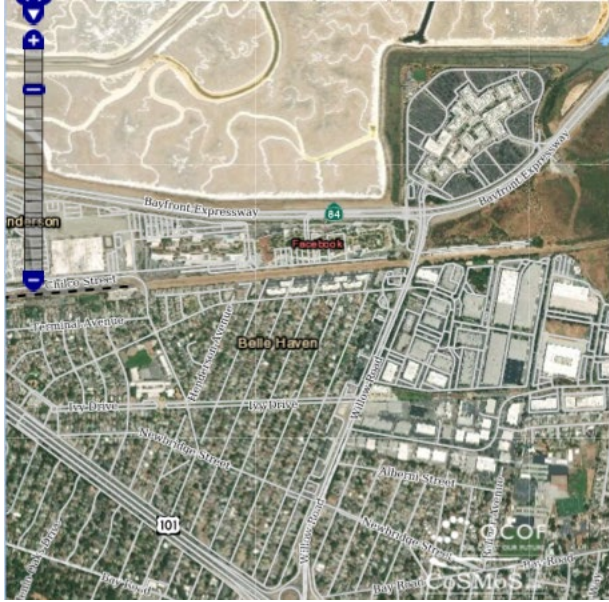




As you can see, Menlo Park would not achieve its goal of 90% reduction in gas-powered appliances or greenhouse gas emission by our target year of 2030, even with a generous incentive in place. The picture is similar for the fleet of natural gas furnaces, although the longer expected life of a gas furnace results in an even more dismal picture.

This analysis points to the need to restructure policies rapidly to reduce the stranded emissions that will occur from the procurement of new fossil fired devices.

As the subcommittee has previously presented to EQC, current rates of global greenhouse gas emissions are predicted to result in catastrophic sea level rise in Menlo Park, specifically in our Belle Haven neighborhood.



Source: <http://data.pointblue.org/apps/ocof/cms/index.php?page=flood-map>

TODAY

YEAR: 2060-2100

the Bay is projected to rise 3.3 feet

The only real hope of making a seawall or other defensive strategy effective at preserving the low elevation areas of bayside communities like ours, is to have sea level rise **stop rising at some level below an “affordable” sea wall**. For that to happen, worldwide efforts have to succeed at rapidly transitioning away from fossil fuels, including methane (a.k.a. natural gas), which present the most urgent tipping point risks.

For worldwide effort to succeed, local efforts of frontline cities like ours have to demonstrably rise to the challenge of the climate emergency and must break from business as usual. Our best hope for climate preservation is our community’s ability to show leadership that inspires a viral wave of hope and action among other cities, states and countries. We have a model for this in the recent Reach Codes, which have been considered or adopted by dozens of other cities throughout California. While we cannot save the climate on our own, our best chance at giving future generations a chance is making the boldest start possible and sharing the lessons and tools developed along the way, as our staff has done with the highly successful Reach Code effort.

We understand that sounds dramatic and that it has the potential to send ripples through normal city operations for all of the valuable services the City provides every day, as we speed rapidly toward a future where the full effects of climate change will either swamp us or cause our residents to flee wildfires, as has happened in other Northern California communities.

We think Menlo Park can survive in a climate crisis, but only if we also strongly prioritize fighting for the climate and make the transition to a climate-friendly life of prosperity in Menlo Park.

The plan set forth in the attached spreadsheet provides two items for EQC’s consideration:

1. A new abbreviated format for a 3-year Climate Action Plan
2. The subcommittee's suggestions for 2020 climate action

This is the subcommittee's best advice, in accordance with our EQC's directive to provide the best advice we can for the preservation of environmental quality.

Our initial analysis and suggestions have been shared with the Council CAP subcommittee as part of our formative explorations. Just like staff, council members have competing important priorities to balance with protecting the community from increasing climate risks and so the whole community waits to see how the City Council priority setting goes. However, we felt it was important to circle back to the full commission and share our latest findings and hear your feedback and see if a full commission recommendation on 2020 environmental priorities could be provided to council for their consideration.

There are several valuable sustainability efforts underway and a newly declared climate emergency. The challenge for us all (Council, staff, commissions and public) is making priorities and a work plan that produces and preserves the best long term values for our community.

In order to free up resources for climate action, the subcommittee reviewed recent suggestions the City staff made to council on 2020 work plan priorities. Specifically, we suggest that Council defer for one year any sustainability priorities that do not promise a drastic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. For your convenience, in the list below (taken from staff's January 14th memo to Council), we have highlighted in bold red those priorities we believe should be deferred for one year.

"2019 City Council adopted work plan carry-over into 2020 – Work on the following projects will continue unless directed by the City Council to either suspend or cancel:

- Transportation master plan (TMP) 80 percent complete
- Chilco Street improvement project 80 percent complete
- Middle Avenue pedestrian and bicycle rail crossing planning 90 percent complete*
- Heritage tree ordinance update 90 percent complete*
- Transportation management association (TMA) formation 20 percent complete
- Transportation impact analysis guidelines >10% complete
- Near-term downtown parking and access strategies 0 percent complete
- El Camino Real (ECR) / Downtown Specific Plan update 0 percent complete
- Short-term rental ordinance 50 percent complete
- Single-family residential design review 0 percent complete
- **Zero waste ordinance implementation 10 percent complete - DEFER**
- Local minimum wage ordinance 90 percent complete*
- City Council procedures manual update 10 percent complete
- Information technology master plan, year 2; 60 percent complete
- Citywide communication program development 90 percent complete*

New/anticipated work plan efforts – Substantive work will not commence on these projects without City Council direction:

- Belle Haven Multigenerational Community Center and Library (MGCCL)
- Education series on the development and environmental review processes
- ConnectMenlo community amenities list update
- Development incentives for housing in the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan area

- Secondary dwelling unit ordinance update
- Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) grant opportunity
- 2022 Housing Element, zoning code update and related work (e.g., preparation of an Environmental Justice Element, Land Use Element amendments, rezoning, etc.)
- Climate Action Plan 2.0
- Community Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Master Plan
- **Consider a reusable food ware ordinance to reduce and divert waste from landfill - DEFER**
- **Update the Solid Waste Ordinance (State mandates and Zero Waste Plan) - DEFER**
- **Update the Construction and Demolition Ordinance (Zero Waste Plan) - DEFER“**

We propose deferring activities aimed at zero waste for a year and to use this year to build on staff's and Council's excellent leadership in making city policy that avoid stranding fossil assets and that assist with the transformation of the building equipment market and auto market toward clean alternatives. While we support efforts toward further reducing the city's solid waste, we believe that the city's limited time and resources should be focused this year on actions that will have the greatest impact on our greenhouse gas emissions in order to set the city up for success in meeting the target that will be established in CAP 2.0.

A new breed of CAP is also needed and we have attached a proposed format for the City's final Climate Action Plan 2.0.

Rather than asking staff to produce the typical 100+ page climate action plan report, which can take 9 months or more, time and resource constraints call upon us to adjust our approach. We believe that a 3-yr climate action plan produced in the abbreviated format attached can be prepared quickly (in as little as 3 months) to show the budget, staff and time requirements needed to enable staff, Council and commissions to tackle climate change in Menlo Park.

For the coming year, the CAP subcommittee proposes 5 broad areas for City action on climate:

- A. Decarbonization of municipal assets
- B. Commercial-permit triggered electrification
- C. Exploration of ways to reduce VMT
- D. Increased permit compliance for heating and water heating equipment
- E. Educational campaign to engage community members on climate preservation

Details about our specific recommendations for 2020 actions are listed in the excel document attached above. Those actions can be grouped into 3 types of action:

1. Relatively quick council directives on city infrastructure electrification, perhaps using expanded UUT funds
2. New electrification policies applying to commercial building permit activities, as well as gas equipment permit compliance upon property sale
3. A community education program or marketing campaign.

All of these activities can be pursued and shared in ways that help other cities consider them as models to build upon.

Action	Type of Action	CAP Strategy	Lead Dept	Supporting Dept	2020	2021	2022	Community Engagement Req'd	FTEs Required (per yr)	3-yr Cost (not staff)	Ann. GHG Reduced (MT CO2e /yr)	Notes
A: Municipal Greening												
Collect 3.5% UUT on natural gas sales and use \$ to fund municipal electrification program	Directive	2, 6, 8	Finance	Public Works	x							Idea: Use proceeds to fund electrification (+ batteries?) in 1) day cares, 2) municipal buildings, 3) schools, 4) low income residents' homes.
Develop plan for electrifying all municipal buildings + batteries for resiliency	Directive	2, 6, 8, 10	Public Works	Sustainability	x							Idea: Install heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, solar and batteries in municipal facilities for resiliency during emergencies.
Develop plan for electrifying municipal fleet	Directive	4, 6, 8	Public Works	Transportation	x							Idea: Identify who makes municipal vehicle decisions
Adopt CA regulations + Marin concrete language on embodied carbon in municipal construction, e.g. sidewalks	Directive	5, 6	Planning	Public Works, Sustainability	x							Idea: Find state purchasing guidelines published recently and adopt those
B: Commercial Greening												
Require electrification on burnout - commercial	Ordinance	2, 8	Sustainability	Building permitting	x			x				Idea: Require property owner to replace gas HVAC units at end of life with electric heat pump HVAC; limit to commercial establishments of a certain size
Facilitate daytime EV charging at commercial establishments	Ordinance	4	Sustainability	Building permitting	x			x				Idea: Facilitate installation of EV chargers for commercial establishments of a certain size to encourage charging from 9am to 3pm when supply of renewable energy is abundant and cheap.
Adopt Marin limits on embodied carbon in construction and require building materials that sequester carbon	Ordinance	5	Sustainability	Building permitting	x			x				
C: Reduce VMT												
Explore options for VMT reduction and set a city goal	Ordinance	3	Transportation	Planning	x			x				Idea: Consider adjusting zoning & land use regs to encourage mixed use, dense development near transit to reduce the number of cars and car trips due to commuting
D: 100% Permit Compliance												
Achieve 100% permit compliance for heating and water heating appliances upon property sale	Ordinance	2	Sustainability	Building permitting	x			x				
E: Public Education Campaign												
Hire marketing firm for city-wide CAP campaign	Program	CAP management	Communication	Sustainability	x			x				Idea: Share aspirational CAP goals; Educate residents about what they can do; Share what will happen if we don't act; Digital campaign, newspaper articles, speakers, classes, radio PSAs, TV?, mailers, signs around town, billboard?, signs on buses, banners downtown
Launch CAP education campaign w/ churches, Rotary clubs and PTAs	Program	CAP management	Public Engagement	Sustainability	x			x				Idea: Council members present to local groups
Deferred until 2021												
Apply reach codes to remodels and additions	Ordinance	2, 8	Sustainability	Building permitting		x		x				

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