

Environmental Quality Commission



REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Date: 3/19/2025
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: [Zoom.us/join](https://zoom.us/join) – ID# 879 3070 9093 and
City Hall Downtown Conference Room, 1st Floor
701 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

Members of the public can listen to the meeting and participate using the following methods.

- How to participate in the meeting
 - Access the meeting, in-person, at the Downtown Conference Room
 - Access the meeting real-time online at:
[Zoom.us/join](https://zoom.us/join) –Meeting ID 879 3070 9093
 - Access the meeting real-time via telephone at:
(669) 900-6833
Meeting ID 879 3070 9093
Press *9 to raise hand to speak

Subject to change: The format of this meeting may be altered or the meeting may be canceled. You may check on the status of the meeting by visiting the city website menlopark.gov. The instructions for logging on to the webinar and/or the access code is subject to change. If you have difficulty accessing the webinar, please check the latest online edition of the posted agenda for updated information (menlopark.gov/agendas).

Regular Session

A. Call To Order

B. Roll Call – Hill, Hedley, Hernandez, Kissel, Meyer, Vice Chair McKenna, Pelegri-Llopart

C. Public Comment

Under “Public Comment,” the public may address the Commission on any subject not listed on the agenda. Each speaker may address the Commission once under public comment for a limit of three minutes. You are not required to provide your name or City of residence, but it is helpful. The Commission cannot act on items not listed on the agenda and, therefore, the Commission cannot respond to non-agenda issues brought up under public comment other than to provide general information.

D. Regular Business

D1. Welcome new commissioner

D2. Approve the February 19, 2025 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes ([Attachment](#))

D3. Select chair and vice chair

D4. Report out on Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment ordinance and voucher program ([Attachment](#))

D5. Consider disbanding or selecting additional commissioners to ad hoc subcommittees

E. Reports and Announcements

E1. Reports and announcements from staff and Commissioners

F. Informational Items

F1. 2024-25 Environmental Quality Commission work plan ([Attachment](#))

G. 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 before, the public hearing.

Any writing that is distributed to a majority of the Commission by any person in connection with an agenda item is a public record (subject to any exemption under the Public Records Act) and is available by request by emailing the city clerk at jaherren@menlopark.gov. Persons with disabilities, who require auxiliary aids or services in attending or participating in Commission meetings, may call the City Clerk's Office at 650-330-6620.

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REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – DRAFT

Date: 2/19/2025
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Teleconference and
City Hall Downtown Conference Room, 1st Floor
701 Laurel St., Menlo Park. CA 94025

A. Call To Order

Chair Schmidt called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Hedley, Hill, Kissel, Vice Chair McKenna, Pelegri-Llopert
Absent: Meyer
Staff: Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer, Management Analyst II Ori Paz,
Management Analyst II Liz Tapia

C. Public Comment

- Brian Schmidt spoke in support of the carbon dioxide removal documentary Legion 44, volts podcast, a graduate student seminar at Stanford and on concerns related to Assembly Bill (AB) 306.
- Desta Raines spoke in support of their application to the Environmental Quality Commission.

D. Regular Business

D1. Approve the January 15, 2025 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes (Attachment)

ACTION: Motion and second (Hedley/ Kissel), to approve the January 15, 2025 Environmental Quality Commission minutes, passed 4-0-1-1 (Hill abstaining, Meyer absent).

D2. Update on communitywide electrification grant and provide feedback on expending the second half of funds (Attachment)

Vice Chair McKenna introduced the item.

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer made the presentation.

The Commission received clarification on allocated funding for the Home Upgrade program, area median income limits, program requirements, spenddown requirements, downward trend of interest in program, project scoping, anticipated greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction, allowable expenditures for grant funds, communication challenges and consequences of not spending funds by June 2026.

- Jeff Schmidt spoke in support of prioritizing and seeking direction from City Council on how to spend the communitywide electrification grant funds.
- Brian Schmidt spoke in support of spending communitywide electrification grant funds quickly and prioritizing low-income residents over municipal buildings.

- Nicole Angiel spoke in support of new project ideas, potential GHG reductions, serving low-income population and electrifying municipal buildings.

The Commission discussed ranking potential project ideas and prioritized a matching rebate program for heat pump water heater (HPWH) and heat pump heating and cooling systems first, increasing income eligibility from 80% average median income (AMI) to 120% AMI second, electrifying the Belle Haven Child Development Center third, providing resiliency kits to renters fourth and electrifying the Burgess Pool last.

D3. Review outreach approach for adopting amendments to the building code (Attachment)

Vice Chair McKenna introduced the item.

Management Analyst II Ori Paz made a presentation.

The Commission received clarification on building code priorities, themes and questions for the outreach survey, past outreach strategies and outreach target audience.

- Brian Schmidt spoke in support of using outreach strategies for Bayfront Commercial District policy.
- Jeff Schmidt spoke in support of adding building code amendments to the City Council priority list.

The Commission discussed using the survey format for the City Council priority setting input survey, hosting two in-person workshops with interpretation, testing the survey for misunderstandings, strategy for positively messaging the benefits of building code regulations, educating the general public and contractors, sharing incentives for going all-electric, offering meals, childcare and stipends at workshops, distributing the survey after events and workshops and adding education to the survey.

D4. Disband Impact of Plastics on the Environment and Distributed Energy Resources ad hoc subcommittees

Vice Chair McKenna introduced the item.

ACTION: Motion and second (McKenna/ Hill) to disband Impact of Plastics on the Environment and Distributed Energy Resources ad hoc subcommittees, passed 5-0-1 (Meyer absent).

D5. Consider selecting additional commissioners to Environmental Quality Commission ad hoc subcommittees

Vice Chair McKenna introduced the item.

The Commission discussed selecting additional commissioners at the March 19 meeting.

E. Reports and Announcements

E1. Reports and announcements from staff and Commissioners

Commissioner Hill reported out on SF Climate Week at the end of April.

Commissioner Pelegri-Llopart reported out on a future Stanford Energy System Innovations (SESI) visit and a distributed energy resources blog post.

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer reported out on the Belle Haven Community Campus receiving an honorable mention for Sustainable San Mateo County for electric design April 3, the Home Upgrade program update to City Council April 25, the addition of 100 new street trees planted by the tree team and a San Mateo County master composting course.

Management Analyst II Ori Paz reported out on City Hall installation of three new HPWHs through PG&E grant funds, provided updates on Burgess Pool showers HPWH installation, electric vehicle (EV) charging project consultant support, electrification of Belle Haven Child Development Center and an upcoming presentation on the Tesla Pilot program at the California Police Chief Association tech summit.

F. Informational Items

- F1. 2024-25 Environmental Quality Commission work plan (Attachment)

G. Adjournment

Vice Chair McKenna adjourned the meeting at 9:13 p.m.

Management Analyst II Liz Tapia



ZERO EMISSION LANDSCAPING EQUIPMENT (ZELE) ORDINANCE UPDATE

Presented by: Sustainability staff

AGENDA

- Background
- Outreach
- Voucher program
- Enforcement
- Next steps
- Discussion

BACKGROUND

- July 11, 2023, City Council:
 - Adopted ZELE requirement that prohibits using gas powered landscaping equipment due to its negative impacts on health, and noise and air pollution.
 - Approved an electric gardening equipment rebate program.
 - Directed staff to provide public outreach.

BACKGROUND: RULES

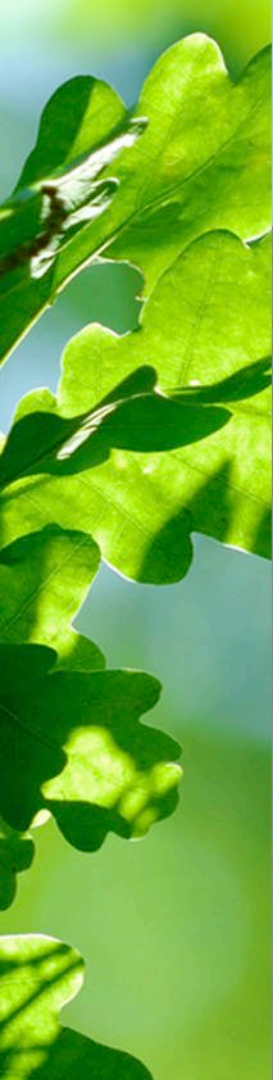
- As of July 1, 2024: gas-powered leaf blowers and string trimmers are prohibited.
- Beginning Jan. 1, 2029: gas-powered walk behind lawnmowers, hedge trimmers and chainsaws are prohibited.
- Hours of allowable operation would remain the same for electric powered equipment.
- Violations are the property owners responsibility.



OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Email and text to ZELE mailing list after adoption July 2023.
- Letter to Menlo Park gardening businesses with notice of adoption July 2023.
- Continuous updates to ZELE webpage began July 2023.
- Published ordinance adoption announcement on social media outlets and Weekly Digest July 2023.
- Recology billing insert September 2023 and December 2023.





OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Tabling at community events beginning April 2024.
- Weekly Digest reminder of ordinance beginning June 2024.
- Citywide bilingual postcard to Menlo Park addresses in June 2024.
- Placed electronic message boards in neighborhoods December 2024.
- Hung bilingual banners in downtown Menlo Park and Belle Haven neighborhoods January 2025.



GAS LEAF BLOWERS AND TRIMMERS PROHIBITED JULY 1
SOPLADORES DE HOJAS Y CORTADORES DE GAS PROHIBIDOS EL 1 DE JULIO

Starting July 1, 2024, the use of gas leaf blowers and string trimmers is prohibited in the City of Menlo Park. Property owners will be responsible for violations and violators could be subject to enforcement actions up to and including monetary fines.

This ordinance was passed by City Council on July 11, 2023 as part of the City's Climate Action plan.

Eligible residents, landscaping professionals, and businesses may receive a voucher to support the purchase of zero emission landscaping equipment.

Learn more about the new rules and voucher program on our website menlopark.gov/silo, email sustainability@menlopark.gov or call 650.330.4720

A partir del 1 de julio de 2024, el uso de sopladores de hojas y cortadoras de hilo a gas están prohibido en la ciudad de Menlo Park. Los propietarios serán responsables de las infracciones y los infractores podrían estar sujetos a acciones de cumplimiento que pueden llegar hasta multas monetarias.

Esta ordenanza fue aprobada por el Concejo Municipal el 11 de julio de 2023 como parte del plan de Acción Climática de la Ciudad.

Residentes de Menlo Park, profesionales y negocios de jardinería pueden ser elegibles para un reembolso para ayudar con la compra de equipos de jardinería con cero emisiones.

Obtenga más información sobre las nuevas reglas y el programa de reembolsos en nuestro sitio web menlopark.gov/silo, email sustainability@menlopark.gov o llame 650.330.4720.



VOUCHER PROGRAM

- Partnered with Acterra to administer a voucher program to assist eligible residents and landscaping businesses with the purchase of electric gardening equipment.
- The program did not require for any money to be paid out of pocket.
- Applications were received through an online portal, bilingual phone assistance was made available.



55th ANNIVERSARY
ACTERRA
ACTING FOR A HEALTHY PLANET

Who We Are ▾ What We Do ▾ Get Involved ▾ Calendar Donate

MENLO PARK ELECTRIC GARDEN PROGRAM

ELECTRIC GARDEN VOUCHER PROGRAM FOR THE ELIGIBLE RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES IN MENLO PARK

Acterra has currently reached the maximum number of applications for the program. We will reopen applications if additional vouchers become available.

With a new city regulation set to prohibit gas-powered leaf blowers and string trimmers starting July 1, 2024, Menlo Park is taking proactive measures to support its community by offering financial assistance to ease the transition to electric gardening tools. Eligible residents and non-gardening businesses can receive vouchers of up to \$250, while gardening businesses may qualify for up to \$1,000. These vouchers are redeemable towards the purchase of electric garden equipment, including leaf blowers, hedge trimmers, chainsaws, lawnmowers, and more. Once awarded, recipients will have 21 days to use the voucher at participating stores.

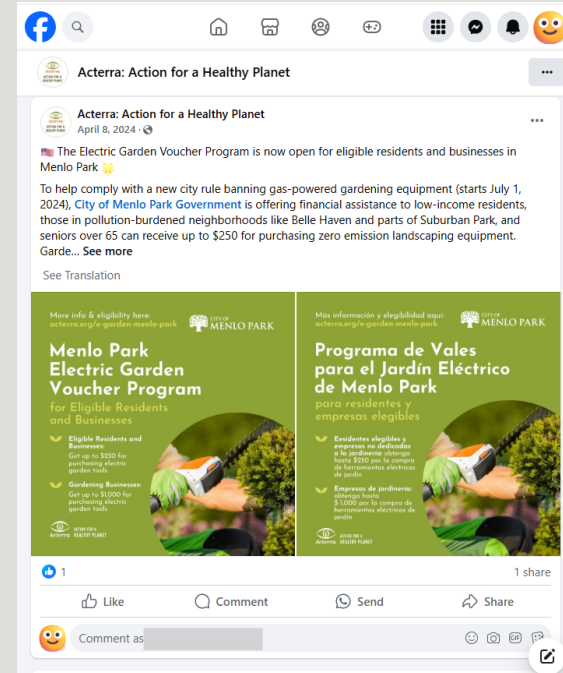
Acterra is proud to be working with the city to distribute the vouchers. Funding for this program comes from the City of Menlo Park.



Donate

VOUCHER PROGRAM

- To complement City efforts, Acterra performed outreach at events, farmers markets, via social media, email and flyer distribution.
- Customers could shop at a 3 different stores who provided education and assistance with purchasing the appropriate equipment.
- A total of \$41,000 in funds allocated to distribute vouchers in two phases.
- Phase 1 program launch April 2024.
Phase 2 program launch September 2024.





VOUCHER PROGRAM AUDIENCE

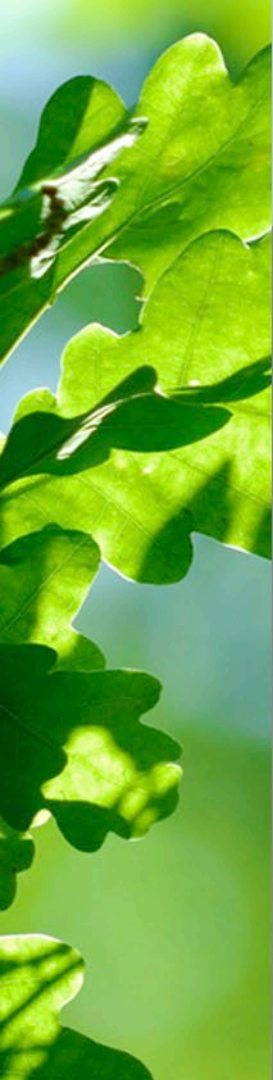


Category	Amount	Start date
Professional gardeners working in Menlo park	Up to \$1,000	April 2024
Menlo Park non-gardening businesses	Up to \$250	April 2024
Qualifying Menlo Park residents	Up to \$250	April 2024



VOUCHER PROGRAM RESIDENT ELIGIBILITY

- Enrolled in government or utility financial assistance program, CALWorks, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), PG&E Programs, Menlo Park utility discount program.
- Located in a Menlo Park neighborhood that is disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution with a score above 60 according to California Office of the Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (CalEnviroScreen 4.0 map).
- Residents over the age of 65.



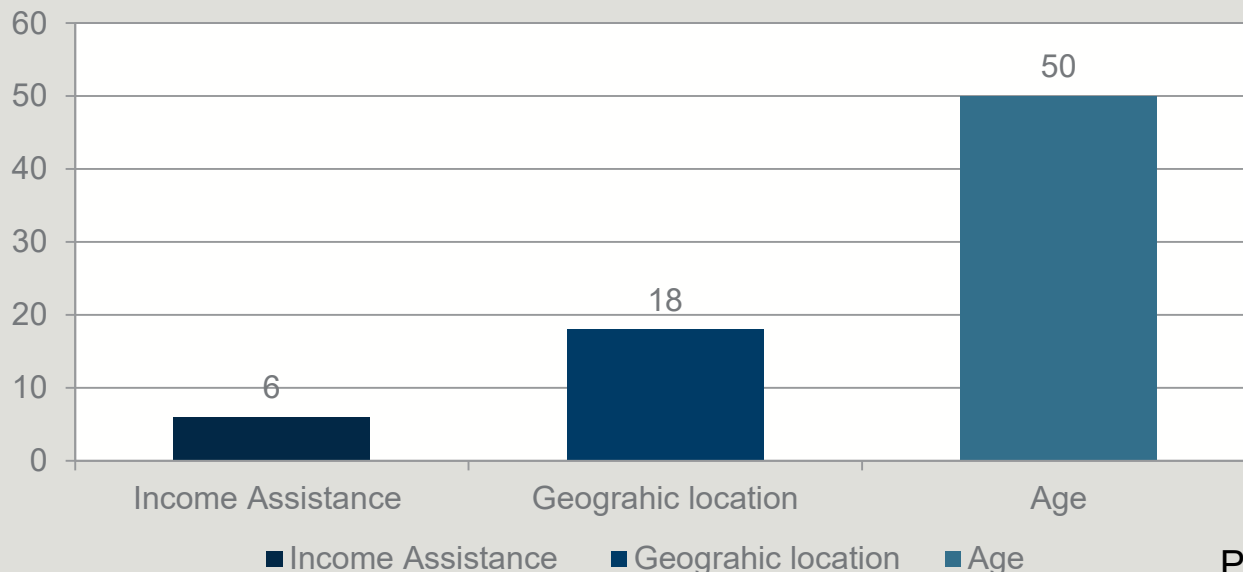
VOUCHER PROGRAM RESULTS



Voucher	Phase 1	Phase 2	Total
Professional gardeners	10	10	20
Non-gardening businesses	2	2	4
Menlo Park residents	38	36	74
TOTAL	50	48	98

VOUCHER QUALIFICATION BREAKDOWN

- Six (6) vouchers were issued to residents on income assistance.
- Eighteen (18) vouchers were issued to residents based on geographic location.
- Fifty (50) vouchers were issued to residents who were age eligible.

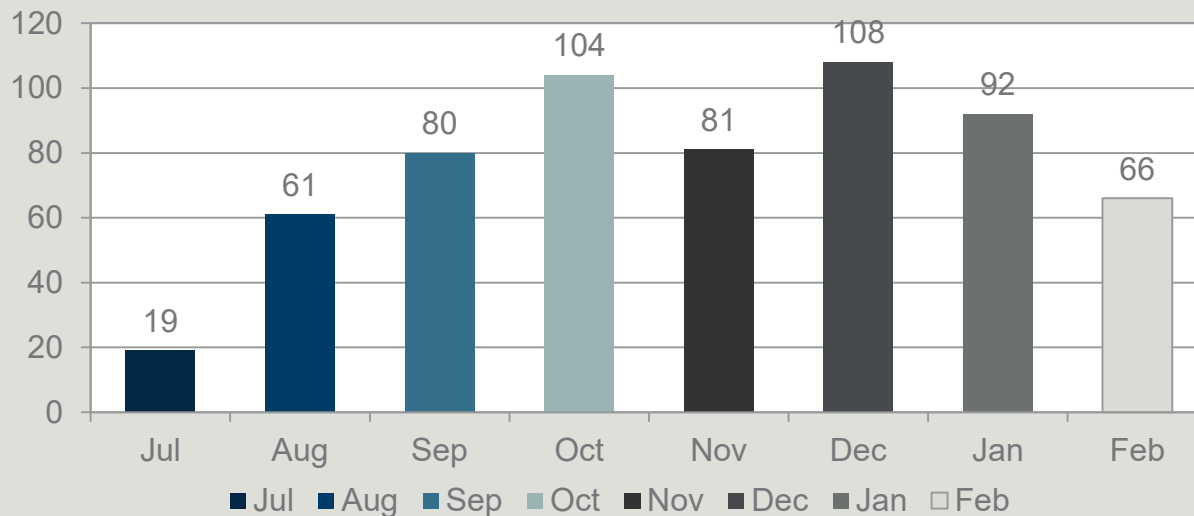


ENFORCEMENT

- Enforcement began as an educational approach July 2024.
- Reports are taken by police dispatch, online through ACT Menlo Park, phone calls to Sustainability and via email.
- All addresses reported receive a violation notice letter from Menlo Park code enforcement advising them of the ordinance.
- Addresses with multiple reports receive a call from a Police representative.

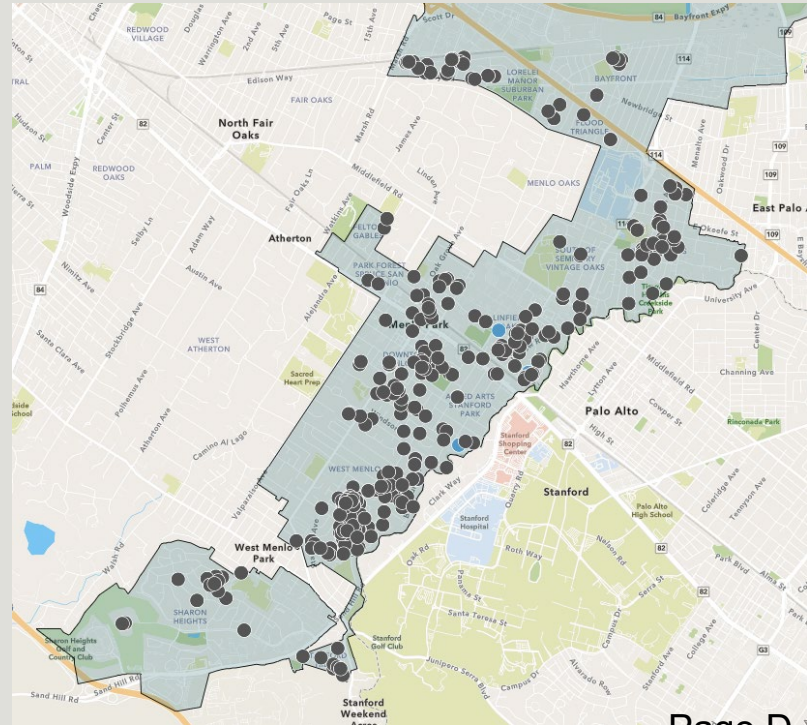
ENFORCEMENT: REPORTS

- 611 reports to date.
- 200 reports to police dispatch.
- 411 reports to ACT Menlo Park.
- Reports are decreasing.



ENFORCEMENT: REPORTS

- Dots indicate a community report made in ACT Menlo Park.



ENFORCEMENT: NEXT STEPS

- Exploring additional outreach methods
 - Door hangers for repeat violations.
 - Code enforcement visits.
- Enforcement to begin July 1, 2025
 - First violation citation cost \$50.

DISCUSSION

- How to spend additional funds
- Outreach ideas for compliance
- Questions



THANK YOU

Environmental Quality Commission work plan

City Manager's Office
 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park CA 94025
 Approved Sept. 24, 2024



Work plan goals		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide feedback to staff and advise the City Council on 2025-2030 scope of work implementation for Climate Action Plan (CAP) strategies No. 1 through No. 6 2. Ensure that our most vulnerable communities have a voice in policies and programs to protect their communities from environmental impacts. 3. Leverage best practices to advise/recommend on the preservation of heritage trees, city trees and expansion of the urban canopy; and make determinations on appeals of heritage tree removal permits. 4. Support sustainability initiatives, as needs arise, which may include city-led events, habitat protection, healthy ecology, environmental health protection, healthy air, surface water runoff quality, water conservation and waste reduction. 5. Maintain an annual commission calendar to provide transparency and allow adequate time to prepare agenda items related to the commission's work plan; update and post for public review monthly. 6. Encourage and facilitate robust public comment and participation at Commission meetings. 7. Foster a public meeting environment that is inclusive of all members of the diverse Menlo Park community. 8. Support the filling of openings on the Commission and the effective onboarding of new Commissioners. 		
Work plan history		
Action	Date	Notes
Work plan recommended to EQC	7/17/2024	
Work plan City Council approval	9/24/2024	

Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) agenda topics fiscal year 2024-25

Agenda schedule may change based on City Council, Chair and Vice Chair and staff requests/direction

Month	Topics	Author/Presenter	EQC role
July 2024	Discuss fiscal year 2024-25 agenda calendar, work plan and subcommittees	Sustainability staff/ad hoc subcommittee	Action by Commission
	Annual City Arborist Report and review of heritage tree ordinance administrative guidelines	City arborist and public works staff	Feedback to staff on ideas, policies and programs
	Discuss opportunities for student engagement in EQC	Chair	Action by Commission
August 2024	Review student engagement goals and plan	Student engagement ad hoc subcommittee	Action by Commission
	Presentation on the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association's (SPUR) relevant research and programs	Guest speakers	Informational/no action
September 2024	Review and discuss student engagement ad hoc subcommittee recommendations	Student engagement ad hoc subcommittee	Action by Commission
	Presentation from the Institute for Market Transformation on Building Performance Standards	Guest speaker	Informational/no action
	Consider appointing commissioners to subcommittees	Sustainability staff	Action by Commission
	Update on the Menlo Park City School District Climate Action Plan	Chair	Informational/no action
October 2024	Presentation from Sustainable San Mateo County	Guest speakers	Informational/no action
	Review Heritage Tree Ordinance administrative guidelines	Sustainability staff	Informational
November 2024	Discuss updates to the Heritage Tree Ordinance administrative guidelines process	Heritage Tree Ordinance administrative guidelines ad hoc subcommittee	Action by Commission
	Review additional urban forest recommendations	Heritage Tree Ordinance administrative	Action by Commission

		guidelines ad hoc subcommittee	
	Update on Compliance with SB 379 Permitting for residential solar energy systems	Sustainability Staff	Informational/provide feedback to staff
	Review and discuss approach for the Love Our Earth festival	Sustainability staff	Informational/provide feedback to staff
December 2024	No meeting		
January 2025	Review and discuss recommendations from the impact of plastics on the environment ad hoc subcommittee	Impact of plastics on the environment ad hoc subcommittee	Action by Commission
	Review and discuss recommendations to promote solar and battery storage	Distributed energy resources ad hoc subcommittee	Action by Commission
February 2025	Review options and outreach approach for adopting amendments to the building code	Sustainability staff	Action by commission
	Update on building electrification outreach and education and provide feedback on second round of programming (\$4.5 million grant)	Sustainability staff	Provide feedback to staff
March 2025	Select Chair and Vice Chair	Chair	Action by Commission
	Report out on Zero Emission Landscaping Equipment Voucher Program	Sustainability staff	Informational, provide feedback to staff
April 2025	Discuss CAP progress report	Sustainability staff	Informational/no action
	Discuss state, federal and additional grant opportunities	Chair	Informational, provide feedback to staf
May 2025	Update on building code local amendment options	Sustainability staff	Provide feedback to staff
	Discuss CAP No. 4 (reduce vehicle miles traveled) implementation	City staff	Informational/provide feedback to staff
	Discuss annual agenda calendar/ work plan to present to the City Council	Sustainability staff/Chair and Vice Chair	Action by Commission
June 2025	Annual City Arborist Report	City arborist and public works staff	Informational

	Approve the annual agenda calendar/ work plan to present to the City Council	Sustainability staff	Action by Commission
July 2025	Review Peninsula Clean Energy's programs	Sustainability staff	Provide feedback to staff

Ad hoc subcommittees

- Student Engagement Ad Hoc Subcommittee
 - Scope: To identify opportunities, recommend programs, and discuss ways to engage students in Menlo Park.
 - Duration: Three months – report out in September 2024
 - Commissioners: Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair McKenna, Commissioner Meyer
- Heritage Tree Ordinance Administrative Guidelines Ad Hoc Subcommittee
 - Scope: Review and present recommendations to amend the heritage tree ordinance administrative guidelines to protect heritage trees and the city's tree canopy.
 - Duration: Three months – report out in October 2024
 - Commissioners: Chair Schmidt, Commissioner Hill, Commissioner Hedley
- Distributed Energy Resources Ad Hoc Subcommittee
 - Scope: Identify and implement programs that can increase the amount of solar and battery storage in Menlo Park.
 - Duration: Two months – report out in January 2025
 - Commissioners: Commissioner Pelegri-Llopart, Commissioner Hill, Commissioner Kissel
- Impact of Plastics on the Environment Ad Hoc Subcommittee
 - Scope: Research and present recommendations on programs and policies to prevent stormwater pollution in the city including artificial turf and single use plastics.
 - Duration: Two months – report out in January 2025
 - Commissioners: Vice Chair McKenna, Commissioner Hedley
- Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation Ad Hoc Subcommittee
 - Scope: Provide feedback to inform the development of a Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation Plan
 - Duration: Two months with an expected report to the EQC in March 2025
 - Commissioners: Vice Chair McKenna
- Transportation Ad Hoc Subcommittee
 - Scope: Work with Complete Streets and Planning Commissions to develop, implement, and communicate programs that support public transit, bicycling, walking, and rolling to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
 - Duration: Two months with an expected report to the EQC in July 2025
 - Commissioners: Commissioner Hedley, Commissioner Meyer, Vice Chair McKenna

Other topics to be determined

- Identify grant funding opportunities
- Track Menlo Park School District electrification efforts and CAP development
- Promote the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Provide recommendations for workforce training related to building electrification
- Urban forest management plan
- Electrification reach codes and policies
- Review and discuss recommendations for developing a climate change resilience and adaptation plan

Regular items

- Annual selection of Chair and Vice Chair (May)
- Chair report to the City Council (at minimum once per year)
- Set fiscal year commission agenda calendar (June/July)
- Annual informational presentation on existing building electrification outreach and education (annual)
- Annual City Arborist Report (spring)
- Zero Emissions Landscaping Equipment (ZELE) Policy progress (requires two years of reporting to the commission directed by the city council starting in 2025)