

Environmental Quality Commission



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: 4/16/2025
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

Vice Chair McKenna called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call

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

C. Public Comment

- Brian Schmidt spoke in support of a Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE) webinar and the Love our Earth Festival April 26.

D. Regular Business

D1. Approve the March 19, 2025 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes (Attachment)

ACTION: Motion and second (Hedley/ Pelegri-Llopart), to approve the March 19, 2025 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes, passed 6-0-1 (Kissel absent).

D2. Discuss Climate Action Plan progress report (Attachment)

Chair McKenna introduced the item.

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer made the presentation (Attachment).

The Commission received clarification on off-road and on-road transportation, types of transportation factored into transportation emissions and outreach strategies and expanded qualification for the Home Upgrade program.

- Brian Schmidt spoke in support of prioritizing Climate Action Plan (CAP) strategy No. 1 and building code amendments, and on concerns related to Assembly Bill (AB) 306.

The Commission discussed including the following recommendations on the CAP progress report: CAP strategy #1:

- Expand greenhouse gas (GHG) emission data to include tracking embodied emissions.
- Explore tracking real kilowatt-hours used for both gas and electric consumption.
- Expand CAP goal No.1 to measure total kilowatt-hours in addition to full building electrification.
- Add dates to the CAP implementation timeline on presentation to City Council.

- Explore creating an online tracker of key metrics to see progress in real-time.
- Explore using state grant funds to offer solar and batteries.
- Report future next steps to ensure City will reach CAP strategy #1 goals.
- Monitor AB 306 and determine a plan for alternative ways to encourage electrification.
- Look at other pathways the City can engage residents to make the switch from gas to electric and increase awareness.
- Utilize on-site collateral and present in-person at the Belle Haven Community Campus (BHCC) and Belle Haven Child Development Center to increase participation.
- Make residents aware of potential cost savings and incentives of switching from gas to electric.

CAP strategies No. 2 and No. 3:

- Explore a City sponsored e-bike loaner, benefits, and education program.
- Explore expanding Waymo into the City.
- Encourage use of Caltrain and share comfort benefits like less noise and Wi-Fi.
- Expand tracking to electric vehicle (EV), e-bike and e-scooter sales and registration.
- Increase education and outreach on EV benefits.
- Explore ways to increase EV charging in multifamily communities.

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer re-opened public comment.

- Brian Schmidt spoke in support of Waymo expanding to Menlo Park.

D3. Discuss state, federal and additional grant opportunities (Attachment)

Chair McKenna introduced the item.

Rincon Consultants Senior Climate Planner Anna Yip made the presentation (Attachment).

The Commission received clarification on the definition of disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged, funding areas and funding categories.

The Commission discussed applying for building electrification grants, preparing for applications by working with community based organizations, creating specific Environmental Quality Commission ad hoc subcommittees for specific grants, prioritizing funding opportunities for Belle Haven, working with neighboring cities like East Palo Alto and Redwood City, incorporating the Environmental Justice Element, leveraging matching funds from potential partners or local tax dollars, using funds to convert turf fields to natural grass, utilizing a grant writing consultant and timeline for fund allocation.

E. Reports and Announcements

E1. Reports and announcements from staff and Commissioners

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer reported out on the April 26 Love our Earth Festival, the April 29 City Council meeting to appoint two new Environmental Quality Commissioners and the May 8 building code amendment workshop at the Belle Haven Community Campus.

Vice Chair Pelegri-Llopart reported out on stepping down from the Environmental Quality Commission and on PCEs distributed energy resource strategy.

Commissioner Hill reported out on San Francisco Climate Week.

Chair McKenna reported out on Healthy Homes event May 10.

Commissioner Hedley reported out on comments received by the Commission about trees and safety relating to accessory dwelling units and construction.

F. Informational Items

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

The Commission received clarification on the presentation date for an item on the climate adaptation plan.

G. Adjournment

Vice Chair McKenna adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Management Analyst II Liz Tapia

Minutes approved at the May 21, 2025 Environmental Quality Commission meeting.

Environmental Quality Commission work plan

City Manager's Office

701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park CA 94025

Approved Sept. 24, 2024



Work plan goals

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 progress report including strategies four, five, and six	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
	Transportation ad hoc subcommittee report out	Transportation ad hoc subcommittee	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 TBD
 - Commissioners: Chair McKenna, Commissioner Hernandez, Commissioner Meyer
- 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, 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)