

Environmental Commission 2021/22 Accomplishments and 2022/23 Work Plan

2021/22 Accomplishments

Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP)

Along with staff and consultant, CAAP subcommittee directed city's process to develop 2022 CAAP leading to the successful approval of the plan by City Council in March 2022. Process included public outreach including two community focus groups (April 23rd – Climate Vulnerability; May 24th – Los Altos Potential Strategies), two workshops (Business and Community workshops on 6/28/2021) and two community surveys. Subcommittee met on a bi-weekly basis providing countless hours of input and expertise into the process.

Waste

EC Reviewed Draft Municipal Code update and Edible Food Recovery Ordinance addressing requirements of SB 1383 (August and September). Council approved code updates in November.

Lehigh Hansen and Stevens Creek Quarry

Subcommittee formed to monitor and provide support to council subcommittee.

Legislation

Provided letter of endorsement for AB 1346 that prohibits the sale of gas-powered small off-road engines (SORE) Action to City Council (June)

Drafted memo to council regarding Commission's position on HR 2307 Carbon Dividend Trust Fund detailing reasons Commission did not take a position on legislation.

Received Presentation on California legislation from Local Government Commission

Informational Updates

Water

Cal Water presentation in June

Los Altos conservation achievements:

- 5 million gallons saved by conservation programs utilized in 2020
- 2020 Lifetime savings = 77 million gallons
- 750 million gallons Lifetime cumulative savings

Residential Water-Efficiency Programs available: High-efficiency toilets, clothes washers, Smart irrigation controllers, High-efficiency sprinkler nozzles. Conservation Kits (Free), Smart Landscape Tune-up Program (Free), Turf Replacement Rebate, Drip-line Conversion Rebate

Standard Prohibited Uses of Water

- Use of water on landscaping that causes runoff onto adjacent property, non-irrigated areas, private and public walkways, roadways, parking lots, or structures
- Use of a hose without a shut-off nozzle to wash vehicles
- Use of water for washing driveways and sidewalks

- Use of water for decorative fountains that do not utilize a recirculation system
- Use of water on landscaping during or within 48 hours after rainfall
- Use of excessive water due to unrepaired leaks or defective irrigation systems
- Providing water in restaurants (except upon request)
- Outdoor irrigation between the hours of 8:00 am and 6:00 pm

Energy

SVCE presentation in May

Los Altos Customers in 2020:

- 12,200 households in Los Altos receiving carbon-free electricity
- \$573,000 in on-bill savings for Los Altos customers
- \$48,700 in cash payments for surplus solar energy generated
- 99% reduction in electric utility-related emissions (24,516,000 pounds greenhouse gas emissions avoided)

During pandemic Los Altos customers received:

- \$26,300 in on-bill credits to 263 income-qualifies customers
- \$40,500 in on-bill credits to 162 qualifying small and medium businesses
- \$149,500 set aside for community investment in energy resiliency
- Provided Annual Product Content Label and status of investment in new Renewable Energy projects (over \$1B)
- Customer Resources: eHub online tool, heat pump water rebates (up to \$3,500), solar + battery storage incentives for low-income customers
- Reach Code technical support
- Transition to Time of Use electricity rates: 4-9 is peak pricing period every day

2022/23 Work Plan

Needed Resources: Staff/consultant grant-writer to seek funding for CAAP action implementation. Permanent Sustainability Coordinator.

CAAP Implementation (subcommittee: Delagneau, Humayan, Van Reis)

The EC has identified the following CAAP actions for implementation priority in 2022:

- Reach Codes (see below)
- Yearly EV Fair – work with GreenTown to develop yearly fair (EC liaison Van Reis)
- Single-use Plastic Ordinance (see below)
- Energy-efficiency audits of city buildings (subcommittee to work with Manny Hernandez)
- Alternative work schedule/telecommuting options for city employees (staff-directed)
- Urban forest & greenspace: Form subcommittee to investigate development of Urban Forest Master Plan & and expansion of non-organic pesticide/herbicide ban. Work with staff on scope of work and determine potential need for consultant to develop plan.
- Exploring residential and commercial energy audit and retrofitting options (CAAP subcommittee)

The EC plans to address on the following actions in early 2023 and/or when a permanent Sustainable Coordinator is hired:

- Off-road gas engine ban (ahead of state action)
- Zero-waste policy for city facilities & events
- All-year farmer's market

Reach Codes 2.0 (subcommittee: Hecht, Teksler, Weiden)

Conduct public outreach, technical research and develop options for Council study session in June 2022. Refine recommendation for August/September Council consideration.

Single Use Plastics (subcommittee: Delagneau, Teksler, Weiden)

A proposed single-use plastics ordinance was brought to Council at the end of 2020 at which time it was decided to postpone the adoption of such an ordinance due to the challenges faced by restaurants during COVID. The EC has formed a solid-waste subcommittee to revisit the ordinance. The subcommittee will engage with business committee (survey) and investigate current single-use plastic ordinances adopted or in development in surrounding communities. The Commission does not expect to be able to bring a new proposed ordinance to council until a new Sustainability Coordinator is hired.

Lehigh Hansen and Stevens Creek Quarry (Lu)

Continue monitoring county-led efforts to acquire property and/or review revised Reclamation Plan.

Water Conservation

Commission plans to form a subcommittee to track and promote water conservation efforts.

Education, Outreach & Commission Collaboration

- Commissioner Van Reis appointed to update dashboard tracking water and energy conservation
- Individual subcommittees to work with staff to increase public outreach efforts and web resources (e.g. Reach Code workshops)
- Individual subcommittees collaborate with other Commissions as appropriate (e.g. Complete Streets work included in CAAP).