

Sustainability Commission

- Present: Jamie Duran, Business Seat 1
Luz Gomez, Community Seat 1
Howdy Goudey, Community Seat 2
Shoshana Wechsler (Chair), District 1 Seat
Kim Jones, District 1 Alternate
Victoria Smith, District 2 Seat
Christopher Easter, District 2 Seat Alternate (Virtual)
Julie Haas-Wajdowicz, District 3 Seat Alternate
Brandon Matson (Vice-Chair), District 4 Seat
Devin Jackson, Education/Research Seat
Kiara Pereira, Environmental Justice Seat 1
Sarah Foster, Environmental Justice Seat 2
- Absent: Susan Hurl, Business Seat 2
Norman Cohen, District 3 Seat
Wesley Sullens, District 4 Seat Alternate
Solomon Belette, District 5 Seat
Reilly Kent, District 5 Seat Alternate
- Staff Present: Jody London, Sustainability Coordinator, Dept. of Conservation and Development;
Nick Spinner, Senior System Engineer, Dept. of Information Technology
Emily Groth, Planner, Dept. of Conservation and Development;
Demian Hardman-Saldana, Principal Planner, Dept. of Conservation and Development;
Blake McPherson, Student Intern, Dept. of Conservation and Development
- Attendees: Dr. Bret Andrews, Rex Simmons, Bill Olsen, Carol Weed, Heidi Rous, Valerie Xiong,
Andrea Bailey, Charles Davidson, Lisa Jackson

1. Roll Call and Introductions

Chair Wechsler called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

2. Public comment on any item under the jurisdiction of the Commission(s) and not on this agenda (speakers may be limited to two minutes)

There was no public comment on this item.

3. APPROVE Record of Action for April 28, 2025, meeting

*Commissioner Smith moved to approve the Record of Action. Second: Commissioner Jackson.
The Record of Action was unanimously approved.*

4. RECEIVE Presentation from Commission Member on using a Dashboard to follow greenhouse gas reduction implementation for the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

Commissioner Easter gave a presentation focused on the benefits of data visualization tools to track progress of the County's implementation of measures to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in accordance with the County's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP). Easter framed the discussion around the Commission's mission to provide advice to County staff and the Board of Supervisors on the implementation of the CAAP.

Easter provided a historical recap on the State's creation of GHG reduction targets that began with the passage of Assembly Bill 32 in 2008. Several sectors of activity require a significant change from current operations to meet state-wide 2030 and 2045 emissions reduction targets. Statistics presented regarding California's gross state product and emissions reductions since 2008 indicate that a successful economy can be grown while prioritizing a clean economy.

Easter noted that one key aspect of implementing GHG emission reduction strategies is widespread policy change and implementation across all cities and counties. In order to properly manage GHG emissions reduction strategies and make decisions for key course corrections, the County must track GHG emissions data and progress in meeting CAAP goals.

Easter provided examples of existing climate action dashboards displaying GHG emissions in various sectors from other jurisdictions, such as the City of San Jose, Arlington County in Virginia, and Larimer County in Maryland. Easter also highlighted another type of dashboard: one in which qualitative programmatic information is presented to show progress in meeting goals defined in jurisdictions' approved plans to reduce GHG emissions.

Commission Member(s) Discussion:

The Commission discussed several questions on topics mentioned, including: a clarification that the slide presenting Bay Area Air District funding was for GHG reduction projects and not just dashboards; fugitive emissions are from leaks (such as refrigerants) not being captured; schools often have unique circumstances to apply GHG reduction strategies but many tools at their disposal; and the State provides some resources for GHG tracking/dashboards but not a state-wide emissions inventory across all sectors.

To encapsulate the discussion, Easter reiterated that a GHG emissions dashboard is a critical tool for transparency for the community to earn buy-in and make course corrections as needed. The implementation of GHG reduction actions is the real goal to meet the state's GHG reduction targets, and having a GHG emissions dashboard for the County is a useful tool to help inform GHG reduction actions and decisions.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment on this item.

5. RECEIVE Progress Report from Staff on Dashboard for Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS

Jody London, Sustainability Coordinator, began her presentation by introducing two staff members who have worked on this initial concept for the County's CAAP implementation dashboard: Nick Spinner, Senior System Engineer, and Emily Groth, Sustainability Planner. London played an excerpt from a video titled "[Talk Like a Human](#)," from timestamp 10:35 to 14:15. The video encouraged the usage of accessible, understandable language instead of scientific jargon when communicating about climate change and GHG reductions. London stated that the County should ensure any dashboard created to track implementation of CAAP strategies should be accessible for all and will be meaningful to the public.

The County uses the Civics Plus platform for its website, the same program as two other cities with functioning dashboards: [Issaquah, WA](#) and [Fremont, CA](#). Nick Spinner has created a dashboard in the past to track the County's Measure X tax funds using a program called Power BI, which could be utilized for a dashboard for CAAP implementation. London drew the attention of the Commission to a handout illustrating the actions in the CAAP that directly reduce GHG emissions, asking the Commission to think about what measures should be included in the County's dashboard.

Emily Groth added that Commission members should not only think about quantitative measures, but also qualitative storytelling aspects to CAAP implementation that could be included in this dashboard.

Commission Member(s) Discussion:

Commission Members discussed whether the creation of the dashboard would be contracted out or kept within County staff, and London responded that it would be within the County as Nick Spinner assisting with the dashboard creation works for the County's Dept. of Information Technology.

Members suggested adding pictures and graphics in the dashboard to show equivalency of emissions data to real-world applications. For example, the dashboard could show a graphic stating the presented amount of GHG emissions reduced as a result of a CAAP measure is equivalent to a calculated number of miles driven by passenger cars or an equivalent number of trees planted.

Commission Members also suggested that grouping CAAP implementation progress by the "Performance Metric" titles listed in the CAAP may provide a sufficient top-level overview in the dashboard. London stated that some quantitative data is available, but many measures do not directly feed into GHG emissions. Equity goals are potentially an indicator of who is being served and how they are being served, though not directly reducing GHG emissions.

Members discussed the possibility of County staff creating an initial dashboard presenting progress tracking the initial 11 quantifiable GHG emissions reduction measures in the CAAP. Emphasis was placed on the dashboard incorporating storytelling elements that everyone in the county can understand. The Commission decided to deliberate on measures they would like to see

implemented in the dashboard and discuss this item at the next meeting while County staff begin to create a dashboard using the 11 CAAP metrics that directly reduce GHG emissions.

Public Comment:

Charles Davidson, a member of the public and former Commission member, explained he has been observing geographic information system (GIS) maps for equity solutions for years and noticed that a fire station in the unincorporated community of Rodeo had 3 times more emergency service responses per capita than the nearby city of Hercules. Davidson suggested the County should post an annual GIS map of emergency response rates, income quintiles, and impacted community boundaries for every fire station within unincorporated communities from Contra Costa Fire Protection District data.

6. RECEIVE Presentation on co-benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel emissions from member of SF Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility

Dr. Bret Andrews, Neurologist and Board Member of San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility, provided a presentation connecting the reduction of GHG emissions with co-benefits such as improved public health.

Andrews addressed how the increase in carbon and fossil fuel pollution in the atmosphere has been associated with increased global temperature and health impacts. The cost associated with climate change caused events are increasing, particularly in healthcare. The co-benefits of reducing greenhouse gases are the reduction in health burden and air pollution.

Particulate matter 2.5 microns or smaller (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) have been studied widely. PM2.5 is a soot-like product of incomplete fossil fuel combustion that can penetrate deep into the lungs of humans. The Air Quality Index (AQI) is based on PM2.5, developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Research has shown that health impacts can occur at AQI's lower than 50, which is the EPA threshold for safe levels of PM2.5. Contra Costa County has consistently scored a failing grade on the American Lung Association's State of the Air report card for PM2.5, as it has not had an annual average AQI below 50 for nearly 10 years.

Andrews showed CalEnviroScreen 4.0 results for Contra Costa County, including graphs of asthma, cardiovascular disease, low birth weight, diesel PM, NO2, and other metrics in relation to the rest of the state. Most of these metrics indicated a higher concentration than the State average in areas near large industrial sources that generate air pollution.

Andrews presented findings from several studies that indicate associations of PM2.5 exposure to humans with increased frequency and severity of health complications. Vulnerable, impacted communities are not only burdened by living near air pollution sources, but also deal with many other factors such as living in a heat island, older homes lacking effective air filtration, historical environmental racist economic policies, and many more. NO2, primarily from natural gas use in stoves/ovens, has a well-studied association with negative health effects. Studies indicate that electrifying all appliances in homes could reduce childhood asthma by 20% and save around \$900 million in health impacts in the Bay Area.

To conclude the presentation, Andrews recapped that reducing GHG emissions in the County will have co-benefits of health improvements. Electrification with clean energy sources and improving ventilation were recommended. Andrews asked the Commission to consider what CAAP measures yield the highest number of co-benefits and consider tracking those in the proposed dashboard.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment on this item.

Commission Member(s) Discussion:

Hardman-Saldana highlighted the County's work in supporting electrification goals pointed at improving public health as well as reducing GHG emissions. Commission Members discussed the importance of addressing public health effects from air pollution from personal experiences.

7. RECEIVE Report on Staff Activities that Support Sustainability Goals

Jody London provided a verbal report on Sustainability staff activity. Some highlights include:

- Bids for consultants for the Senate Bill 1 Ocean Protection Council grant for Sea Level Rise planning are being evaluated.*
- A portion of funding from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant will be used to conduct a study determining the types of homes to conduct the most cost-effective all-electric retrofits. A majority of the funding will be used for implementing clean building retrofits in family-based licensed daycare facilities in the unincorporated community.*
- Negotiations are underway with consultants for the Urban Forest Management Plan.*
- The Clean Energy Roadmap will be brought to the Sustainability Committee in September.*
- The County may join a class action lawsuit against the EPA for cancelling the \$19 million Community Change Grant for North Richmond, which was set to fund a resilience hub.*
- A new building ordinance went into effect in May, which sets a building performance standard for efficiency and will hopefully drive builders to install more solar and make buildings all-electric to meet that efficiency standard.*
- Staff have attended and presented at multiple regional conferences, including the Western Regional Meeting of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network and the California Climate and Energy Collaborative.*

Public Comment:

There was no public comment on this item.

8. RECEIVE reports from Sustainability Commission members and alternates, and PROVIDE DIRECTION as needed

There were no reports provided for this item.

9. RECEIVE Report from Sustainability Commission Chair and IDENTIFY TOPICS for next report to the Committee on Sustainability

Chair Wechsler encouraged Commission members to send potential topics to her via email.

10. The next meeting is currently scheduled for August 25, 2025

11. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 pm.

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