

SUSTAINABILITY STAFF REPORT FOR SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION May 12, 2025

Activities since the Sustainability Commission's meeting on March 10, 2025, are listed below. Activities are keyed to goals in the 2024 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

ACTIVITY	2024 CAAP GOAL
Department of Conservation and Development	
Staff is in the process of entering into contract with the Ocean Protection Council's (OPC) for the Senate Bill 1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Grant, which was awarded in June 2024. The grant of almost \$1.5 million will support the development of the Contra Costa Resilient Shoreline Plan. Staff has been working with OPC to complete requirements to execute the grant in the next month.	Goal 5 – Resilient Communities and Natural Infrastructure
<p>Staff continues working to organize and plan the activities which will be funded by the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG).</p> <p>Staff is working with a technical consultant, San Timoteo, to develop an inventory of existing buildings and cost analysis for transitioning the unincorporated County's existing building stock to all-electric. San Timoteo has already begun work on this task, and it is expected that the final Existing Buildings Inventory and Cost Analysis will be completed by the end of 2025.</p> <p>Staff is in the process of developing a contract with CoCoKids, under which CoCoKids and County staff will partner to identify licensed home-based childcare facilities that are eligible for energy efficiency and all-electric transition retrofits.</p> <p>Staff is currently developing a solicitation to select an entity to implement energy efficiency upgrades for licensed childcare facilities. Staff aims to release the solicitation in May 2025. This task has experienced delays due to complications in communications with the U.S. DOE, including a nationwide communication freeze imposed by the Federal Government between all Federal departments and local governments at the state, regional, and local level.</p>	<p>Goal 1 – Clean and Efficient Built Environment</p> <p>Goal 6 – Climate Equity</p>
Sustainability staff have been working with the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) on the budget and workplan for a \$750,000 grant that will fund development of an Urban Forest Management Plan. Staff are working with partners on the project (The Watershed Project, Sustainable Contra Costa, Civicorps, Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County). A Request for Proposals for a technical consultant was released on April 18; bids are due May 12.	Goal 5 – Resilient Communities and Natural Infrastructure
On April 15, 2025, the Sustainability Team hosted the second meeting of the Contra Costa All-Electric Working Group. The primary goal for this meeting was to gather input and feedback on the Draft Clean Energy Roadmap for Existing Buildings which was released for public comment on March 25, 2025. The working group also finalized the logistics for future meetings and identified the	<p>Goal 1 – Clean and Efficient Built Environment</p> <p>Goal 7 - Leadership</p>

ACTIVITY	2024 CAAP GOAL
Q3/Q4 meeting deep-dive topics to explore, <i>All-Electric Policies: What Works?</i> and <i>Education on the Benefits of All-Electric Buildings</i> .	
On March 25, 2025, the Draft Clean Energy Roadmap for Existing Buildings was released for a 30-day public comment period. The Clean Energy Roadmap establishes a framework that the County can utilize to further progress related to transitioning the existing building stock in unincorporated Contra Costa County. Also included in the Clean Energy Roadmap is a section dedicated to the next steps and actions for staff. These include completion of an existing building inventory and all-electric transition cost analysis for unincorporated areas of the County, authority to engage with regulatory agencies and utilities, development of a community engagement strategy tailored to the specific needs of the County, and other actions such as seeking pre-approval from the Board of Supervisors to continue seeking funding for this work, implementing pilot projects where feasible, and continued analysis of policy options to identify those that are a good fit for Contra Costa County to pursue.	Goal 1 – Clean and Efficient Built Environment
<p>On January 6, 2025, the County received a grant award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a \$19 million Community Change Grant for the North Richmond Community Resilience Initiative. The grant award approved expenditures by the County for its projects under the grant, and stated that EPA would approve expenditures by the partners in the grant when a more complete budget and workplan were submitted, which occurred on January 31, 2025.</p> <p>The grant status was listed as “suspended” in the EPA payment portal from the end of January until April 29, with a brief period at the end of February where it was open. During that time, staff were able to draw down funds to cover County expenses for the beginning of February. On March 26, Senators Schiff and Padilla, along with other members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, issued a statement that referenced a list of grants that EPA has targeted for termination; the list included the grant for the North Richmond Community Resilience Initiative.</p> <p>On April 15, 2025, Federal Judge Mary McElroy issued a ruling that EPA and other federal agencies unlawfully froze funds under IIJA and IRA and orders agencies to immediately resume disbursing money to all grant recipients. On April 17, 2025, the County sent an email to EPA to obtain immediate access to funds legally obligated to Contra Costa County. On April 21, 2025, Congressmen John Garamendi and Mark DeSaulnier sent a letter to EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin asking EPA to rescind the grant termination and conduct a comprehensive investigation into the lack of transparency and due process in EPA’s termination process.</p> <p>Urban Tilth, one of the grant partners, posted more information about the North Richmond Community Resilience Initiative on its web site. KTVU ran a story about this on April 22.</p>	<p>Goal 1 – Clean and Efficient Built Environment</p> <p>Goal 5 – Resilient Communities and Natural Infrastructure</p> <p>Goal 6 – Climate Equity</p>

ACTIVITY	2024 CAAP GOAL
<p>On April 29, the grant was listed as “open” in the EPA payment portal. County staff were able to draw down funds for expenses through the end of April.</p> <p>On May 1, the County received a notice of termination from EPA for the grant, effective immediately. Similar notices were sent to grant recipients across the country. Staff is evaluating options for disputing the notice.</p>	
<p>The County continues to implement the Bay Point/Pittsburg Energy Enhancement Pilot Program, funded through a grant from the Keller Canyon Mitigation Fund. The first phase of the Pilot Program offers rebates to cover up to 50% of the project cost (maximum of \$8,000) for the installation of qualified electric heat pump heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in eligible single-family homes. Staff presented on the Pilot Program at the April 1 Bay Point Municipal Advisory Council meeting.</p>	<p>Goal 1 – Clean and Efficient Built Environment Goal 6 – Climate Equity</p>
<p>Climate Emergency Resolution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Just Transition.</i> The Governing Board of the Green Empowerment Zone (GEZ) received an update from the UC Berkeley Labor Center on March 21 on a just transition economic development framework for Contra Costa County. The update—which came after the release of the final Contra Costa Refinery Transition Partnership Reports—also included research findings on a prioritization of clean energy manufacturing technology for the GEZ. • <i>Interdepartmental Climate Action Task Force.</i> The G3 Champion meeting on April 9 focused on active transportation and commute options. It included presentations on Bike to Work/Wherever Day, sustainable commute options and resources, and the commuter benefit for County employees. The G3 Champions also heard from Teresa Datar, a County employee and G3 Champion who is the 2025 Contra Costa County Bike Champion of the Year! • <i>All-Electric Building Ordinance.</i> The new ordinance that amends the County building code to increase energy efficiency standards for newly constructed residential buildings, offices, hotels, and retail buildings to meet the County’s Climate Action Plan goals has been approved by the California Energy Commission and will go into effect on May 1, 2025. Staff has developed training materials to be used to train building department staff on the new energy efficiency requirements for single-family, multifamily, and specific non-residential (hotel, office, and retail) new construction. 	<p>Goal 1 – Clean and Efficient Built Environment Goal 7 - Leadership</p>
<p>The spring 2025 issue of the quarterly Sustainability in Contra Costa County newsletter was published on March 28, 2025. The newsletter included articles on the draft Clean Energy Roadmap, the Department of Public Works’ Electric Vehicle Charger Ribbon-Cutting Event, energy efficiency toolkits, Earth Day celebrations, Bike to Work Day events, and more.</p>	<p>Goal 7 - Leadership</p>
<p>Staff organized the first quarter Sustainability Exchange on March 20, 2025. The meeting featured a presentation from Contra Costa Health Services staff about the Contra Costa County Green Business Program. Participants were invited to explore the process of certifying their own building through the Green Business Program and how to encourage local businesses to participate.</p>	<p>Goal 7 - Leadership</p>

ACTIVITY	2024 CAAP GOAL
Staff organized the first quarter Energy Efficiency Collaborative on March 26, 2025. The Energy Efficiency Collaborative is a space for local government staff to coordinate on topics related to energy efficiency and all-electric buildings. Staff received updates on the new BayREN Single-Family Program – the EASE Home Program – and an overview of current programs available to support energy efficiency and all-electric upgrades for residential and commercial audiences.	Goal 1 – Clean and Efficient Built Environment Goal 7 - Leadership
<p>The Sustainability Team welcomed Blake McPherson, its new Sustainability Service Corps Fellow, on March 3. Blake’s workplan includes helping to update the County’s greenhouse gas emissions inventory, supporting the County’s work on sea level rise planning, and providing general support to the Sustainability Team.</p> <p>On April 25, the federal government terminated funding for Americorps programs, of which the Sustainability Service Corps is one. Fellows were instructed to pause their work and not report to their sites starting April 29, until further notice. This impacts a Fellow in the Department of Public Works, as well as the Department of Conservation and Development.</p> <p>The State of California has joined a lawsuit challenging the termination of the Americorps program.</p>	All
Sustainability staff continue to monitor state and federal grant opportunities and prepare to apply for projects that will support key climate goals around all-electric buildings, active transportation, sea level rise, climate resilience, and Just Transition.	All
Department of Public Works	
On February 28, 2025, Public Works was awarded Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds for two active transportation projects: (1) Treat Boulevard Corridor Improvements; and (2) Central County Crosswalks Improvements. The Treat Boulevard project will add bikeways to the road in the Contra Costa Centre area. The Central County project will improve pedestrian crossings for Center Avenue at Deodar Drive in Pacheco and Danville Boulevard at South Avenue in Alamo.	Goal 5 – Clean Transportation Network
Ongoing	
Staff participated in professional learning opportunities regarding environmental justice, carbon sequestration, climate resilience, communication and facilitation strategies, race and equity, and related.	All
Staff participated in regional activities.	All

Attachments
