

**CITY OF ALBANY
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: April 28, 2015
TO: AUSD Board of Education
FROM: Claire Griffing, Sustainability Coordinator
SUBJECT: Annual Update from the City of Albany Sustainability Committee

The following is intended to serve as an overview of completed and ongoing Sustainability Committee initiatives.

BUILDINGS & ENERGY

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)

Community Choice Aggregation allows public agencies to procure electric power on behalf of electric power customers, while energy transmission, distribution, repair, customer service, and billing continue to be administered by PG&E. The advantages of joining a CCA program include the ability to obtain power from more renewable resources and potential greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions. The Sustainability Committee has researched community renewable energy options, including CCA. The Committee made a recommendation to the City Council to pursue a membership analysis with the Marin Energy Authority (MCE) in April 2014, but no Council action was taken. Alameda County is now conducting a feasibility study for CCA and the Sustainability Committee continues to support the process.

Energy Conservation Ordinances

The Sustainability Committee is researching policies to increase energy efficiency upgrades in residential and commercial properties in Albany. Residential and Commercial Energy Conservation Ordinances (RECO/CECOs) accelerate energy efficiency improvements by requiring upgrades, usually at the time of sale. The Committee is also looking at a Building Energy Saving Ordinance (BESO) model, which requires detailed energy assessments at certain time intervals, depending on building size. The City of Berkeley recently adopted a BESO ordinance.

School Energy Efficiency

The Committee has encouraged school energy efficiency through the Schools Subcommittee and hopes to continue to interact with schools regarding energy efficiency and other sustainability initiatives.

PACE Programs

In 2014, the Sustainability Committee researched and recommended joining a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing program, which provides financing for solar installations, energy efficiency, and water upgrades. The loans are repaid over the assigned term (typically 15 or 20 years) via an annual assessment on the property tax bill. The Sustainability Committee received a presentation from the HERO PACE Program and made a recommendation to City Council, who voted to join the program on July 21, 2014. The Committee will be researching alternate PACE programs in the next few months, including one that also offers financing for commercial seismic retrofits.

TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE

Parking Policy Update

In 2014, the Committee participated in a working group of members from the Sustainability Committee, Traffic & Safety Commission and Planning & Zoning Commission to discuss Measure D parking requirements. The Committee will continue to work with the City on improvements to existing parking policies in the next couple of years.

General Plan Update

The Sustainability Committee provided valuable input on the City's General Plan Update, primarily related to the Conservation Element. A draft of the General Plan and associated environmental impact report will be available this summer.

Review of Major Developments

In 2014 and 2015, the Committee provided feedback on the planned sustainable features of new developments, including the Belmont Village Senior Housing project, the Sprouts grocery store, and the new City Public Works facility.

OUTREACH

Arts & Green Festival

In partnership with the City, the Sustainability Committee continues to produce the annual Albany Arts & Green Festival. The next event will be on Sunday, May 3rd. The Festival celebrates Albany's commitment to the arts and the environment with music, activities, demonstrations, and information booths displaying the activities of local environmental groups.

Community Outreach Group

The Committee researched additional ways to reach Albany residents, and hosted a meeting of community groups to discuss possibilities for collaboration. The meeting was a success and the group, now called the Albany Carbon Reduction Action Team, continues to meet regularly to discuss community outreach.

OTHER INITIATIVES

CAP Funding Proposal

The Committee researched funding strategies and recommended to City Council that the City's Utility User's Tax be increased to fund priority CAP measures.

Adopt New CAP Targets

The Sustainability Committee has explored the possibility of new greenhouse gas reduction goals for long-range planning. They recommended a new goal of 60% GHG reductions by 2035 and net zero emissions by 2050, and plan to incorporate this goal into the Conservation Element of the General Plan. They are continuing to refine these new goals and discuss strategies for achieving net zero emissions.

Leaf Blowers

The Committee researched leaf blower use and had concerns not only with their GHG emissions but also with the health risks related to the particulate matter they circulate, especially around small children. Facing issues with enforcing a citywide ban, they made a recommendation that the City Public Works Department reduce their use of leaf blowers in City parks, especially during hours of peak usage.