



## SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

RECORD OF ACTION FOR  
July 26, 2021

Supervisor John Gioia, Chair  
Supervisor Federal D. Glover, Vice Chair

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Present: John Gioia, Chair  
Federal D. Glover, Vice Chair

Staff Present: Monica Nino, County Administrator; Brian Balbas, Public Works Director; John Kopchik, Director, Dept of Conservation and Development; Joe Yee, Deputy Director, Dept of Public Works; Steve Kowalewski, Chief Deputy Director, Dept of Public Works; Jerry Fahy, Section Chief, Dept of Public Works; Jeff Valeros, Engineer, Dept of Public Works; Alexander Zandian, Engineer, Dept of Public Works; Jason Crapo, Deputy Director, Dept of Conservation and Development; Robert Sarmiento, Planner, Dept of Conservation and Development; Jody London, Sustainability Coordinator; Susan Psara, Green Business Program Manager; Christine Locklear, Green Business Program Associate; Dom Pruett, Field Representative, Supervisor Andersen; Wade Finlinson, Integrated Pest Management Coordinator; Erin Steffen, Management Analyst, County Administrator's Office; Luz Gomez, Manager, Community Wellness Program

Attendees: Brenna Shafizadeh, Carol Weed, Chris Easter, Marti Roach, Lindy Novak, Lisa Jackson, Betty Lobos, Wes Sullens

1. Introductions
2. Public comment on any item under the jurisdiction of the Committee and not on this agenda (speakers may be limited to three minutes).

3.

*The Record of Action from the June 28, 2021 Special Meeting was approved.*

4. Accept report on Sustainability Fund research findings and consider staff recommendation for a Sustainability Fund for Contra Costa County that would be used to support investments in County facilities that further the County's environmental sustainability and climate change goals. Refer the report findings and recommendation for a Sustainability Fund to the full Board of Supervisors for consideration.

Staff recommends that a Sustainability Fund be established with an annual

allocation of \$1-\$5 million for the next 5 years. Public Works staff will report back to the Sustainability Committee annually on progress on project implementation and progress towards improving the data quality and performance metrics through improved tracking systems. At the end of 5 years, the Public Works Department will report back to the Sustainability Committee with a recommendation to evolve the Sustainability Fund to a revolving fund based on whether Public Works is able to develop the data and metrics needed to track actual cost savings for sustainability projects.

Staff recommends the Department of Public Works have primary responsibility for the Sustainability Fund, working in consultation with an interdepartmental advisory committee and the County Administrator's Office. Public Works would identify projects, oversee projects to completion, track savings (estimated or actual), and report annually on the fund's impact. This conforms to best practices learned from other jurisdictions.

In our research, an interdepartmental committee was identified as a key element for a Sustainability Fund. The recently created Interdepartmental Climate Action Task Force could play this role. The Task Force consists of department heads or designated representatives of each County department. It would convene throughout the year to make ongoing recommendations about the Sustainability Fund's management including the process of identification and selection of the projects the County should implement.

Steve Kowalewski, Chief Deputy Director, Public Works Department, provided an update on research and recommendations for a Sustainability Fund that would support investments in County facilities that advance the County's climate action goals. Starting from the best practices identified in the written report, Public Works developed goals for a Contra Costa County Sustainability Fund:

1. Reduce impact on the environment
2. Centralize authority for funding sustainability investments.
3. Minimize costs of implementation.
4. Start project implementation immediately.
5. Fund oversight and transparency.
6. Reduce operating costs through energy use reduction or other resource use reduction.

Working off a flow chart (attached) Kowalewski described the trade-offs involved in implementing a special fund, particularly in terms of the amount of resources used to verify energy savings. The Committee agreed, and recognized that there are non-monetary benefits from investments that support climate action, particularly in terms of health and environment. Kowalewski clarified that the Sustainability Fund would be used for retrofits of existing County facilities. The funds would be available to any County facility, regardless of the department's funding source.

Public Works recommends that project selection and prioritization be done through recommendations from the County's Energy Manager, input from the County's Sustainability Coordinator, input from the Facilities Services and Capital Project Management divisions, input from County Departments, and input and project approval from the CAO. The Interdepartmental Climate Action Task Force would review the project selection and approval process and make recommendations on how to improve. Staff has

already developed an initial list of energy reduction projects, electric vehicle charging stations, electric vehicle purchases, and continue with the solar panel installation program (on-going).

The Committee directed staff to update report to reflect that: (1) some of the actions the Fund will support are going to be required under State law (i.e., electric vehicles), (2) there are health benefits of these improvements to County facilities, and (3) this creates an opportunity to leverage County investment with infrastructure funds coming from State, Federal, maybe other sources. The Committee directed Public Works to consult with the Health Department regarding health benefits. The Committee agrees with staff recommendations on Fund structure and governance. The Committee recommended the amount requested be revised to \$2.5 - \$5 million, with the initial focus on installing the first tranche of electric vehicle chargers identified in a later agenda item. The Committee directed that the report be presented to the Board of Supervisors in September.

**5. RECEIVE UPDATE on Conversion of County Fleet to Electric Vehicles, and PROVIDE DIRECTION.**

Joe Yee, Deputy Director, Public Works, responded to the direction provided by the Committee at its May meeting. The written report included in the agenda includes information on the number of total vehicles purchased in the last two years by County departments. Out of 340, 12 were electric vehicles (EVs).

Yee reviewed a proposal from staff to install EV chargers at 15 County facility sites. Several of those sites have solar panels. Once this project is complete, there will be 93 chargers across the 15 sites.

Public Works also looked at how many County vehicles are being operated out of these sites, and noted that in many cases, electric conduit is already present. There may be some sites at which the electrical panel needs to be upgraded, which can increase the cost of the project.

The Committee reviewed Administrative Bulletins 507 and 508 relating to vehicles and fleet. The Committee directed that the Bulletins be revised to reflect that the default vehicle type will be all-electric. The Committee discussed other revisions to the Bulletins, including priority of use for chargers, rates for charging, time limits for charger use, removing internal combustion engine vehicles from sites that have EV charging capability, and a preference to refer to "zero emission" vehicles.

**6. RECEIVE REPORT on County Active Transportation Plan and PROVIDE DIRECTION as needed.**

Robert Sarmiento, Planner in the Department of Conservation and Development (DCD), provided an overview of the ongoing work to update the County's Active Transportation Plan. The goal of this project is to have a seamless network for bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the County. This project is being led by the Department of Public Works and DCD with funding from a State grant. The project is moving quickly to meet a grant deadline of February 2022.

The group will report back to the Committee in September on the recommendations in the Active Transportation Plan.

**7. RECEIVE REPORT from Sustainability Commission Chair, or Designee.**

8. RECEIVE report from Sustainability Coordinator.
  9. The next meeting is currently scheduled for September 27, 2021.
  10. Adjourn
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For Additional Information Contact:

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