

2025-2026 Sustainability Speaker Series Proposal  
*Prepared by the Sustainability Commission*  
April 2025

THEME AND TOPICS

**Game Time: Sunnyvale’s Playbook for Climate Action**

Sunnyvale’s Climate Action Playbook (CAP) Update and Game Plan 2028

(<https://sunnyvaleclimateaction.org/playbook>) were approved by City Council last year, laying out quantifiable goals to continue the city’s work on greenhouse gas emissions reductions and sustainability over the next several years. The CAP has six Strategies: promoting 100% clean electricity; decarbonizing buildings; decarbonizing transportation and sustainable land use; managing resources sustainably; empowering our community; and adapting to a changing climate. Each Strategy consists of multiple Plays – specific, measurable actions to achieve the Strategy. Game Plan 2028 is the city’s workplan of “Moves” or actions that will be implemented between FY 2023/24 and FY2027/28 to propel the city toward its 2030 targets. This year’s Sustainability Speaker Series will highlight some of the Plays and Moves that are underway as we work towards a more sustainable and resilient Sunnyvale. Events will highlight the various ways community members can take action now to make a positive impact in our city. We hope this theme will also inspire the general public to find their own way to incorporate CAP Plays and Moves into their day-to-day activities and to engage in the next CAP Game Plan update.

The topics proposed in Table 1 below are relevant to residents and businesses in Sunnyvale and are meant to both educate and motivate action. The Sustainability Commission Subcommittee has proposed topics for ranking in the following table. The table also lists potential event titles, speakers, and a brief description of the topics to be covered.

COSTS

The first five years of the Sustainability Speaker Series were funded through a project’s budget, set up specifically for the series. From Fiscal Year (FY) 2021/22 forward, the Sustainability Speaker Series is funded through the operating budget for Environmental Sustainability Program in the Environmental Services Department. Costs for the series vary depending on whether the series is held virtually or in person. It remains to be determined if these events will be held in a virtual or in-person setting which could result in differences in how the budget is spent. Typical costs incurred for in-person events include fees for travel costs, refreshments and staff time for set up and take down of event space. Virtual events accrue costs from staff time, advertising and speaker fees. The adopted budget for FY2025/26 includes \$16,000 for speaker series implementation.

Table 1: Proposed Topics and speakers

Commission Rank	Topic	Event Title	Speaker	Title / Affiliation	Description
	Decarbonizing Buildings: The Next Level	Accelerating CAP Strategy 2 by electrifying multi-family	Cora Wyent	Director of Research, Rewiring America	Sunnyvale has made great strides in promoting electrification for new construction and for homeowners looking to make the switch, but what about the half of the city who rent, often in older, multi-family buildings? This talk will focus on ways that non-homeowners can reduce emissions from their residence, and what strategies have been successful in other localities.
	Cool Blocks (empowering community)	Local impacts - Building community and reducing climate change in your neighborhood (Strategy 5)	David Gershon  Edith Gomez Marin	Managing Director, Cool Block  City of Mountain View	The Cool Block program empowers residents to address climate change by working toward stronger, more resilient, more livable communities at the neighborhood level. Cool Block teams are already active in Mountain View; in this event we will hear how the program has been implemented in our neighbor city and how Sunnyvale communities might also get involved in these local actions.
	Resilience Hubs	Resilience Hubs in Sunnyvale's CAP	McKenzie Jones	Resilience Hub Director, Urban Sustainability Directors Network	Climate change is happening, and much of the extent of its impacts will be determined by how well we are prepared and how well we respond to various challenges and emergencies. Resilience hubs are community centers and sites which are specifically prepared to help members of the community after an emergency or natural disaster, and are specifically described in Move 6.F. This talk will give examples of how resilience hubs have been implemented around the Bay Area, the progress in implementing them as part of the Sunnyvale CAP, and how the community can get involved.

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	SMART station and solid waste reduction	Goodbye, garbage – what happens to your trash?	Sunnyvale Solid Waste Programs staff	TBD	Play 4.1 is to reduce per capita landfilled garbage to <1lb/day, but what actually happens when you put something in the trash? Sunnyvale’s SMART station is one-of-a-kind, processing all the city’s trash, recycling, and food waste, and will be central to the zero waste goals of the city. This talk will give residents a tour of our SMART station, and answer burning questions about recycling, organic waste, and what really happens when your neighbors put their trash in the wrong bin?
	Active Transportation Plan	Name your transportation – An Update on the City’s Active Transportation Plan (Strategy 3)	Sunnyvale Transportation Department staff	TBD	Driving is up by 18%, but emissions are trending down thanks to cleaner vehicles. As part of achieving our climate goals, the City aims to increase the amount of alternative transportation use. Our Active Transportation Plan is designed to encourage bicycling and walking by creating a safe, connected network for bicyclists and pedestrians. Join us for an update on our Active Transportation Plan work and what residents can do to get involved.
	Reducing off-road emissions from landscaping	Let’s talk about leaf blowers	Rosemary Malfi	Director of Conservation Policy, Xerces Society	Off-road equipment use was 7% of the city’s 2023 emissions, and few are more visible than leaf blowers and other gas-powered lawn equipment, which produce emissions, noise, and suspended particulates; these issues are somewhat but not fully mitigated with electric equipment. Bans are becoming more popular, but enforcement remains a challenge. This talk will discuss options for landscaping which minimize equipment usage (e.g., "leave the leaves", low-maintenance and local flora), the benefits and co-benefits, explore success stories in other locations, and promote dialogue with

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					professionals working towards a just transition away from these types of equipment.
	The intersection of climate change and disability rights	Building an Inclusive Climate Action Solution (Strategy 5)	Daphne Frias	Activist, Climate Reality Project	Community empowerment is only as strong as its treatment of marginalized communities. In 2023, there were more than 44 million adults in the US living with a disability. Climate change-induced disasters often disproportionately impact people with disabilities, who may have additional medical needs, mobility challenges, and socioeconomic risk factors. Join us to learn more about how both abled and disabled residents can work together to build inclusive climate solutions in our community. This talk would ideally be coordinated with the City Manager's Office to align with October's United Against Hate Week.

## SCHEDULING

Up to four events will be spaced approximately every two to three months, coordinated by staff in consideration of speaker availability, staff time, budget, and other City events.

## VENUE

The events held since January 2020 have been held in a virtual online environment. City events in a lecture style have been better attended in the virtual format than in-person. Staff will consider in-person events if there are hands-on components or demonstrations as part of the talk. Online events allow more people to attend since seating capacity is not limited. If an in-person event is held, the Bay Conference Room (Room 145) at City Hall, is a first choice of venues because it allows for live broadcast on K-SUN TV as well as recording for later viewing. Other venues including the Sunnyvale Community Theater (capacity 200) and the Community Center Ballroom (capacity 300) are considered when a larger audience is expected. Refreshments will be provided at in-person events with a zero-waste goal.

## PUBLICITY

The promotion and marketing of events will be similar to past series. It will include social media, email blasts, Sunnyvale Sun ads, and flyers posted at community businesses. With longer advance notice, the event notices could be printed in *Horizon*. Additional avenues for outreach to local schools, colleges and universities as well as the business/tech community should also be used.

## VIDEO RECORDINGS

Each event will be videotaped and made available on the Community TV channel as well as on the City's Sustainability website. If the venue is other than online or City Hall, some funding and coordination is needed for video recording services. If a particular speaker does not allow recording/posting of their talk, a summary of the key points will be written and posted online.

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Evaluation surveys will be administered, as done in past series, to collect feedback from attendees on the event experience, identify improvements, and gather suggestions for future topics and speakers.

## HISTORY

For context, Table 2. below summarizes the history of prior Sustainability Speaker's Series events. The 2018-2019 series marks the shift between calendar year and fiscal year planning to align with Sunnyvale's budgeting fiscal year.

Table 2: Sustainability Speaker Series Event History since inception

Series Year	Title	Speaker	Date	General Topic
2017	Electrifying! Beyond Fossil Fuels in Homes and Businesses	Pierre Delforge	May 31, 2017	Buildings
	Electrifying Our Transportation System	Rod Diridon, Sr.	Aug. 2, 2017	Transportation
	Zero Waste Home	Bea Johnson	Aug. 30, 2017	Waste
2018	Drawdown: 100 Substantive Solutions to Global Warming	Chad Frischmann	Jan. 31, 2018	Climate Solutions
	Hidden in Plain Bite	Katie Cantrell	May 16, 2018	Food
	The Power of Stuff	Annie Leonard	Sept. 26, 2018	Consumption of Resources
	Home Energy: Taking Charge! Panel Discussion	Tom Kabat, Doug Kunz, Dave Edwards, Steve Schmidt, Marianna Grossman	Oct. 25, 2018	Home Energy
2019 (added to 2018 series)	Climate, Energy & Food: A Recipe for Action	Dr. Eugene Cordero	May 22, 2019	Carbon Footprint
FY 2019-2020	Electric Cars Demystified	Jane Rosten, Marc Geller, Jim Barbera	Nov. 9, 2019	EV Transportation
	California's Rise to Water Resilience: What will it take?	Felicia Marcus	Jan. 29, 2020	Water
	Less Traffic, Better Places: How do we get there?	Patrick Siegman	Mar. 11, 2020	Transportation
FY 2020-2021	California's Equitable Carbon Neutral Future	Jarod Blumenfeld Secretary of California EPA	Dec. 3, 2020	Adaptation and CA Climate Policy
	Sustainability goes to School	Nik Kaestner, Director of Sustainability at San Francisco	Jan. 30, 2021	Decarbonizing Buildings

		Unified School District		
	What Moves You - Active, Shared and Electric Transportation	Terra Curtis & Meghan Weir Principals at <a href="#">Nelson/Nygaard</a>	March 17, 2021	Decarbonizing Transportation
	Recycling – Beyond the Triangle	Mark Bowers Former Sunnyvale Solid Waste Programs Division Manager	May 19, 2021	Managing Resources Sustainably
FY 2021-2022	This Old Zero-Emission House: Climate Retrofits on a Limited Budget	Sean Armstrong, Zero Net Energy Designer and Managing Principal, Redwood Energy	February 2, 2022	Decarbonizing Buildings
	The Emissions that You Purchase: Reducing Your Carbon Footprint	Chris Jones, Director of CoolClimate Network, UC Berkeley	March 16, 2022	Consumption-based emissions
	A Changing Climate: Through the Lens of Equity and Resiliency	Violet Saena, Founder & Executive Director, Climate Resilient Communities	June 8, 2022	Climate Change and Health
FY 2022-2023	Sustainable Food Gardening in Our Own Backyards	Trinity Tomsic	December 14, 2022	Food
	Farm to Table: Busting the Myths of our Food System	Dr. Sarah Taber	January 25, 2023	Food
	An Electric Dinner Party: Induction Cooking	Chef Rachelle Boucher	May 30, 2023	Decarbonizing Buildings
FY 2023-2024	Drought, Atmospheric Rivers and Floods, Oh My!	Christine Shields Erik Porse	January 24, 2024	Water
	Microplastics? Macro Problems	Dr. Imari Walker-Franklin	February 7, 2024	Water
	Make Every Drop Count: Grey Water Reuse	Shreya Ramachandran	April 17, 2024	Water