

2022-2023 Sustainability Speaker Series Proposal

Prepared by the Sustainability Commission

June 2022

THEME AND TOPICS

This following proposal from the Sustainability Commission is for the 2022-2023 Sustainability Speaker Series (FY2023 Series). The Council currently has a Priority for Accelerating Climate Action. The Climate Action Playbook specifies Next Move 5.D to “Implement the Sustainability Speaker Series”. This proposal for the 6th year of the series will be coincident with the 2022-2023 update of the Climate Action Playbook Next Moves. Up to four events will be selected from the seven proposed. Final speakers and dates will depend on speaker availability and City schedules. The proposed theme for the next series is “Food and Climate”. Food is a fundamental part of everyday life and something which every person needs. The state of California produces over a third of the US’s vegetables and two-thirds of the country’s fruits and nuts (<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/statistics/>), and the production of our food is intimately connected with changes in climate, as well as other equity issues such as climate justice and resiliency of farmworker communities especially in light of increasing heat waves and wildfires. In this series, we aim to explore different aspects of the relationship between food and sustainability, from soil and growth practices through harvest and preparation.

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 and ranked them in priority order as shown in the first column of 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 the 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 FY 22/23 includes \$25,000 for speaker series implementation.

Table 1: Proposed Topics and speakers as ranked by the Commission on June 20, 2022

Commission Rank	Topic	Event Title	Speaker	Title / Affiliation	Description
1	Induction Cooking	Plug In to Induction Cooking: Healthy Cooking for you and the Planet	Rachelle Boucher	Chef and Founder, Kitchens to Life	Induction cooktops are an electric alternative to gas stovetops. Induction cooktops are more than 40% more energy efficient than gas stoves and have better heat control. Join professional chef Rachelle Boucher for a live cooking experience to learn about electric induction cooking: a new safer, healthier, and higher-performance cooking alternative to natural gas – for cuisines of all kinds. The zero-waste and emissions-free meal will use seasonal ingredients.
2	Community-based agriculture	Sustainable food gardening in our own backyards	Trinity Tomsic	Chair, Garden to Table Silicon Valley	Garden to Table's Taylor Street Farm is open to new and returning volunteers at least three days a week, with a mission to educate people how to grow their own food and create a sustainable, just, and equitable local food system that builds community, improves access to healthy foods, and teaches residents to cultivate their own fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Volunteers are encouraged to harvest at each visit! This talk could potentially involve a field trip to the farm and would be of interest to Sunnyvale residents who do not have access to their own outdoor gardening space or consistent schedules to be able to commit to a different model of community garden.

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3	Sustainable and equitable agriculture	How can grocery shoppers contribute to agricultural sustainability and equity?	Sarah Taber OR Michael Mendez	Crop scientist, ex-farmworker, author Assistant professor of Environmental Planning and Policy, UC Irvine	No matter how much we shop at the farmer's market, we all rely on some conventional farming foods. These agricultural systems have serious sustainability (e.g., soil health, pesticides) and environmental justice (e.g., labor justice/equity) issues, especially as wildfire smoke and heatwaves become increasingly common. This speaker will talk about the main issues in agriculture and what we as food consumers can do to move us all towards more sustainable systems in California and the rest of the US.
4	School Districts, Food, and Sustainability	How Our Local Schools Are Fighting Climate Change with Healthy, Sustainable, Equitable Food Options	TBD; Potentially Nicole Meschi, David Tuttle,	Director, Student Nutrition Services (CUSD); Project Manager for District Farm to School Program (SCUSD)	Learn about how our local schools are serving our community and children with educational efforts, programs, and zero waste efforts. Practitioners will share an on-the-ground perspective of how schools play a critical role in our sustainability and equity efforts through food.

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5	Food Recovery	Let's Glean! Keeping our Neighbors Healthy and Planet Clean	Oakland Gleaners Volunteer	Oakland Gleaners	Gleaning is simply harvesting extra crops from farms and gardens to give to our neighbors facing hunger. Gleaning offers an opportunity for straightforward environmental and social wins- food waste on farms/gardens is reduced and supply of fresh food to those in need is increased. Learn from the Oakland Gleaners, a group of volunteers who pick fruit and deliver it to an Oakland food donation program.
6	Food Systems and Climate Resilience	Nature based Solutions to Food Resilience	TBD	Santa Clara County Food Systems Alliance	How does the food system space intersect with climate resilience? How is climate change impacting agriculture? Learn about how it's important to reduce food waste in order to reduce methane emissions from landfills, how to supporting local/sustainable/ethical agriculture, and how to provide equitable access to healthy food.
7	Regenerative aquaculture	Let's eat kelp for sustainability	Dune Lankard OR Karen Gray	Eyak practitioner of regenerative ocean farming California Reef Manager, GreenWave	The oceans, especially off the California coast, are home to many crucial ecosystems, store an enormous amount of carbon, and are massively at risk from the effects of climate change. They also represent a huge untapped potential to meet the demands of the growing human population. Speaker would potentially talk about how we can facilitate ocean farming in a more sustainable way, with a focus on using kelp aquaculture to support existing fisheries and rebuild damaged ecosystems.

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 due to the pandemic. Experience gained in hosting these events will allow flexibility for future events if, for whatever reason, an in-person event is not feasible. Online events allow more people to attend since seating capacity is not limited. When a return to in-person events is deemed safe, the Council Chambers 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 Unified School District	Jan. 30, 2021	Decarbonizing Buildings
	What Moves You - Active, Shared and Electric Transportation	Terra Curtis & Meghan Weir Principals at Nelson/Nygaard	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	February 2, 2022	Decarbonizing Buildings

	Managing Principal, Redwood Energy		
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