



City of Sunnyvale

Meeting Minutes

Sustainability Commission

Thursday, October 23, 2025

7:00 PM

Online and Council Chambers, City Hall,
456 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086

Special Joint Meeting with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Nabhan called the joint meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chair Nabhan led the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: 12 - Chair Jeffery Nabhan
Vice Chair Kristina Pistone
Commissioner Madeline Chang
Commissioner Colin Ford
Commissioner Cortney Jansen
Commissioner Douglas Kunz
Commissioner Richard Parenteau
Jonathan Wilson
Alex Bonne
Geeta Gollakota
Leia Mehlman
Diyi Zhu

Absent: 2 - Bryce Beagle
Dan Hafeman

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) Vice Chair Beagle and BPAC Commissioner Hafeman were absent.

Council Liaison Srinivasan and Council Liaison Mehlinger were absent.

STUDY SESSION

[25-0993](#) Climate Action Playbook: 2024 Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHG) and Game Plan 2028 FY 2024/25 Update

Madeline Khair, Environmental Programs Manager, provided an overview of the Climate Action Playbook (CAP), Game Plan 2028 FY 2024/25 Annual Update, and 2024 Communitywide Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory. At the end of the presentation, Ms. Khair proposed for City staff to conduct the GHG inventory every two years, while continuing annual CAP Updates. Ms. Khair; Ramana Chinnakotla, Director of Environmental Services; Christina Raby, Environmental Engineering Coordinator; and Lillian Tsang, Principal Transportation Engineer/Planner provided answers to the Commissioner's questions.

BPAC Commissioner Bonne inquired about the proportion of total housing represented by the approximately 200 heat pump HVAC installations. Ms. Khair noted that she did not have the total housing count available. Commissioner Bonne also asked about the sources of edible food recovery; Mr. Chinnakotla explained that the current sources are large food and grocery stores, with restaurants expected to be included in future reporting cycles. Commissioner Bonne questioned the lack of a 2030 water reduction goal. Ms. Khair noted the City is awaiting State-defined conservation targets. Commissioner Bonne suggested that the City could consider setting a proactive, more ambitious target ahead of the State's guidance. Mr. Chinnakotla added that a State bill requires cities to meet specific standards, and staff prefer to review those requirements before establishing local water conservation goals.

BPAC Commissioner Mehlman thanked staff for the presentation and asked what percentage of the City's Public Safety vehicle fleet is fully electric. Ms. Khair responded that the number is not currently available, noting that the City is prioritizing electrification of staff fleet vehicles used daily, with Public Safety vehicles planned for a later time due to continuous "hot seat" operations that make charging difficult. Commissioner Mehlman asked about Public Works vehicles, including whether any are electric. Ms. Khair stated that the breakdown is not available at this time but confirmed that some Public Works vehicles are electric. Commissioner Mehlman asked about the status of Move 3.E. Ms. Tsang explained that the vendor contracted for the pilot program is no longer operating in the City. Staff are re-evaluating the program and plan to present it to the City Council for approval to continue, though no specific timeframe has been set. Commissioner Mehlman asked about progress toward the Strategy 3 metric to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per person by 20% by 2030. Ms. Khair explained that VMT is currently based on

modeled data assuming annual increases, which staff believe does not reflect actual conditions. Ms. Khair noted that staff plan to explore improved tracking methods and mentioned other cities face similar challenges in accurately measuring VMT. Commissioner Mehlman inquired about Countywide data indicating increased fuel use and whether staff know the percentage of diesel-powered municipal fleet vehicles. Ms. Khair described the California Air Resources Board (CARB) dataset tool used to calculate fuel use by County and noted that she was unable to provide a percentage of diesel-powered vehicles in Sunnyvale. Commissioner Mehlman asked whether the City has specific, measurable goals for progress made on Move 3.D related to the Active Transportation Plan (ATP). Ms. Tsang stated that implementation goals for 2030 and 2045 are not set as part of the ATP. Commissioner Mehlman commented on the lack of measurable goals at the strategy level, and Ms. Khair explained that metrics are tracked at the Play level, emphasizing that dedicating staff resources to implementing Moves is a higher priority over tracking individual Play progress. Commissioner Mehlman asked about progress on Move 3.J and why it is scheduled for a later phase in Game Plan 2028. Ms. Khair stated that the timeline was determined based on available staff resources and agreed work plan priorities.

BPAC Chair Wilson asked about greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the FoodCycle program. Mr. Chinnakotla stated that there is a method to calculate GHG impacts but he does not have the data available and noted that approximately 12,000 tons of food scraps are diverted from the landfill each year. Chair Wilson asked for clarification on the significant increase in electricity and transportation emissions, what the new transportation emissions model would show if applied to previous years' data, and whether more aggressive actions are needed to reduce emissions. Ms. Khair explained that staff plan to consult with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to better understand the new EMFAC model, including data sources and reduced fuel efficiency. Chair Wilson commented that the model appears unreliable for accurately reflecting local VMT trends. Ms. Khair agreed, noting that while staff expect further clarification from CARB, the larger issue is that the Sunnyvale VMT model assumes a consistent annual increase based on population and job growth. As a result, even if CARB confirms higher emissions due to reduced fuel efficiency, using Sunnyvale's modeled VMT still does not provide meaningful insight into whether local VMT is actually increasing or decreasing. Chair Wilson asked for clarification on PG&E's power content label, and Ms. Khair provided an explanation. Chair Wilson asked if there is a Move addressing land use strategies to reduce travel distances. Ms. Khair explained that a Move on high-density, mixed-use development was included in the previous Game Plan and

implemented through the City's Area Specific Plans; therefore, it was considered complete and not carried forward into Game Plan 2028. Chair Wilson asked about incentives for landlords to electrify rental properties. Ms. Khair stated that the City does not currently offer such incentives, but Silicon Valley Clean Energy (SVCE) provides rebates and turnkey programs for property owners. She added that the Sustainability Team is hiring an Electrification Liaison to engage with property owners on electrification opportunities. Chair Wilson asked about the solid waste reduction target and how the City plans to achieve the one-pound-per-person-per-day goal. Mr. Chinnakotla explained that CalRecycle has calculations to support the City in determining progress toward that target. Chair Wilson inquired about Sunnyvale's water consumption targets. Mr. Chinnakotla shared additional details on the State's process for setting future conservation targets and how the City is collaborating with the State on that effort. Chair Wilson asked about municipal fleet emissions and whether the current replacement pace is sufficient. Ms. Khair referenced Move 2.C, which will conduct a municipal GHG inventory, and noted that the City is following CARB's requirement that 50% of new fleet purchases be zero-emission vehicles. She also mentioned that the new Fleet Manager has purchased approximately 30 EVs since being hired in November.

Sustainability Commissioner Kunz thanked staff for their work on the presentation and the 2024 GHG Inventory. Commissioner Kunz asked what factors contributed to the decrease in natural gas consumption over the year. Ms. Khair explained that staff are still analyzing the data and described the State's "15 by 15" ruling, which restricts energy data sharing when a small number of large consumers account for 15% or more of total use in the city. As a result, Sunnyvale's natural gas data was partially withheld, requiring staff to estimate residential and commercial usage for 2024. She added that the Building Performance Standard (BPS) currently under development will help target natural gas emissions reductions in buildings. Commissioner Kunz asked whether staff have identified metrics to support vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction. Ms. Khair explained that Move 3.K is still being designed and that staff are exploring available data sources to better track alternative transportation modes. She noted that Move 3.K specifically focuses on tracking alternative modes and that staff also plan to identify a new data source for VMT tracking outside of this Move for better transparency and accuracy. Commissioner Kunz asked if staff considered updating previous years' transportation data using the new CARB EMFAC 2025 model. Ms. Khair stated that staff tested the new calculations on prior years but chose not to include them in the presentation to keep it concise. Commissioner Kunz asked about the timing of the new two-year cycle for updating the GHG Inventory and its relationship to the City's

budget cycle. Ms. Khair clarified that Game Plan 2028 is a five-year work plan with ongoing implementation, so its progress is not tied to the City's budget cycle. She noted that the GHG Inventory will be updated biennially over even years, with the next update scheduled for 2026.

Sustainability Commissioner Jansen thanked staff for the presentation and the explanation of the CAP structure. Commissioner Jansen commented that the 6.1% of electricity from rooftop solar seems low for Sunnyvale. Christina Raby, Environmental Engineering Coordinator, explained that the data is sourced from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and based on PG&E's interconnected reports by Sunnyvale zip codes. Ms. Raby noted the data is not from the City's permit center. Commissioner Jansen asked for the name of the County's food recovery program. Mr. Chinnakotla stated that the program is managed by Second Harvest Food Bank and is called the Santa Clara County Food Recovery Program. Commissioner Jansen inquired about why Moves 3.A and 3.G are not considered delayed. Ms. Khair responded that these Moves are currently in progress as of FY 2024/25 and would only be considered delayed if work continues outside of the years they are slated for.

Sustainability Commissioner Ford asked where the original vehicle miles traveled (VMT) number originated and how staff determine the annual increase. Ms. Khair explained that a consultant developed the baseline VMT projection using expected job and population growth from 2013 to 2025, with staff interpolating an annual 1.86% increase to reach the 2035 VMT estimate. Commissioner Ford asked what data showed the 2020 decrease in VMT. Ms. Khair stated that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) provided Silicon Valley Clean Energy (SVCE) with a COVID "Shelter-in-Place" (SIP) factor for each city's transportation calculations. The factor, derived from MTC's data sources, adjusted for pandemic-related reductions in travel. The SIP factor was last applied in 2023 at a minimal level. Commissioner Ford asked if staff know what data MTC used to create the SIP factors. Ms. Khair responded that MTC did not share methodology details and that cities were provided with a factor and instructed to apply it to their inventories. Commissioner Ford asked about the City's remote work policy and whether there are counts of employees working from home. Ms. Khair described the current in-office requirements but noted she did not have specific data on telecommuting levels. Commissioner Ford asked for clarification on the increase in heavy-duty vehicle emissions in the transportation sector. Ms. Khair provided additional details on the model inputs and explained that the State is accounting for more heavy-duty vehicle miles traveled on the road in their new update, contributing

to higher emissions. Commissioner Ford asked if staff have received feedback from riders of the Peery Park Rides shuttle. Ms. Tsang replied that the shuttle vendor recently conducted a rider satisfaction survey, and data collection is still in progress. Commissioner Ford confirmed that the program is grant funded and asked about plans for expansion. Ms. Tsang explained how the City intends to seek funding opportunities to expand service to additional areas. Commissioner Ford inquired about the status of the reusables pilot program. Ms. Khair reported that approximately 21 to 25 businesses are participating through mini-grant funding and that the program has also been implemented for internal City Hall events.

BPAC Commissioner Gollakota asked for clarification on the 6.1% solar metric and whether it includes large commercial solar installations. Ms. Khair explained that this figure comes from a State dataset, which reflects the total interconnected solar generation reported for Sunnyvale. Commissioner Gollakota asked what “non-electric source of power” refers to in Move 2.E. Ms. Khair clarified that it refers to fossil fuel energy sources, such as natural gas used in water heaters, HVAC systems, and cooking appliances, which the City aims to phase out through electrification. Commissioner Gollakota asked what a waste-to-energy program entails. Ms. Khair and Mr. Chinnakotla explained that the Water Pollution Control Plant plans to use organic waste from the City’s FoodCycle program to generate renewable energy to power the facility. Commissioner Gollakota commended the City for its success with the FoodCycle program. Commissioner Gollakota inquired about the status of the scooter program. Ms. Khair explained that the previous vendor is no longer operating in the City and that staff are looking into restarting the program. Commissioner Gollakota expressed concern about the implementation of the Urban Forest Management Plan, noting that large trees are being removed without sufficient replacement and that smaller trees do not provide equivalent carbon sequestration. She asked how the City plans to increase tree canopy coverage. Ms. Khair stated that the City continues to report a net positive increase in annual tree plantings and is updating the current tree inventory.

Sustainability Commissioner Chang thanked staff for the presentation and data. Commissioner Chang asked how the “Stories from Students” feature is being published. Ms. Khair responded that it is shared through the Sustainable Sunnyvale Newsletter. Commissioner Chang asked whether any tangible outcomes have resulted from the quarterly check-ins with the Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action (SVCYA) group. Ms. Khair noted that staff and SVCYA are collaborating on programming for the City’s Earth Day event and are also working with the Sustainability Librarian to develop a “Climate Café” program at the Sunnyvale

Public Library. Commissioner Chang asked if staff plan to expand engagement to all Sunnyvale youth, not just SVCYA members. Ms. Khair replied that this is a possibility if a structured plan is developed to reach a broader youth network. She acknowledged that Commissioners Jansen and Chang are already exploring this type of initiative and stated the City is open to expanding engagement in that way. Ms. Khair added that her team has reached out to several local youth groups, although a citywide outreach effort has not yet been conducted. Commissioner Chang asked if the Sustainability Librarian could provide educational programs for elementary school students on sustainability topics. Ms. Khair explained that the position is housed within the Library's Adult Services division, which is why most programs currently target adults, though the position does collaborate with SVCYA. She also noted that the Library leads the children's activities at the City's annual Earth Day event.

BPAC Commissioner Zhu inquired about Play 3.3: Increase Zero-Emission Vehicles Registered in Sunnyvale, asking how the data is collected and whether the City tracks gasoline-powered vehicles or monitors when residents switch from gasoline to electric vehicles. Ms. Khair explained that the data comes from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), which tracks the number of registered vehicles in Sunnyvale by fuel type. She noted that this allows staff to monitor both the total number of vehicles and the percentage that are electric. Commissioner Zhu asked whether it would make sense to create a program or incentive to retire gasoline-powered vehicles alongside the City's goal to increase electric vehicle adoption. Ms. Khair responded that the State has similar programs for older vehicles but stated that a vehicle buyback or retirement incentive would need to be administered by a larger agency capable of managing logistics and funding. She noted that the City currently does not have the capacity to offer its own incentives. Commissioner Zhu commended the City for its success with the edible food recovery program and asked if the City is considering a fruit tree collection program to gather excess fruit from residential trees. Ms. Khair stated that the City is not pursuing such a program and explained that it would be complex to manage due to operational and liability challenges.

Sustainability Vice Chair Pistone asked whether delivery vehicles are included in the City's VMT model calculation. Ms. Khair confirmed that, theoretically, these vehicles are included for the trips they make within Sunnyvale. Vice Chair Pistone asked if insurance companies might have data on the annual miles driven by each vehicle and whether that could be a source for more accurate VMT data. Ms. Khair stated that she was not aware of this data source but noted staff could investigate it

further. Vice Chair Pistone asked if staff have compared CARB's VMT calculations to Sunnyvale's VMT model. Ms. Khair explained that CARB's estimates are based on County-level data and likely are not far off from Sunnyvale's model, though a closer comparison is needed. Vice Chair Pistone asked how the Bay Area Air District's (BAAD) upcoming ban on natural gas appliances is being received in Sunnyvale, what the plan is, and how prepared the City is for the 2027 implementation. Ms. Khair noted that the rule requires a feasibility evaluation the year prior to implementation, which is expected soon. She added that staff are monitoring opposition from neighboring cities and that many cities are adopting Reach Codes to support the ruling. Vice Chair Pistone asked whether the Emergency Preparedness Plans are intended for internal City staff or the public, and how public communication occurs if the plans are for emergency preparedness. Ms. Khair explained that these completed plans are internal City documents to guide staff response during emergencies. Vice Chair Pistone asked whether telework is included in Move 3.J, which requires large employers to have a Transportation Demand Management Plan. Ms. Khair said she is unsure if telework is currently included and noted that staff need to review and update the program. Vice Chair Pistone asked whether residents attending Drive Electric events are asked about public transportation needs. Ms. Khair responded that attendees are primarily asked about electric vehicle charging locations, since the events focus on test-driving EVs.

Sustainability Chair Nabhan asked how Silicon Valley Clean Energy (SVCE) plans to secure carbon-free electricity given that over a third of its power comes from hydroelectric sources, which are affected by droughts. Ms. Khair noted that SVCE has several new facilities coming online, including solar, wind, and geothermal projects, which will provide reliable, carbon-free energy without heavy reliance on hydroelectric power. Chair Nabhan asked whether plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) affect transportation emissions. Ms. Khair explained that PHEVs are included in the fuel-use data and are considered zero-emission vehicles for tracking purposes. Chair Nabhan asked about the main challenges in expanding the edible food recovery program. Mr. Chinnakotla stated that the largest challenge is ensuring recovered food is matched with agencies that can use it promptly to prevent spoilage. He added that large-scale cafeterias will be included in the next phase to increase collection volumes.

BPAC Commissioner Mehlman asked where the percentage measurement for the water consumption reduction metric comes from. Ms. Khair explained that it reflects citywide water use relative to a 2013 baseline. Commissioner Mehlman asked about progress on Move 4.H. Mr. Chinnakotla noted that the study has been completed,

the City has fully funded implementation, and a contractor will install new meters citywide over a four-year period. Commissioner Mehlman asked how graywater is measured in the City. Ms. Khair stated that there is currently no method to capture graywater usage. He also asked whether developers are required to install rainwater or graywater catchment systems. Mr. Chinnakotla responded that there are no such requirements. Commissioner Mehlman inquired about issues with federal funding for Move 6.D. Ms. Khair stated that the Army Corps of Engineers is currently reviewing funding, and the City expects updates soon on project progression. Commissioner Mehlman asked what percentage of the City is serviced by SVCE. Ms. Khair responded that 97% of the City is covered. Commissioner Mehlman noted that Mobile Home Parks may not be serviced by SVCE, representing a significant portion of homes without coverage. Commissioner Mehlman asked why Move 1.E is considered infeasible. Ms. Khair explained the complexities of a community-scale solar program and noted that such a program is currently infeasible in California. Commissioner Mehlman asked whether any buildings in the City have battery storage. Ms. Khair noted that City Hall functions as a microgrid system and provided background on battery storage, microgrids, and City solar policy. She added that there is currently no requirement for battery storage, but staff are working with SVCE to identify a reliable data source, as the State's program for tracking battery storage has changed. Commissioner Mehlman asked whether there is any metric or tracking for Move 5.A. Ms. Khair stated that the Move has been delayed, and staff are evaluating several implementation approaches. Commissioner Mehlman asked how many pounds of waste per person per day are being generated. Ms. Khair reported that the current metric is 2.6 pounds per person per day.

Commissioner Gollakota inquired whether and how the City is tracking medical waste. Mr. Chinnakotla explained that stringent State laws govern hazardous waste management in hospitals, and while hazardous waste is tracked, it is not monitored at the City level. Commissioner Gollakota also asked whether there are opportunities to reduce single-use plastics in City cafeterias.

Chair Nabhan opened public comment at 9:12 p.m.

Sharlene Liu suggested alternative methods for tracking vehicle miles traveled (VMT) instead of the current approach. They also proposed using relative measures, rather than absolute values, to track alternative modes of transportation in the City.

Chair Nabhan closed public comment at 9:15 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.