

# 2021-2022 Sustainability Speaker Series Proposal

*Prepared by the Sustainability Commission*  
November 2020

## THEME AND TOPICS

This following proposal from the Sustainability Commission is for the 2021- 2022 Sustainability Speaker Series (FY2022 Series). In line with the current Council Priority for 'Accelerating Climate Action', the series informs and inspires residents and businesses on sustainability topics. This proposal for the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the series will be coincident with planning for the 2022 update of the Climate Action Playbook Next Moves. The proposed theme for the next series is "Equity and Resilience". Events of 2020 brought these issues to the fore and made it clear that our actions to address climate change need to be equitable and build resilience. Equity and social justice issues were highlighted as the nation grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic and witnessed inequalities in society taking a disproportionate toll on low-income Americans, people of color, and others who were already marginalized before the crisis hit. The wildfires very close to home and across California tested our systems and infrastructure and showed us that our actions need to be flexible and adaptive to changing conditions.

The topics proposed in Table 1 below are relevant to residents and businesses in Sunnyvale and are meant to both educate and motivate action. Six topics relating to this theme have been proposed, of which four will be selected. The Sustainability Commission Subcommittee has ranked topics in priority order on November 16, 2020, 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. Final speakers and dates will depend on speaker availability and city schedules.

## COSTS

In FY 2020/21, \$27,315 was allocated for four Sustainability Speaker Series events. As all these events are being held virtually, many of the typical costs accrued for the series are not being spent. This includes fees for travel costs, refreshments and staff time for set up and take down of event space. Virtual events accrue cost from staff time, advertising, and speaker fees. The adopted budget for FY21/22 allocates \$25,000 from the Climate Action Playbook projects budget. It remains to be seen if these events will be held in a virtual or in person setting which could result in differences on how the budget is spent.

Table 1: Proposed Topics and speakers

Commission Rank	Topic	Event Title	Speaker	Title / Affiliation	Description
3	Consumption Emissions	The Emissions that You Purchase	Chris Jones	Director, CoolClimate Network /UC Berkeley	For Sunnyvale and many cities like it, the GHGs we emit locally are just the "tip of the iceberg" in terms of our climate impact! Learn about consumption-based emissions: those that mostly occur elsewhere as a result of our buying decisions here. Learn what drives our consumption-based emissions, how equity issues and consumption emissions are linked, and what your choices can do to make a positive impact.
1	Home Electrification	This Old Zero-Emission House: Climate Retrofits on a Limited Budget	Sean Armstrong	Partner and ZNE Design Manager at Redwood Energy	Sunnyvale's existing buildings account for about a third of the city's greenhouse gas emissions. What are the barriers that can keep property owners from retiring polluting appliances, and how can we overcome them? What are highest-impact actions you can take if you're eager to make progress, but you've got a limited budget, or are renting?
5 (tie)	Water Resiliency	Let's Talk Water	Barbara Keegan	District 2 Director, Valley Water	Where does Sunnyvale's water come from? How secure is our future supply considering the impacts of climate change like drought and reduced snowpack? Are there threats to water quality? How is Valley Water partnering with Sunnyvale to protect against storm related flooding? What technologies are coming for water recycling? What is 'Net Zero Water' and how can residents and businesses work towards achieving it? What roles do rainwater harvesting, graywater and onsite recycling play?

Commission Rank	Topic	Event Title	Speaker	Title / Affiliation	Description
5 (tie)	Healthy Community	The Nature Fix	Florence Williams (or other)	Author of <u>The Nature Fix</u>	Research has shown that spending time in nature improves our mental and physical health. Likewise, lack of access to nature can result in sub-optimal health. In some cities historical biases have exacerbated inequities in access to nature and increased the heat island effect. What's the status of Sunnyvale's Urban Forest? How much will trees help the city reduce greenhouse gases? What successes have other cities had in implementing nature-based resilience solutions?
4	Sea Level Rise	Who Pays When the Water Comes?	Jeff Goodell or  Jeremy Lowe or  Will Travis	Author of <u>The Water Will Come</u>  Senior Scientist at SFEI,  Former Exec. Director, BCDC	Some amount of sea level rise is expected, but how much is uncertain. Projections of 'several feet in the coming century' are only increasing as meaningful emissions reductions globally are delayed. How we navigate these 'uncharted waters' will matter. What are our options in terms of infrastructure, natural barriers, ecosystem services, financing, land use, and city services? How much will it cost and who pays? How can we build in equitable and resilient solutions?
2	Health and Adaptation	Well-adjusted: How to stay sane and healthy in a changing climate	TBD		Our climate is already changing and impacting our lives and our health. We have all experienced wildfire smoke creating unhealthy air quality, drought, and extreme heat events. We have seen flooding and wildfire destruction of forests and homes nearby. What are some strategies we can take personally, and in our city to adapt to these changes and protect our mental and physical health?

## SCHEDULING

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 events and those remaining in the 2020-2021 Sustainability Speaker's Series. 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 <small>(added to 2018 series)</small>	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 <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