



Item No. 16 Town of Atherton

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – REGULAR AGENDA

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER

FROM: STEPHANIE B. DAVIS, AICP PRINCIPAL PLANNER

DATE: JANUARY 20, 2021

**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION REGARDING SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR
STAFFING**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council receive a report regarding a Sustainability Coordinator staffing and provide direction to staff.

BACKGROUND

Currently, the Town's contract Planning Department provides support staffing to Town sustainability efforts, including providing staffing support to the Town's Environmental Programs Committee (EPC).

Sustainability efforts currently managed by staff include working with local residents, governmental agencies and/or private organizations in order to build a more sustainable future for Atherton. Initiatives working towards this goal include such things as community education and outreach on sustainable practices, providing a category of programs aimed at reducing the Town's carbon footprint and resource reduction, implementation of the adopted Climate Action Plan (CAP), as well as responding to any sustainability related regional and/or state proposals and legislation. This may include such tasks as reporting local, regional and/or state efforts to the Council, as well as preparing any related Atherton Municipal Code (AMC) or policy document amendments. Staff also regularly attends regional sustainability meetings sponsored by the Regional Climate Action Planning Suite (RICAPS) program; a collaboration of all cities in San Mateo County to meet their climate action plan goals.

The EPC is established and governed under City Council Resolution 2018-11, which outlines the Committee's principles, rules of procedures, powers and duties. The EPC provides the City Council with recommendations, outreach programs, and education on environmental issues facing the Town's natural and built environment. Acting in an advisory capacity, the EPC has the following powers and duties:

a. Upon request, make recommendations (programmatic and legislative) to the City Council on all matters pertaining to the Town's natural and built environment and the Town's regional role and responsibilities as one of the communities on the San Francisco Bay Peninsula.

b. Pursuant to established City Council programs and policy, assist staff in the creation of pro-active community engagement programs for residents, commercial and public enterprises active within the Town's jurisdiction.

Historically, the Town's EPC has been the primary body in creating and supporting an Earth Day event for the Town, as approved by the Council. An Earth Day event is not outside of the Committee's advisory role. Further, as an advisory Committee, the EPC would only be allowed funds allocated directly by the Council on a programmatic basis, with those funds disbursed through staff. With respect to the Climate Action Plan, the EPC assists staff when needed as staff implements CAP programs. The EPC can assist through public engagement at Committee meetings and/or other programs or activities consistent with the policy goals of the CAP. The EPC does not actively operate or govern specific programs or policies implemented as part of the CAP. Those responsibilities fall to staff. As programs under the CAP are developed, they are discussed by the EPC prior to any recommendation for approval by the City Council. Implemented programs may be monitored by the EPC for their effectiveness via regular reports by staff managing the program.

ANALYSIS

The Town's CAP was approved by the City Council in October 2016. In 2017, the Council subsequently approved a prioritized list of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction measures in the adopted CAP; of the 25 adopted GHG reduction measures, 16 measures were approved for more immediate prioritization of implementation, with the remaining 9 measures acknowledged as still pertinent to effectively reduce the Town's carbon footprint, however recommended to be addressed at a later time and that any significant programs and policies to be implemented be brought to the Council for review and approval prior to implementation. Since 2017, staff has been working with the EPC towards the creation of low to no-cost approaches in implementing the GHG measures per Council direction. See Attachment 1 - Status Summary- Prioritized List of GHG Reduction Measures.

Entering 2021, it may be useful for the Town to evaluate its current progress in meeting the 16% GHG reduction target by 2020 as specified in the CAP, while subsequently evaluating any future update to the CAP in light of the conclusions, and in anticipation of reaching the next identified target of 49% by 2030. Additionally, the EPC has currently been discussing several topics to be brought to the Council at future meetings in attempts at further strengthening and enhancing the Town's sustainability efforts including such things as increased EPC membership and ability to meet more frequently and/or for longer periods of time, beginning of initial efforts in evaluating and updating the Town's CAP, development of an EPC work plan identifying the EPC in more robust and recurrent public outreach and education efforts (including creation and distribution of brochures/information items, promotion of awards programs, website updates, more frequent updates on the Town's CAP) and desire to evaluate collaboration with other cities and regional efforts related to sustainability.

It is noted by staff that, while staying within available budget, meeting with the EPC bi-monthly and subsequently with appointed ad-hoc EPC committees consistently throughout a calendar year,

coordinating with the EPC and Council on recommended sustainability efforts as issues and topics arise, and the ability to implement such public education and outreach programs to the level of detail or timeliness as otherwise may be possible has been challenging under existing staffing resources and may be more attainable both in timing and detail, if increased staffing resources were allocated to such efforts.

Potential Sustainability Coordinator position

To best implement the sustainability efforts currently underway and as may be further developed and enhanced in the future as noted above (per Council direction), the Council may consider engaging consulting services or creating a new position of a Sustainability Coordinator on either a part-time or full-time basis. The position would increase the amount of staffing resources, including an increase in allocated budget, beyond what is currently provided by Planning Department staff (see Fiscal Impact discussion below). Any position recruitment should clearly identify scope of duties as directed by the Council. Such position would need to perform identified tasks under a department division head. Recruitment could be a competitive process with a minimum of three – five consulting firms contacted with a request of interest for qualified, experienced staffing, or could be added as a new Town staff position. A full time consultant could consider approximately 40 hours a week, or 2,000 hours of work each year (assuming 2 weeks off each year as unpaid vacation time). A part-time basis could consider approximately 20 hours a week, or 1,000 hours of work each year, also assuming 2 week off each year as unpaid vacation time.

It is also recommended that sustainability staff report to the City Manager’s office. Sustainability efforts encompass town-wide efforts that cross multi departments and coordination with outside agencies.

Other Jurisdictions

Staff completed a survey of other jurisdictions who have dedicated staff responsible for sustainability efforts; see summary table below. While the majority of the positions are full time and managed by City Manager offices, several of the positions appear to have “split” job responsibilities under the title of “Management Analysts” – meaning approximately 50% of the position is responsible for other, non-sustainability focused tasks. All of the positions listed below are city staff, not consultant positions, so other employment allowances such as paid vacation, holidays, sick leave, medical benefits and retirement are not reflected.

Jurisdiction	Position Title	Managing Department	Salary or Hourly Rate	Full-Time or Part-Time
Hillsborough	Management Analyst <i>*sustainability assignments coordinated from the City Manager’s office</i>	City Manager	\$97,812 - \$118,898	Full – Time
Portola Valley	Assistant to the Town Manager	City Manager	\$119,326 - \$145,061	Full - Time

Burlingame	Sustainability Coordinator	City Manager	\$101,976 - \$123,960	Full - Time
Palo Alto	Chief Sustainability Officer	City Manager	\$119,662 - \$179,504	Full - Time
San Mateo	Sustainability Analyst	City Manager	\$104,935 - \$125,185 / year	Full - Time
Menlo Park	Sustainability Manager	City Manager	\$121,835 - \$159,205	Full - Time
Brisbane	Sustainability Manager	Public Works	\$102,240 - \$125,520	Full - Time

POLICY FOCUS

It would be appropriate for the Council to provide feedback to staff on the Council’s vision for the Town’s actions and involvement in local and regional sustainability efforts and initiatives, the Town’s existing CAP and any future updates to the CAP, including the level of financial and staffing resources dedicated to implementing such programs and involvement.

FISCAL IMPACT

Planning Department staff consultant time has increased over the last three years to support the Town sustainability efforts. The services include; implementation of the CAP; efforts to support bi-monthly, two (2) hour EPC meetings (including pre meeting coordination with EPC chair, preparation of meeting agenda and materials, and meeting attendance) general follow up actions and tasks as a result of these bi-monthly meetings. It also includes additional time for staff to either attend special EPC meetings (1-2 a fiscal year), and/or to periodically work with appointed ad-hoc subcommittees to assist in the development, support, implementation, and attendance of an annual Town Earth Day event which typically is sponsored by the EPC, or other identified and approved sustainability efforts.

Planning consultant expenses on sustainability efforts:

FY 2018/2019	\$14,416
FY 2019/2020	\$31,237
FY 2020/2021	\$30,500 (six months)

If efforts continue for the next six months, it is anticipated that Planning contract staff expense will be \$61,000. Staff expects this cost to continue to increase for the next fiscal year.

As noted above, upon research of other local jurisdictions, it appears that the average hourly rate for a qualified sustainability coordinator/management analyst varies between the range of \$48.50 - \$88.00 per hour. For a full time position, such range would be estimated at an annual cost of approximately \$97,000 - \$179,000, while at a part-time position, would be estimated at an annual cost of \$48,500 - \$89,500.

The 2020/2021 Fiscal Year (FY) Budget includes \$5,000 for the EPC - General Support for committee work. Historically, this \$5,000 has been dedicated to fund the an annual Earth Day event sponsored

by the Town with the direct assistance of the EPC and staff as part of a Council approved Earth Day work plan.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in print and electronically. Notice was published in the Almanac on May 8, 2020. Information about the project is also disseminated via the Town’s electronic News Flash and Atherton Online. There are approximately 1,200 subscribers to the Town’s electronic News Flash publications. Subscribers include residents as well as stakeholders – to include, but be not limited to, media outlets, school districts, Menlo Park Fire District, service providers (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL

This item X has or has not been before a Town Committee or Commission.

- Audit/Finance Committee (meets every other month)
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee (meets as needed)
- Civic Center Advisory Committee (meets as needed)
- Environmental Programs Committee (meets every other month)
- Park and Recreation Committee (meets each month)
- Planning Commission (meets each month)
- Rail Committee (meets every other month)
- Transportation Committee (meets every other month)
- Tree Committee (meets each month)

ATTACHMENT

1. Status Summary- Prioritized List of GHG Reduction Measures

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Priority #	Measure Topic Area	GHG Reduction Measure:	Status:	Notes:
1	Residential Energy	EC2. Incorporate available Energy Upgrade programs and similar rebate	On Going	Town shares and advertises opportunities as they arise through social media and sustainability website. HEA, Home Intel and BayRen home audit programs promotion.
2	Green Building	EC1: Voluntary residential green building ordinance for new construction	Completed/ On Going	Town shares and advertises opportunities as they arise through social media and sustainability website. Promotion of Green Building Awards.
		EC4. Voluntary commercial green building ordinance for new construction and major additions	In Progress	EPC working on Green Building Handout
		EM4. Energy efficiency in municipal buildings	Anything on Civic Center?	
3	Community Choice Aggregation	EC6. Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)	Completed/ On Going	<i>The Town is part of the Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE) Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) Program. Enabled by California legislation (AB117), Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) allows local governments to purchase and generate power to sell to residential and business customers. The Town has opted for the ECO100 option (100% renewable</i>

				<i>energy) for all Town facilities.</i>
4	Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan	TRC1. Implement the Town's Bike Pedestrian Master Plan to create a walkable / bikeable street landscape	Not yet discussed.	
		TRC2. Fund and implement Bike Master Plan priorities and make having safe routes to school a Town priority	Not yet discussed.	
5	Waste Management	WC1. Set higher community waste diversion goal	Not yet discussed.	
		WC2. Require commercial recycling through mandatory ordinance	Not yet discussed.	
		WC3. Promotion of recycling/diversion of yard waste	Completed/Ongoing	Town shares and advertises opportunities as they arise through social media and sustainability website. Partnership with waste management services.
		WM1. Create Sustainable Vendor Policy for public events	Complete	AMC 8.56
		WM2. Environmentally preferred purchasing policy - Waste reduction	Complete	AMC 3.16
		WM3. Approach a zero-waste policy in government operations	Complete	AMC 3.16, 8.56
6	Water Conservation	WTRC1. Water conservation incentives	In Progress	Town shares and advertises opportunities as they arise through social media and sustainability website.

		WTRC2. Water conservation ordinance	Complete	AMC 15.48 WELO
		WTRC3. Voluntary water conservation programs	In Progress	Town shares and advertises opportunities as they arise through social media and sustainability website.
NP (not prioritized per 2017 CC)	Municipal Energy	EM1. Energy efficient street lighting	Not yet discussed.	
NP		EM2. Environmentally preferred purchasing policy - Energy	Complete	AMC 3.16
NP		EM3. Renewable energy installation on municipal property	Not yet discussed.	
NP		EM5. Implement municipal program for shade trees	Not yet discussed.	
NP	Residential Energy	EC3. Implement program for residential shade trees	Not yet discussed.	
NP		EC5. Promote PG&E commercial energy efficiency/demand response programs	Not yet discussed.	
NP	Community Transportation	TRM1. Efficient fleet policy	Not complete	
NP		TRM2. Flexible schedules	In Progress	
NP		TRM3. Explore Town participation in Countywide rideshare or bus program	Not yet discussed.	
*Measure Codes: EC (Energy Community), EM (Energy Municipal), TRC (Transportation Community), TRM (Transportation Municipal), WC (Waste Community), WM (Waste Municipal), WTRC (Waste Community)				