

Climate Plan Update Town Hall Meeting – October 5, 2017 – Notes

Approximately 70 people attended the second town hall meeting on October 5, 2017, which focused on next steps for the Climate Plan Update. Mayor Spencer, City Councilmember Frank Matarrese, Public Utilities Board member Ann McCormick, Commissioner on Disability Issues Arnold Brillinger and Planning Board members David Burton and John Knox White also were in attendance. The presentation for the town hall meeting is located on the City's Climate Plan Update web page: <https://alamedaca.gov/go-green-public-works/local-action-plan-climate-protection>. Ruth Abbe of CASA served as the meeting facilitator and moderator. Liam Garland – Acting Public Works Director – was the main speaker, and several other City staff, PG&E staff and CASA speakers covered specific topic materials during the presentation. CASA led a visioning exercise, Q&A and then the attendees participated in break-out groups throughout the room. The comments are shown below by topic area.

General Comments

- A speaker wants Alameda to focus on new technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, wants to make the City accountable and reflects that Alameda can make a difference for the world.
- A speaker highlighted that Alameda will not be expected to meet its goal of 25 percent greenhouse gas emission reductions by 2020 in that Alameda is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 18 percent.
- A speaker quoted Margaret Mead – an American cultural anthropologist – by stating “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

Adaptation

- PG&E has adaptation grants available for sea level rise issues.
- ~15 folks in breakout group, all in favor of extending scope to adaptation, and felt their neighbors would feel the same. Some issues identified below:
 - How to balance urgency of topic without creating unnecessary fear.
 - How to relay a factual message about the future of sea-level rise that considers different scenarios and explains them.
 - Create fun, outdoor activities that could be blended in with future adaptations. Make adaptations serve double duty as educational vehicles for developing nature awareness/connection.
 - Half-dozen Alamedans volunteered to contribute their skills to the project moving forward.
 - Most neighbors are vaguely aware of sea-level rise threats but not to the degree of those present. They might care if they knew it could impact their home value.
 - Should have started before, let's get going!

Electricity

- A speaker clarified Alameda Municipal Power's current policies.
- A speaker expressed the desire for the Alameda Municipal Power to increase solar power usage.
- A speaker wants Alameda to use more low-carbon energy options, and to become a member of the [Rocky Mountain Institute](#).

- Incentivize electric vehicles: \$350 for lease/purchase electric vehicles; \$150 for hybrids.

Land Use and Green Building

- Concern on effectiveness of transit-oriented developments.

Natural Gas

- One request for rebates/incentives for clothes lines (instead of using a gas/electric clothes dryer).

Regeneration and Sustainability

- The first idea that got a lot of positive response was how a Biochar facility in Alameda could pull the equivalent of 3,500 cars of greenhouse gas emissions out of the atmosphere at the same time as providing heat to 400 apartment units using leaf and wood chip waste as the input.
- One attendee was concerned about wood burning fireplaces and outdoor fire pits and their impact on our carbon footprint.
- I tried to explain how a gassifier and pyrolysis works to make Biochar and leads to minimal emissions of carbon dioxide but I lacked sufficient time to explain all the details.
- Another attendee was excited to hear that this is a means to pull carbon dioxide from the air at the same time as building rich organic soil.
- The second question raised by folks at the table was regarding plans for SF Bay Restoration. I briefly described my, and Liz Taylor CEO of DOER's, ideas for a system of Living Machines at De-Pave Park and conversion of the Seaplane Lagoon into Bivalve Bio-remediation Bay to showcase regenerative bio-science and promote eco-tourism, as well as producing fresh wild oysters for the local restaurants. This plan would also help to attract and anchor more Google (Makani Energy) and Tesla (Wrightspeed) types of spin-offs at Alameda Point.
- This idea and my plans for installing a series of micro-tidal marsh remediation cells along the waterfront of Alameda were met with enthusiasm by the public at our table. We could further support the growth of these green-tech sector jobs in Alameda by integrating the Singularity University curriculum model into the College of Alameda.
- "Singularity University is a global community using exponential technologies to tackle the world's biggest challenges. Our learning and innovation platform empowers individuals and organizations with the mindset, skill set, and network to build breakthrough solutions that leverage emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, robotics, and digital biology. With our community of entrepreneurs, corporations, development organizations, governments, investors, and academic institutions, we have the necessary ingredients to create a more abundant future for all."

Transportation

- A speaker expressed concern about congestion in Alameda, especially given the level of development that the City is expected to experience.
- Why is there no bus to the Main Street ferry?
- Electric vehicle policy only should support options that decrease congestion and support transportation goals simultaneously with lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Waste

- Interest in anaerobic digestion and renewable energy capture.
- Discussion of mixed waste processing as a strategy for diverting more tons from landfill disposal. Works in conjunction with source separation programs/outreach and education, however, mixed waste processing itself wouldn't be advertised. Opportunity to begin processing at Davis Street.
- Need for EPR to address waste upstream; mixed waste processing and other strategies often focus on downstream materials management.
- Interest in buying used instead of purchasing single-use products, using compostable products, and reducing consumption overall.
- Question regarding statewide disposal trends: why has the decrease in waste "flat-lined" and how to fix it?
- Suggestion to develop zero waste event requirements for street fairs, City events and facilities, etc.
- "Trash Talkers" program has been continued by CASA, but one participant noted that more is needed (e.g., have a program to provide technical assistance for businesses, and the ability to show them how much money they could potentially save by downsizing the garbage container, and increasing recycling/composting service, and right-size containers overall).
- CASA members as community educators working in collaboration with the City on achieving zero waste – next focus area will be foodware ordinance / ReThink Disposable outreach and education.
- Recycle on Island – keep it local.
- Extended producer responsibility.

