

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE June 6, 2023

TO Honorable Chair Blackmon and Members of the Environment & Sustainability Committee

SUBJECT **Environment & Sustainability Committee Progress Report**

The Environment and Sustainability Committee was re-formed and assigned a new slate of goals in December 16, 2021 with the express purpose of advancing the mayoral priorities (attached). We offer the following summary status of ENVIS Committee accomplishments to date towards these goals, along with next steps to consider moving forward:

1. **Dallas Codes and Ordinances:** *“Reviewing our city codes, policies, and procedures that allowed for environmental threats to occur, and recommending to the Dallas City Council new codes, policies, and procedures including zoning changes to prevent such occurrences in the future”*: Efforts include, but are not limited to:
  - **Forward Dallas Update:** Through the Forward Dallas update, staff are working to establish a unified vision of future land use to serve as a guide for future decisions about zoning, development, public funding, and infrastructure, and identify areas of incompatible land uses that need zoning updates. Staff are supporting this effort by compiling maps and data analyses of sites with known environmental concerns, added tree equity and heat island efforts, and correlating health outcomes, economic and other demographic data to help guide land use decision-making, plan for a better future, and to help “un-design the redline”.
    - **Next Steps:** The draft update to this plan is anticipated to be complete in the late Fall of 2023. Because of potential for Environmental Justice impacts, briefing to the Committee, with a request for related direction should be anticipated.
  - **Building Code Update to 2021 International Code Council Standards:** Effective May 12, 2023, the Dallas City Council updated the 2015 mechanical residential, commercial, electrical, pool systems, and other Building Codes to the current 2021 versions. These updated codes can be found [here](#).
  - **Development Code Update:** The companion update to ForwardDallas is an overhaul of the Dallas Development Code to develop a modern, updated and user-friendly development code that is streamlined, consistent, clear, aligned with all adopted City plans and policies. This update is anticipated to take approximately 24 months once a contract is executed.
    - **Next Steps:** This effort will likely be implemented during the next Council term. Updates to support CECAP implementation may include revisions related to parking reform, green space, transit-oriented development, “greening factors” including tree canopy and racial equity overlays, and updated requirements related to sustainable design. Because of potential for environmental justice and CECAP impacts, briefing to the Committee, with a request for related direction should be anticipated.
  - **Net Zero Carbon Design Policy:** Staff have worked with the Dallas American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the Strategic Partnerships and Innovation Committee of the

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DATE June 6, 2023

SUBJECT **Environment & Sustainability Committee Progress Report**

Environmental Commission, to develop recommendations to update the City's existing Green Building Policy, to guide the design and construction specifications for the pending 2024 Capital Bond Program and the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, enabling the CECAP target of net zero carbon construction by 2030. This was briefed to the ENVS Committee on February 7, 2022 and June 6, 2023.

- **Next Steps:** This effort will likely be implemented during the next Council term, through coordination with the 2024 Bond Committees, the Development Code updates, and the updates to the City Design Standards and Construction Specifications. We may convene a stakeholder working group to work with development stakeholders relative to implementing these design measures into future code updates.
  
- **EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant:** Staff have conducted efforts under a \$600,000 EPA Grant to evaluate environmental concerns, with economic development potential of about 400 sites near South Dallas/Fair Park target area. This project helped address prior environmental practices in these areas to support future investment and related economic development. During the last budget cycle, Council approved \$1.5 million as seed money, in support of the Racial Equity Plan, to apply for two EPA brownfield grants and launch a permanent City brownfield program. In May, EPA announced that it awarded two brownfield grants to the City totaling an additional \$1.5 million.
  - **Next Steps:** Staff are developing and are in the process of implementing a City brownfield program that will provide funding for site assessment, inventory, and site redevelopment planning; loans and subgrants to owners/developers for cleanup activities at brownfield sites; and educational programming. Focus areas include locations in South Dallas and Joppa.
  
- **Impaired Property Cleanups:** Staff are providing oversight and supporting community stakeholder engagement to effectively address several impaired properties that pose an environmental threat to the communities in south- and west- Dallas:
  - **Lane Plating Community Advisory Group:** EPA-led site characterization and cleanup of arsenic, hexavalent chromium, and other hazardous substances under the EPA Superfund Program to clean up metals-pollution from a 90-year old electroplating operation in South Dallas.
  - **Texas Vermiculite Site:** EPA site characterization and cleanup of asbestos under the EPA Superfund Program in West Dallas. The WR Grace Texas Vermiculite plant operated from 1953-1992 and processed vermiculite, a mineral. The plant was dismantled during 2001 to 2002. Initial sampling by the EPA has been complete.
  - **Blue Star Site Settlement and Cleanup:** Initial shingle and debris removal is complete. In July 2022, staff completed sampling activities at the site that identified lead-contaminated soils at the site above residential cleanup standards. Staff have successfully applied for the property to be included in the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Voluntary Cleanup Program and expect to complete site cleanup by the end of calendar year 2023.
  - **Jeffries-Meyers Assessment:** Staff have started site assessment activities, which includes soil, soil gas, and groundwater assessments. Staff plan to conduct air quality monitoring at the site. Staff plan to complete sitework by the end of the calendar year.
  - **General Aniline & Film (GAF) Materials Corporation:** Staff have conducted facility inspections, responded to numerous odor nuisance complaints, and supported community stakeholder input into ensuring human health protection from existing onsite environmental hazards. Staff are supporting ongoing dialogue between Deputy

DATE June 6, 2023

SUBJECT **Environment & Sustainability Committee Progress Report**

Mayor Pro Tem Omar Narvaez, community stakeholders, and GAF related to the company's plans to vacate the site. Staff have also installed air sensors in the area to better evaluate pollutant levels in along the Singleton Boulevard corridor.

- Next Steps: These efforts will continue towards completion and certification of formal site closure during the next Council term.

**2. Bulk-and-Brush Trash Pickup Program**: *“Reform Bulk-and-brush trash pickup to ensure maximum efficiency and proper use”*.

- Staff completed a piloted bulk-and-brush program in 6 locations that was completed in December 2021;
- The information from this pilot was used to inform the [Local Solid Waste Management Plan Update](#), adopted on June 22, 2022, by Council Resolution 22-0965. This new updated plan informs future decision-making on brush and bulky item collections and processing of green waste material for beneficial reuse.
  - Next Steps: These efforts will likely be continued through the next Council term. Updates to support CECAP implementation include revisions related to multi-family recycling, increasing recycling as a percent of materials disposed, and ways of effectively addressing organic materials.

**3. CECAP**: *“Continuing to implement the Comprehensive Environmental and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) and effectuating resilience strategies contained therein, such as the creation of green roofs and a solar program”*. Staff are continuing to work with over 17 departments to implement the current [CECAP Work Implementation Plan for FY 22-23](#). We anticipate these efforts to be a primary focus for the next several years. We anticipate updating the Greenhouse gas inventory in 2024, to allow bottom-line assessment of progress under the CECAP. Program highlights include:

- **Environmental Commission & Environmental Health Committee**: Staff worked with the Environment & Sustainability Task Force, chaired by Honorable Sandy Greyson, to develop and implement a new Environmental Commission (EVC) to advise the ENVS Committee on CECAP implementation and environmental justice issues as they arise. The Annual Report covering EVC actions during FY 21-22 can be found [here](#). On May 24, 2023, in accordance with the formational ordinance for the commission, a public hearing was held and the Dallas City Council approved the ordinance amendment to extend the end date of the Environmental Commission until June 18, 2025.
  - Next Steps: The effort will continue through June 18, 2025; Council members will need to provide nominations for EVC Commissioners to serve in this next term beginning on October 1, 2023.
- **CECAP Buildings Sector**: **Dallas buildings are energy efficient and climate resilient**:
  - **Weatherization**: Staff are implementing a new [Whole Home Program](#) with resources to connect eligible low- and moderate-income residents to existing programs that assist with whole-home weatherization upgrades in a comprehensive, accessible and easy to understand online format. This program was launched in early 2023, and includes the weatherization campaign, regional home forums, to expand partnerships supporting the program, a green careers training pilot, and a virtual training assistance program to support workforce development to support the program.

DATE June 6, 2023

SUBJECT **Environment & Sustainability Committee Progress Report**

- Next Steps: This effort will likely be implemented, and as funding and participation allow, expanded during the next Council term.
- **CECAP Energy Sector: Dallas generates renewable reliable and affordable energy.**
  - **Energy Management Improvements for City Buildings** (Underway, complete 2024): Allows assessment of potential energy efficiency opportunities for the over 500 buildings managed by the City in addition to evaluation for potential use as resilience hubs, and or for self-generation of renewable energy. Efforts include but are not limited to performing energy audits on over 170 buildings, setting priorities for implementing energy efficiency efforts, solar generation, and future batteries to support greater local resiliency for City facilities. In addition, several contracts have been briefed to ENVIS and approved to implement energy efficiency projects, and additional 600 Kw in Solar, and to pilot solar + battery at the Bachman Recreation center. In February 2022, the City committed to partnering with the US DOE Better Climate Challenge program to reduce the energy-use intensity and to decarbonize 140 City buildings in the next 10 years.
  - Next Steps: These efforts will be continued through the next year. Staff recommend that energy savings achieved through greater energy efficiency be reinvested into the program.
  - **Solar Program Implementation**: The City is implementing a multi-faceted Solar Implementation Program:
    - **U.S. DOE Community Solar Grants**: In 2021, the City received two U.S. Department of Energy Program Assistance Grants to investigate feasibility of developing Community Solar Program for low- and moderate-income households. The initial report outlining recommendations is available online. Following an initial pilot effort in 2022, staff are procuring a consultant to help plan City-wide implementation of community solar generation to support related CECAP goals; this contract is on the June 14, 2023 Council Agenda for approval.
    - **City Facility Solar**: CR 22-436/525 approved by Council on April 13, 2022, installs solar photovoltaic panels at the West Dallas Branch Library, the Fretz Park Recreation Center, and the Pleasant Oaks Recreation Center. These projects qualified the City to participate in the 2022 Oncor Commercial Solar Program for rebates for installing solar on City- owned facilities, also with an associated average 50-to-60 percent reduction in energy use. Staff are also exploring ways of using ARPA Grant funding to implement additional solar on City Facilities.
    - **Solar for Affordable Housing**: City staff worked to install solar panels on affordable housing projects underway at the St. Phillips Community and to support solar as a part of multi-family development by Dallas City Homes in West Dallas. We are using additional ARPA Grant funds and are working to set up a permanent fund to allow greater deployment of solar on the City's affordable home projects going forward.
    - **Solar Switch / Solar United Neighbors Program**: City staff have identified a non-profit program that bundles residential solar projects, vets the contractors, and conducts the reverse auction to obtain residential solar contracts at a significantly reduced price for the residents. More information can be found [here](#). This program is being briefed to ENVIS on June 6, 2023.
  - Next Steps: These efforts will continue to be implemented during the next Council term.

DATE June 6, 2023

SUBJECT **Environment & Sustainability Committee Progress Report**

- **CECAP Transportation Sector: Dallas's communities have access to sustainable affordable transportation options:**
  - **Connect Dallas - Strategic Mobility Plan:** (completed, Spring 2021; available [here](#)); (also under Transportation & Infrastructure Committee): detailed approach towards converting from auto-centric to multi-modal transportation network; supports sector of emissions reduction in CECAP.
  - **Vehicle Electrification:** There are several efforts underway related to fleet electrification. Efforts started with a Fleet Electrification Study conducted by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (National Plan) to evaluate opportunities to electrify the over 2,600 light duty vehicles in our fleet; the plan and recommendations were presented to the ENVS Committee on August 1, 2022, in time to support related budget discussions. Staff are currently working to develop a Dallas Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan (DEVI) to support development of a City-wide charging network to support multi-family residents, travelers, City staff, and people visiting City facilities. This plan should be complete in time to support Dallas' participation in allocating funding from the Texas Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan (TEVI), under the National Plan. We are also working with the NCTCOG to apply for the EPA Clean Skies Initiative to leverage IRA Funding to support 100 charging sites across the City.
    - **Next Steps:** These efforts will continue to be implemented during the next year.
- **CECAP Zero Waste Sector: Dallas is a zero-waste community:**
  - **Local Solid Waste Management ("Zero Waste") Plan Update (Complete, 2022):** Update to 2013 LSWMP to reflect current recycling market conditions, and to take CECAP waste management actions forward; Link [here](#).
  - **Bulk & Brush** (see Item #2 above).
  - **Food Waste Pilot:** Staff from SAN and OEQS are working together to implement a food waste composting pilot for select restaurants in the Bishop Arts District under a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The project is expected to be complete during the summer of 2024. Results can be used to explore appropriate next steps for programmatic improvement.
    - **Next Steps:** These efforts will continue to be implemented during the next year. Programmatic updates to support CECAP implementation include multi-family recycling; increasing recycling as a percent of materials disposed, and ways of effectively addressing organic materials such as food waste and brushy materials.
- **CECAP Water Resources Sector: Dallas protects its water resources and communities from Floods and Drought:** Ongoing efforts under the DWU Water Conservation Plan, Drought Contingency Plan, and Capital Improvement Plans (also briefs to Transportation and Infrastructure).
- **CECAP Urban Green Space: Dallas Protects and Enhances its Ecosystems, Trees, and Green space, that in turn enhance public health:**
  - **Urban Forest Master Plan:** In June 2021, the Dallas City Council adopted the Dallas [Urban Forest Master Plan](#) that included 14 actions including conducting a tree inventory, developing and Emerald Ash Borer strategy, develop a storm response plan, and ultimately develop the plan to manage the City's urban canopy in a sustainable way. To date, a forestry website has been established, and there have been efforts to initiate the inventory.

DATE June 6, 2023

SUBJECT **Environment & Sustainability Committee Progress Report**

- **Emerald Ash Borer Action Plan:** With the discovery of the destructive Emerald Ash Borer in one of the sentinel traps, in June, 2022, staff developed and are implementing an [Emerald Ash Borer Action Plan](#) to address this threat to the forest.
- **Expand Green Space and Trails:** Staff have expanded parklands by 193.8 acres through the additions of the Parkdale Park, Woody Branch Park and South Oak Cliff Park, the Downtown Parks and others, by effectively working with the Reforestation Fund, and Partnerships like The Trust for Public Lands. Additionally, public access to trails has increased to over 73 percent of Dallas residents being within a ½ mile distance to a park or trail.
  - **Next Steps:** These efforts will be continued, and with the new “Green Space Czar” may be expanded during the next Council term.
- **CECAP Food Access: All Dallas communities have access to healthy local food:**
  - **Comprehensive Food and Urban Agriculture Plan:** The [Comprehensive Urban Agriculture Plan](#) was adopted in February 2023, and included 5 primary action areas, mostly focused around supporting greater local food production in Dallas; follow-on actions include hosting the [Dallas InnerCity Growers Summit \(DIGS\)](#), supporting local farms and community gardens, hosting training seminars, hosting “Grow with Us” volunteer field days, and developing a new web-hub to support farm networking.
    - **Next Steps:** This effort will be continued during the next Council term. We anticipate additional efforts to reduce barriers to implementing urban farms, community gardens and farmer’s markets will be addressed as a part of the Development Code update effort.
- **CECAP Air Quality: All Dallas communities breathe clean air:**
  - **Dallas Community Air Monitoring Program (D-CAMP):** Staff have expanded the efforts of the original Breathe Easy Dallas Project by implementing a city-wide neighborhood-level air sensor program, which prioritizes communities with environmental justice concerns. The program is working under two different grants and funding to support the Racial Equity Plan:
    - **EPA State Environmental Justice Community Program Grant (SEJCP):** This grant to supports implementing five (5) non-regulatory air quality monitors in West Dallas, with follow-on work with Parkland Health, Children’s Health, and Positive Breathing to develop and implement appropriate education materials/interventions to use with affected community members. Staff have conducted initial community meetings to attain preferences for monitor locations and have installed two monitors near the GAF facility.
  - **American Rescue Program Act (ARPA) Grants:** Staff are following the approach for the SEJCP grant program with ARPA funding to implement similar neighborhood non-regulatory air quality monitors in other parts of Dallas with environmental justice concerns. Staff have installed air sensors in Dixon Circle and Joppa. Additional communities under consideration include but are not limited to: other Fair Park areas, Floral Farms, Jeffries-Meyers area, Upper Elm Fork (near Walnut Hill), and other locations.
    - **Next Steps:** When the GIS servers are rebooted, the website developed to provide public access to these data will be shared. Additionally, staff have begun efforts under two different grant programs to assess and mitigate urban heat island impacts. This



DATE June 6, 2023

SUBJECT **Environment & Sustainability Committee Progress Report**

summer, staff will be working under a program implemented by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with college student volunteers to obtain heat island mapping for 100 square miles of Dallas. The City was also accepted to a three-year Technical Assistance program to use these data and others to identify heat island areas and develop mitigation measures through the Smart Surfaces Program. These efforts will continue to be implemented during the next year.

**4. New Environmental Policies Around Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers and Concrete Batch Plants:** *“Exploring new, equitable policies to address environmental concerns in neighborhoods, including gas-powered leaf blowers and a notification process regarding plans to build concrete batch plants”.*

○ **Batch Plants:**

- City Council adopted Phase One of the development code update affecting batch plants that now requires permanent and temporary asphalt/concrete batching plants to obtain a Specific Use Permit. The code amendment was approved by Council Z13. DCA 201-003 item 22-1020, on May 11, 2022; Phase Two is currently under development and includes additional design and locational standards for batch plant operations and is estimated to be submitted for review by early Fall, 2023 to the Zoning Advisory Committee.
- **Next Steps:** This effort will be continued during the next Council term: Recent Texas Legislative efforts may impact implementation of these Development Code efforts.

○ **Gas-Powered Landscape Equipment:**

- Gas-powered landscape equipment policies were briefed to the ENVS Committee on December 1, 2021, to the Park Board on May 19, 2022. On June 8, 2022, the Environmental Health Committee of the Environmental Commission provided the recommendation to *“support a phased transition from gas-powered landscaping equipment to battery-operated or electric-hybrid equipment to reduce particulate matter and other pollutants that affect health and contribute to poor air quality.”* In November 2022, the ENVS Committee recommended that staff develop a landscape equipment transition plan.
- In the June 6, 2023 ENVS Meeting, staff are providing a briefing memo outlining recommended internal and external efforts to implement these recommendations along with relative budget estimates, and a timeline for implementation.
- **Next Steps:** This effort will be continued during the next Council term: Recent Texas Legislative efforts may impact implementation of these Development Code efforts.

**5. Hensley Field:** *“Ensuring that progress continues on the remediation of Hensley Field”:*

- In December 2022, Council approved the Hensley Field Redevelopment Plan. Communication with the Navy concerning site cleanup is ongoing. On June 6, 2023, OEQS provided an update to the ENVS Committee through a briefing memorandum.
  - **Next Steps:** Staff are preparing the RFQ for the master developer, which is expected to be advertised during this summer. This effort will be continued during the next Council term.

DATE June 6, 2023

SUBJECT **Environment & Sustainability Committee Progress Report**

6. **Dredge White Rock Lake**: “*Developing a plan to dredge White Rock Lake*”.

- The White Rock Lake Dredge Feasibility Study was completed September 2021; Staff are awarding the contract for a development phasing plan and true opinion of probable cost to design consultant in Fall 2023, with anticipated inclusion in the 2024 Capital Bond Program.
- **Next Steps**: This effort will be continued during the next Council term.

In addition to the six identified goals as set forth in the Mayor’s December 16, 2021 Memorandum outlining the above ENVS Committee assignments, several prominent examples of local environmental justice challenges arose during the year, causing the Committee to develop and implement an additional new goal to ensure viable action around Environmental Justice:

7. **Environmental Justice Planning, Data Tracking, Training, and Reporting**: As a new goal for the City to “*better integrate environmental justice into OEQS and City business practices and activities by focusing on integrating environmental justice into City planning, data tracking, training, and reporting.*”

- **CECAP, Racial Equity Plan, and Equity Indicators**: In 2020, City Council unanimously adopted a CECAP that includes an equity analysis for each action and eleven specific environmental justice actions. In FY22, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, in consultation with OEQS and other departments, advanced environmental justice by, for example, including environmental justice goals and measures into the City’s Racial Equity Plan. Currently, OEI and OEQS are working to develop environmental justice equity indicators, based on recommendations by the Environmental Commission.
- **Integrating Environmental Justice into City Operations**: OEQS has developed a plan to ensure the better integration of environmental justice into City business by, among other things: working with other departments to develop an EJ screening tool that helps departments better identify communities with EJ concerns and better invest in our most environmentally overburdened communities; developing training for City staff to use the screening tool and to better advance EJ; developing, tracking, and evaluating EJ metrics for OEQS; and evaluating ways to better engage our most environmentally overburdened communities.
- **Next Steps**: This effort will be continued during the next Council term. We anticipate finalizing environmental justice equity indicators and ensuring efforts under the CECAP plan continue to consider equity of implementation.



DATE June 6, 2023  
SUBJECT **Environment & Sustainability Committee Progress Report**

We are proud of the enormous strides we have taken towards a more sustainable environment and better quality of life for the Dallas community. Should you have questions or need additional information, please contact Carl Simpson at 214-670-3118.



**Carl Simpson**  
**Assistant City Manager**

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