



## Sustainability Advisory Committee

### MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, October 6, 2022

6:00 PM-7:30 PM

Via Zoom –

Link to join will be emailed to committee members.

Meeting notice will be posted on the Sustainability Advisory Committee webpage at <https://www.albanyny.gov/342/Sustainability-Advisory-Committee>, the [Sustainable Albany Facebook page](#) and [Albany Office of Sustainability Facebook page](#).

Meeting will be livestreamed via Facebook.

Advance questions/comments from the public can be sent via Facebook message or emailed to:

[Sustainability@albanyny.gov](mailto:Sustainability@albanyny.gov)

- Regular Business – 10 minutes
  - Call to Order and roll call – Commissioners, please send designee if unable to attend
  - Review/Approval of September 1, 2022 minutes
  - Public Comment Period (Approx. 3 minutes per comment)
- New Business –80 minutes
  - (30 minutes) Discussion of Climate Agenda for 2022-2023 (Dan, Jason), see draft attached.
  - (10 min) Update on Clean Energy Community Campaigns – 3 campaigns (*Energy Efficiency/Heat Pumps, Community Solar and Electric Vehicles*) approved by NYSERDA on 10-18-2. (Tina, Jason, Jackie)
  - (10 min) Review, Approval of Annual Report (Gaby)
  - (15 min) Director of Sustainability, Commissioners and Subcommittee Chairs: Updates
- Upcoming events, calls for Volunteers, call for new Members
- Adjourn

**Next meeting –Thurs. November 3, 2022 at 6 pm.**



## **Sustainability Advisory Committee**

### CLIMATE ACTION POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Dear Mayor Sheehan, President Ellis, and members of the Common Council,

In light of the seriousness of the climate crisis being brought on by global greenhouse gas emissions, and in light of recent Federal and State laws designed to enable action to avoid and reduce the damage from climate change, the City of Albany's Sustainability Advisory Committee recommends accelerated action – including an update of the City's Climate Action Plan. As the Capital of New York State, we have a special responsibility to our city, to the State, and to the nation to become leaders by example for other communities who may not have our resources.

As the climate crisis deepens and public awareness of the threat grows, more people are joining this movement for humanity's future. Community groups and nonprofits such as AVillage, Sheridan Hollow Alliance for Renewable Energy (SHARE), and People of Albany United for Sustainable Energy (PAUSE) among others, have already been advocating for climate justice – in some cases for decades. Many if not all of Albany's local officials understand that climate change is a crisis we cannot ignore.

Our financial resources, the proven depth of commitment from local organizers and organizations, and our status as the state capital combine to place Albany in a rare position to prove (to ourselves and others) that climate change can be slowed, even halted. And we can do it in a way that brings desperately needed resources to neighborhoods that have been left behind for decades.

We recommend that the City take the concrete steps necessary to be a leader in achieving a sustainable energy system while improving the lives of our residents. We propose that the City accelerate the implementation of our shared vision of an equitable, decarbonized and sustainable City. What follows is not a comprehensive list of every action the City can or should take. A more thorough list of policy initiatives will inevitably arise from a renewed Climate Action Plan (CAP) driven by a robust community-engagement process, and from Common Council hearings on climate legislation.

Funding is currently being explored for a new Climate Action Planning process.. In the meantime, the policies below are examples of actions the Administration and Common Council might consider while a broader plan is being developed:



1. Revise the City's Climate Action Plan to include the statewide goals set out in the NYS Community Leadership and Climate Protection Act:
  - a. 70% Renewable Energy by 2030,
  - b. 100% Zero-Emission Electricity by 2040
  - c. 85% reduction of city-wide emissions (from 1990 levels) by 2050 (as in the CLCPA),
  - d. Net zero emissions across all sectors of the economy by 2050
2. Increase Albany's urban heat resilience through heat mitigation and heat adaptation measures such as:
  - a. Adopting measure in support of the State's Emergency Heat Action Plan
  - b. Removing heat-absorbing and/or impervious land surfaces wherever possible,
  - c. Expanding the tree canopy in under-resourced and formerly redlined areas by eliminating the 50% match in the City's Adopt-a-Tree Program in disadvantaged communities
  - d. Committing funds to advertise heat advisories and action measures in targeted neighborhoods
  - e. Causing building roofs to be painted with white or reflective paint where feasible by:
    - i. Requiring white or reflective roofs be the default option for flat roofs in new construction or substantial renovations.
    - ii. Aiding owners of existing buildings to paint their roofs white or reflective by seeking grants for painting supplies from State and Federal sources.
3. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with food production and distribution by:
  - a. Supporting local urban and peri-urban agriculture as a means to reduce fossil fuel consumption related to food distribution
  - b. Promoting organic agriculture in order to reduce the use of fossil-fuel derived and nitrous oxide-producing synthetic nitrogen fertilizers
  - c. Enhancing the health of urban soils in order to promote soil carbon capture
  - d. Update/review any foraging laws on public properties
  - e. Update urban forestry plans to include edible/fruit bearing plants
4. Reduce methane emissions by:
  - a. Enacting citywide composting, including in municipal buildings and at events sponsored by the City,
  - b. Adopting a ban on any new natural gas connections within the City by 2024
  - c. Developing a plan to phase out existing gas pipelines within the City, by focusing building electrification work on areas with the pipelines anticipated to require replacement soonest, so as to minimize investment in fossil fuel infrastructure while maintaining necessary heating services.
  - d. Accelerating the elimination of sewage overflows<sup>1</sup>
5. Encourage Capitalize Albany to recruit companies with cutting edge solutions to building electrification and other decarbonization technologies in Albany. Private investment can play a key role in reducing and adapting to climate change by:
  - a. Developing more affordable means of building heating electrification
  - b. Developing more affordable means of EV charge installation and maintenance

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<sup>1</sup> <https://citylimits.org/2019/01/28/new-yorks-sewer-overflows-could-be-contributing-to-climate-change/>



6. Continue to fund sufficient grant-writing services to allow a concentrated effort to secure state (DEC, NYSERDA) and federal (DOE, EPA, HUD) funds for climate mitigation and adaptation where capacity for program management exists. Such grant-funded programs could include:
  - a. Support for neighborhood-scale building heat electrification
  - b. Support for neighborhood-scale
7. Invest in the City's disadvantaged communities by ensuring that at least 40% of all climate-related mitigation, adaptation, and resilience funding benefits those neighborhoods which have been historically redlined.<sup>2</sup>
8. Adopt the NYStretch Code to increase the energy-efficiency of new construction by up to 20%.
9. Adopt a ban on new natural gas connections within the City by 2026, or by the first date that two neighboring communities enact such a ban.
10. Adopt a plan to require energy efficiency audits and upgrades whenever capital improvements greater than some dollar amount or fraction of home value are approved.
11. Accelerate funding for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, with the goal of reducing the number of automobiles in Albany, and dramatically increasing the fraction of trips taken by foot, bicycle and public transportation.
12. Adopt a local law requiring the 'benchmarking' and public disclosure of energy use, energy use intensity and greenhouse gas emissions in private buildings of 35,000 square feet or greater.
- 13.

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<sup>2</sup> Map of NYS Disadvantaged Communities:  
<https://climate.ny.gov/Our-Climate-Act/Disadvantaged-Communities-Criteria/Disadvantaged-Communities-Map>

