



Sustainability Commission Working Agreements

Adopted by the Sustainability Commission on August 16, 2017

Updated and Adopted by the Sustainability Commission on June 19, 2019

Process to Take Idea to Council

1. An idea or proposal is sponsored and sent by a Commissioner to the Chair, Vice-Chair, and staff liaison in writing (by email) with context about why it is relevant to the Commission. If the proposal is considered time-sensitive, this should be indicated in email. For more information on the time-sensitive track, see Addendum I.
2. Commission Leadership will either 1) accept the proposal and put it on a future agenda or 2) not accept the proposal and send a response to the entire Commission explaining why. (See filters developed in Task 2 for guidelines the Chair and Vice Chair will use to make this determination). 3) If Leadership has not accepted the proposal, any Commissioner can notify the rest of the Commission (at least one week prior to the Commission meeting) that s/he plans to make a motion that the rejected proposal be placed on a future agenda. S/he will then make that motion at the meeting, and if it passes, then Leadership will place the proposal on a future agenda for discussion.
3. To move the proposal forward, the Commission needs to pass a motion to form a committee. The motion shall include a timeline for completion of work and identify a minimum of three and not more than six Commissioners to serve on the committee. (See committee process) Note: It is the prerogative of Chair, in consultation with the Vice-Chair, to expedite this process if the need arises

(The committee will then carry out its work plan and develop a recommendation as described in "Committee Process".)

4. When scheduled on the agenda, the committee will present their recommendation to the Commission.
5. A motion and second on the recommendation will have one of the following outcomes:
 - a. Proceed
 - b. Stop
 - c. Committee is instructed to further research the issue and amend the recommendation

Committee Process

1. Committees are created by a majority vote of the Commission.
2. The Commission will identify the Chair of the Committee.
3. The Chair will work with staff to schedule a meeting time and location which are subject to public meeting requirements.
4. At the first meeting of the Committee, the Committee will:
 - a. Formally elect a chair and vice chair as required by the Commission by-laws.
 - b. Create a concise work plan that aligns with the motion adopted by the Commission. The adopted Commission's motion should provide the recommended goals and schedule for committee. Designate a commissioner to perform TBL analysis for committee review.
 - c. Schedule future meetings. Ideally, future meetings will have a regular recurring date and time, not to exceed the timeframe indicated by the Commission or the by-laws.
 - d. Identify who the Committee should hold discussions with in order to gather information needed to inform their proposal. These could include conversations with other boards, commissions, stakeholders and/or elected officials.
5. Committee shall inform the Commission of the results of their first meeting and provide updates as warranted.
6. The final Committee recommendation to the Commission should include:
 - a. Clear recommendation,
 - b. 1-2 page factsheet that summarizes the issue
 - c. Concise discussion of triple bottom line aspects of the issue.
 - d. City Council strategy (i.e. email, memo, sit-down meeting, public forum)
 - e. Involved/contributing stakeholders
7. Once the recommendation is complete, committee leadership should request Commission Leadership put the committee's recommendation on the Commission's agenda. To be considered for agenda time, recommendations need to be sent to leadership no later than one week prior to the Commission meeting.

**The Commission and staff will collaboratively develop work plan and recommendation/factsheet template for use by committees.

Communications Expectations

Communications with Outside Groups and Elected Officials

1. Be clear for whom you are speaking (as a private citizen, as a Commissioner, or representing the Commission).
2. You are not speaking for the Commission unless authorized by the majority of the Commission.
3. Commissioners are encouraged to communicate with elected officials and outside groups often, but not on behalf of the Commission unless specifically directed.
4. If in doubt, ask the Commission staff liaison and Commission Leadership for guidance.

Commissioner Communication with City Staff

1. Written communications (e.g., email) with City staff should always include copying the chair, vice-chair, and the Commission staff liaison.
2. City staff time is limited and information requests should be carefully evaluated.

Filters for Issues to Address

When deciding whether to take on a new issue/request, the Commission will consider the following questions:

- Is it on our work plan, or very closely associated with a work plan item?
- Is it aligned with the charge of the Sustainability Commission?
- What other groups are already working on the issue?
- How will it affect City Council policy-making? (I.e., is it likely to lead to Council action? Would it be legal for Council to take the requested action? What does the Sustainability Commission have to add that would inform Council deliberation? Etc.)
- Is it timely? Is it the right time to act?
- Do we have the capacity to take on this new issue?
- What is the potential impact on sustainability?
- *For the time-sensitive track: why is this issue time-sensitive? What is the negative outcome if the commission does not act now?

Coordination with Other Bodies

Building relationships is critical to the Commission's success, therefore volunteers will be sought to serve as liaisons for a one year term to other bodies whose work is related to the Commission's work. Liaisons will be appointed by a vote of the Commission on an annual basis, closely aligned with the timing of the annual work plan. These groups include (but are not limited to):

- Planning Commission
- Human Rights Commission
- Active Transportation Committee
- Housing Policy Board
- Budget Committee

Volunteers will seek to develop relationships with members of these boards and provide a recognizable contact for them. Expectations for volunteers include:

1. Attending a meeting of the designated group at least quarterly,
2. Providing a written quarterly report to the Sustainability Commission on how the work of the designated group relates to the Commission's work, as well as any opportunities for coordination. Leadership will develop a template for the written report.
3. At the Commission discretion, a liaison may be replaced if they are not fulfilling their commitment.

Commissioner Expectations

- Do your homework. Come prepared.
- Be engaged. Participate by listening and sharing your thoughts.
- Be concise, stay on topic. Leave space for everyone to participate.
- Work gets done in committees.
- Commissioners should periodically be on committees.
- All committee members should contribute to the work.
- Materials for agenda and discussion should be distributed at least one week prior to the meeting. This is in support of 'no surprises' efforts.
- Chair should delegate the work.
- Make efforts to meet with the Councilor who appointed you, or if an At-Large Member, a Councilor of your choice, on at least a quarterly basis.

Addendum I Track Descriptions

Time Sensitive Track

1. Commissioner prepares a proposal ready for submission to City Council, and a description of how well it meets the “Filters” of the Working Agreements, specifically addressing the issue of time sensitivity. Commissioner sends the proposal and filter description to all members of the Commission, preferably in time to be included with the meeting materials, but at least a day or two before the Commission meeting.
2. At the “Review of Agenda”, the Commissioner moves to add the time-sensitive proposal to the agenda. If that motion is seconded and approved, the proposal is added to the agenda.
3. When the proposal is addressed, discussion will first center around whether or not it meets the “Filters” well enough for the Commission to take action on it. The Commission then votes on whether or not to address the proposal.
4. If a majority of Commissioners vote to address it, then after a brief discussion of the content of the proposal, the Commission will vote on the proposal itself. This should be essentially an up or down vote—any modifications of the proposal should be quite minor. Since there will be limited time for commission deliberation, examples of proposals/proposed actions include:
 - Sign on to an existing letter or statement presented by another group
 - Issue a general statement that the Commission is “concerned” or “generally supportive” or “has heard a significant amount of public concern,” but do not propose specific actions or positions (for lack of due diligence)
 - Request a deadline extension for input to allow time for the Commission’s normal process.
5. If a majority of the Commission votes in favor of the proposal, it will be sent to Council.

In any case, Commissioners are welcome to express viewpoints as individuals even if the Commission cannot take action on the issue.

Detailed Sequence for Usual Track:

1. Commissioner sends idea/proposal to Chair/Vice-Chair.
2. Chair/Vice Chair accepts proposal and place it on an upcoming Commission agenda. Proposal will be included in packet for Commission meeting.
Note: To be considered for the earliest meeting, the proposal must be submitted to leadership at least one week before that meeting.
3. At Commission meeting, a Commissioner moves to form a committee to act on the proposal.
4. If the motion passes, Commission will approve a tentative timeline for the committee and 3-6 Commissioners to serve on the committee, including an acting Chair.
5. Acting Chair will coordinate with staff to schedule first meeting, in accordance with open meeting requirements.
6. At first meeting, the committee will:
 - Elect a Chair and Vice-Chair
 - Create a concise work plan consistent with the Commission's motion
 - Schedule future meetings. If possible, select a consistent day/time
 - Identify people/groups the Committee hopes to consult in carrying out its work.
 - Identify minutes recorder (may rotate) and possible TBL monitor
7. Committee Chair will update Commission of Committee's progress at next Commission meeting and as needed thereafter.
8. When Committee has completed its work, Committee Chair will contact Commission leadership to request time on the agenda. This request, including approximate time required, must be received at least one week prior to Commission meeting.
9. The Committee Chair will submit the following to staff by at least the Thursday before the Commission meeting for inclusion in the meeting packet:
 - Clear and Concise Recommendation/Proposal
 - 1-2 page fact sheet providing background information
 - Concise TBL summary
 - Proposed City Council strategy
 - List of Stakeholders involved or affected
10. Commission acts on Committee proposal. Potential actions are:
 - Approve—if so, identify schedule for presenting to Council
 - Reject—thank committee for their time
 - Revise—direct committee to re-convene to modify or refine the proposal