

Sustainability and Resiliency Committee Draft BYLAWS

Approved by the City Council: January 28, 2025

Approved by the Committee: March, XX, 2025

Article I. Purpose of Committee

(a) Description

The Sustainability and Resiliency Committee (“SRC”, or “Committee”) is a pilot committee that serves as an advisory body to the Santa Cruz City Council (“City Council”) on climate and resiliency issues.

(b) Purpose

- (i) **Advisory Role:** Advising the City Council on selected sustainability and resiliency topics related to the goals the City has adopted in its Climate Action Plan and Climate Adaptation Plan (e.g., important projects and policies in progress).
- (ii) **Monitoring Progress:** Guiding the operationalization and implementation of activities to reach climate and resiliency goals (e.g., annual progress report and workplan).
- (iii) **Cross-Committee Integration:** Facilitating collaboration and communication across existing City commissions to integrate sustainability and resiliency goals into citywide efforts.
- (iv) **Study Sessions:** Recommending climate and resiliency study sessions for the City Council to consider for specific topic areas as needed.

(c) Term

The term of the SRC is 18-months. At the conclusion of the 18-month term, the Committee shall draft a report for the City Council evaluating the effectiveness of the Committee in achieving its purpose and make any recommendations about the future need and/or format of a sustainability and resiliency advisory body.

(d) Schedule

The SRC shall meet beginning around Earth Day in April, 2025 and conclude in October, 2026.

Article II. Authority and Establishment of the Committee

(a) Authority

The Committee was established by Santa Cruz City Council on June 25, 2024 and seated on or before March xx, 2025. The Committee is subject to the Brown Act and the public is invited to participate in meetings. The Committee is established for 18 months from the time of the first meeting, after which the City Council shall determine whether the Committee will continue as a pilot committee, or whether adjustments should be made.

(b) Committee Composition

(i) Three (3) At-Large Members:

At Large 1: City resident with expertise in climate advocacy, transportation, water, trees, waste, buildings, energy, or resiliency.

At Large 2: City resident with expertise in climate advocacy, transportation, water, trees, waste, buildings, energy, or resiliency.

At Large 3: City youth resident up to age 24 with an interest in climate advocacy, transportation, water, trees, waste, buildings, energy, or resiliency.

(ii) Four (4) Representatives from the Existing Commissions: One member from each of the following City commissions (“Existing Commissions”), nominated by their respective bodies:

Transportation and Public Works Commission

Planning Commission

Water Commission

Parks and Recreation Commission

(c) Appointment Process

(i) At-Large Members: At large members must be residents of the City of Santa Cruz (“City”) and shall be recruited using the City’s standard application for advisory committees and commissions. The application and appointment process will mirror the process the City has traditionally used for commission appointment, with the full candidate pool coming to the Council for selection and approval.

(ii) Commission Representatives: The staff to each of the 4 Existing Commissions shall distribute these Bylaws to their respective commission, make a call for nominations

from their respective commissioners in late January 2025, agenda discussion of nominations in February or March 2025, and recommend a commission representative by March 31, 2025.

(d) Dissolution

At the end of the Committee term, the Committee shall produce a report that includes an evaluation of the efficacy of the Committee in reaching its purpose and recommendations for the City Council to determine the continuation, restructuring, or dissolution of the SRC.

Article III. Organization of the Committee

(a) Membership Terms

- (i) At-Large Members: At-large members shall serve an 18-month term concurrent with the term of the Committee.
- (ii) Commission Representatives: Commission representatives shall serve concurrently with their respective commission appointments during the Committee term. Should a commission representative resign or complete their term of service on their commission, staff to the commission will agenda selection of a new commission representative and the commission will select a new representative to serve on the SRC.

(b) Compensation

Should Committee members require compensation due to a hardship, they must “opt in” as provided in Council Policy 5.19 by coordinating with staff assigned to the Committee.

(c) Committee Member Withdrawal

- (i) Members may withdraw from the Committee at any time by providing a letter of resignation to the City Council and City Manager, with copies to City staff to be distributed to the other Members.
- (ii) Committee members shall adhere to the attendance policy specified in the Handbook for City Advisory Bodies.

(d) Chair and Vice Chair

The Committee shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair at the first meeting of the Committee. The Chair shall establish meeting agendas, with staff support, and preside over Committee meetings to ensure the Committee conducts its business efficiently and in compliance with the Handbook for City Advisory Bodies and these Bylaws. The Vice Chair shall preside over meetings in the absence of the Chair.

(e) Quorum

A meeting of the Committee shall be considered to have sufficient members present for it to function if there are at least 4 members at the meeting.

Article IV. Roles and Communications

(a) Committee - City Council

- (i) The Committee expects that City Council members will not speak or actively participate in Committee meetings unless input is specifically requested by the Committee.
- (ii) The Committee shall communicate with the City Council by letter or written report which may be accompanied by an oral communication as authorized by the Committee.
- (iii) Reasons for the Committee to report to the City Council include:
 - 1) To provide updates on status of work; and
 - 2) To make recommendations based on Committee review.
- (iv) Individual Committee Members may communicate personally with City Council members. Individual Committee Members who communicate personally with City Council members shall only do so on their own behalf, not as representatives of the Committee.

(b) Committee Member - Committee Members

- (i) Collaboration with an open outlook: Committee members shall commit to participate collaboratively and maintain an outlook that is open to new information and new outcomes.
- (ii) Existing Commission Committee members shall communicate relevant information to their respective commission at its next meeting and provide any questions or comments from their commission back to the Committee.

(c) Committee - Public

- (i) Committee members may fully engage with the public to describe their experience as Committee members, the information that they have learned, any changes to their perspectives, et cetera.

- (ii) Committee members will always make it clear when they speak or write in public that they speak for themselves, and not as a spokesperson for or representative of the Committee.

(d) City Staff

City staff shall:

- (i) Support the Committee’s work by ensuring that appropriate resources are made available to the Committee in a timely manner.
- (ii) Engage in the same level of collaborative participation as specified for the Committee members.

Article V. WorkPlan

(a) Workplan

The Committee shall agree on a work plan, facilitated by staff. This workplan shall be set annually and will guide the work of the Committee.

Article VI. Decision-making process

(a) General Decision Process

In general, the Committee will follow the Handbook for City Advisory Bodies and Council Policies for procedural rules. The Committee’s decision-making process will differ from that of the City Council or Existing Commissions in that the Committee is expected to reach consensus through a collaborative process. The Committee shall use the following hierarchy of decision tools:

- (i) The preferred decision tool is for the Committee to arrive at a “sense of the meeting.” (See glossary for definition of this term)
- (ii) Consensus is highly desirable.
- (iii) Informal voting may only be used to explore the decision space.
- (iv) Formal voting may be used as a fallback when consensus fails as long as there is consensus that a vote should take place. Any decision resulting from a vote shall be determined by a majority.

Article VII. Meeting Procedures

(a) Brown Act

This Committee shall comply with the Brown Act.

(b) Location and Format

Meetings shall be held at Santa Cruz City Hall or virtually, as decided by the Chair and approved by the Committee. The meeting times and virtual access links shall be posted on the City’s website 3 days in advance of the meeting.

(c) Committee Meetings shall occur quarterly.

- (i) Committee members who cannot attend shall notify City staff in advance pursuant to the attendance policy in the Handbook for City Advisory Bodies.

(d) Meeting Materials.

- (i) City staff shall prepare meeting materials, including the agenda, in consultation with the Committee Chair.
- (ii) City staff shall ensure that an e-mail containing the agenda will be sent to Members at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting, except in extraordinary circumstances.
- (iii) City staff shall prepare action-only meeting minutes, which shall be reviewed for accuracy by the Committee at the following Committee meeting.
 - 1) The meeting minutes shall include a record of attendance at the meeting, including Committee Members and members of the public who choose to identify themselves.

(e) Involvement of the Public in Meetings

In addition to providing public oral communication for items on the agenda, Council Policy 5.11 permits an opportunity for public oral input on matters of public concern which are not listed on the agenda.

Glossary

Action-only minutes: Minutes that show decisions made by the Committee and prescribed forward actions.

Consensus: Consent of all the members. Consensus may include “standing aside,” in which one or more members may convey the sentiment “I am not going to block this, but I am willing to let it go. However, I want my non-agreement to be noted.”

Resiliency: The ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning, the capacity for self organization, and the capacity to adapt to stress and change. The City's Draft 2025-2030 Local Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan defines resiliency strategies for the following climate hazards: coastal erosion, drought, extreme heat, river flooding, sea level rise and wildfire).

Sense of the Meeting: After discussing an issue, often at some length, there is a palpable feeling in the room that a wise and stable decision has been reached. At this point, the Chair will confirm with the group what that decision is and that a sense of the meeting has been achieved.