



# Sustainability Commission 2021 Work Plan

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## DIVISION H: SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

### § 2.86.01 Purpose

The purpose of the Sustainability Commission shall be to advise the City Council on policies and practices that relate to the sustainable use and management of environmental resources that include air, water, energy, land, and ecological resources, and waste. The Sustainability Commission will help to ensure that such resources will be sustained and continue to provide for a high quality of life for present and future generations of Bloomington.

### § 2.86.02 Duties and Responsibilities

The Commission shall:

- a) Collaborate with city staff to review, evaluate, develop, and advise the City Council on policies and practices regarding the sustainable use and management of environmental resources that include air, water, energy, land and ecological resources, and waste;
- b) Act as change agent, coordinator and educator for policies, procedures and proposals that relate to environmental sustainability;
- c) Engage with the Bloomington community and serve as a community liaison for issues, ideas, and proposals and provide appropriate feedback;
- d) Cultivate relationships with residents, community groups, businesses, institutions of higher learning, faith based organizations, outside government bodies, and non-governmental institutions;
- e) Serve as a resource for other Bloomington commissions, boards, committees, and task forces on any issues related to sustainability;
- f) Adopt criteria and processes for making decisions about the use of resources and selection of sustainability projects;
- g) Review sustainability proposals and make recommendations; and
- h) Submit written annual work plans and progress reports to the City Council.

### § 2.86.03 Membership

The Sustainability Commission shall consist of 11 members, including at least two young adults. The majority of the members shall be technical experts in one or more of the areas of sustainability and one seat shall be reserved for a City Council member.

(Ord. [2017-15](#), passed 5-22-2017; Ord. [2018-19](#), passed 7-9-2018; Ord. [2019-31](#), passed 8-5-2019)

## ROSTER

Name	Bio	Appoint.	Term Exp	District
Rob Bouta	Rob Bouta is an ecologist and environmental consultant with a background in wetlands, environmental assessment, permitting, wildlife, and restoration. He joined the Sustainability Commission to help Bloomington adapt to climate change while sustaining natural open spaces that contribute quality to our lives.	1/23/17	2/28/22	1
David Drummond	Dave Drummond has a Ph.D. (Environmental Health) from the U of M School of Public Health. He performed the first campus-wide sustainability study for the UW-Madison including a facilities-based carbon footprint. He also served as their Director of Environment, Health and Safety. As a new member of the Commission, he is learning and participating in its activities and hopes to share his expertise where it will be helpful.	2/24/20	2/28/23	2
Paul Erdmann	Paul Erdmann has a degree in Conservation and experience in water quality, environmental education, invasive species and ecological restoration. Paul joined the Sustainability Commission to advocate for natural resource conservation and to continue making Bloomington a great place to live for generations to come.	1/23/17	2/28/22	3
Steve Flagg	Steve Flagg is Founder and Chair of Quality Bicycle Products right here in Bloomington. QBP has a gold LEED certified building with solar and provides tours of its buildings on a monthly basis to demonstrate the many environmentally and business initiatives. Steve joined the sustainability commission at its inception to promote and focus on sustainability in the business community but also sees the green potential for Bloomington overall.	1/23/17	2/28/22	2
Tim Sandry	Tim Sandry has spent most of his career as project manager, manger, executive in the Information Technology space — primarily working with others	2/24/20	2/28/23	2

	to get things done on time and on budget to meet the “clients”. Tim utilizes those skills in his role as a Commissioner. In this case the client is the earth and its inhabitants (including us).			
Joseph Strommen	Joe Strommen is an engineer and cleantech entrepreneur with experience in clean energy technology and climate impact analysis. He enjoys being part of the Sustainability Commission to help create real change at the local level.	2/13/18	2/28/21	1
Deanna White	After earning a bachelor's degree in Political Science, Deanna White worked on political campaigns for several years before transitioning to the nonprofit world. Deanna spent eight years working for the Sierra Club and two years working with the Brandon Valley Area Chamber of Commerce before moving to the Twin Cities in 2008 to work for Clean Water Action, where she currently serves as State Director. After living in Sioux Falls, Las Vegas, and Washington DC, she has a broad perspective on community solutions to sustainability challenges.	2/13/18	2/28/21	4
OPEN SEAT	To be filled March 1, 2021			
<b>One City Councilmember Seat</b>				
Councilmember Dwayne Lowman	Dwayne Lowman was born and raised in Bloomington near Effa play lot. He and his wife Kellie enjoy camping up north and walking the parks and trails. Dwayne has a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Urban Studies, concentrating in Public Administration and Community Economic Development from Augsburg University. When reflecting on why he joined the Sustainability Commission he said: “There are many reasons why I am committed to Bloomington's long term ecological, social, and economic resilience. Chief among those many reasons has to be those voices that are marginalized or drowned out by obstacles seen and unseen. I trust that I will have the humility to pass on a better Bloomington than what I have found.”	2/13/18	2/28/21	1

**Two Young Adult Seats**

Maya Hidalgo	Maya Hidalgo is a student at Jefferson High School. She is one of the leaders of JHS Earth Corps, the environmental club at Jefferson, and YEA! MN Network (Youth Environmental Activists of MN). Maya is passionate about taking action on issues that intersect with climate change, and she is excited to create climate justice solutions in her city.	9/1/20	8/31/21	Youth
Xiaoxin (Yanyan) Zeng	Yanyan Zeng is a student at Jefferson High School and the President of JHS Earth Corps, Jefferson's environmental club. She joined the Commission because of her passion for improving sustainability in her community and fighting climate change	8/19/19	8/31/21	Youth

	2017	2018	2019	March 2020- Feb 2021	March 2021- Feb 2022
Chair	<i>Tim Sandry</i>	<i>Tim Sandry</i>	<i>Tim Sandry</i>	<i>Tim Sandry</i>	
Vice Chair	<i>Steve Flagg</i>	<i>Steve Flagg</i>	<i>Steve Flagg</i>	<i>Joe Strommen</i>	

## City Staff Support

### Staff Liaison

Emma Struss, Sustainability Coordinator

### Staff-Appointed Commission Secretary

Kim Larson, Office Coordinator

## 2021 WORK PLAN DEVELOPMENT

### Process

The Sustainability Commission developed this work plan during their monthly meetings from November 2020-January 2021. Staff facilitator Erik Juhl facilitated the process with support from Kim Larson, Commission Secretary and Emma Struss, Staff Liaison.

### Guiding Prioritization Principles

- It makes sense to see incomplete initiatives through to the end from 2020 work plan
- More projects = slows down speed to complete, adds overhead (less efficient)

- The work plan needs to reflect duties and responsibilities as defined in City Code which means including hours for advising and reviewing proposals, policies, practices initiated by other Bloomington commissions, boards, committees, City Council, and city staff.
- Due to open meeting law, no decisions can be made outside of Sustainability Commission meetings. This means there needs to be enough time allocated for informal work groups to provide updates at monthly meetings, which limits the amount of total initiatives that can happen at once.
- City staff with subject area expertise must have hours available to work on initiatives related to those expertise.
- The Sustainability Commission staff liaison must have enough hours to track and coordinate all work plan initiatives.

## WORK PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Initiatives	Timeline			
ADMINISTRATIVE	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
a) Update to § 2.86.01, Sustainability Commission's Purpose				
b) Recruitment and Onboarding of New Members				
c) Monthly Commission Meetings				
d) Developing 2022 Work Plan				
MULTIPLE AREAS OF SUSTAINABILITY	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SUPPORT CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY, BOARDS/COMMISSIONS AND STAFF REQUESTS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:				
a) Sustainable Building and Site Design Ordinance Research				
ENGAGE WITH THE BLOOMINGTON COMMUNITY BY:				
b) Hosting a 2021 Earth Day Celebration Event				
ECOLOGICAL LAND STEWARDSHIP	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SUPPORT CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY, BOARDS/COMMISSIONS AND STAFF REQUESTS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:				
a) Review natural resources and sustainability chapter of Parks System Master Plan				
b) Serve as a staff resource for updating city code to reflect sustainable landscaping best practices				
c) Assist staff in adopting criteria and processes for making decisions about the use of resources and selection of natural resource projects				
d) Serve as a resource for staff and consultants on the restoration in Parker's Picnic Grounds				
DETERMINE INTEREST AND AVAILABILITY OF PARKS AND RECREATION AND PARCS TO COLLABORATE ON OUTREACH AND EDUCATION:				
e) Residential outreach and engagement around sustainable landscaping practices				
ENERGY (NATURAL GAS AND ELECTRICITY)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SUPPORT CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY, BOARDS/COMMISSIONS AND STAFF REQUESTS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:				
a) 1-4 Unit Residential Air Sealing and Insulation Pilot				
b) Promoting residential energy efficiency programs				
c) B3 and Portfolio Manager municipal building benchmarking				
ENGAGE WITH THE BLOOMINGTON COMMUNITY AND ADVISE CITY COUNCIL ON:				
d) Time of Sale Energy Disclosure Ordinance				
e) Large Building Benchmarking Ordinance				
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SUPPORT CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY, BOARDS/COMMISSIONS AND STAFF REQUESTS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:				
a) Review racial equity impact assessments for sustainability initiatives				

ATTEND, PREPARE, AND RESPOND TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM:

- b) Equity Foundation Trainings

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**SOLID WASTE**

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
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SUPPORT CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY, BOARDS/COMMISSIONS AND STAFF REQUESTS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- a) Planning for Residential Curbside Organics Recycling
- b) Continued Education on Organics Recycling and Promotion of Organics Recycling Drop-Offs


ENGAGE WITH THE BLOOMINGTON COMMUNITY AND ADVISE CITY COUNCIL ON:

- c) Sustainable Alternatives to Curbside Cleanup Program

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**TRANSPORTATION**

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
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SUPPORT CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY, BOARDS/COMMISSIONS AND STAFF REQUESTS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- a) Setting quantitative transportation goals

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**WATER**

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
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SUPPORT CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY, BOARDS/COMMISSIONS AND STAFF REQUESTS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- a) Commercial Irrigation Program
- b) Jefferson High School Unity Garden


Community outreach and engagement is an important part of the plan and specific communication tactics will be decided by the Commission throughout the year.

## WORK PLAN FOCUS AREAS

### Administrative

#### INITIATIVES

##### City Code

**a) Update to § 2.86.01, Sustainability Commission's Purpose**

*Description:* Recommend to City Council that environmental justice and climate change are added to the Sustainability Commission's purpose in City Code.

##### Sustainability Commissioners

**b) Recruitment and Onboarding**

*Description:* Help staff recruit for open Sustainability Commission seats and welcome newly appointed members to the Sustainability Commission.

##### Meetings

**c) Monthly Commission Meetings**

*Description:* Prepare for and attend monthly Commission meetings held on the third Tuesday of every month. Meetings begin at 6:00pm and last ~2.5 hours.

##### 2022 Work Plan

**d) Developing 2022 Work Plan**

*Description:* At the end of 2021, develop the Sustainability Commission's 2022 work plan with facilitation and technical support from staff.

The City staff leads on administrative tasks are the Sustainability Commission's staff liaison and secretary.

## Multiple Areas of Sustainability

## INITIATIVES

Support City Council, community, boards/commissions and staff requests including but not limited to:

**a) Sustainable Building and Site Design Ordinance Research**

*Description:* In Bloomington's Energy Action Plan (2018) under the "After 2020" strategy section is: "Research and present to the Council for deliberation green building codes that would continuously promote higher building standards and performance for future building development." In 2021, Bloomington's Sustainability Coordinator and Planning staff will continue to research and discuss green building standards (B3 and SB 2030, LEED, Enterprise Green Communities, GreenStar, etc.) with peer communities who have or are developing sustainable building ordinances. Staff will present the results of the research and regional collaboration to the Planning Commission, Sustainability Commission, and City Council for deliberation. Sustainability Commissioners will share technical expertise as needed. The City staff lead on this initiative is Sustainability Coordinator Emma Struss.

## Informal Work Group

- David Drummond
- Paul Erdmann

Engage with the Bloomington community by:

**b) Hosting a 2021 Earth Day Celebration Event**

*Description:* Raise awareness about sustainability opportunities and the environment through a community event. In October 2020, the Commission and the Bloomington Chapter of the League of Women Voters co-sponsored a virtual Earth Day event with ~60 participants. In 2021, the Commission will ask the League of Women Voters if they would like to co-host again and determine whether a virtual event in April (Earth month) or trying for an in-person event later in the year is best. The City staff leads on this initiative are Community Outreach Coordinator Nancy Brewster and Deputy Director Ellen Biales.

## Informal Work Group

- Rob Bouta
- Xiaoxin Zeng
- Deanna White
- Tim Sandry

## Ecological Land Stewardship

## INITIATIVES

Support City Council, community, boards/commissions and staff requests including but not limited to:

**a) Review natural resources and sustainability chapter of Parks System Master Plan**

*Description:* Sustainability Commissioners with ecology and water expertise will provide feedback to Parks and Recreation staff on sustainability and natural resource content in the Parks System Master Plan. The City staff lead on this initiative is Assistant Director Renae Clark.

**b) Serve as a staff resource for updating city code to reflect sustainable landscaping best practices**

*Description:* Planning staff are updating landscape and tree preservation standards to remove low-hanging barriers in current code language. Sustainability Commissioners with ecology and water expertise will provide assistance as needed. The City staff lead on this initiative is Planner Shawn James.

**c) Assist staff in adopting criteria and processes for making decisions about the use of resources and selection of natural resource projects**

*Description:* In 2019, Commission members and staff identified and cataloged city-owned natural and open spaces using available land use and natural resource data with geographic data queries. The work resulted in a high-level descriptive profile of Bloomington's natural resource lands outside the Minnesota River Valley. In 2021, the Parks and Recreation department has \$70,000 to spend on natural resource restoration. The Sustainability Commission will use previous research and work with staff to develop criteria for selecting and implementing 2021 restoration projects. The Sustainability Commission will engage with the community to get feedback on a potential site. The City staff lead on this initiative is Parks and Recreation Director Ann Kattreh with assistance from Assistant Director Renae Clark, Recreation Supervisor, Mark Morrison, and Assistant Maintenance Superintendent, Dave Hanson.

**d) Serve as a resource for staff and consultants on the restoration in Parker's Picnic Grounds**

*Description:* In 2018, the DNR awarded the City a Conservation Partners Legacy Grant from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment for natural resource restoration in Parker's Picnic Grounds. In 2021, sustainability commissioners will continue to work with staff to complete Phase 1 of implementation and determine next steps. The City staff leads on this initiative are Assistant Director Renae Clark, Recreation Supervisor Mark Morrison, and Assistant Maintenance Superintendent Dave Hanson.

Determine interest and availability of Parks and Recreation and PARCs to collaborate on outreach and education:

**e) Residential outreach and engagement around sustainable landscaping practices**

*Description:* Sustainability Commissioners will discuss opportunities with the Parks and Recreation Department and Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission to develop and distribute educational materials about residential landscaping best practices. The City staff lead on this initiative is Deputy Director Ellen Biales.

Informal Work Group (~2.5 hours/month)

- Rob Bouta
- Paul Erdmann
- Tim Sandry

## Energy (Natural Gas &amp; Electricity)

## INITIATIVES

Support City Council, community, boards/commissions and staff requests including but not limited to:

**a) 1-4 Unit Residential Air Sealing and Insulation Pilot**

*Description:* In 2021, staff are implementing a pilot aimed to increase air sealing, insulation, and ventilation, when needed, in 1-4 unit homes through financial incentive strategies informed by the community. The City staff lead on this initiative is Sustainability Coordinator Emma Struss.

**b) Promoting residential energy efficiency programs**

*Description:* Assist staff and community partners in promoting residential energy efficiency programs as needed. Potential programs include: Weatherization Assistance Program, Home Energy Squad®, CenterPoint Energy and Xcel Energy's Multi-Family Building Efficiency program. The City staff lead on this initiative is Sustainability Coordinator Emma Struss. The Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) staff lead is HRA Program Manager Bryan Hartman.

**c) B3 and Portfolio Manager Municipal Building Benchmarking**

*Description:* CenterPoint Energy and Xcel Energy automatically transfer municipal energy data into B3 and Portfolio Manager for staff to track use. The City staff lead on this initiative is Sustainability Coordinator Emma Struss.

Engage with the Bloomington community and advise City Council on:

**d) Time of Sale Energy Disclosure Ordinance**

*Description:* Continuing the work started in 2020 to implement Bloomington's Energy Action Plan strategy "to incentivize investments in energy efficiency, require an energy audit disclosure with estimated energy costs, as part of real estate transactions." This involves updating Time-of-Sale Housing Evaluations to include the collection of seven more metrics. These metrics will provide property buyers with information on the energy performance of the home, bringing visibility and value to home energy improvements. The energy disclosure report will provide a score and outline cost-effective recommendations for improving the energy performance of a home. The City staff lead on this initiative is Sustainability Coordinator Emma Struss.

**e) Large Building Benchmarking Ordinance**

*Description:* Continuing to implement “Business Strategy F” in Bloomington’s Energy Action Plan. In 2020, City staff and Commission members completed planning workshops through Hennepin County’s Efficient Buildings Collaborative. In 2021, staff and the Commission will work on the next task outlined under Business Strategy F, “Pass a benchmarking ordinance”. The City staff lead on this initiative is Sustainability Coordinator Emma Struss.

**Informal Work Group (~ hours/month)**

- Joe Strommen (3-3.5)
- Maya Hidalgo (2)
- Steve Flagg (3-3.5)
- Tim Sandry (3-3.5)

## Environmental Justice

**INITIATIVES**

Support City Council, community, boards/commissions and staff requests including but not limited to:

**a) Review racial equity impact assessments for sustainability initiatives**

*Description:* The City of Bloomington is committed to racial equity in the design of our services and programs. The Racial Equity Business Plan (2020) calls for the use of a racial equity impact assessment when developing new programs and policies. The Sustainability Commission will similarly consider other equity factors in the consideration of our programs and policies. The City staff leads on this initiative are Racial Equity Coordinator Faith Jackson and Sustainability Coordinator Emma Struss.

Attend, prepare, and respond to recommendations from:

**b) Equity Foundation Trainings**

*Description:* Sustainability and racial equity are intertwined. Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities experience the adverse effects of climate change first and to a higher degree. To offer more inclusion and opportunities for BIPOC communities in environmental planning, the Sustainability Commission started a racial equity training program in 2020. Racial Equity Coordinator Faith Jackson and Sustainability Coordinator Emma Struss are co-facilitating the five-part training series. After the training is complete, participants will report their findings to City Council. Sessions 3-5 will be completed in 2021. The City staff leads on this initiative are Racial Equity Coordinator Faith Jackson and Sustainability Coordinator Emma Struss.

**Informal Work Group (~2 hours/month)**

- David Drummond
- Deanna White
- Dwayne Lowman
- Maya Hidalgo
- Xiaoxin Zeng
- Patrick Martin

## Solid Waste

## INITIATIVES

Support City Council, community, boards/commissions and staff requests including but not limited to:

**a) Planning for Residential Curbside Organics Recycling**

*Description:* Hennepin County is requiring cities to make curbside organics recycling available to residents by 2022. 2021 will be used to further research implementation options and plan for 2022 implementation. The City staff leads on this initiative are Public Works Project Coordinator Laura Horner and Deputy Director Ellen Biales.

**b) Continued Education on Organics Recycling and Promotion of Organics Recycling Drop-Offs**

*Description:* Continue to promote the use of the City's two organics recycling drop-off locations through community engagement. The City staff leads on this initiative are Public Works Project Coordinator Laura Horner and Deputy Director Ellen Biales.

Engage with the Bloomington community and advise Council on:

**c) Sustainable Alternatives to Curbside Cleanup Program**

*Description:* City Council directed the Commission to develop alternative methods to dispose of bulky items in a more sustainable way than the current Curbside Cleanup Program. The Commission presented recommended alternatives (community drop-off events and bulky item vouchers) to Council in 2020. Council was supportive of changes and requested Commission and staff continue to develop new program. 2021 will result in public engagement on program changes and the development of new model for roll-out in 2022. The City staff leads on this initiative are Public Works Project Coordinator Laura Horner and Deputy Director Ellen Biales.

Informal Work Group (~1-2 hours/month)

- Deanna White
- Dwayne Lowman
- John Jaimez (community member)
- Tim Sandry
- Xiaoxin Zeng

## Transportation

### INITIATIVES

Support City Council, community, boards/commissions and staff requests including but not limited to:

#### a) Setting quantitative transportation goals

*Description:* Determine a baseline for annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in Bloomington and from City staff commutes. Use these metrics to calculate the City's GHG emissions from the transportation sector. These metrics will be included in the submission of MN GreenStep Cities Step 4 metrics. Use metrics to set quantifiable transportation goals to reduce both VMT and greenhouse gas emissions in the City. Community engagement will be a part of the goal setting process. The City staff lead on this project is Sustainability Coordinator Emma Struss.

Informal Work Group (~1-2 hours/month)

- Maya Hidalgo
- Rob Bouta
- Steve Flagg

## Water

### INITIATIVES

Support City Council, community, boards/commissions and staff requests including but not limited to:

#### a) Commercial Irrigation Program

*Description:* Implement the second year of the Commercial Irrigation Program funded from the Metropolitan Council Clean Water Fund Grant and Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District. This program aims to identify 8-10 top commercial/industrial/institutional irrigation users to receive US EPA Water Sense audits and provide recommendations on how to achieve significant water and cost savings through better use of required rain sensors, smart water controllers, adjusting the frequency and duration of water times, and repairing non-functional sprinkler heads. Deputy Director Ellen Biales is the City staff lead on this project.

#### b) Jefferson High School Unity Garden

*Description:* Continue to support the Earth Corps Club at Jefferson High School in their efforts to design, secure funding and build the first phase of the Unity Garden project at Jefferson High School. The project aims to support pollinators, improve water quality, and promote community access. Both of the Sustainability Commission's young adult members are students at Jefferson. Water Resources Specialist Jack Distel is the City staff advisor on this project.

Informal Work Group (~2-4 hours/month)

- Maya Hidalgo
- Tim Sandry
- Xiaoxin Zeng

## BIKE RACK

During the planning process sustainability commissioners proposed new initiatives. Commissioners voted on their priorities at the December 15, 2020 Sustainability Commission meeting. There were enough staff resources to support initiatives with five or more votes in 2021. Initiatives with five or less votes will stay on the bike rack. When additional resources become available, the Commission will revisit this list. These initiatives are in addition to the initiatives that carried over from the 2020 work plan.

### BIKE RACK

Proposed Initiative	Commissioner Priorities										
	RB	DD	PE	SF	MH	JJ	DL	TS	JS	DW	YZ
Business Energy Best Practice Tours (still happening?)	X		X	X		X					
Climate Action Plan						X				X	X
Analyze commercial benchmarking data											
Renewable Energy for commercial buildings							X		X		
Address recommendations from Equity Foundations Training					X	X	X			X	X
Add environmental justice into the Commission's purpose		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Developing proposals for waste reduction efforts around disposable items					X					X	
Reducing single use plastics		X	X			X				X	
Add climate change to commission's purpose				X		X	X		X	X	X
Community outreach and engagement around water conservation											
Commissioners terms- allowing existing commissioners to serve expiring terms				X		X	X				
Add additional youth commissioner							X				
Review ped and bike connectivity and safety		X									
Climate Crisis Resolution							X		X		
Explore potential for hiring a natural resource manager (2022)- start talking about			X								
Earth Day Event	X	X	X	X	X	X					X