

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY
THE CULVER CITY STANDING SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CULVER CITY
STANDING SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE CITY COUNCIL CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

June 5, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Council Member McMorris called the special hybrid meeting of the Standing Sustainability Subcommittee of the City Council to order at 6:03 p.m. in the Dan Patacchia Meeting Room at City and online.

Present: Freddy Puza, Vice Mayor
 Yasmine-Imani McMorris, Council Member

Staff Present: Sean Singletary, Environmental Programs and
 Operations (EPO) Manager
 Wallis Nash, EPO Senior Management Analyst
 Alicia Ide, Public Works Management Analyst

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Pledge of Allegiance

Council Member McMorris led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Community Announcement from Members

None.

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Information Items from Staff

Alicia Ide, Management Analyst, discussed funding for the portable electric battery project; reported that the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) proposed for the solar panel feasibility study had not been recommended and was not part of the FY 25-26 Budget presented; she indicated that staff could bring the project back next year unless otherwise directed; she stated that Sunshine Kitchen was not interested in making a presentation and she provided their email to Members; and, responding to inquiry, she

agreed to research a request that a list of things that did not get approved be provided to Subcommittee Members.

Discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding plastic linings in aluminum cans; consumer awareness; shelf stability; and additional research to be done.

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Public Comment - Items NOT On the Agenda

Council Member McMorris invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

David Coles provided updates on leaf blower enforcement; he reported that an additional Enforcement staff member had been hired in the fall; discussed noticeable improvement since enforcement began; interaction; education; he indicated that progress was being made; he thanked those who had helped in the hiring; reported landscapers at City Hall using gas powered leaf blowers; and he recommended leading by example by the City switching to electric leaf blowers.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Alicia Ide, Management Analyst, reported distributing correspondence to Subcommittee Members.

MOVED BY VICE MAYOR PUZA, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER MCMORRIS, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE STANDING SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE CITY COUNCIL RECEIVE AND FILE CORRESPONDENCE.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

Approval of Minutes for the Standing Sustainability Subcommittee Meeting of February 27, 2025

MOVED BY VICE MAYOR PUZA, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER MCMORRIS AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE STANDING SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING ON FEBRUARY 27, 2025.

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Action Items

Item A-1

Receive and Discuss a Presentation by the River Project

Melanie Winter, The River Project, provided a presentation on nature-based stormwater projects noting that they had provided a similar presentation to the Subcommittee six years prior; discussed water conservation; water supply; stormwater; water quality; graywater; adapting to the impacts of climate change; shifting standard practices; the watershed perspective; watershed management; managing stormwater on site; different ways of looking at stormwater projects; different types of infrastructure used; potential benefits for different types of projects; defining nature-based solutions; Measure W; impervious surface coverage; sequestering carbon; providing a foundation for habitat and biodiversity; letting nature handle water quality issues; investments that save money in the face of disaster; capturing co-benefits; responsiveness to community needs; making things more broadly accessible; the focus on residential properties; the Water LA Phase 1 Pilot Program; soil infiltration rates; community engagement; hands-on workshops; streets planning; water management challenges; increasing street trees; and interventions that can address issues in a cost effective way.

Council Member McMorris invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

David Coles expressed appreciation for the presentation; discussed opportunity; incentivizing usage; support for the focus on residential; offering a rebate for homeowners to replace their driveways with pervious surfaces; rebates for natural yards; the City focus on gray infrastructure; the underground stormwater basin under Culver Boulevard; plans for Syd Kronenthal Park; costs for the non-nature-based system; relaying information back to the full City Council; the budget crisis; saving money as a City while using nature-based solutions; biodiversity; and keeping precious fresh water rather than sending it to the ocean.

Melanie Winter, The River Project, discussed replacement of driveways with gravel, and multiple benefits of the common usage of gravel driveways in the European Union.

Deborah Gregory, Ballona Creek Renaissance (BCR), discussed their work to replace asphalt with a native California landscape garden at an elementary school; plans to do additional projects; alley paving; converting unpaved alleyways into greenscape; permeability; creation of native gardens; and the state mandate for Low Impact Design (LID).

Melanie Winter, The River Project, noted efforts by Los Angeles to skirt requirements; discussed development of the program for non-regulatory communities who wanted to voluntarily engage; the LID manuals written by engineers for engineers but executed by contractors; people who put in simple options like rain barrels until the Certificate of Occupancy (COO) is received and then get rid of them; big underground cisterns that are very expensive, meet a subset of the goals, and get smaller benefits; and reducing heat islands and spreading more benefits throughout the community with smaller projects and less total cost.

Discussion ensued between Melanie Winter, staff, and Members regarding appreciation for the presentation; Complete Streets Guidelines; savings on water and cooling per year; funding for parkway retrofits; grants; incentives; Measure W; high visibility projects; the underground cistern system started by DWP (Department of Water and Power); redefining and reprioritizing nature-based solutions; requests from neighborhood councils; efforts to receive funding from Los Angeles; work with the county; individual private properties or neighborhood workshops; Prop 4 funding; the comprehensive report available on work done in Panorama City; identification of available incentives; hands-on workshops; community support; collaboration to develop a program; the standard plan for parkway basins; and other cities implementing programs in the more commercial district areas.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding appreciation for the dedication to the work; excitement about the potential; synergies; moving the conversation forward; Culver City residential parkway guidelines; standard plans; finalization of the Complete Streets document; unpaved alleys in Culver City; efforts of EPO (Environmental Programs and Operations); to identify grants; operational challenges for trash trucks in the unpaved alleys; support for nature-based solutions; compliance; regulatory guidelines; the MS4 permit; the temporary TSO; unmet goals in the region; the large Culver Boulevard project; the Stormwater Master Plan that includes 400 small projects; green streets projects; water saved each month; and staying in compliance with the Water Board while implementing attractive projects for the community.

Melanie Winter, The River Project, discussed water quality improvements related to the program that are as good or better than standard greenscape and rain garden programs; healthy soil; plants that have adapted to survive on the rain; flood risk reduction, groundwater recharge, water conservation, and water quality improvements that help meet regulatory goals; new construction; and she encouraged Culver City to include graywater systems for residential in the code.

Discussion ensued between staff and Members regarding promoting the ability for residents to install rain gardens; educating the public; understanding next steps; reevaluation of the code; examination of implementation of 2016 plans; incorporating areas of opportunity into procedural processes; required permits for parkway gardens; and recommendations for public right of way and private yards.

Additional discussion ensued between Melanie Winter, staff, and Members regarding outreach to areas that see localized flooding; a suggestion to pick a neighborhood and do a pilot program; development standards; synergy with existing projects; water conservation and efficiency; identification of opportunities; detailing benefits; outreach to see if funding is available; threats to grants and funding; education; alternatives to AstroTurf; low maintenance with native plantings; biodiversity; stormwater; heat islands; neighborhoods in need of street trees; installation of parkway basins; providing more shade in communities that lack it; Prop 4; agreement to share standard plans with the Subcommittee; growth of the program in communities and groups over the years; and appreciation for the presentation.

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Item A-2

Receive and Discuss a Presentation Regarding the Plant Based Treaty

Wallis Nash, Senior Management Analyst, provided a presentation on The Plant Based Treaty organization.

Council Member McMorris invited public comment.

Alicia Ide, Management Analyst, indicated the no public comment had been received.

Discussion ensued between staff and Members regarding next steps; appreciation for the presentation and information provided;

support for the proposal; timing for bringing the item before the full City Council; upcoming meetings; and the special election.

A member of the public reported bringing plant-based snacks for everyone and expressed appreciation for the nature-based solutions being discussed at the meeting.

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Item A-3

Receive and Discuss a Presentation from Ballona Creek Renaissance (BCR) Regarding the 4B Plastic Ban Proposal

Alicia Ide, Management Analyst, indicated that it was the last chance for public speakers to sign up to speak.

Deborah Gregory, BCR, provided background on the organization; discussed their primary focus; recognition of former BCR President, Jim Lamm at a City Council meeting; recognition of firefighters; BCR as caretakers; impacts of decisions made; land acknowledgement; previous collaboration with Culver City; community cleanup events; amount of trash gathered annually; what can be recycled and how often; difficulty recycling plastic; the importance of acting locally; and she introduced Craig Cadwallader to review ordinances and provide additional clarity.

Craig Cadwallader, BCR, discussed recommended ordinances; noted that ordinances were not as drastic as some people have expressed; discussed identification of problems observed in the wild; recommended solutions; extending regulation of single-use carryout bags; stores not preempted by the state-wide bag ban; draft ordinance language for an extension; implementation timeline; he asked for serious consideration of the modified ordinance; discussed regulation of the sale and use of balloons; harm to wildlife caused by balloons; the ban on mylar balloons; power outages and wildfires sparked by electrically conductive balloons; latex balloons; toxic chemicals; encouragement for Culver City to take a leadership position; implementation timeline to allow retailers to switch to non-balloon decoration; viable alternatives; plastic reusable balloons; and communication with the beach cities to upgrade their existing ordinances.

Discussion ensued between staff and Members regarding outreach to Laguna Beach; enforcement; allowance of balloons in private spaces; and lack of impact noted.

Craig Cadwallader, BCR, clarified that the proposed ordinance would not include private residences, and he did not foresee heavy-handed enforcement; discussed the intent to reduce impacts; advocated for education on impacts on the environment and wildlife; and he discussed providing sufficient time to have retailers modify their product mix to move away from single-use balloons.

Deborah Gregory, Ballona Creek Renaissance, noted the importance of making a difference one city at a time.

Craig Cadwallader, BCR, discussed use of reusable balloons to promote real estate; free resources provided to retailers in Manhattan Beach through the Small Business Administration to help shift product mixes; regulation of plastic bottles; recyclability of plastic bottles vs. aluminum cans; impact of beverage bottles on the environment; aluminum as the most recycled item on earth; number of times aluminum can be recycled vs. plastic; downcycling vs. recycling; Ballona Creek; number of plastic beverage bottles sold in Culver City each year; misinformation promoted by plastic bottle companies; the request to change the packaging to something that doesn't harm the environment the way plastic does; the two-phase implementation recommendation for City facilities and events; beverage companies that sell water in aluminum cans; clarification that still water is not taxed; dispelling false arguments with facts; cigarette butts as always the most collected item on Coastal Cleanup Day; lowered quality of life; impacts to humans and wildlife; unused smoking receptacles in Hermosa Beach; elimination of designated smoking areas; setting a bad example; fostering usage by younger individuals mimicking adults; impacts of litter on property values, business, and tourism; lack of negative impact to businesses on the implementation of a tobacco sales prohibition; compliance rates in Beverly Hills and Manhattan Beach; decreased percentage of smokers each year; the right for people to smoke in their homes; health effects of smoking; the minority of smokers impacting the majority of non-smokers; he wanted to see Culver City become the third city in the country to prohibit tobacco sales; indicated that they were going to Hermosa Beach and Redondo Beach to ask them to ban the sale of tobacco products; lack of any evidence for perceived negative impacts; and he indicated having additional statistics to share with staff if they want any more.

Discussion ensued between BCR representatives, staff and Members regarding smoking in single-family homes; designated smoking areas in Culver City; areas in the City where smoking is banned; shifting to 100% recyclable bottles and increasing the circular economy; plastic that is downcycled; breakdown of the polymer chains;

benefits of aluminum over plastic; the water bottle ban in Truckee; issues with AstroTurf; shedding and microplastics as AstroTurf degrades; PFAs; rebate programs; heat island effects with AstroTurf; minimum mandates; friction impacts on bare skin; the American Chemistry Council; understanding how plastics ruin health and the environment; moving the needle on individual items; the need for real change; acknowledgement that making change is hard; the fact that industry always adapts; dismantling of the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency); the importance of action at the local level; undoing progress to make a cleaner environment; previous leadership demonstrated by Culver City; and plastics going into the water table.

Council Member McMorris invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Subcommittee:

Duncan McFetridge, Coalition for Responsible Celebration, noted previous consideration of the item; received clarification that different consideration of the item was being given; expressed disagreement with statements by Craig Cadwallader; asserted that mylar balloons were legal; discussed the previous ICC survey indicating that balloons make up less than 1% of trash; other, better options rather than a ban; and impacts to businesses.

David Coles indicated being bored of the conversation; felt the subject had been discussed repeatedly over several years; felt it was time to put the item to a vote of the City Council; discussed feedback from industry; weighing public interests vs. private interests; he observed that Costco would thrive either way; felt that those selling balloons were selling pollution; did not think people should be concerned with harming businesses that hurt wildlife; noted disproportionate effects on wildlife; and he asked that the years-long debate be concluded with a vote.

Ikra Dangy provided background on their party store run by her family in Culver City for the past 20 years; noted the large percentage of their income generated by balloons; she asserted that a ban would negatively impact their business; discussed manufacturers that do not provide reusable options; and she asked that the Subcommittee find a solution that is best for their business and for the environment.

Jennifer Silberman was called speak but was not able to unmute herself.

Jackson McFetridge was called to speak but did not respond.

Doug Cross reported working for one of the beach cities; discussed the plastic prohibitions that have benefitted the environment; spillover of business behavior and customer awareness; he noted that the more cities pass a ban, the better for all of them; discussed nuances, realities, and benefits of the ordinance; the impetus of stormwater pollution prevention; the responsibility to prevent pollution; regulatory benefits; support of similar ordinances by the Water Board and CalRecycle; pollution reduction requirements; enforcement; mylar balloons; lack of evidence of financial hardship; and he encouraged the Subcommittee to pass the item.

Jennifer Silberman was called to speak but did not respond.

Richard Hibbs was called to speak but did not respond.

Shae Cunningham, BCR Advisory Committee, expressed frustration at picking up plastic bags and bottles during Creek cleanups over the years; discussed the pervasiveness of plastic; the resurgence of the plastics industry during the pandemic; the current administration; carving the way out of fossil fuel pollution at the local level; negative impacts of plastic on the environment; the Culver City Sustainable Business Certification Program; environmentally responsible businesses that do their best to stay away from disposable plastics; and certified businesses.

Wendy Coldesina, Costco, shared Costco's mission statement noting that they wanted to be part of the conversation; discussed reasons that glass and aluminum are not at the top of the recycling list; tariffs; production scarcity; costs; logistics; cans and bottles; the goal to reduce packaging overall; small improvements; their reductions to plastic in 2019; waste diversion goals; natural resources; emissions; examination of waste; she indicated that they wanted to work to make things better; and discussed unintended consequences and cost of making changes.

Jennifer Silberman, Dollar Tree, expressed appreciation for dedication and environmental stewardship; shared concerns about the potential impact of balloons on the local environment; indicated that they were one of the largest balloon sellers in the US; discussed balloon usage; impacts of a ban; consideration of a ban on the intentional release of balloons; education; encouraging behavioral changes; safe and responsible disposal; collaboration on a responsible way to dispose of balloons; and she asserted that banning balloons in Culver City would not stop demand but would

instead shift business to other stores and hurt businesses in the community.

Richard Hibbs, BCR, expressed support for the proposal as brought forth by BCR; discussed the watershed area; environmental stewardship in step with the current times; he noted that times had changed and people would be able to get along without balloons; discussed alternatives; AstroTurf; community support for Culver City taking the lead in environmental stewardship; he thanked the City for their work; and he was looking forward to the presentation to the City Council.

Discussion ensued between BCR representatives, staff and Members regarding recommendations to expand waste reduction for beverage bottles to ban all single use plastic beverage bottles from use or distribution within City facilities or at City-sponsored events; requiring an additional fee for the purchase of single-use plastic beverage bottles to offset climate issues in Culver City; banning the use and release of balloons in public spaces regardless of material or fill; banning the use of fill that is lighter than oxygen and requiring additional weight for tethers; banning outdoor smoking outside of specific smoking zones with appropriate receptacles; banning the sale and distribution of plastic carryout bags City-wide; allowing shoppers to use existing bags that they may have; banning the sale and use of AstroTurf on any property type in Culver City; education; and outreach by the Economic Development team.

Discussion ensued between BCR representatives, staff and Subcommittee Members regarding the City Council motion made in April 2024 that did not include tobacco sales; duration; implementation timelines; support for moving the item forward to the City Council; staff recommendations for phase-in periods; education and studies; staff agreement to bring back data regarding single-use plastic bottles to the City Council after a certain period to determine whether Option 2 should be pursued in the future; use of a focus group for restaurants regarding plastic carryout bags; follow-up with Economic Development; having the slides include initial actions from staff, subcommittee recommendations, and feedback received; options provided by staff; including people who have consistently shown up; and consideration of the item by the City Council.

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Public Comment for Items NOT on the Agenda

Council Member McMorris invited public participation.

Alicia Ide, Management Analyst, reported that no additional requests to speak had been received.

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Members Requests to Agendize Future Items

None.

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Items from Subcommittee Members/Staff

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Subcommittee Members regarding the date and location for the next meeting.

Alicia Ide, Management Analyst, discussed a previous request for information about Clean Air Day and suggested that a representative from the Transportation Department make a presentation on what they are planning for Clean Air Day on October 1, 2025.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:53 p.m., the Standing Sustainability Subcommittee of the City Council adjourned to August 21, 2025 in the Patio Room.

Jeremy Bocchino
SECRETARY of the Culver City Sustainability Subcommittee of the
City Council Culver City, California

APPROVED

Yasmine-Imani McMorris
COUNCIL MEMBER, Sustainability Subcommittee of the City Council
Culver City, California