

Sustainability Commission Working Agreements

Adopted by the Sustainability Commission on August 16, 2017

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.
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.
 - 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.
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?

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.