

**CITY OF HELENA**  
**Citizen Conservation Board**  
**Thursday, January 11, 2024 from 4:30-6 pm**  
**Zoom Online Meeting:**

<https://www.helenamt.gov/Calendars/Board-Committee-Meetings/Citizen-Conservation-Board-Meetings-2023>

**City-County Building, Room 426**

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**Call to Order and Roll Call**

**Minutes**

Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes Draft – 12/4/23 Special and 12/14/23 Regular meetings

**Regular Items**

**A. Updates from City Staff – Miranda Griffis, Sustainability Coordinator, and Leea Anderson, Public Works Dept.**

**B. Officers' Report**

**C. Consider Unfinished Business**

**1. CCB Report and Presentation to the Commission on 1/17/24**

- i. Public Comment
- ii. Motion (if appropriate)

**2. CCB Strategic Plan for 2024-2026 – update?**

- i. Public Comment
- ii. Motion (if appropriate)

**3. CCB Composition and Filling Vacancies**

- i. Public Comment
- ii. Motion (if appropriate)

**4. Election of Officers**

- i. Public Comment
- ii. Motion (if appropriate)

**D. Consider Emerging Issues/New Business**

- 1. Public Comment
- 2. Motion

**Member Communications/Proposals for Next Agenda**

## **Public Communications**

### **Announcements**

### **Adjournment**

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**TTY Relay Service 1-800-253-4091 or 711 Email: [citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov](mailto:citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov)**

**Mailing Address & Physical Location: 316 North Park Avenue, Room 445, Helena, MT 59623.**



# Climate Action and Sustainability Plan 2023-2026

Helena Citizens Conservation Board

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## Introduction

The Helena Citizens' Conservation Board (CCB) was created by the City Commission in 2017 (Resolution #20375 with a sunset date of sixty months after the first meeting) when the City signed on to the Paris Climate Accord (Resolution #20347).

The CCB was initially comprised of fourteen members, representing various fields i.e., Water/Watershed (2); Business/Building Industry (2); Environmental Organizations (2); Student Leaders (2); At-large (2); Earth Sciences Educator (1); Professional Engineer (1); Healthcare Community (1); and the Helena Citizens Council (1) and appointed by the City Commission.

The CCB is charged with making recommendations regarding sustainability and climate action to the City Commission. The CCB is building upon the research and recommendations of the Climate Action Task Force and its 2009 Climate Action Plan for the City of Helena.

The original CCB met for five years (January 2018-December 2022) and established four main Committees:

Executive (Chair, Vice, and Sec.)

Energy and Transportation

Waste Reduction

Water Conservation

During those five years, the CCB made several recommendations to the City Commission and took actions, resulting in:

- Creation of a full-time Sustainability and Recycling Coordinator position
- Resolution #20592 calling for 100% Clean Electricity by 2030 (80% by 2025)
- Resolution #20643 calling for 50% Waste Reduction in Helena by 2040 and 35% waste reduction by 2030
- Creation of a Strategic Plan for Waste Reduction outlining a menu of options to achieve Helena's waste reduction goals.
- Publication and distribution of a WaterWise Booklet to promote water efficiency and climate-appropriate planting and irrigation
- Installation of a Demonstration Xeriscape Garden at the Law and Justice Building with plans for additional demonstration projects
- WaterWise Workshops and Utility Bill inserts and displays to promote water conservation and efficiency

- Others to add?

## New Conservation Board

In early 2023, the CCB was dissolved according to its sunset date of January 2023, and a new Conservation Board was established. The CCB now has nine At-large members. The current Board members are:

**Lori Fitzgerald** (new CCB appointee;  
1-year term, expiring 2/28/24);

**Diana Hammer** (original CCB appointee;  
1-year term, expiring 2/28/24);

**Dick Sloan** (original CCB appointee;  
1-year term, expiring 2/28/24);

**Mark Juedeman** (former CCB appointee;  
3-year term, expiring 2/28/26);

**Devon Malizia** (new CCB appointee;  
3-year term, expiring 2/28/26); and

**Nora-Paige McFadden** (new CCB appointee;  
1-year term, expiring 2/28/24)

**Jason Selong** (new CCB appointee;  
3-year term, expiring 2/28/26)

At-large member - vacant

At-large member - vacant



*Xeriscape Demonstration Garden at the Law and Justice Building on Fuller Street, Helena*

## Energy and Transportation

The Energy and Transportation Committee offers advice and recommendations to the Citizen Conservation Board, and ultimately to the Helena City Commission and Mayor, regarding mitigation of emissions associated with City and community transportation and energy use and adaptation of energy and transportation infrastructure to the impacts of climate change.

### CCB Energy and Transportation goals

**1. Prioritize activities first by City emissions sector** (in order, highest to lowest: Electricity, Transportation, Natural Gas, Employee Commute, Waste), **and then Community emissions sector** (in order, highest to lowest: Transportation, Electricity, Natural Gas, Waste) **and then develop strategies to address each.**

**2. Within the City emissions sectors, consider both working with individual departments and working with the Commission to provide policy guidance through resolution.**

The Sustainability Coordinator has a key role to play, but given the division of duties between Sustainability and Recycling, and half-time each, support from the Energy and Transportation committee will be vital. There is much to do, and so little time, and the position deserves to be both expanded and moved to a more strategic position within the City organization.

**Goal: 2020 Goal by City Commission resolution: achieve 100% Clean Electricity (for City operations) by 2030, with an interim goal of 80% by 2025.**

**3. Within the Community emissions sectors, the City can play several roles.**

City government can consider infrastructure improvements that make emission reduction easier (such as biking, walking, charging EVs).

The City can direct funds (perhaps federal) to incentivize actions that reduce emissions (such as support for carpooling or using e-bikes for commuting). It can provide information and educational outreach. The City can lead by example.

**4. Most of all, the City should prioritize action on climate mitigation and adaptation.** It should act as if there is a climate emergency—because there is—and be the leader in Montana commensurate with being the Capital City.

This may take the form of a package of Commission resolutions which would initiate quick, decisive, and effective action by City government.

## Waste Reduction

The Waste Committee of the Helena Citizens Conservation Board (CCB) is working to help the City significantly reduce the amount of waste generated in the greater Helena community, following the Waste Reduction Hierarchy and the principles of the 5 Rs: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot.

### Waste Reduction Strategies:

1. Work closely with the City Commission, City staff, the public and businesses to ensure that the City achieves its Waste Reduction Goals
2. Closely monitor and advance the City's implementation of the Strategic Waste Reduction Plan developed by Zero Waste Associates
3. Represent the CCB on the Integrated Solid Waste Master Plan Steering Committee
4. Engage with the Public to help educate and advocate for waste reduction/diversion measures

**Goal: Reduce the City's Waste 50% by 2050 with an intermediate goal of 40% by 2040.**





## Water Conservation and Efficiency

The Water Conservation and Efficiency Committee is working to reduce water consumption and increase water efficiency in Helena.

### Strategies to accomplish this include:

#### 1. Outreach and Education

- Target homeowners: workshops, garden tours, xeriscaping, flyers, etc.
- Target businesses and large institutions and water users: conservation information, incentives
- City website should be a useful resource; social media

#### 2. City Policy/Planning - Recommendations

- Water Master Plan (complete 2022) and Wastewater Master Plan (update in progress) to develop a long-term Comprehensive Water Management Plan (per capita water, growth, annexation, future development, etc.)
- Tiered water rates (targeting the largest water users - businesses, Parks, Carroll, State of MT, etc.)
- Use revenue from increased water rates to fund Outreach and Education activities, provide water conservation incentives
- Develop a City policy requiring low water use and xeriscaping policy on City Properties
- Hire City Water Conservation Specialist

**Goal: Reduce average consumption to less than 100 gallons/person/day;**

2019 water use: 154 gallons/person/day

**Goal: By 2026, change the culture/mindset about how Helena considers water use.**

**Metric: 50% of users reduce summer water use by 50%**

#### 3. Partnerships/Community/Actions

- Lake Helena Watershed Group, Water Quality Protection District, and other organizations re: WaterWise best practices
- Partner with City - websites, water bill inserts, outreach and education
- Partner with others (TBD) to participate in/sponsor/hold events

#### 4. Infrastructure

- Water Meters - meter replacement and update in progress; leak detection
- Tracking City water line replacements to increase efficiency, fix leaks and reduce loss
- Stormwater capture and management (green infrastructure and other opportunities)

**Next Steps**



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**Appendix**

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# Report to the Helena City Commission from the Citizen Conservation Board

January 17, 2024

# A brief history of the CCB

- The formation of a citizen conservation board was a recommendation of the 2009 Climate Action Plan
- The CCB was established in 2017 as part of Helena's response to US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord
  - Resolution #20347 (June 26, 2017) formalized Helena's support of the Paris Climate Accord's goals and requires the City to provide an annual report regarding to be presented before or during the budget process documenting implementation of activities implemented by the City, and track GHG, energy, and other resources such as water.
  - Resolution #20375 (August 7, 2017) established the Citizens Conservation Board, with a sunset date of 60 months after its first meeting date.
- Resolution #20792 (January 9, 2023) rescinded Resolution 20375 and reestablished the Citizens Conservation Board as it reached the end of its initial term. Among other changes, the CCB was significantly reduced in size and term limits were instituted and applied retroactively.
- Resolution #20857 (August 21, 2023) amended Resolution #20792 to alter membership (removed HCC representation and youth positions)

# The CCB's contributions towards City sustainability efforts and successes

- Creation of a full-time Sustainability and Recycling Coordinator position
- Resolution #20592 calling for 100% Clean Electricity by 2030 (80% by 2025)
- Resolution #20643 calling for 50% Waste Reduction in Helena by 2040 and 35% waste reduction by 2030
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- WaterWise Workshops and Utility Bill inserts and displays to promote water conservation and efficiency
- Connection with Capstone Program at MSU to address glass recycling issues

# Progress on sustainability goals

- Clean Electricity Goal: The CCB does not have current information about progress toward 100% Clean Electricity for the Helena community. We believe that it is currently unlikely that the Helena community will reach the interim goal of 80% clean electricity by 2025 or the final goal of 100% clean electricity by 2030.
- Waste Reduction Goal:
- Water Conservation Goal:
- We sincerely appreciate the Commission's support of green electricity for City operations and for residents during the ARPA funding process.
- We hope that the Sustainability Plan Audit will allow for quick prioritization and action to electrify City operations and generate Clean electricity.

# Concerns regarding effectiveness of the CCB

- Despite the CCB communicating with the Helena City Commission 16 months prior to sunseting of the CCB with recommendations for a more effective CCB, no response was received nor recommendations apparently considered in the drafting of the resolution by the Commission reestablishing the CCB. We believe that difficulties that we have since had could have been addressed by our recommendations.
- Term limits have resulted in considerable loss of experience and expertise, along with difficulty in recruiting new members. Simply using the power that the Commission already has to approve or deny a CCB member's reapplication at the end of a term would have been more effective.
- Banning of HCC membership has also resulted in further loss of experience, expertise, and leadership.
- Redefining the calculation of a quorum to majority of positions rather than of membership places the CCB in constant risk of being unable to meet.
- Imposition by the City of the Zoom webinar format has resulted in less dynamic interactions with online participants. Ironically, this also means that the requirement to see CCB members on Zoom for participation is unable to be met.
- Offers to provide feedback—*not* decision making—during interviews of potential staff or service providers has been rebuffed by City staff.
- City staff have been unwilling to share progress on key efforts until final decisions have been made, again eliminating any possibility of the CCB providing input when it might have had an impact.



# Appreciation for this opportunity to provide priorities

- The Citizen Conservation Board has long asked for the opportunity to have a direct dialogue with the Commission, and one bright spot of the resolution reestablishing the CCB was the requirement for annual communication early in the year. Unfortunately, 2023 passed without this presentation scheduled, but we are hopeful that this 2024 opportunity allows for useful dialogue and action.
- We look forward to seeing how these recommendations are incorporated into the FY24 Budget.

# Recommendations to the Commission

- The CCB has prioritized those actions that should be taken as soon as possible to move Helena towards a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and get the community back on track towards reaching the 100% clean energy goal.
- As much work needs to be done, priorities are presented as buckets of actions to take, along with more detail about those actions. Clearly City Departments and Staff will need to decide how best to incorporate these recommendations into their workplans and budget.

# Energy Conservation and Efficiency

Buildings—City-owned or funded (such as projects supported with ARPA funds)

- **Prioritize upgrades to existing buildings to avoid upfront/embedded carbon emissions**
- Use the results of the Sustainability Plan Audit to implement:
  - Electrical upgrades to allow for building electrification
  - Heating and cooling upgrades (heat pumps)
  - Hot water (heat pump water heaters)
  - Envelope tightening and insulation
  - High performance windows and doors
- Specifically include air-source heat pumps in the Residential Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Loan Program
- Develop high-performance requirements for any *new* City or City-funded buildings (LEED, Living Building Challenge, Zero Net Energy Building, or Passive House standards)

# Green Electricity

- Use the results of the Sustainability Plan Audit to implement:
  - Electrical infrastructure improvements to allow for solar or other renewable energy
  - Solar installations (both net metered systems, and behind-the-meter systems that would be appropriate for facilities with high demand during each day such as Missouri River Water Plant and wastewater treatment plants)
- Elect the renewable rate option, if approved by PSC, for City operations and promote it in the community.
- Continue to fund zero-interest revolving loan program to fund solar and energy efficiency projects for individual homeowners.

# Transportation

- Mode shifts (bikes, e-bikes, walking, etc.) are critical and funds should be provided to enable such shifts, such as:
  - Sidewalk infill and upgrades or new sidewalks where they don't already exist. Prioritize based on safe routes to school, access to essential services (grocery, pharmacy, etc.), equity
  - Protected bike lanes (so all people traveling by bicycle feel safe--and are safe)
  - Provide workplace charging infrastructure for city staff who are EV users (to shift peak charging to daytime when demand is lower and solar renewable energy production is higher)
  - Funds to build charging stations and infrastructure for multifamily housing
  - Provide Incentives for e-bikes (rebates, etc.), carpooling, and other incentives to avoiding driving
- Fleet and Municipal operations
  - Fund electrical infrastructure improvements to allow EV charging identified in SPA and install charging equipment
  - Make replacement of ICEs with EVs the default unless justified otherwise based on usage patterns (fleet cars and trucks, four-wheelers, skip loaders, mowers, police cars, etc.)
  - Buses for transit

# Water and Energy Conservation

- Continue to implement WTR-3 recommendation from 2009 Climate Action Plan (Adopt “Lush and Lean” Landscaping Practices for municipal Properties) including drought-resistant native and xeriscape planting strategies.
- Implement TWRP-6 recommendation from the 2009 CAP (Adopt a Municipal Back-to-the-Tap Policy) through refillable water bottles/mobile unit.
- Continue to implement nature-based solutions to sequester carbon, reduce urban heat-island effects, and reduce water runoff, such as:
  - Preservation of mature woodlands (outright purchase or conservation easement)
  - Preservation of native grasslands (outright purchase or conservation easement)
  - Planting street trees and city property trees (quick growing, long-lived species preferred)

# Sustainability Coordinator Enhancement

- Make the Sustainability Coordinator role a full-time position (split off the recycling coordinator position)
- Work towards formation of a “Green Team” cross-department sustainability group
  - Research how other municipalities have designed and established Green Teams
  - Solicit participation from other departments
  - Identify key goals for 2024 and work to implement