



City of Helena

Citizens Conservation Board

February 8, 2024 – 4:30-6:00 PM Zoom

Online Meeting: [Citizen Conservation
Board Meeting - City of Helena, MT
\(helenamt.gov\)](https://www.helenamt.gov/citizen-conservation-board-meeting)

County Building, Room 426

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Introduction of New Members
3. Approval of Minutes 1/14/24 Meeting
 - a. Public Comment
4. Updates from City Staff
5. Officer's Report
6. Unfinished Business
 - I. Appointment of interim officers and plan for officer elections
 - II. CCB Presentation to City Commission
 - III. CCB Strategic Plan 2024 Discussion
 - IV. Designation of replacement on the City's Integrated Solid Waste Master Plan Committee starting in March
7. New Business
8. Member Communications/Proposals for Next Agenda
9. Public Communications
10. Announcements
11. Adjournment



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

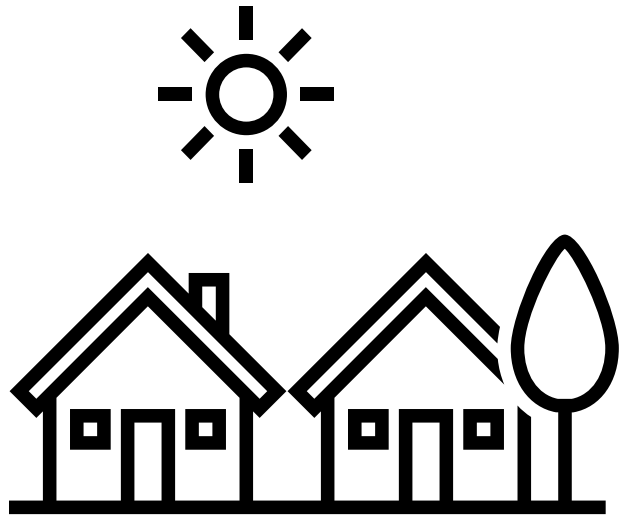


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Appendix

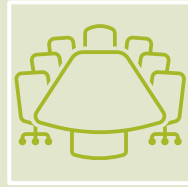
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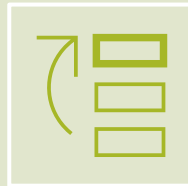
CITIZENS CONSERVATION BOARD ANNUAL REPORT TO THE HELENA CITY COMMISSION

January 17, 2024

**Tonight's
Citizens Conservation
Board Presentation
to the
Mayor and
City Commissioners**



The Conservation Board



Recommended Sustainability
Priorities for FY2025



Looking Forward and Working
Together to Create a More
Sustainable Community

Citizens Conservation Board: Brief History

- **2009 Climate Action Plan** – recommended formation of a Conservation Board
- **2017** - Helena responds to the United States' 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 Green House Gas Emissions, 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.
- **2023 - 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)
- **Today**, the CCB has nine seats, currently eight seats are filled with one open seat. By the end of February, there will be four additional vacancies, leaving too few to establish a quorum

Purpose and Mission of the Citizens Conservation Board (CCB)

- **Citizens Conservation Board will support, recommend, and monitor sustainability measures undertaken by the City.**
- **Mission:**
 - ...advise the Helena City Commission regarding actions to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, including the goal to hold warming to well below 2°C, and to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy that will benefit Helena's security, prosperity, and health.
 - 1) The Board will support, recommend, report on, and monitor sustainability measures undertaken by the City.
 - 2) Furthermore, in recognizing the importance of education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information, and cooperation and that sustainable lifestyles, conservation, and sustainable patterns of consumption and production play an important role in addressing climate change,
 - 3) the Board will design, develop, and participate in a public awareness campaign, as approved by the City Commission, to engage and empower citizens of Helena to take action and respond to the urgent threat of climate change.

The CCB actively contributes to the City's Sustainability goals, efforts, and successes:

Clean Energy



Supported creation of a full-time Sustainability and Recycling Coordinator position



Supported Resolution #20592 calling for 100% city-wide Clean Electricity by 2030 (with an interim goal of 80% by 2025)

The CCB actively contributes to the City's sustainability goals, efforts, and successes

Waste Reduction



Supported Resolution #20643 - 50% Waste Reduction in Helena by 2040, with an interim goal of 35% waste reduction by 2030



Supported and Participated in creating the Strategic Plan for Waste Reduction
- providing a menu of options to achieve Helena's waste reduction goals and save time and resources



Participation in the long-term Integrated Solid Waste Master Plan Steering Committee



Connection with Capstone Program at MSU to address glass recycling challenges in Helena

The CCB actively contributes to the City's sustainability goals, efforts, and successes:

Water Conservation



Board members drafted and collaborated to publish and distribute the WaterWise Booklet to promote water efficiency and climate-appropriate planting and irrigation



Board members designed and helped install the Demonstration Xeriscape Garden at the Law and Justice Building and develop plans for additional demonstration projects



Board members conducted WaterWise Workshops, designed public displays, and worked with the City on Utility Bill inserts to promote water conservation and efficiency

Progress on Helena's Sustainability Goals



CLEAN ELECTRICITY:

STATUS: UNKNOWN. CCB HAS CONCERNS THAT WITH NO CURRENT GHG EMISSIONS TRACKING (ICLEI CONTACT LAPSED), **IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE HELENA COMMUNITY WILL REACH ITS GOALS** (80% CLEAN ELECTRICITY BY 2025 OR 100% CLEAN ELECTRICITY BY 2030).



WASTE REDUCTION:

HELENA'S CURRENT DIVERSION RATE IS ABOUT 26%. **ESTIMATES ARE THAT ~80% OF WHAT GOES INTO THE LANDFILL IS RECYCLABLE, COMPOSTABLE, REUSABLE, ETC.** **RECENT RECOMMENDATIONS** TO THE ISWMP STEERING COMMITTEE INCLUDE UNIVERSAL CURBSIDE RECYCLING, GREEN MATERIAL COLLECTION, PAY-AS-YOU-THROW



WATER CONSERVATION:

THE 2009 CAP GOAL: REDUCE WATER USE TO LESS THAN **100 GALLONS/PERSON/DAY**; DUE TO VARIABILITY IN ANNUAL CALCULATIONS, IT IS UNCLEAR IF CITY WILL MEET THIS GOAL WITH SUMMER WATER USE 5-6X AS MUCH WATER AS THE REST OF THE YEAR, **HUGE OPPORTUNITY TO SAVE WATER, MONEY, AND OTHER RESOURCES** WITH WATER WISE BEST PRACTICES



CITY SUPPORT:

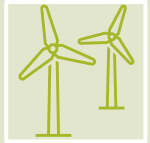
CCB SINCERELY APPRECIATES THE COMMISSION'S SUPPORT OF GREEN ELECTRICITY FOR CITY OPERATIONS AND FOR RESIDENTS SPECIFICALLY: RENEWABLE ENERGY REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS, NEW EV CHARGERS, NEW SOLAR PANELS, EFFICIENCIES AT CITY WATER AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS, ETC.



SUSTAINABILITY AUDIT:

WHILE THE CCB IS DISAPPOINTED THAT THE CITY DIDN'T PREPARE A **CITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN** IN FY23 AS ORIGINALLY INTENDED AND BUDGETED, THE CCB HOPES THAT **THE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN AUDIT** WILL RESULT IN QUICK PRIORITIZATION AND ACTION TO **ELECTRIFY CITY OPERATIONS AND GENERATE CLEAN ELECTRICITY.**

Recommendations to the Commission



The CCB has prioritized actions to be taken as soon as possible to move Helena towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and getting back on track towards its 100% city-wide clean energy goal.

Additional priorities address water conservation and waste reduction goals and other sustainability efforts.



Much work needs to be done, generalized priorities are presented with more detailed implementation actions.

Clearly, City Departments and Staff will decide how best to incorporate recommendations into workplans, budget.

Energy Conservation and Efficiency



Buildings – City-owned or funded/operated; Prioritize upgrades to existing buildings to avoid upfront/embedded carbon emissions



Use the results of the **Sustainability Plan Audit** to implement:

1) Electrical) Electrical upgrades to allow for building electrification; 2) Heating and cooling upgrades (heat pumps); 3) Hot water (heat pump water heaters); 4) Envelope tightening and insulation; and 5) 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



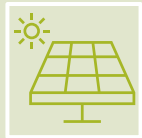
Use the results of the Sustainability Plan Audit to implement:

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 Helena's Missouri River Water Treatment Plant and its 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 (people traveling by bicycle feel - 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)

Fund for charging stations/ infrastructure for **multifamily housing**

Provide Incentives for e-bikes (rebates, etc.), carpooling, and other incentives to avoiding driving



Electrify Fleet and Municipal operations

Fund electrical infrastructure improvements to allow EV charging identified in SPA and install charging equipment

Make vehicle replacement with EVs the default unless justified otherwise based on usage patterns (fleet cars and trucks, four-wheelers, skip loaders, police cars, electric buses, etc.)

Use electric mowers and other e-landscaping tools

Water and Energy Conservation



'Lush and Lean' - 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 and encourage the practice among area property owners



Implement TWRP-6 recommendation from the 2009 CAP (Adopt a Municipal Back-to-the-Tap Policy) by encouraging refillable water bottles and funding a mobile unit(s) for use at City events (e.g., Alive at Five; Farmers' Market) and events on City property (require as part of the use permit)



Continue to implement nature-based solutions to sequester carbon, reduce urban heat-island effects, and reduce water runoff, such as:

Xeriscaping, green infrastructure, and other best practices to reduce consumption and better manage storm water

Conservation of forests, grasses, and riparian areas (through outright purchase or conservation easement)

Planting trees on streets as well as on public and private property (quick growing, long-lived and diversity of species recommended)

Sustainability Coordinator Enhancement



Make the Sustainability Coordinator role a full-time position
(split off the recycling coordinator position)



Create a “Green Team” as an
interdepartmental sustainability group

Research how other municipalities have designed and established Green Teams; learn from previous efforts

Solicit participation from all City Departments

Identify key goals for 2024, targets, and work to implement

Concerns regarding the City-CCB interactions which limit the CCB's effectiveness

- **POOR COMMUNICATION.** 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. The Board believes recent difficulties would have been addressed by our recommendations.
- **TERM LIMITS.** Term limits have resulted in considerable loss of experience and expertise, along with difficulty in recruiting new members. The Commission already has the power to approve or deny a CCB member's re-application so term limits weren't needed.
- **LOSS OF LEADERSHIP AND EXPERTISE.** Banning of HCC membership has also resulted in further loss of experience, expertise, and leadership.
- **LIMITING EFFECTIVENESS.** Redefining the calculation of a quorum to majority of positions rather than of membership places the CCB at risk of being unable to meet/fulfill its duties.
- **LIMITING INTERACTIONS.** 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.
- **NON-RESPONSIVENESS.** CCB offers to provide feedback, expertise, and information to consider —*not* decision making—during interviews of potential staff or service providers and contractors have been rebuffed by City staff.
- **LACK OF COOPERATION AND ENGAGEMENT.** City staff have been unwilling to share progress on key efforts until final decisions have been made, again reducing the Board's effectiveness and ability to provide important input and expertise.

In summary, to create a more sustainable community, the CCB Recommends

Prioritization of the following Sustainability Actions for FY2025:

Energy Conservation and Efficiency – Buildings - City-owned and operated/funded

Green electricity – Sustainability Plan Audit, Renewable Rate Option, Continued strong support for the Revolving Load funding

Transportation – Prioritize the shift to non-driving modes (e.g., walk, bike) and electrify the City fleet and operations

Water and Energy Conservation – waterwise landscaping, refillable water bottles/mobile refilling station, and nature-based solutions (e.g., green infrastructure)

Enhanced Sustainability Coordinator position – 100% working on sustainability issues and leading the re-established interdepartmental 'Green Team'

Appreciation for this opportunity to provide priorities

The Citizens Conservation Board has long asked for the opportunity to have a direct dialogue with the Commission, and appreciates the requirement for annual communication early in the year. The CCB regrets that there was no opportunity to present in 2023 and is hopeful that this 2024 opportunity allows for useful dialogue and action.

The CCB looks forward to seeing how these recommendations are considered and incorporated into the FY25 Budget.

We also look forward to further discussions with the City to plan how to meet its goals for clean energy, waste reduction, and water conservation as we work together to create a more sustainable Helena.

THANK YOU!

From the current **Helena Citizens Conservation Board**:

Lori Fitzgerald, Diana Hammer, Bob Jones, Mark Juedeman, Devon Malizia,
Nora-Paige McFadden, Jason Selong, and Dick Sloan (and one vacancy)

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to and serve our community.