

## Environment and Sustainability Task Force Meeting Minutes

The Environment and Sustainability Task Force meetings are recorded. Agenda materials and recordings may be reviewed/copied by contacting the Board Coordinator at 214-671-1200

**Meeting Date:** January 15, 2021  
**Convened:** 1:03 p.m.  
**Adjourned:** 3:03 p.m.

**Task Force Members Present:**

Sandy Greyson, **Chair**  
Rita Beving, **Vice-Chair**  
Pamela Rogers  
Dr. Maria Boccalandro  
Aaryaman Singhal  
Tracy Wallace  
Janette Monear  
Michael Martin  
Tony Robinson  
Alan Hoffmann  
Phil Crone  
Raphaella Silva  
Drew Campbell

Kamal Fulani, DART  
Kay Shelton, DART  
Edie Diaz, DART  
Todd Plesko, DART

**Task Force Member(s) Absent:**

Erryn Hopson  
Ples Montgomery, IV

**Staff Present:**

Sam Merten- on behalf of Councilmember Adam McGough, Dallas City Council D10  
Susan Alvarez, OEQS, Task Force Staff Liaison  
Sheila Delgado, Director (I) OEQS  
Pharr Andrews, OEQS  
Katy Evans, OEQS  
Brittany Hailey-Wells, OEQS  
Kevin Overton, OEQS  
Kathryn Rush- TRN  
Gus Khankarli, TRN

**AGENDA:**

1. **Call to Order**

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### **Action Taken/Recommendation(s):**

Chair called the Environment and Sustainability Task Force meeting to order at 1:03 p.m., Friday, January 15, 2021 at Dallas City Hall, via TEAMS Virtual Meeting Service, Dallas, TX, 75201. A quorum was present.

### **2. Public Comments**

There were no Public Comments received.

### **3. Approval of Meeting Record of December 11, 2020 Meeting**

#### **Motion to approve the minutes of December 11, 2020 meeting**

**Motion by:** N/A

**Motion seconded by:** N/A

The December 2020 minutes will be approved at the February 2021 meeting with the following edit to Janette Monear's comments in section 4:

*Texas Trees Foundation does not have grants available to the public but has the ability to secure grants for project research and programming.*

### **4. White Rock Lake Old Fish Hatchery Issue**

Sandy Greyson briefed the task force on the White Rock Lake Old Fish Hatchery issue at the request of Councilwoman Paula Blackmon.

Dr. Maria Boccalandro recommended that consistent volunteers be identified to maintain the Fish Hatchery area and expressed concerns about the use of hazardous chemicals for maintenance. Per Sandy, all pruning will be done by hand and volunteers will be identified through the "Fish Hatchery Friends" group.

Aaryaman Singhal asked about the involvement of Brett Wilkinson (PKR) and suggested that Brett would be a good resource. Sandy confirmed that Brett is the point person on this project.

### **5. Review of FY 2021 Proposed Work Plan by CECAP Section- Transportation & Air Quality:**

Pharr Andrews and Katy Evans briefed the task force on the Transportation and Air Quality sections. They discussed the importance of each sector, related equity concerns, overall sector targets, and year-one action items.

#### **Transportation**

Dr. Boccalandro expressed concerns about the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists around UNT's campus due to the lack of sidewalks. This inhibits safe and effective travel to and from transit stations. She suggested incorporating open spaces and trails to create better connectivity to DART and other transit systems. Per Sue Alvarez, PBW is working on a Sidewalk and Pedestrian Plan, and Sue will advise PBW of these comments.

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Tracy Wallace requested an intentional effort to create new green jobs for students in DISD and local colleges as the City begins to explore new technologies for electrifying its buses and fleet. Dr. Boccalandro commented that Cedar College has an automotive program training auto mechanics for electric vehicles and the other colleges are also exploring direct partnerships with electric vehicle manufacturers to electrify the colleges' fleets.

Aaryaman requested a summary of the DART Board meeting's recent discussions around electrifying its bus fleet. Todd Plesko relayed the update—

The Bus Fleet Replacement Plan will guide the transition of the oldest CNG and some light duty fleet vehicles to natural gas. Some of the transition has already begun, but secure transition cannot be authorized until more information is gained on the most up-to-date technologies for extended battery power and mileage. DART is acquiring a long-distance electric bus for a pilot, but the buses are expensive and require extensive infrastructure upgrades throughout the region. DART is also purchasing ten light-duty electric buses to pilot around the Parkland Hospital area and could begin as early as 2022.

Aaryaman also asked for an update on the procurement of EV charging stations by the City in the summer of 2020. Sue clarified that the City is providing support for a private vendor who is using trailer-mounted charging at commercial locations, with a network of around one hundred locations. Sue will provide a map. The City also received a grant the day prior to this meeting for funding to procure public charging stations. A goal of the upcoming Fleet Electrification Study will be to analyze best locations for the charging stations. This will guide the Fleet and Building Services Departments in placing the EV chargers.

Alan Hoffman asked about how the Transportation Dept. (TRN) will collaborate with the Sustainable Development Dpt. to identify priorities related to zoning and density and the implementation of those ordinances. Per Sue, staff from OEQS, TRN, and others are serving on various internal planning groups and technical advisory committees that are advising on these initiatives. One particular group is working on the Forward Dallas Plan. Another group is working on researching issues around parking densities and whether they support good City planning and job growth. A group is also working on the Hensley Field project to make the area more walkable and job accessible. Sue also discussed actions in the CECAP related to "greening" factors for development, and a group is already looking into related actions to offset parking density.

Alan followed up with a suggestion that the City must consider increasing housing density near retail center in order to make neighborhoods more walkable as well and asked if the CECAP could help implement actions to move that development forward. Sue responded that this will be considered in the Forward Dallas update, which includes a land-use plan, and offered to invite a representative to brief the task force on the planning efforts. Sue further commented on the economic development potential.

Alan then asked about the City's plans to install solar stations throughout the city to support new EV infrastructure and advised against moving to transition the fleet without also transitioning the grid. Todd Plesko commented that all DART's light rail trains and electric buses receive power from a renewable source, and it is still exploring new technologies for renewable energy and EVs. Alan suggested partnering with Oncor to incentivize rooftop solar power generation. Michael Martin provided information about the upward trajectory of the return on investment in solar power generation.

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Michael requested an update on the Fleet Electrification Study. Per Sue, the City is working with the National Renewable Energy Lab on a contract, pending approval in March, and aims to complete the study by the end of this fiscal year. Michael asked if the study will expand the current EV charging station goals before 2040. Sue responded that one of the goals is to analyze the charging station network.

Michael then asked about opportunities to incentivize businesses and residents to transition to EVs or other alternative commute methods, in addition to the education initiatives in action T5. Alan commented on the recent shift in homebuyers' attitudes from desiring smaller homes to seeking homes with an extra room for an office space. to the desire for a spare room for office space and that this is already initiating the transition to more climate-friendly job opportunities. Michael also suggested that the task should explore incentives or partnerships with business communities and local chambers of commerce to maximize the reach of transportation education and outreach initiatives.

Dr. Boccalandro expressed support for increasing parking costs, at least downtown, as many other major cities have done to push residents towards public transit. She suggested that the task force support bolder measures to increase taxes or fees associated with driving and/or parking in the city. Alan commented that DART must address transit in the southern sector in order to make transit more affordable and sustainable for all residents.

### **Air Quality**

Rita Beving urged the City to collaborate with the region on a more robust air quality campaign, involving partnerships with multiple organizations, to address the long-standing ozone non-attainment status.

Michael asked about the City's plans to tighten the emissions requirements of businesses and industries and to increase monitoring of these facilities. He expressed support for fines or other penalties for those who violate their permits. Per Sue, the State has primacy on the local municipalities that limit the actions the extent of City regulations. Sue also commented that industrial sources only contribute to around nine percent of the City's greenhouse gas emissions, while transportation accounts for forty-four percent.

Ms. Greyson asked about whether the air quality goals in the CECAP are more aggressive than NCTCOG's goals. Sue is hopeful that the change in Dallas' compliance status will help further advance the City's air quality goals.

### **6. Discussion on Formation of an Environmental Commission**

A potential barrier to the creation of the EC is the preclusion of any potential appointees who have not lived within the city limits for at least six months. One possible solution is to implement a hybrid model in which the EC is composed of fifteen experts who live in Dallas, along with non-voting advisory groups for each sector. Some council members have requested that the EC also work on environmental issues specific to their respective districts.

Aaryaman expressed support for the EC advising on community-based initiatives and involving community members in the voting decisions. He commented on the need for partnerships with various City departments, boards, and commissions community organizations through meetings, working sessions, and or liaisons to help facilitate discussions and community input coordination.

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He also suggested that we explore options to engage residents virtually to communicate safely and effectively. In regard to selecting members for the Board, Ms. Greyson commented that the task force can provide requirements and recommendations to City Council, but Council makes the final decision.

Tracy asked which sectors may not have experts within the city limits. The task force has not begun to identify potential members, but Michael expressed confidence in the task force's ability to locate experts in Dallas.

Rita suggested that the advisory groups not be limited to Dallas residents only and supports non-residents being non-voting members.

Alan cautioned against limiting participation to Dallas residents.

Dr. Bocalandro voiced support for a hybrid approach, composed of technical experts *and* residents and businesses. Ms. Greyson commented that technical experts can always be invited for specific projects and that staff can give recommendations to Council for local experts if the Council cannot identify them.

Janette Monear asked if the EC could have subcommittees with a designated advisor. Ms. Greyson replied that the task force can make that recommendation to Council, but it is up to Council to form and appoint subcommittees. Janette followed up with a question about the appointment of staff liaisons to advise on particular issues to ensure the progress of initiatives the EC will be working on. The task force can make that recommendation as well.

Rita expressed support for having staff liaisons involved.

Ms. Greyson advised the task force to be prepared to decide and vote at the next meeting on membership size, meeting frequency, and subject matter recommendations to make to Council for formation of the EC.

Aaryaman asked if task force member could assist with synthesizing the suggestions and recommendations between this meeting and the next. Michael agreed and requested the questionnaire be sent in enough time for the task force to respond and review.

### **7. Meeting Wrap-Up**

#### **Motion to adjourn meeting.**

**Motion by:** Alan Hoffman

**Motion seconded by:** Michael Martin

Passed by majority.

The January 15, 2021 Environment and Sustainability Task Force Meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

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**APPROVED BY:**

**ATTEST:**

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Chair  
Environment & Sustainability Task Force

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Task Force Staff Liaison  
Environment & Sustainability Task Force