



DATE: January 12, 2015

AGENDA ITEM # 2

**TO:** Environmental Commission

**FROM:** J. Logan, Staff Liaison

**SUBJECT:** Environmental public information forums

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and discuss opportunities, topics and methodology for public education and outreach

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**BACKGROUND**

The Environmental Commission 2014/15 Work Plan, Goal 1, is to provide environmentally relevant information to the community to improve sustainability in accordance with the Council goals to advance natural resource conservation and environmental quality in Los Altos.

The Commission determines topics and opportunities for approved public forums related to sustainability. An example of public outreach activities were public forums held prior to the award of the waste disposal contract and a study to determine both Municipal and Community Green House Gas emissions for the City. Current outreach efforts include the design and analysis of a survey to the community to facilitate and gain public input for the Los Altos Climate Action Plan in coordination with the Climate Action Plan consultant firm and with the Community Development Department. An additional topic is a ban on single-use bags and issues involved with polystyrene products.

**DISCUSSION**

The Environmental Commission held a public forum on recycling, diversion and composting on February 22, 2014. The Commission is continuing discussion regarding community education and outreach activities for the Climate Action Plan (CAP).

To that goal, a Commission subcommittee is exploring topic ideas and approaches on additional ways to engage the public via education and information forums, various outreach mechanisms. The subcommittee composed of Commissioner Zahra Ardehali, Vice Chair Chris Keller and Chair Gary Hedden presented an update to the public education and information outreach plan. A public interest survey was created by Commissioner Eyre and vetted with Councilwoman Val Carpenter and staff to assess City of Los Altos residents' interest in environmental topics. The survey was conducted at the July 10 and July 24 Farmers' Market and the results were discussed at the August meeting.

Chair Hedden is continuing to research a joint meeting with the Chair of the BPAC, (Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission) and the opportunity to study the issues as a joint commission project. In December 2014, staff liaisons meet with the Chairs of the Environmental Commission and BPAC to identify mutual interest and explore topics for a joint commission meeting. Chair Hedden will provide an update regarding these communications and meeting.

A subcommittee was also appointed at the September 2014 meeting, composed of Commissioners Ardehali and Eyre, to explore opportunities for CalWater, the Town of Los Altos Hills and the Commission to work together on the topic of Water Innovation. This seminar is scheduled for March 12, 2015 for the purposes of public education and outreach. The subcommittee will give its report.

