



MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2012

7:00 P.M. - REGULAR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING

Council Chambers, Los Altos City Hall
One North San Antonio Road, Los Altos, California

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Members of the audience may bring to the Commission's attention any item that is not on the agenda. Please complete a "Request to Speak" form and submit it to the Staff Liaison. Speakers are generally given two or three minutes, at the discretion of the Chair. Please be advised that, by law, the Commission is unable to discuss or take action on issues presented during the Public Comment Period. According to State Law (also known as "the Brown Act") items must first be noticed on the agenda before any discussion or action.

1. Commission Minutes
Approval of minutes – Regular Meeting of March 12, 2012.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. Environmental Commission Annual Report to City Council
Review, discussion and revisions if necessary to the 2012-2013 Work Plan presented to City Council at the Joint Meeting on April 3, 2012.
3. Climate Action Plan
Activity progress report by Environmental Commission Task Force and discussion on next steps working with consultant, PMC and staff.
4. Tour of Newby Island Composting Facility
Report by subcommittee on upcoming date to tour facility.
5. Disposal and Management of Expanded Polystyrene
Staff update on Short-Term Trash Load Reduction Plan followed by discussion.
6. Increasing Watershed Awareness and Stewardship in Los Altos
Discussion led by Commissioner Eyre.
7. Environmental Commission Website
Staff report on monthly hits to website.

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2012 AT
7:00 P.M. AT LOS ALTOS CITY HALL, ONE NORTH SAN ANTONIO ROAD,
LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA**

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Bray, Eyre, DeMichiel Anderson, Keller, Reed, Ardehali

ABSENT: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Presentation by Mayor Valorie Cook Carpenter of powerpoint, *Building for Tomorrow* to update and discuss plans for the Los Altos Community Center Master Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Comments presented by Gary Hedden regarding GreenTown Los Altos solar initiatives and distribution of *Get Solarized* materials and cover sheet provided by GreenTown Los Altos.

1. Commission Minutes

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER DeMICHEL, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER REED to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 13, 2012 with one correction of the spelling of Newby Island. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. Appointment to Environmental Commission

Welcome and self introduction by Commissioner Zahra Ardehali.

3. Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Introduction by Zach Dahl, Senior Planner, Community Development and presentation by Scott Davidson, PMC Consulting regarding CAP project. Discussion followed the presentation.

- a. Activity progress report by Environmental Commission Task Force.

4. Nomination and Election of Environmental Commission Chair and Vice Chair and Commission Reorganization

Nominations and election by Commissioners of Don Bray to continue as Chair and Joe Eyre as Vice Chair.

5. Tour of Newby Island Composting Facility

Appointment of subcommittee composed of Vice Commissioner Eyre and Commissioners Anderson and Ardehali to attend tour and report back to Commission.

6. Disposal and Management of Expanded Polystyrene

Staff update and discussion on Short-Term Trash Load Reduction Plan.

7. Increasing Watershed Awareness and Stewardship in Los Altos
No new information to report from Vice Chair Eyre.
8. Environmental Commission Work Plan Progress Review
 - a. Continue discussion of Summary of Achievements for 2011 Work Plan to present to Council at joint meeting on April 3, 2012.
 - b. Continue discussion of draft for 2012 Environmental Commission Work Plan to be discussed with Council at joint meeting on April 3, 2012.
9. Earth Day Public Outreach and Education
Discussion of Environmental Commissioners to staff information table at the event on April 21, 2012, noon to 4pm. Vice Chair Eyre and Commissioners Reed and Ardehali will attend.
10. Environmental Commission Website
Staff report on monthly hits to website were 481 from launch date and 274 from January to present.
11. City of Los Altos 60th Anniversary Celebration
Report by Commissioner Anderson on Planning Committee meeting progress. Commissioner Anderson is discussion "greening" of the event with the Planning Committee.
12. Announcements and Items for Information
 - a. Environmental Commissioner Representative at March 13 and March 27, 2012 Council Meeting – Commissioner Keller and Vice Chair Reed respectively.
 - b. Annual Volunteer Recognition Event, Thursday, April 19, 2012 at 5:30pm at LAYC. The event will honor all City volunteers, about 215 in total, and includes commissions, committees, senior center and all other volunteers. April is the month nationally associated with volunteer recognition.
 - c. Report by Commissioner Eyre on Public informational meeting held by the staff of the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant.
 - d. Handout – Brown Act and Agenda Process Updates for Liaisons.
 - e. Update by staff on hiring of new City Manager Marcia Somers.
 - f. Reminder of Joint Meeting with Council on April 3, 2012.

COMMISSION REPORTS AND DIRECTIONS ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bray adjourned the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

J. Logan, Assistant City Manager and staff liaison

Item #2

Summary Points from Environmental Commission meeting with City Council
April 3, 2012

- Overall, the council was comfortable with our plan for 2012-13, and supportive of the goals
- Some concern was expressed that we may be taking on too much; we discussed that some items on the work plan will involve more effort than others; perhaps in next year's briefing, we can describe a rough allocation of time anticipated between the various goals
- Council suggested that the EC look into getting interns/students to help with writing an article on how leading businesses in town are leveraging new solid waste management services and processes to improve their diversion rates
- The Santa Clara County Cities Association has made a recent recommendation re EPS, and single use bags; Val Carpenter said she would forward this to us
- Council discussed the potential need for a consistent city policy on how content is posted to the city website; some commissions can do this, and others can't; city staff to follow up on this; also, the council asked about mechanisms for 'bi-directional' communication via the city's website with the EC
- Council was generally supportive of the idea of creek signage, and focusing initially on the new Fremont Road bridge over Permanente Creek; council directed questions to the new city manager re if/how this requirement can be added into the design at this point in the design/construction process
- Regarding SCVWD land use guidelines near streams, there were general questions from council on the status of these standards, and whether this was more Planning & Transportation Commission question
- Regarding specific EC commission work related to creek habitats, council suggested checking with the city attorney v/v potential conflict of interest concerns for commissioners living close to creeks
- Council asked about Governor Brown's potential move to relax CEQA guidelines, and if the City of Los Altos should actively support this concept
- Council asked if the EC had any specific financial requests (OPEX or capital improvement-related); OPEX requests would need to be submitted quickly (e.g. April), at this point CIP requests may have more runway, possibly a year

**Environmental Commission
2011-2012 Work Plan Highlights and Accomplishments
March, 2012**

- **Rebuilt Los Altos Environment Website**
 - Updated and added numerous content pages as educational resource to community. In addition to original content provided by commission members, website currently includes approximately 60 links to environmental information available in the broader community.
 - Updated menu; established consistent branding/look & feel.
 - Established clear, direct link from the Los Altos home page, and installed traffic counter.
 - ~500 hits since launch, a 5X increase in monthly traffic.
 - No cost to City; work led by Commissioner DeMichiel with contributions by all commission members.
- **Climate Action Plan/Sustainability Element**
 - At start of year, presented Environmental Commission (EC) developed community GHG (Green House Gas) Inventory to city; Inventory received by city council.
 - During last spring/summer, developed and presented background research on Sustainability Elements and Climate Action Plans (CAP) to city staff.
 - In the fall, assisted with request for proposal (RFP) development and evaluation/selection of contractor to support CAP development process.
- **Water Conservation and Stewardship**
 - Co-sponsored community forum on water-efficient landscaping with CalWater:
 - 35 attendees.
 - EC partnership with CalWater; EC arranged logistics, hosted event, CalWater did postcard mailer, lined up content & presenters.
 - Developing Los Altos specific water-use baseline with new CalWater data.
 - Researching and developing initiatives on watershed awareness.
 - Participation in Creek clean-up activities.
- **Solid Waste Management**
 - For downtown, reviewed single-stream vs. multi-stream can collection and provided community outreach and education; championed new downtown receptacle rims labeled '*Recyclables – Organics – Garbage OK – Contents Sorted Offsite*'.
 - Publicized initial 2010 waste diversion results via article written for *Los Altos Town Crier*.
 - Received 2011 summary report from MTWS; 71.44% overall diversion rate.

- **Expanded Polystyrene (EPS)**
 - Per city council request, studied Santa Clara County Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission (RWRC) recommendation to ban EPS.
 - Made specific recommendations to Council to put a ban in place harmonizing various elements of State Regional Water Board's directions, and RWRC recommendations.
- **Other Activities**
 - Participated in energy efficiency/reduction outreach with GreenTown Los Altos and Acterra.
 - Participating in planning of Los Altos' 60th anniversary celebration, and incorporation of 'green' event guideline.
 - Celebrated life and contributions of late EC Chair Patty Rosewater at memorial service and tree planting ceremony.

Los Altos Environmental Commission - Update **March 22, 2012**

Approved Projects 2011-2012

Goals Approved by City Council Oct 19, 2010	Goals -- Progress Updates
b. Projects 2011-2012	
1 Continue to provide approved community education and outreach activities to achieve natural resource conservation for Los Altos. (Steve Anderson, Linda DeMichiel)	- Add (or link) document with definition of Plastics types 1-7 to website, with MTWS 'context' for recycling plastics (mostly 1&2) - Jan 2012: Complete. New site is up and operational. Dedicated 'quick link' is now set up to access the Environment website directly from the city's homepage. Initial traffic report showed 190+ hits in December, more than 10X increase from prior to upgrades. Staff will continue to provide periodic reports on traffic to site, and a general website discussion item will be put on EC meeting agenda periodically to review content and news on main landing page.
a. Deliver updated web site that is visually pleasing, navigates well, has relevant, current content, and ties into city website. (Owner: Linda)	
b. Provide approved public information forums for topics of interest to the public. (e.g. Climate Action Plan Building, Solar) (Owner: Steve)	- Nov 2011: Successfully co-sponsored with Cal Water a forum on Water Efficient Landscaping. They provided speaker, refreshments, staffing, publicity. We provided venue and publicity - Will continue to engage here when there are specific opportunities related to city programs or policies. One opportunity will be for interim review and input to upcoming Climate Action Plan development.
c. Investigate new education and outreach activities re watershed awareness and protection	- Feb 8 email communication from Jim Gustafson notes a standard format, dated 1/4/10, for labeling storm drain inlets 'NO DUMPING!' - Only Rain Down the Drain - Flows to xxxx Creek'; suggestions for community outreach re Stormwater plan may be incorporated with re-activated city Communique; Also, Jim notes that Fremont Ave bridge over Permanente Creek is being rebuilt so may be a good time to design permanent engraving of creek name. - Joe discussed potential for marking on all city storm drains - stream specific, along the lines of what is going on storm drains downtown. Michael and J to follow up with staff on potential for incorporation of this as recommendation in the upcoming 'Storm Water Master Plan' being prepared by city staff. Done - report by Michael. - Discussed elevating the general topic of 'Watershed Stewardship' to one of the primary goals for the 2012/13 workplan, to include other potential topics such as creek signage.

Item#2

2	Explore enhancements to further improve waste management in Los Altos. (Don Bray, Steve Anderson, Joe Eyre) a. Monitor MTWS diversion rate for regularly scheduled pickups and event waste management. Look for ways to meet and exceed contracted diversion rate. (Owner: Don) b. Make results available to community, along w/ education on how they can help improve outcomes. (Owner: Steve)	February 2012: MTWS presented update on diversion statistics, and other key developments: - Overall diversion rate of 71.44% for calendar year 2011; need to achieve 78% in 2013; in 2011, estimate diversion rate for single family residential at 81% (75% of overall tonnage), commercial at 39% (23% of tonnage), and multi-unit residential at 52% (2% of tonnage). Some natural differences in commercial/multi-unit statistics due to no or limited yard waste component. MTWS sense is that businesses are doing well in general, and some are doing great (e.g. Peets, Draegers) with 'front of store' programs and/or aggressive recycling/composting at the back of store. - AB 341 regs have just been finalized, and implementation is being followed closely by MTWS; this bill requires a business, defined to include a commercial or public entity, that generates more than 4 cubic yards of commercial solid waste per week or is a multifamily residential dwelling of 5 units or more to arrange for recycling services, on and after July 1, 2012. The bill would also require a commercial waste generator to take specified actions with regard to recyclable materials. MTWS notes that 73 businesses currently produce >4 CY/week, and currently have 66% diversion capacity. - Regarding guidelines around what's recyclable and compostable, vs. garbage; MTWS notes that compostable/bio-plastic items that look like conventional plastic items (e.g. cups, cutlery) continue to be difficult to separate and can be problematic for both recycling and composting streams. Also, MTWS collects plastics 1-7, but there's really only a market for plastics 1&2. Such factors should be considered in discussions of EPS bans, use of alternative products, etc. July 2011 – MTWS gave update on diversion rates. Residential ahead of target, commercial lagging. Efforts to work with individual vendors necessary. May 2011 – article published in LATC re diversion rates and customer satisfaction. Feb 2011: Update from MTWS, showing diversion rate of 73.3% in December, 70.9% YTD since beginning of contract. Customer satisfaction stats very positive as well. Feb 2012 - Discussed possible development of a news article featuring waste management efforts at leading local businesses – to highlight 'best practice' examples, and educate the public and other businesses; also, discussed establishing a date and logistics for a Newby Island facility tour in the March timeframe. - December 2011: Some new receptacle rims now installed; others in-transit, to be installed over next few weeks. - August 2011 – EC and staff review preliminary design, recommended specific updates to "Recyclables, Organics, Garbage OK, Contents sorted onsite" label around lid of receptacles. - Mar 2011: Commission is disappointed to learn that the new streetscape plans do not include receptacles for composting and recycling for downtown shoppers. c. Work with MTWS to provide recycling and composting services for downtown shoppers. d. Help educate citizens as soon as new services are available. (Owner: Steve)
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3	Provide modeling and analysis of ways to reduce environmental impact in the community. (Subcommittee: Don Bray, John Reed, Patty Rosewater)	a. Use CAPPa tool to model the impact of various behaviors (i.e. change to florescent bulbs, use energy star appliances...). (Owner: John) b. Pick a limited number to pursue; with Council approval, develop education/outreach activities. (Owners: Don, John, Patty)	– ITEM CLOSED. Moving directly to Climate Action Plan (#4 below). – Apr 2011: Each EC member to gather information on how other cities have addressed this problem. – Mar 2011: Top 20 opportunities from CAPPa modeled identified, however definition of those opportunities very broad. Need to continue to drill down to get to a meaningful discussion on program possibilities.
4	Work with Planning Services Manager to develop Sustainability element to Los Altos General Plan. (Joe Eyre, Don Bray, TBD)	a. The 2011 CIP includes funds for this project in July 2011. The EC will serve in an advisory and review role. (Owners: Joe, Don) b. Review draft Grant Application developed by City Staff	– Feb 2011: City staff has decided not to pursue state grant opportunity; CAP development to start up in March; staff and PMC will present to EC at March meeting. – December 2011: Development of Climate Action Plan approved by City Council, and PMC selected as consultant. Joe and Don met with city staff re next steps, and getting started with the project. New opportunity has emerged to apply for state grant to support CAP-related activities, and program start-up activities will be extended into the spring/summer. – October 2011: Proposals for assistance with development of Climate Action Plan submitted by three prospective consultants, and reviewed by City Staff and EC subcommittee. Decision on consulting firm to be finalized by City Staff and City Council. – Delete this item; State's Sustainable Communities Planning Grant and Incentive Program funding will not be pursued by City Staff.
5.	Implement approved education program regarding re-useable bags in Los Altos. (Steve Anderson)	a. Continue to partner with Chamber of Commerce in visits with CVS Pharmacy and Walgreens to inquire about their re-useable bag programs. (Owner: Steve) b. Publicize results of reusable bag survey as appropriate. (Owner: Steve)	Environmental Commission will look at investigating potential recommendations, timing, and approach for a single use plastic bag ban, as a possible work plan item for 2012/2013. – August 2011: California Supreme Court sided with Manhattan Beach, said EIR was not required for its ban on plastic bags. – July 2011: Contacted Safeway for an update re implementation of bag ban in San Jose, law scheduled for implementation in Jan 2012. They said it took ~5 years of work to get that in place, they don't take a position either pro/con for legislation but did say that banning ALL single-use bags is much better than banning only plastic (as SFO did), because there is no incentive to reduce single use bags and all are environmentally undesirable. Recommended we take a "wait and see"

		approach to see how SJ does before considering anything. Jan 2011: EC Member and ED of Los Altos Chamber of Commerce visit Drug stores in Los Altos to inquire about re-useable bags program. Report published on web site; article in LATC.
6.	Continue to work to foster water conservation in Los Altos. (Linda DeMichiel, Chris Keller) a. Continue to work with Cal Water to develop Los Altos specific baseline. (Owner: Joe) b. Incorporate water conservation plans into broader Climate Action Plan above. (Owner: Linda)	Joe will work on submission of official data request form to Cal Water, coordinating with City Staff. TBD Cal water data + 4 months: Article re water usage in LATC. TBD Cal Water data + 2 months: Updated baseline with most current information published on web site. TBD based on Cal water data: Baseline of trends over 5 years established, and incorporated into dashboard (see Goal #3). TBD: Program presented to Council as part of Climate Action Plan (to include measures and initiatives related to water). TBD Cal Water data + 4 months: One program selected and documented to propose to staff and Council for water conservation. This issue will grow in urgency and priority if 2011-12 winter remains dry. - By Mar 2011: Report from staff that annual creek cleanup is required by state in order to fulfill permits for storm drainage into creek. - In March meeting, staff reported that the city engineers are looking at issues of 'regionalization' and options for how to proceed w/ EPS and plastic bags per Water Board Requirements; may possibly link up in EIR process with other local jurisdiction(s), e.g. San Mateo or Santa Clara counties - In February, EC subcommittee studying EPS met with Los Altos city engineer and staff to discuss perspectives on potential issues such as EPS ban enforceability, inspection, budgets, burden to merchants, etc; It turned out that banning EPS is part of a new Water Board requirement, related to trash load reduction in storm water outflows. City staff has prepared detailed recommendations, including an EPS ban, to meet the Water Board requirements of 40% load reduction by 2014.
7.	Other Council goals as directed. a. Investigate state requirements and funding opportunities for creek-clean up. (Owner: j) b. Review recommendations by Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission of Santa Clara County (RWRC) for related to disposal and management of Expanded Polystyrene (Owner: Chris & Steve)	

	After a thorough discussion the EC voted to support staff's 'Baseline Trash Load and Short-Term Trash Load Reduction Plan' as written, with two additional recommendations. Firstly, the EPS ban be made effective 1/1/13, consistent with the original RWRC recommendation, and secondly, that the EPS ban requires that replacement products are compostable or recyclable, consistent with the MTWS diversion program (also per the original RWRC recommendation). - December EC discussion focused on agreement with general spirit/direction of RWRC proposal, but concern about complexity of recommendations (e.g. policy vs. ordinance, prohibiting use in parks, EPS specific ban vs. broader focus on synching up with what MTWS diversion program can and can't handle). Subcommittee will present initial findings and recommended next steps to the EC - By December 2011, EC subcommittee will review RWRC recommendations, and examples of steps taken by other local municipalities. MTWS and GreenTown's Co-op have provided additional content and perspective based on their experience. Questions include likely cost to businesses, what businesses have already adopted; experience of 40+ local cities that have already implemented a ban; policing costs/approach; possible involvement of citizens in policing efforts? (Owner: Chris)
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General Comment from Council: If any programs require funding, case must be presented in time for annual budget cycle.

Los Altos Environmental Commission – Submitted 2012-13 Work Plan

Approved Projects & Projects for Approval

Goals [to be] approved by City Council April, 2012 Projects 2012-2013	Goals -- Progress Updates
1	Provide approved community education and outreach activities to advance natural resource conservation and environmental quality in Los Altos. (Linda DeMichiel, Steve Anderson,) a. Maintain updated 'Los Altos Environment' website with relevant, high-value content, in a manner that is visually pleasing, navigates well, and ties into the city website. (Owner: Linda) b. Provide approved public information forums for topics of interest to the public. (e.g. Climate Action Plan) (Owner: Steve) - Periodic reviews and updates to site content, news items on main landing page, and staff-provided website traffic statistics; regular item on EC meeting agenda - Conduct forums, receive reports, etc. when there are specific opportunities related to city programs or policies. One upcoming opportunity will be for interim review and public input to Climate Action Plan development process.
2	Work with Planning Services Manager and city residents to develop Climate Action Plan for City Los Altos. (Joe Eyre, Don Bray, TBD) a. Aid in developing, reviewing, and facilitating public input to a Los Altos Climate Action Plan (Owner: Joe, Don) - Work began in March, with presentation of CAP project plan to EC and City Staff by the City's Planning Services Manager, and consultant PMC; EC providing GHG inventory data to PMC - The role of the Environmental Commission will be to: - o provide input and policy recommendations on reduction targets, reduction measures, and 'level of ambition' - o identify issues and opportunities - o evaluate feasibility - o provide a forum for community participation

Item #2

3	Improve watershed stewardship for the City of Los Altos (Joe Eyre, Zahra Ardehali)
	a. Investigate potential education and outreach, and best practices associated with watershed awareness and protection, and identify near-term actions for implementation - improved creek habitats - storm water & runoff (Owner: Joe, Zahra)
	- Advance city storm drain labeling, incorporation of recently establish standards - Investigate development and implementation of creek signage, with possible initial focus on new Fremont Road bridge over Permanente Creek - Continue to support creek restoration activities and education, information on EC website - Monitor findings of quarry-related water discharges
	b. High-level review of selected city policies, practices, & implementation v/v watershed stewardship, to identify potential opportunity areas (Owner: Joe)
4	Continue to foster water conservation in Los Altos (Joe Eyre, Zahra Ardehali)
	a. Work with Cal Water to develop detailed Los Altos water usage baseline and trends, and ongoing process for tracking. (Owner: Joe)
	b. Incorporate water conservation plans into broader Climate Action Plan above. (Owner: Linda)
	c. Continue to actively support community outreach and education activities related to water conservation (Owner: Zahra)
	- Work with CalWater, City Staff and others to develop and present water use baseline, recent trends - leveraging water baseline developed above, incorporate specific water efficiency measures into Climate Action Plan. - Additional co-sponsorship of CalWater conservation classes - Promotion of such elements as SCVWD rebates (landscape conversion and hardware upgrades), weather-based irrigation controllers in muni and residential applications

5	Monitor and advance solid waste diversion and source reduction practices in Los Altos. (Don Bray, Steve Anderson, Joe Eyre, John Reed) a. Monitor MTWS diversion rate and look for ways to help meet and exceed contracted 78% diversion rate in 2013; make results available to community, along w/ education on how they can help improve outcomes. (Owner: Steve, Don) - Publication of 2011 results, and 'leading practices' article featuring top business/commercial participants in Los Altos - Organize educational visit to Newby island for interested EC, staff, council, community participants - Continue to work on supporting and communicating 'Green Events' guidelines, e.g. for 60th anniversary event b. Monitor overall solid waste volumes relative to source reduction and longer-term 'zero waste' concepts & practices; (Owner: John) - Incorporate source reduction measure(s) into CAP - Support education and outreach v/v source reduction, zero-waste practices (e.g. participation in free-cycling networks, e-waste collection)
6	Evaluate and recommend program options, and assist in implementing effective city programs restricting use of selected environmentally-harmful products. (Chris Keller, Steve Anderson, John Reed) a. Engage in on-going analysis of program and implementation options v/v restricting use of expanded polystyrene and 'single use' plastic bags (Owner: Chris) Support city development and implementation of restrictions on use of expanded polystyrene, plastic shopping bags, etc. as recommended by the Santa Clara County RWRC, and required by the Santa Clara Valley Water District Water Board. Environmental Commission will study potential recommendations, timing, and approach. Notes: In January 2012, the EC subcommittee studying EPS met with Los Altos city engineer and staff to discuss perspectives on potential issues such as EPS ban enforceability, inspection, budgets, burden to merchants, etc; It turned out that banning EPS is part of a new Water Board requirement, related to trash load reduction in storm water outflows. City staff has prepared detailed recommendations, including an EPS ban, to meet the Water Board requirements of 40% load reduction by 2014. After a thorough discussion the EC voted to support staff's 'Baseline Trash Load and Short-Term Trash Load Reduction Plan' as written, with two additional recommendations. Firstly, the EPS ban be made effective 1/1/13, consistent with the original RWRC recommendation, and secondly, that the EPS ban requires that replacement products are compostable or recyclable, consistent with the MTWS diversion program (also per the original RWRC recommendation).

7	Other Council goals as directed	
	a.	

General Comment from Council: If any programs require funding, case must be presented in time for annual budget cycle.

Prepared for Environmental Commission/Council Joint Meeting on April 3, 2012

Los Altos Environmental Commission – Draft Workplan 2012-13

Approved Projects & Projects for Approval

Goals [to be] approved by City Council April, 2012 Projects 2012-2013	Goals -- Progress Updates				
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b. Provide approved public information forums for topics of interest to the public. (e.g. Climate Action Plan) (Owner: Steve)	- Conduct forums, receive reports, etc. when there are specific opportunities related to city programs or policies. One upcoming opportunity will be for interim review and public input to Climate Action Plan development process.				
2	Work with Planning Services Manager and city residents to develop Climate Action Plan for City Los Altos. (Joe Eyre, Don Bray, TBD) <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="998 1430 1378 1881">a. Aid in developing, reviewing, and facilitating public input to a Los Altos Climate Action Plan (Owner: Joe, Don)</td><td data-bbox="998 235 1378 1430"> - Forward community inventory materials to PMC, and discuss community inventory approach (Don) - Work began in March, with presentation of CAP project plan to EC and City Staff by the City's Planning Services Manager, and consultant PMC; EC providing GHG inventory data to PMC - The role of the Environmental Commission will be to: - o provide input and policy recommendations on reduction targets, reduction measures, and 'level of ambition' - o identify issues and opportunities - o evaluate feasibility - o provide a forum for community participation </td></tr> </table>	a. Aid in developing, reviewing, and facilitating public input to a Los Altos Climate Action Plan (Owner: Joe, Don)	- Forward community inventory materials to PMC, and discuss community inventory approach (Don) - Work began in March, with presentation of CAP project plan to EC and City Staff by the City's Planning Services Manager, and consultant PMC; EC providing GHG inventory data to PMC - The role of the Environmental Commission will be to: - o provide input and policy recommendations on reduction targets, reduction measures, and 'level of ambition' - o identify issues and opportunities - o evaluate feasibility - o provide a forum for community participation		
a. Aid in developing, reviewing, and facilitating public input to a Los Altos Climate Action Plan (Owner: Joe, Don)	- Forward community inventory materials to PMC, and discuss community inventory approach (Don) - Work began in March, with presentation of CAP project plan to EC and City Staff by the City's Planning Services Manager, and consultant PMC; EC providing GHG inventory data to PMC - The role of the Environmental Commission will be to: - o provide input and policy recommendations on reduction targets, reduction measures, and 'level of ambition' - o identify issues and opportunities - o evaluate feasibility - o provide a forum for community participation				

Item # 2

3	Improve watershed stewardship for the City of Los Altos (Joe Eyre, Zahra Ardehali)	a. Investigate potential education and outreach, and best practices associated with watershed awareness and protection, and identify near-term actions for implementation - improved creek habitats - storm water & runoff (Owner: Joe, Zahra)	- Feb 8 email communication from Jim Gustafson notes a standard format, dated 1/4/10, for labeling storm drain inlets 'NO DUMPING! - Only Rain Down the Drain - Flows to xxxx Creek'; suggestions for community outreach re Stormwater plan may be incorporated with re-activated city Communique; Also, Jim notes that Fremont Ave bridge over Permanente Creek is being rebuilt so may be a good time to design permanent engraving of creek name. - Advance city storm drain labeling, incorporation of recently establish standards - Investigate development and implementation of creek signage, with possible initial focus on new Fremont Road bridge over Permanente Creek - Continue to support creek restoration activities and education, information on EC website - Monitor findings of quarry-related water discharges - E.g. selected muni guidelines for native landscaping, organic fertilizers/herbicides/pesticides - SCVWD guidelines and standards for land use near streams
4	Continue to foster water conservation in Los Altos (Joe Eyre, Zahra Ardehali)	b. High-level review of selected city policies, practices, & implementation v/v watershed stewardship, to identify potential opportunity areas (Owner: Joe) a. Work with Cal Water to develop detailed Los Altos water usage baseline and trends, and ongoing process for tracking. (Owner: Joe) b. Incorporate water conservation plans into broader Climate Action Plan above. (Owner: Linda) c. Continue to actively support community outreach and education activities related to water conservation (Owner: Zahra)	- Work with CalWater, City Staff and others to develop and present water use baseline, recent trends; Joe will work on submission of official data request form to Cal Water, coordinating with City Staff - leveraging water baseline developed above, incorporate specific water efficiency measures into Climate Action Plan. - Additional co-sponsorship of CalWater conservation classes - Promotion of such elements as SCVWD rebates (landscape conversion and hardware upgrades), weather-based irrigation controllers in muni and residential applications

5	Monitor and advance solid waste diversion and source reduction practices in Los Altos. (Don Bray, Steve Anderson, Joe Eyre, John Reed)
a. Monitor MTWS diversion rate and look for ways to help meet and exceed contracted 78% diversion rate in 2013; make results available to community, along w/ education on how they can help improve outcomes. (Owner: Steve, Don)	February 2012: MTWS presented update on diversion statistics, and other key developments: - Overall diversion rate of 71.44% for calendar year 2011; need to achieve 78% in 2013; in 2011, estimate diversion rate for single family residential at 81% (75% of overall tonnage), commercial at 39% (23% of tonnage), and multi-unit residential at 52% (2% of tonnage). Some natural differences in commercial/multi-unit statistics due to no or limited yard waste component. MTWS sense is that businesses are doing well in general, and some are doing great (e.g. Peets, Draegers) with 'front of store' programs and/or aggressive recycling/composting at the back of store. Publication of 2011 results, and 'leading practices' article featuring top business/commercial participants in Los Altos; Feb 2012 - Discussed possible development of a news article featuring waste management efforts at leading local businesses -- to highlight 'best practice' examples, and educate the public and other businesses; - Organize educational visit to Newby Island for interested EC, staff, council, community participants; discussed establishing a date and logistics for a Newby Island 'activity tour' in the April timeframe. - Continue to work on supporting and communicating 'Green Events' guidelines, e.g. for 60th anniversary event
b. Monitor overall solid waste volumes relative to source reduction and longer-term 'zero waste' concepts & practices; (Owner: John)	- Incorporate source reduction measure(s) into CAP - Support education and outreach v/v source reduction, zero-waste practices (e.g. participation in free-cycling networks, e-waste collection)
6	Evaluate and recommend program options, and assist in implementing effective city programs restricting use of selected environmentally-harmful products. (Chris Keller, Steve Anderson, John Reed) a. Engage in on-going analysis of program and implementation options v/v restricting use of expanded polystyrene and 'single use' plastic bags (Owner: Chris) - Support city development and implementation of restrictions on use of expanded polystyrene, plastic shopping bags, etc. as recommended by the Santa Clara County RWRC, and required by the Santa Clara Valley Water District Water Board. Environmental Commission will study potential recommendations, timing, and approach. - In March EC meeting, staff reported that the city engineers are looking at issues of 'regionalization' and options for how to proceed v/v EPS and plastic bags per Water Board Requirements, may possibly link up in EIR process with other local jurisdiction(s), e.g. San Mateo or Santa Clara counties

		Notes: In January 2012, the EC subcommittee studying EPS met with Los Altos city engineer and staff to discuss perspectives on potential issues such as EPS ban enforceability, inspection, budgets, burden to merchants, etc; it turned out that banning EPS is part of a new Water Board requirement, related to trash load reduction in storm water outflows. City staff has prepared detailed recommendations, including an EPS ban, to meet the Water Board requirements of 40% load reduction by 2014. After a thorough discussion the EC voted to support staff's 'Baseline Trash Load and Short-Term Trash Load Reduction Plan' as written, with two additional recommendations. Firstly, the EPS ban be made effective 1/1/13, consistent with the original RWRC recommendation, and secondly, that the EPS ban requires that replacement products are compostable or recyclable, consistent with the MTWS diversion program (also per the original RWRC recommendation).
7	Other Council goals as directed	
	a. City position on potential move at state level to relax CEQA guidelines?	

General Comment from Council: If any programs require funding, case must be presented in time for annual budget cycle.

Dear City Council:

We are three students from Los Altos High who are here to speak regarding the Los Altos Plastic Bag Ban scheduled to go into effect by 2014 as dictated by the Trash Load Reduction Plan. LAHS is a Green-Certified school, and the Green Team would like to join with the people of Los Altos to implement of the goals of the Baseload Trashline Reduction Plan, specifically regarding the Single-Use Carryout Plastic Bag Ordinance.

Our goals are for the Council to discuss this topic at the next meeting and to vote on it within the next three months and for the ban to apply all stores, not just large supermarkets. The ban should be voted on approximately one year prior to going into effect. Therefore, discussion and detail finalization need to happen within the next meetings. We suggest that voting should occur by mid-July or August 2012 so that the ban can go into effect by July 1, 2013.

Los Altos can be among the leading cities in California on passing a plastic bag ban. The ban should be voted on as soon as possible to ensure that it goes it to affect quickly, saving thousands of plastic bags from the garbage dumps. Los Altos is ready for the ban now. 98% of all students, who were given the opportunity, signed our petition--this shows they are enthusiastic about the ban and want it now. Mountain View is looking into passing a ban soon as well, and we should coordinate to make it simpler for those shoppers who shop in both cities. We will be happy to discuss this idea with Mountain View representatives.

The ban should apply to plastic bags in all stores, not just the large supermarkets. This creates a level playing field for all stores within Los Altos regardless of size. It also makes it easier for customers because they know that they have to bring reusable bags to all stores.

In conclusion, we request that the Council discusses this issue at the next meeting and considers banning plastic bags from all stores.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Meredith Soward
Roya Samani
Sruthi Jayakumar

Submitted @ Los Altos City Council Meeting
March 13, 2012

DATE

Regarding the potential ban on plastic bags in stores within Los Altos, California:

We, the students of Los Altos High School, would like to express our full support for such a ban. Plastic bags are highly wasteful of precious resources. Additionally, bags that are not properly disposed of can suffocate animals who come in contact with them. Thousands of plastic bags make their way into the Pacific Ocean, specifically, the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch" and many more pollute streets and parks all over California. San Jose has recognized the threat of plastic bags, and passed a ban against usage of such in stores throughout the city. Los Altos too can help to eliminate reliance on plastic bags for shopping. By banning stores from handing out plastic bags to customers, fewer bags will be created, resources will be conserved, and litter decreased. Customers will have incentive to remember to bring their reusable shopping bags inside stores as they will not have the easy fallback plan of plastic bags.

Please recognize how much of a difference Los Altos can make to help the environment and to keep our town cleaner by banning plastic bags in our major stores.

Attached is the list containing the names of students who are in favor of the plastic bag ban.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Students of Los Altos High School

Item #6

[GreenTown Los Altos](#)

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Let It Rain: Bioswales at Rosita Park Help Slow It, Spread It, Sink It

Posted by [margie_s](#) on Thursday, April 5, 2012 · [Leave a Comment](#)

by Gary Hedden, GreenTown Volunteer

The recent storms have been handled with ease along Rosita Ave in Los Altos. The newly rebuilt Rosita Park has a lot of impervious surface so storm water runoff was a big concern.

With three tennis courts and a big parking lot, water could have surged down the street into the storm drain, carrying with it lawn chemicals, oil from cars, and other pollutants that harm our creeks and Bay and the wildlife in them.



Curb cuts along Rosita Ave. help direct stormwater to a bioswale. Photo credit: Gary Hedden

But it didn't. Instead curb cuts cleverly directed the water to infiltration areas filled with a special soil, slowing the flow and allowing the water to sink into the subsurface. These planted areas that slow and help sink water are sometimes referred to as bioswales. Pipes buried 18 inches deep eventually carry excess water to the storm drain.

According to Larry Lind, Senior Engineer with the City of Los Altos, this approach will "slow the flow into the storm drain and allow micro-organism treatment of the water." So we get both flood control and cleaner water in our creeks. Denise Welsh, who lives at the corner of Rosita and Campbell, says she and her husband are "extremely pleased" with how well the system works.

Three cheers to the City of Los Altos for a job well done.



Rocks and special soil in the swale help to slow and sink the stormwater. Photo credit: Gary Hedden

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