



Results of the Community Input Forum on Environmental Sustainability July 9, 2022



Prepared for
City of Woodland

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Background

The City of Woodland Sustainability Advisory Committee (“Committee”) was established in 2019 to help the City achieve its state mandated conservation and Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals, as well as provide recommendations to City Council regarding local environmental policies and issues. A component of those responsibilities is to serve as a forum for public input and feedback on local environmental sustainability topics and CAP implementation.

Community engagement is necessary for achieving a climate ready, resilient, and sustainable Woodland. Opportunities to regularly engage in these topics helps them become relevant and meaningful to a broader audience and fosters community-wide ownership of the environmental change residents and businesses wish to see. However, the last city-sponsored community input forum on sustainability topics had occurred prior to August 2012 as part of the CAP development process.

The Committee therefore identified the implementation of a community input forum as a key part of its 2021-2022 Work Plan, and hosted the “Community Input Forum for Environmental Sustainability” (“Forum”) on Saturday, July 9, 2022. The Forum was held at the Leake Center of the Woodland Public Library and offered in two languages: English and Spanish. The Forum was facilitated and marketed as an opportunity for Woodland residents, business owners, and stakeholders to provide input on current interests, needs, concerns and ideas on the CAP or local environmental and sustainability topics.

The Forum agenda is included with this report as Appendix 1.

Summary

The English session of the Forum was attended by 42 community stakeholders, including Mayor Mayra Vega and Mayor Pro Tempore Vicky Fernandez, six Committee members (four of which organized the event), and Rosie Ledesma from the City of Woodland Environmental Services Division. While the Spanish session did have pre-registrants, there were no Spanish session attendees.

Participants were invited to provide feedback using three methods: verbally, as part of small breakout discussion groups, in writing using a pre/post event questionnaire, and by participating in a poll. Breakout group discussions were documented by group “listeners” (Committee members and Ms. Ledesma) and this data, along with the data from the pre/post questionnaire, was used to identify a total of fifteen (15) community priorities for environmental sustainability plus nine (9) key recommendations for the City of Woodland.

The top five (5) community priorities for environmental sustainability are:

- 1) Mitigating Climate Change
- 2) Waste Abatement (General)
- 3) Non-Motorized Transportation Planning
- 4) Water Conservation (General)
- 5) Climate Ready/Waterwise Landscaping

Numerous participant suggestions were analyzed for this report and cross-referenced with past Committee activities and recommendations. Together, this information culminates in nine (9) key recommendations for the City of Woodland that could be addressed concurrently, presently and in the very near future:

- 1) Endorse the Climate Safe California Campaign, as recommended by the Sustainability Advisory Committee, to help California address climate change through policies that also ensure a just transition for those communities dependent on the fossil fuel industry.
- 2) Fill all vacant positions within the Environmental Services Division (e.g., Environmental Sustainability Manager), with the additional recommendation of adding one coordinator-type position to oversee CAP implementation, education, and outreach.
- 3) Complete a greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory, which is a key metric for evaluating the CAP. The CAP calls for monitoring of GHGs at least every five years. The CAP was adopted in May 2017.
- 4) Update and expand the Environmental Services website (envirowoodland.org) to emphasize climate resiliency planning, energy conservation (including information on Valley Clean Energy accounts), cost savings programs, citizen education, and networking. Finalize and include the CAP interactive online dashboard developed in

2020. Make website content available in numerous languages other than English. This can be done in-house or with a contractor.

- 5) Update the City Bikeway Master Plan (2002) and pursue funding to continue expanding non-motorized transportation options, complete bike lanes, and improve biking conditions for safety.
- 6) Enroll the City's municipal accounts not currently supported by solar infrastructure into Valley Clean Energy's UltraGreen program.
- 7) Replace cleaning products used in city-owned public spaces with non-toxic alternatives, which will improve indoor air quality and protect the health of custodial workers, staff, and visitors.
- 8) Develop and implement education programs and resources in partnership with Woodland Joint Unified School District, emphasizing water and energy conservation as well as waste management. This can be completed in-house or with a contractor.
- 9) Develop and implement a more comprehensive outreach strategy to promote and educate residents about the City's water conservation and waste management programs. This can be completed in-house or with a contractor.

Methodology

Community input was solicited in three ways: 1) as verbal responses to three questions asked during small group breakout sessions, 2) as written responses to a pre/post event questionnaire; and 3) by raising/not raising hands as part of a poll.

Method 1: Breakout Group Discussions

Participants were broken up into smaller groups of 5-8 individuals and asked to take turns responding to each of three focus questions:

- 1) What environmental topics do you regularly think about? What are you thinking or feeling when these topics come to mind?
- 2) What have you encountered in the City that you feel addresses any of the topics discussed so far? What do you see as being the benefits, challenges or opportunities of these solutions?
- 3) What would you like to see the City implement to address any of the topics discussed today?

Each group was moderated by a Committee member or Environmental Services staff member who was also responsible for documenting and clarifying each participant's response. After all participants shared their responses, participants were encouraged to have a free-flowing discussion on the question at hand for as long as time allowed.

Method 2: Pre/Post Questionnaire

Upon arrival, participants were given a two-page questionnaire containing pre and post event questions as well as a demographics survey. Participants were instructed to complete the pre-questionnaire prior to the start of the Forum and the post-questionnaire within the last five minutes of the Forum. This questionnaire is attached as Appendix 2.

Method 3: Audience Polling

One of the objectives of the Forum was to gauge community interest in the Climate Safe California Campaign and whether or not City Council should endorse the Campaign at their July 19, 2022 meeting. Prior to the event, pre-registrants were e-mailed a link to the Campaign website to allow for research on the topic. Information on the campaign was also presented at the meeting. Following this discussion, the audience was asked to raise their hands if they think City Council should endorse the campaign.

Participants

As part three of the pre/post questionnaire instrument, participants were invited to respond to an optional demographic survey. This data was collected, sorted, and analyzed in order to understand the audience and what socio-economic experiences may be informing their interest and contributions.

A total of 25 individuals (63% of participants excluding Committee members and City staff) responded:

- ▶ 76% of respondents identified as female and 24% as male.
- ▶ 79% of female respondents identified as being white and not Hispanic or Latino; 16% identified as being Hispanic or Latino; and 5% identified as Asian. All male respondents (24% of the total sample) identified as being white and not Hispanic or Latino.
- ▶ The median age range of female respondents is 55-64 and the median age range of male respondents is 65-74. No participant identified as being younger than 25 or older than 84.
- ▶ 72% of respondents indicated that they have a post-graduate degree, with six more respondents identifying as having a bachelor's degree and one identifying as having an associate's degree. No participant identified as having a high school degree (or equivalent) or less educational experience.
- ▶ The median annual household income of respondents is \$75,000-\$99,999.

Using these respondents as a sample of the total participant cohort, Forum participants can be described as predominantly female, white, affluent, and well-educated. Therefore, special consideration should be made regarding recruitment practices for future input activities to ensure that historically marginalized and underrepresented groups are included.

Results

Climate Safe California Campaign

For Method 3 (audience polling), just over two-thirds of non-Committee and staff participants present at the time (29 out of 38 individuals) indicated that Woodland’s City Council should endorse the Climate Safe California Campaign.

Community Priorities for Environmental Sustainability

The following narrative summarizes the responses collected using Methods 1 (breakout discussion groups) and Method 2 (pre/post questionnaire).

A total of 15 unique environmental topics or themes were identified by participants, and the top 5 topics mentioned (from most often to fifth most often) were:

1. Climate Change/Climate Change Impacts
2. Waste Abatement (General)
3. Non-Motorized Transportation Planning
4. Water Conservation (General)
5. Climate Ready/Waterwise Landscaping

- ▶ **Climate Change/Climate Change Impacts** is an aggregate category for a subset of climate change related concerns shared by Forum participants, including: air quality due to wildfires exacerbated by climate-change induced drought conditions; health impacts due to record-breaking heat conditions; drought and reduced agricultural yields; outbreak of tree diseases and insect/pest populations; and the projected increase in human autoimmune responses triggered by climate change induced conditions.
- ▶ **Waste Abatement** describes the programs, policies, and ordinances which reduce, reuse, or recycle solid waste as a means of eliminating refuse that would otherwise end up in the landfill or the natural environment. During this event, participants described four main areas of abatement concerns: a lack of community understanding and education around proper recycling practices; the need for ordinances eliminating non-recyclable take-out products provided by restaurants, such as Styrofoam containers, plastic bags, straws, and plastic utensils from the local waste stream; the impacts of littering and illegal dumping (urban blight); and society as a “throw away culture” (society’s tendency to just ‘throw things away’ rather than invest in reusable options or reuse, repurpose, or compost refuse).
- ▶ **Non-Motorized Transportation Planning** describes plans that allow for ease of walking, bicycling, wheelchair use, and small-wheeled transport methods (scooters, skateboards, roller skates or blades, etc.) that would improve local air quality and reduce GHG emissions. Examples presented by participants include: incomplete and unsafe bike lanes on city streets (such as Court Street) and other general concerns for bicycling safety; the lack of pathways or safe routes used strictly for non-vehicular travel over long distances or to/from major city destinations located across town; and an outdated City Bikeway Master Plan that failed to account for the climate crises. Several participants referenced the need for a system similar

used by the City of Davis (Davis Green Belt).

- ▶ **Water Conservation** an aggregate category for a subset of water-conservation related concerns shared by Forum participants, including: the lack of water education in local schools, a need for the City to conduct outreach, enforcement and/or penalties for those with water exceedances; and acknowledgement that some private wells are going dry in rural Woodland/Yolo County.
- ▶ **Climate Ready/Waterwise Landscaping** describes concerns specific to public and private landscaping practices and retrofit opportunities, such as: the removal of healthy trees on private property, especially older oak trees that sequester carbon and mitigate climate change; homeowners replacing waterwise landscaping in new developments with grass sod; the absence of green roof/permeable landscaping that slows and filters stormwater run-off; the lack of resources for low-income populations to retrofit their lawns; and the lack of pollinator gardens in public spaces.

The remaining 10 environmental priorities identified by participants (after being aggregated, sorted, and ranked) include:

6. Education and Outreach
7. Indoor Air Quality
8. Urban Forests
9. Environmental Justice
10. Pesticides
11. Renewable Energy
12. Rezoning of Agricultural Land
13. Motorized Alternative Transportation
14. Biodiversity
15. Soil Conservation

Current Environmental Successes in Woodland

In both Methods 1 and 2, participants were invited to share what they 1) have observed in Woodland that successfully addresses their priority topics for environmental sustainability, as well as any potential challenges or opportunities associated with those solutions; and 2) what they specifically think the City of Woodland is already doing well regarding environmental sustainability. Those responses were aggregated and are summarized as follows:

- ▶ **Davis-Woodland Water Supply Project:** This award-winning and internationally recognized project improved Woodland's water quality and helped secure our water future. However, it is still important that residents, businesses, and schools conserve water as we do not know how long this current drought will last. Climate change and drought does affect water quality from our surface water source (Sacramento River).

There is an opportunity for more education on water resources and quality in schools and with the public.

- ▶ **Community Solar Program (Valley Clean Energy):** Auto-enrollment in Valley Clean Energy likely contributes to much of the reduction in Woodland’s GHG inventory. There is opportunity to expand this program by auto-enrolling municipal accounts not currently supplied by the City’s solar generation infrastructure into the Valley Clean Energy UltraGreen program, which provides electricity from 100% carbon-free and renewable sources.
- ▶ **Waterwise Landscape Tour:** The virtual waterwise landscape tour has been improving over the last two years and includes valuable resources. In some ways, it is more effective than the in-person tours but it might serve the community best to continue offering both opportunities (virtual and in-person landscape tours) in the future.
- ▶ **Environmental Rebate Programs:** Mulch and compost bin rebate programs are seemingly quite successful and seem to have been running out of funds sooner each year than they did in the past. It would be helpful if the City could also offer rebates for waterwise yard conversions (per square foot) and not just for conservation tools or equipment.
- ▶ **Woodland Tree Foundation:** The Woodland Tree Foundation honors their motto “building community through canopy.” They produced a map of the City’s largest valley oak trees and obtained a grant to increase trees in low canopy areas. They are the most successful citizen engagement group and could be a template for other community engagement projects, such as trash cleanup groups.
- ▶ **Sod-Free Yards in New Developments:** New developments such as Spring Lake have smaller yards that are initially installed with berms, swales, mulch, and drought tolerant plant. However, some homeowners convert these yards to contain sod. The City could have an ordinance preventing this type of conversion.
- ▶ **Crawford Park Rain Garden:** The Crawford Rain Garden was the first demonstration garden in the City; however, it lacks signage explaining why it was installed and how homeowners could do the same. The City could include more rain gardens in public spaces that could serve many more beneficial purposes.
- ▶ **Bee City, USA Designation:** Woodland was designated as a Bee-Friendly and Pollinator-Friendly City in 2019. The California Honey Festival is hosted in Woodland and helps perpetuate the important stories of pollinators.
- ▶ **EnviroWoodland Newsletter:** This monthly newsletter contains valuable news and resources and is easy to read. It would be helpful if it regularly included information from the Sustainability Advisory Committee, such as an update from the Chairperson and/or links to their most recent meeting minutes.
- ▶ **Woodland Regional Park Preserve:** Woodland Regional Park Preserve will be a valuable asset to the City as there is otherwise a complete lack of open space within City limits. Maintaining funding for K-12 and public education at this venue is necessary.
- ▶ **Organic Waste Management:** For the last few years, residents have been able to add food scraps and food soiled paper to their yard waste bins. Repurposing food waste is

becoming more of a requirement. However, continued outreach and education on what can and cannot go into the organics bin is necessary.

- ▶ **Bulky Waste Program:** (no additional comment)

Community Suggestions for Improvement

Specific community suggestions for environmental topics are listed here. Please note that not every topic previously identified as an area of concern received recommendations.

- ▶ **Climate Change/Climate Change Impacts:**
 - Advertise the Climate Action Plan and provide regular updates to the community. Make the information accessible online and send annual postcards to every Woodland postal address. There is a lack of transparency and accountability.
 - Complete the GHG inventory, which is a key step of for CAP evaluation.
 - Have a staff member and budget dedicated to CAP implementation and outreach.
 - Auto-enroll municipal accounts into Valley Clean Energy's UltraGreen program, as this is one of the City's best strategies for curbing its GHG emissions.
 - Continue adding Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations; the ones at popular shopping centers are usually full on the weekends. More are needed.
- ▶ **Waste Abatement**
 - Impose and/or enforce a Citywide ban or ordinance on Styrofoam takeout products.
 - Educate and support restaurants who are failing to comply with Assembly Bill (AB) 1276 (legislation limiting the distribution of single-use foodware accessories and standard condiments to customers only upon request).
 - Provide outreach and education materials in languages other than English and Spanish; recreate educational materials that transcend language barriers by using pictures.
 - Deliver educational presentations in K-12 schools or start school composting or recycling collection programs.
 - Offer regular community trash cleanup projects, such as monthly "Adopt a Street" or "Adopt a Neighborhood" cleanups. The Cities of Vallejo and Suisun City have these programs that Woodland could use as a template. This will lead to more community engagement and cleaner neighborhoods.
 - Events happening within City limits (e.g., the Woodland Honest Festival) should be required to be zero waste; all vendors should be required to supply only compostable utensils, plates, etc. and this should be a part of the permit application process.
 - Explore and identify solutions for food-grade products that contain Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) that are now being added to City compost bins and adding toxicity to soil and the environment.
 - Require grocers to offer only compostable (compostable in appropriate facility) plastic bags, like Trader Joe's in Davis does.
- ▶ **Non-Motorized Transportation Planning**
 - Finish and improve bike lanes in accordance with the 2002 City Bikeway Master Plan. Make biking safer.
 - Update 2002 City Bikeway Master Plan with an emphasis on replacing traditionally vehicle-friendly routes with non-motorized transportation pathways.

- Offer free safety reflective vests to help residents feel safer biking or walking instead of driving.
- Convert unused railroad systems into non-vehicular travel routes. An example of how this has been done is above Cannery Row in Monterey, CA (“rails to trails”). This could be done along Main Street.
- Offer rebates for those who purchase bikes and/or Electric Vehicle (EV) bicycles.
- Sites like the Community Center and Woodland Regional Park should be safely accessible without needing a vehicle to get there.
- Work with downtown property owners to offer student housing, which will encourage walking through downtown (rather than driving to downtown) and support local businesses.
- Amplify “May is Bike Month” and offer bigger incentives and recognition for participation.

▶ **Water Conservation**

- Offer incentives and recognition for businesses and homeowners that cut back water usage, hopefully to inspire other customers.
- Amplify promotion of AquaHawk (the City’s water use alert program). Look at accounts and specifically reach out to “water wasters.”
- Offer “Brown is the New Green” lawn signs to people who let their lawns die as part of an outreach tool.
- Deliver water education programs in K-12 schools or at the library.
- Make sure City irrigation systems are set to only water in the middle of the night. Penalize the school districts for not doing the same. Encourage installation of greywater systems.

▶ **Climate Ready/Waterwise Landscaping**

- Impose an ordinance, penalty or fine for installing grass sod on properties that are already retrofitted with waterwise/climate ready landscaping.
- Apply for and implement an urban greening grant that would integrate climate-adaptive vegetation and green infrastructure.
- Partner with railroads on their current and/or historic rights-of-way to create and maintain pollinator friendly habitat including native trees, shrubs, forbs, and wildflowers.
- Start incorporating green roofs and other green infrastructure to slow surface runoff and filter out pollutants. Only select developers who will incorporate green infrastructure into their development project.
- Add signage to the Crawford Park Rain Demonstration Garden to explain its purpose and how residents can integrate this into their own yards and gardens.

▶ **Environmental Justice**

- Offer bilingual closed captioning of all City meetings (City Council, SAC, planning commission, etc.) to include vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- Offer rebates for small landscape businesses when they switch their gas-powered equipment for electric equipment, helping to ensure a just transition for businesses like these.

▶ **Indoor Air Quality**

- Replace carpets in City-owned public spaces with non-toxic flooring options. Emulate the Woodland Joint Unified Flooring policy.
- Replace toxic cleaning chemicals in City-owned public spaces with non-toxic alternatives.
- Promote carpeting and cleaning product companies that offer non-toxic options. Provide this information on EnviroWoodland.

AGENDA

Community Input Forum on Environmental Sustainability

Saturday, July 9, 2022 | 1:00PM – 3:00PM
Leake Center | Woodland Public Library

TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER
1:05	Welcome and Introductions	Sara Schremmer <i>Sustainability Advisory Committee</i>
1:15	Discussion Starter	Allison Martin <i>Sustainability Advisory Committee</i>
1:30	Presentation: Woodland Environmental Services	Rosie Ledesma <i>City of Woodland</i>
1:50	Group Agreements and Breakout Session	Sara Schremmer
2:30	Climate Safe CA Campaign and Next Steps	Sara Schremmer Liza Grandia <i>Sustainability Advisory Committee</i>
2:50	Raffle Winner Announcement, Exit Questionnaire, and Networking	

Please complete the pre-event questionnaire as soon as possible. Complete the exit questionnaire included on the same document after the event has concluded. Thank you!



Raffle prizes donated and sponsored by the City of Woodland Environmental Services Division

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Appendix 2



Community Input Event on Environmental Sustainability

Saturday, July 9, 2022

Welcome and thank you for joining us. Your input is essential and appreciated.

There are three parts to this questionnaire. Please complete the first box prior to the start of the event and the second box only after the event has concluded. The third box is optional but provides valuable information. Please return the completed questionnaire to event volunteers at the check-in table to receive a thank you gift provided by Planet Inc.

BOX 1 - Please complete this section immediately upon arrival.

1. How long have you been a Woodland resident? _____ years _____ months
2. What are your expectations for this event?
3. What are your **Top 3** priorities for environmental sustainability that you are hoping to share today? Why are they important to you?
4. What do you think the City of Woodland is doing well regarding environmental sustainability? Where do you think it could improve?

BOX 2 - Please complete this section after the meeting ends.

1. Did this event meet your expectations? Please describe why and/or why not.

continues on back

2. Did any of your **Top 3** priorities (Box 1, Question 3) change based on what you heard from other attendees today? Please explain.

3. Now that the event is finished, what do you think the City of Woodland is already doing well regarding environmental sustainability? Where do you think it could improve?

4. Is there anything else you would like to share?

-
- How did you hear about this event?
 - What suggestions do you have for marketing events like this in the future? How can we connect with more people like you?

BOX 3 - Demographic Information (Optional)

Responses are voluntary and anonymous.

Gender: Male Female Non-Binary Other: _____

Race/Ethnicity (check all that apply): American Indian or Alaska Native Asian Black or African American
 Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 White Other: _____

Age Range: 18 and under 19-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75-84 85 and older

Education Level: Grade 12 or Less High School Degree or Equivalent Some College; No Degree
 Associate Degree Bachelor Degree Post Graduate Degree

Average Annual Household Income: Less than \$10,000 \$10,000-\$24,999 \$25,000-\$49,999
 \$50,000-\$74,999 \$75,000-\$99,999 \$100,000-\$149,999
 \$150,000 or greater