



Sustainability Commission Meeting

Wednesday, July 23, 2025, at 6:30 P.M.

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order at 6:30 P.M.

2. Roll Call by Staff Liaison

Members Present: Chair Ben Ruoti, Vice Chair Diana Estrada and Commissioners Paul Lemmon, Al Nunez, and Daniel Schuh

Members Absent: Commissioners Ramon Sanchez and Daniel Smith-Castillo

Staff Present: Staff Liaison; Kimberly Anderson, Sustainability Officer / Katrece Swanson, Senior Management Analyst for Public Works.

3. Unscheduled Public Appearances

No public present.

4. Approval of May 28, 2025, Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER LEMMON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 28, 2025, AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER SCHUH SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 5-0 WITH CHAIR RUOTI, VICE CHAIR ESTRADA, AND COMMISSIONERS LEMMON, NUNEZ, AND SCHUH VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

5. Sustainability Updates

Ms. Anderson Introduced Katrece Swanson, Senior Management Analyst for Public works, who will be covering for her while she is out on maternity leave.

Ms. Swanson briefly reviewed her role with the Sustainability Commission while Ms. Anderson is out on leave.

Ms. Anderson provided an overview of the recent sustainability updates.

- **R. City + Mill Promotion**

This promotion went live in April 2025 and had a slow start, but with additional flyers and marketing pushes on social media it has gained the interest of residents.

The goal was to have 50 households signed up and as of June there were 44 households registered. The breakdown received since April shows 603 pounds of food scraps were diverted from the landfill, that is the equivalent of 1.47 pounds per day which is higher than the national average. In addition, 639 kilograms of CO2 emissions were diverted, that is equivalent to 139 12-gallon trash bags. Funding has been rolled over to the FY26 budget with enough funding to support 90 households. On November 15, 2025, Mill will host a class in Avondale for residents to learn more about what they do and how they do it.

Chair Ruoti inquired if the class could be recorded and posted on the website. Ms. Anderson said she is working with IT to have the capability to have a hybrid class and host it online as well, which could be recorded.

- Invasive Species Removal

This project has been completed with the removal of invasive plant species along the Aqua Fria River near Festival Fields Park. After a couple of scope changes the Tamarisk trees that were able to reproduce were removed. They posed a high fire risk because they are brittle, and they use up a lot of ground water taking it away from native species. Some trees that were past the reproductive state were left because native wildlife use them as habitat, they provide shade for future park expansion, and for their ecological benefits. Stinknet is another invasive species that has small yellow flowers and emits a horrible smell. There was a plan to do treatments on these based on their emerging cycle, but for some reason they didn't emerge this year.

- EV Siding Plan

This plan is underway as the team met with a contractor today and hope to have their final deliverables including recommended locations throughout the city with future expansion.

Commissioner Nunez inquired about the type of charging stations that will be installed. Ms. Anderson explained the dual port level two chargers will be installed with plans to install level three chargers based on desire from residents, but they are more expensive, using more electricity and electrical infrastructure.

Commissioner Nunez asked if in the long-term EV services would be charged for. Ms. Anderson advised it is something in the longer term in certain locations with level three chargers. Funding for sustainability initiatives has dried up but there are plans for an implementation grant.

Chair Ruoti asked if private enterprise could be made to provide EV charging spaces. Ms. Anderson noted part of the City Code requires a minimum of EV parking spaces for any new or redesigned development. This includes any new city buildings; we hold ourselves to those same standards.

Commissioner Lemmon asked if these are installed at parks. Ms. Anderson stated that was being identified in the study and community parks are included. EV stations were installed at Alamar Park because it is newly developed.

- **Tree Inventory**

Internally this project is moving forward as the team works with IT to review and approve applicable software usage, which will hopefully be finalized within the next two months. Then we can move forward with the tree inventory.

Chair Ruoti asked who would be conducting the inventory. Ms. Anderson advised they are working with a contractor that has an agreement with a nearby city that we are hoping to piggyback off and they have great software. The procurement process would still need to be completed. Once everything is in place the contractor and an arborist would start the process of tree identification using a GIS map to pin locations and monitor the health of the trees.

6. Community Sustainability Plan Workshop

a. Where we are now, and where the Commission thinks we should focus in the near future.

Ms. Anderson discussed the desire to obtain recommendations for pathways and targets from the committee to start planning for next year's budget. What do they feel the community would like to see pursued regarding the sustainability plan. What is the best-case scenario, the hopes and dreams and provide some feedback on what would be most beneficial to focus on in the next five years.

Commissioner Nunez inquired when the current plan would expire. Ms. Anderson explained there are various timeframes but no specific expiration date of the plan perse. Some of the pathways and targets have specific completion dates such as 2030. At some point the plan will need to be revisited, updated, and revitalized.

Commissioner Lemmon discussed renewable energy flux and potentially reviewing any pathway that includes it and focusing on what can be funded. He discussed the water quality insert with a lot of technical information that was probably included for federal reasons which residents more than likely skipped over. It did have some good things like the water story

Chair Ruoti inquired where the City is now in relation to the water usage target for 2030 of 112 gallons per capita per day stands. Ms. Anderson advised she did not have the exact numbers available, but it is an ongoing effort by the Water Conservation Coordinator, with incentives being offered to residents that reduce their water usage.

Commissioner Schuh discussed his concerns and recommendations, starting with the resilience to extreme heat as a key pathway. This is newer problem residents are experiencing with the environment, and it is hard to mitigate. The commission has previously discussed planting trees and the use of cool pavement. There is a plan to plant trees in the new parks for shade canopy. Building materials is another pathway with urban heat, such as efficient buildings with renewable energy. He noted the Water Department does a fantastic job managing the water supply and quality and Department of Transportation offering clean transportation by installing the EV chargers both have done a great job managing these services.

Commissioner Nunez discussed the installation of EV stations and if the goal can be met by 2030 due to price increases. Like any plan this is a living document, and you adjust it as you move along. The water department is doing a great job, but residents need a scientist to read the report that just came out, it should have been an understandable executive summary. The good quality water in Avondale should be reinforced and that it is safe to drink. Where the rebates are going away, many residents have stepped back from installing solar. Another area is air quality, but it is difficult to improve unless drastic measures are taken to remove things, or a dome is installed over the city. This document is still viable; we want it to be more sustainable environment it just needs to be updated based on the challenges with the current environment.

Vice Chair Estrada said her top priorities are heat and water conservation. Some actions have been taken, such as use of canopy trees. She suggested thinking outside the box about planting gardens that reduce the heat index, networking partnerships with cooling centers. Possibility of partnering with HOAs, businesses, or any excessive water users and offering additional incentives to manage water usage.

Chair Ruoti said his two areas of priority are reliable water supply and waste as a resource. He stressed a need to see how these goals are measured and where they stand now. With the additional housing there is a chance the numbers are going backwards. There is a need for a program that presents to the public how to reduce water usage.

Commissioner Lemmon discussed educating residents in multifamily homes on use of the recycling bins to be more efficient with the waste as a resource category.

Ms. Anderson summarized the commission's discussion noting the common themes are sustainability is hard and there are limiting factors. Sometimes unforeseen factors can get in the way of these timeframes. The departments have been efficient in using funds available and work is getting done. There are efforts taken to look at other funding resources and what can be accomplished internally. Conversations continue with other cities and working together to get work done. The commission has asked for an evaluation of where the pathways currently stand by providing progress reports.

Commissioner Lemmon noted the goals are still doable they just need to be updated and keep it real.

Chair Ruoti suggested a workshop in the fall to perform updates with public input. Ms. Anderson advised that there could be a public Ad Hoc meeting.

Ms. Swanson discussed the EV Charging stations and information from the ASU professor to look at not just equal distribution but equitable distribution as well. They will be looking at where the stations are needed the most. Priorities and goals may have shifted, and the plan needs to adapt to the changes and work towards goals that make sense and help the community.

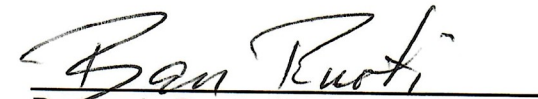
A brief discussion ensued related to the Parks and Rec Department and the work on the trail network.

Ms. Anderson added to the list of priorities discussed by the Commission, with water, heat resilience, waste as resources. These are great because we are not looking for the immediate future, we are still doing things.

7. Adjournment

The next Sustainability Commission Regular Meeting is scheduled for September 24, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

COMMISSIONER SCHUH MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:20 P.M.
COMMISSIONER NUNEZ SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED 5-0 CHAIR RUOTI, VICE CHAIR ESTRADA, AND COMMISSIONERS LEMMON, NUNEZ, AND SCHUH VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.


Benjamin Ruoti, Chair



Kimberly Anderson
Sustainability Officer as Staff Liaison

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting held on the 28th day of May 2025. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.

Kimberly Anderson

Kimberly Anderson
Sustainability Officer as Staff Liaison

Signature:

Email: ben.ruoti@gmail.com