

**PHOENIX ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY and SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION  
URBAN HEAT ISLAND/TREE AND SHADE SUBCOMMITTEE (UHITS) MINUTES**

**February 9, 2021  
Phoenix City Hall  
Online Utilizing WebEx**

<b>Commission Members Present</b>	<b>City Staff Present</b>
Dwayne Allen, Vice Chair via phone	Nancy Allen, Office of Environmental Programs (OEP)
Anna Bettis via phone	Mark Hartman, Office of Sustainability (OOS)
Marc Campbell via phone	Rosanne Albright, OEP
Hazel Chandler via phone	Matthew Potzler, OEP
Doebbeling, Bronwyn via phone	Katrina Gerster, OEP
Aimee Esposito via phone	Cindy Salazar, OEP
CJ Hager via phone	Brianna Williams, OOS
David Hondula via phone	
Tabitha Myers via phone	
Nicole Rodriguez via phone	
Vanessa Spartan-Platt via phone	
Ginger Syke Torres, Chair via phone	
<b>Commission Members Not Present</b>	<b>Community Members Present</b>
Vjollca Berisha	Lance Watkins
Wanda Dalla Costa	Jenna Oddo
Nika Forte	Jessica Bueno
Carlos Galindo-Elvira	Luke Vickery
Tiffany Halperin	Wayne Warrington
	Sarah Porter
	Brent Olson

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 3:08 p.m. There were 10 members present at roll call.

The following subcommittee members arrived at the times stated below:

- Vanessa Spartan-Platt at 3:25 p.m.
- CJ Hager at 3:35 p.m.

**2. Review and approval of January 12, 2020 Minutes**

**ACTION:**

Subcommittee member Chandler made a motion to approve the January 12, 2020 minutes. Subcommittee member Myers seconded the motion, and it carried 10:0.

**3. Public Comments**

There were no comments from the public.

**4. Update from EQSC Chair**

Environmental Quality and Sustainability Commission Chair Colin Tetreault addressed the subcommittee and discussed their goals for the remainder of the year. He started by thanking the subcommittee for their time and the work they put into the subcommittee. The Tree Administrator memo was presented at the last EQSC meeting and commission members will provide feedback and comments. The Commission will vote later this week to forward the memo on to council. Should it be approved Chair Tetreault asks the subcommittee members to participate in advocating for the position during the upcoming budget season starting with the budget hearings in March and April. The Tree Administrator memo contains very good talking points that will be beneficial to highlight in these conversations. Chair Tetreault also recommends subcommittee members to set up personal meetings on their own time with council members.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez asked if the position is moving forward as “Tree Administrator” or “Urban Forest Infrastructure Manger” as stated in the memo. Chair Tetreault stated that the official job title will be determined after budget approval when the job description is developed. Subcommittee member Rodriguez stressed that the name was part of the work the group did to help sell the position.

Chair Tetreault feels encouraged that the position will be successfully approved as there is support from Mayor Gallego and city leadership in this space. He feels the next 9 months of work is very important in encouraging changes. The original charge in creating UHITS was that the subcommittee would return to EQSC in March 2021 with a suite of policy proposals and a timeline of what to cover. Chair Tetreault is expecting future work similar to the memo as it does a good job in stating a desired outcome and back in up with an appropriate amount of facts and rigor. The subcommittee will support the Commission in drafting policies of where the city should be going, why these changes are needed, and providing the horsepower to make a use case. The council can then approve and direct staff to make these changes. Chair Tetreault stated the subcommittee has good things already in motion, such as cool corridors, cool pavement, roofing capacity. All of these can become definitive statements and the Commission is excited for future policy recommendations over the next calendar year.

Subcommittee member Hondula asked for sense of headwinds the subcommittee is facing and what arguments they should expect. Chair Tetreault mentions the memo does a good job at facing these by referencing other places that have tackled this and their precedent as well as a business case for the value of the position. With recent administration changes there is a growing desire and opportunity for overall sustainability. There may not be massive changes soon, but the water is warming at a faster rate.

Subcommittee member Esposito asked when the General Plan will be updated and if, and how, the EQSC will participate in that process. Chair Tetreault stated the General Plan will be updated in 2025 and the changes and plans created in the previous 10 years will need to be reverse engineered into the General Plan. When the changes and plans were developed the EQSC played a role through advocating in that process. The Climate Action Plan will be updated more frequently and be a living feedback mechanism which will be integral in the General Plan update.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez asked what happened to the previous recommendations as she never saw they discussed after the EQSC approved and sent them to council. They would be a good thing to resurface in developing policy changes. Colin Tetreault mentioned that Chief Sustainability Officer Mark Hartman presented to the Transportation, Innovation, and Infrastructure Subcommittee including those recommendations. This process is interval and many of the same topics have been presented before. To his memory the TII Subcommittee had no objections and it was warmly received.

Subcommittee member Hondula mentioned that the county is working on revising the All Hazards Mitigation Plan and will provide additional funding for things like green infrastructure and heat mitigation. It is updated every 5 years and should be included in the work the group is aware of. Chair Tetreault encourages participation in inter-governmental work, especially if it has the potential for funding. He also mentioned that the EQSC received a briefing from city staff in the last year on the Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development Handbook and it was supported. If there is another area focused on green infrastructure that the subcommittee would like to advocate for, he supports and welcomes it.

Chair Torres thanked Chair Tetreault for articulating the charge behind the group and encouraging their work. This discussion was helpful to hear his thoughts and directions on where the group should head.

## **5. Tree and Shade Administrator Business Case Update**

Chair Torres echoed what Chair Tetreault said previously on the memo and also feels encouraged by the support. The vote should happen later this week and another update will occur at the next UHITS meeting.

## **6. Presentation: Natures Cooling System Community Partners**

Chair Torres welcomed the presenters and asked subcommittee members to think about what policy recommendations could occur and what is missing to help community groups providing solutions during the presentation. Phoenix Revitalization Corporation Director of Community Programs Jessica Bueno, and Subcommittee members Bettis and Hondula presented on the Nature's Cooling System Project using a PowerPoint presentation.

Chair Torres asked for clarification on how they provide resources for residents without a cooling system and if they meant cooling down the residence or more than that. Bueno mentioned that it is both depending on the circumstances. It could be helping residents find cooling centers in their neighborhood and helping find community partners to help repair their home cooling system. Subcommittee member Rodriguez asked if they communicate with Neighborhood Services to make sure landlords are following laws about air conditioning. Bueno mentioned that Phoenix Revitalization Corporation does, but the waiting list is very long so it is often quicker to connect them with other partners and help them navigate the system. Subcommittee member Rodriguez was unaware these gaps existed.

Vice Chair Allen asked what the process for follow up was on trees planted in the project. Bueno and Subcommittee member Bettis stated that the agreement was the resident would maintain the trees. The residents were included in the design and are connected to the trees so want to continue caretaking for the trees.

Chair Torres asked if there were common recommendations from the group of communities studied that worked for most to be aware of. Bueno mentioned that the new awareness the community has about equity and investments in their neighborhood allows them to advocate for trees and know where to place them. They are more aware of the affects of heat. The common theme is getting more people involved. Subcommittee member Bettis pointed to a Venn diagram on page 28 of the heat planning guide that shows the overlaps of what the three neighborhoods asked for. All neighborhoods asked for shade, bus stops, trees, and water.

Chair Torres noted that the main takeaway of the presentation was building residents' awareness and empowering the communities with knowledge about the issue of urban heat. It is unclear how it directly ties into city policy, but there is a need to help residents understand the issue and is a benefit. She asked for other subcommittee member's thoughts on what resources are available and how the city could use them in resident education. Subcommittee member Rodriguez spoke at one of the resident meetings and noticed that the residents weren't motivated by the chance to learn for attending but rather the incentives and "freebies" provided. They are exhausted by their needs not being met to have the leisure to learn and just want to be helped immediately. Bueno echoed that she sees the high need among residents she serves and is encouraged by the Virtual Urban Heat Academy to hopefully spark resident's interest as they become more involved and begin to see the changes.

## **7. Presentation: Water Considerations for Tree Canopy**

EQSC Commissioner and Director of the Kyl Center for Water Policy at Morrison Institute at ASU Sarah Porter presented about water considerations and water supply in the City of Phoenix while planting trees using a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation highlighted project vs non-project lands and their differences in water supply. These differences mean any potential recommendations should reflect water sustainability and availability.

Vice Chair Allen asked population growth and changes in demand for the past decade and what it looks like for the future. Commissioner Porter noted Arizona has decoupled population growth from water demand and through incentives and rules Phoenix has been able to decrease per capita demand. Based on previous conversations the City of Phoenix estimated demand will grow about 12% in the next 50 years and some models

showed it would plateau after that. Phoenix's density will increase as it continues to grow in population along with increased water capture indoors to be used outdoors, which will decrease demand over time.

Subcommittee member Bettis noted that the Nature Conservancy is working on modeling low impact development features and their impact in heat mitigation and asked about what role low impact development plays in water sustainability. Commissioner Porter feels low impact development is key but is also skeptical after the recent years of drought. There may be a need to have infrastructure as a redundancy backup for those kinds of years.

Chair Torres asked about how some project lands overlap with previously established vulnerable communities and what recommendations would fit for them. Commissioner Porter said there is not as big of a concern for those areas in terms of water availability. The concerns for Colorado River system are different than for the SRP system. There is always the need to be aware of water use and choose low water trees, but the considerations are different. Subcommittee member Campbell noted that there is an opportunity to think creatively to restore infrastructure in older neighborhoods, such as community gardens and similar features.

## **8. Reports on Assignments and Action Items from January UHITS**

Chair Torres asked for report outs on the tasks assigned during the previous meeting.

- Cool Corridors: Vanessa Spartan-Platt, David Hondula
- Climate Action Plan UHI Chapter and UHI Goal Recommendations: Aimee Esposito
- Cool Rooftop Policy Development: David Hondula, Hazel Chandler
- Tracking Adoption of 2019 Tree and Shade Recommendations/PDD Text Amendments: Nicole Rodriguez

Chair Torres noted that there were about 15 minutes remaining in the meeting and asked for reports to be limited to 5 minutes each.

Subcommittee member Hondula presented on cool corridors and work that is being done on what is a cool corridor, what they should look like, and where should they go. An early, simple definition for a cool corridor is a mile-long stretch of continuous roads that are cool and offer shade. Data from ASU to determine these areas are land surface temperature and sky view factor from Google Street View. The presentation also included photo examples of places that met the criteria from both datasets and feedback from subcommittee members.

Subcommittee member Hager noted that many of the pictures didn't include pedestrian walkways so even though it might be shaded it wouldn't be recommended that they use this path. Subcommittee member Hondula agreed that pedestrian use is critical.

Subcommittee member Rodriguez asked if palm trees are considered as providing shade. Subcommittee member Hondula noted that at the moment anything that obscures the sky counts equally and provided the example that even an airplane in the sky would also count against sky view factor. However, changes could be added to the model that excludes palm trees or additional weights. Subcommittee member Spartan-Platt added that land surface temperature may need more emphasis than sky view factor in determining cooler microclimates for pedestrians.

Chair Torres noted that these initial corridors are in the North/Central area of Phoenix so it would be interesting to compare cooler corridors in different areas of the city and how they differ. Additionally, comparing corridors in project vs non-project lands might be interesting to investigate.

Subcommittee member Spartan-Platt updated the group on conversations with the Street Transportation Department about how the cool corridor task will be managed by multiple divisions and departments. In December Streets submitted a supplemental budget request for 9 additional miles of trees each year in arterial corridors. The areas they are prioritizing are areas of high transit ridership and zero car households. They are looking into the potential of the areas identified and had early constraints. The arterial corridors with high transit ridership and zero car households also had limited right-of-way and utility conflicts. This will cause additional challenged but doesn't make it impossible. In June they will find out if they are approved the budget request and if so, they would finalize their identification and prioritization process. At that time, they would also be facilitating community input and can present to the subcommittee. Subcommittee member Esposito noted that the areas that need trees the most are often the same as the ones that have higher constraints and wondered how the subcommittee could think about that.

In the interest time as the scheduled meeting timeframe had ended, Chair Torres asked the remaining reports to be sent to her via email and she would update the group. She also said that if anyone would like to join forces in looking into these issues and developing policy recommendations, they should email her or the person leading the topic. Subcommittee member Rodriguez asked that she get 20 minutes near the start of the agenda during the next meeting to discuss the Planning and Development text amendment.

## **9. Announcements and Review of Future Agenda Items**

Next month's meeting is tentatively scheduled for 5 p.m., however Chair Torres noted she preferred the 3 p.m. meeting time and will consider making it a permanent change. If any members have conflicts or any comments about public access to attend the meeting, Chair Torres asked they email her.

## **10. Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katrina Gerster, Environmental Quality Specialist