

Meeting Minutes

Environment and Climate Committee



CITY OF BEND

Location: Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall Street

Date: April 10, 2025

The meeting of the Environment and Climate Committee (ECC) was called to order at 11:03 a.m. on Thursday, April 10, 2025, in the City Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall Street, and online.

- 1. Roll Call:** Kavi Chokshi, Laura Tabor, Mark Buckley, Neil Baunsgard, Nick Millar (online), Rory Isbell, Scott Nordquist, Smita Mehta

Madalyn Paquette (ex officio) (online)

Absent: Ray Hartwell, Sasha Sulia (ex officio)

2. Approval Meeting Minutes

2/13/2025 ECC Meeting Minutes

2/24/2025 Joint Advisory Body Meeting on Electrification Minutes

3/13/2025 ECC Meeting Minutes

Approved with no additions or corrections.

3. Public Comment (2 minutes each)

Visitors can use "Raise Hand" feature when prompted to provide public comment

None

4. Staff Updates

Presented by Senior Management Analyst Cassie Lacy.

Slides included:

- Committee member updates
 - Kellie Jensen resigning

- Committee recruitment launching next week – will fill 2 seats
- April 4 Council Stewardship Subcommittee
 - Reviewed biennium priorities with Council and received their support
- April 16 Council Meeting
 - CCAP Adoption
 - Electrification Policy Next Steps
 - Proposing a resolution focused on fleet electrification and hybrid vehicles
- Engagement update
 - Website launched!
 - Newsletter launch in April
 - Tabling at Earth Day Fair

ECC Members asked about the cost-benefit of fleet electrification.

Lacy stated that the fleet director confirmed that the heavily used electric vehicles will be cost-effective and will recoup expenses in approximately one year, and lighter use vehicles will recoup expenses in approximately 4-5 years. Lacy confirmed that the project would save money and funding this project will not detract from other electrification projects.

5. BURA Investment Strategy | Presentation

Lacy stated that this presentation was informational only and that no action was being asked of ECC.

Presented by Urban Renewal Manager Jonathan Taylor.

Slides included:

- Invest Bend – An Economic Development Strategic Plan Project
- Previous Efforts’ Recap
- Project Purpose – Develop the first Economic Development Strategic Plan to guide the City’s economic development programs, policies, partnerships and investments for the next ten years.
- Project Goal – Identify objectives that cultivate stable, long-lasting, and equitable opportunities for upward economic mobility for all who reside in Bend
- The Final Plan will:
 - Set a vision for a sustainable and equitable economic development in Bend through 2035
 - Provide key focus areas, strategies and actions to achieve that vision
 - Facilitates implementation by recommending priority strategies and actions for the next five years
 - Assists with the Bend Urban Renewal Investment Strategy
 - Recommend roles and structures for the City and external partners
- Plan Overview
 - Business
 - People
 - Place
- Growing Our Businesses

- Business is the primary method of achieving economic growth and prosperity. Recruiting, retaining, and fostering business growth will provide access to upward mobility for area workers, assists with stabilizing and diversifying the local tax base, and reduces tax burdens on residential residents
- Example areas:
 - Promote entrepreneurial growth
 - Encourage retail and commercial growth
 - Cultivate target industry clusters
- Supporting our Neighbors
 - People are the primary reason why a community wants to enhance its economic development efforts. Access to housing, better paying jobs, quality education, and healthy community resources encourage life-long residents while attracting new neighbors.
 - Example Areas:
 - Ensure housing development and affordability
 - Build a strong workforce
 - Enhance recreational and cultural opportunities
- Securing our Future:
 - Place is the historic character and soul of the community. Preserving and enhancing what makes a community unique must be central in ongoing development and growth. Access to parks and cultural amenities, restaurants, retail, and sustainable infrastructure systems increases happiness, reduces community stressors, and fosters safety.
 - Example Areas:
 - Infrastructure Development
 - Neighborhood Beautification
 - Economic and Environmental Resiliency
- Development Structure
 - Community Foundation Assessment and Data Analysis
 - Community Engagement
 - Core Team and City Council
- Invest Bend Campaign
 - Investing in our community where nature meets prosperity
- Strategy Timeline
 - Determine Position – November 2024 - July 2025
 - Develop Strategy – June 2025 - September 2025
 - Build Plan – August 2025 - November 2025
 - Perform & Monitor – December 2025 - Onward
- Focus Group
 - Plan development will rely on key partners in identified areas to reveal community priorities for economic growth. Selected by Bend Economic Development Advisory Body (BEDAB), the members of the focus group will participate in three sessions
 - Session 1: Where are we going and what do we bring?
 - Session 2: Where are we going and what do we want to be?
 - Session 3: How do we get there?
- Broad Engagement

- The development of the plan will also incorporate broader community collaboration and input. While key stakeholders can provide valuable information, key feedback may be missed. Providing opportunities for all residents and workers in Bend will be pivotal in the development of this plan.
- Example Outreach Efforts:
 - Local Bank Consortium Lunch
 - Cultivate Bend
 - Bend Outdoor Worx
 - Local CEO Roundtable
 - Worker Survey
 - Business Survey
- Plan Development Team
 - City Council and BURA Champions – Mayor Pro Tem Megan Perkins and BURA Chair Mike Riley
 - These individuals will bring spirited advocacy for internal and cross-elected collaboration. These individuals should be interested in economic development policies and investments. Champions should have the ability to create and maintain strong business relations, understand the value of the project, and can effectively communicate the position of the City.
 - Main Advisory Board – Bend Economic Development Advisory Board
 - The advisory board will provide strategic advice during plan development, assist in making informed decisions about project direction and formation, identify new opportunities for community engagement, provide feedback on draft documents and data, and recommend final product to City Council.
 - Project Managers - The project managers will have the responsibility of planning, developing, coordinating, and executing the development of the Economic Development Strategic Plan.
 - Project Team - The project team will have the responsibility of providing continued feedback on information gleaned and developed in the process.
- Next Steps
 - April 21, 2025: BEDAB identifies participants for Focus Group. Determines how to incorporate City Advisory Bodies into the development of the Plan.
 - May-June 2025, Stakeholder interviews, glean existing plans, demographic analysis
 - June 10, 2025 – First Focus Group
 - June 2025 – Industry cluster supply chain, labor market, economic market, and housing market analysis
 - July 10, 2025 – Second Focus Group
 - August 28, 2025 – Third Focus Group

Taylor asked what recommendations ECC members had for BEDAB to incorporate ECC's input.

Member Isbell suggested BEDAB consider the spatial aspect of the economic development plan, considering land use and zoning to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Taylor clarified that Lacy will be part of the engagement team and will provide updates to ECC.

Mooney stated that he would provide BEDAB meeting agenda topics to Lacy in advance so that ECC members could attend relevant BEDAB meetings.

Lacy anticipated another joint committee meeting to discuss the economic development plan.

Mooney stated that staff and Council would like a representative from the Core Area Advisory Board (CAAB), BEDAB, Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) and ECC to be in the focus group.

Mooney clarified the goal. The presentation outlined a roadmap to an adopted economic development strategy by December 2025. The roadmap included the process, community engagement, and data analysis required to adopt a strategy for the next 10 years.

Member Chokshi suggested consideration of “degrowth”, which moves away from capitalism’s focus on perpetual (and unsustainable and ecologically damaging) economic growth.

Member Buckley suggested consideration of resource consumption in conjunction with growth.

Taylor summarized that he would report back to BEDAB that ECC is very interested in being involved in the process and in providing feedback.

The Committee recessed at 11:47 a.m. and reconvened at 11:59 a.m.

6. Electrification Policy Next Steps | Discussion

Slides included:

- Electrification Policy Next Steps
- Proposed Electrification Policy Work Plan
 1. Launch outreach and education initiative (planning funding for as part of budget)
 - Website/social media/outreach events – spring launch
 - Energy Navigator Program – summer/fall launch
 - Builder education - TBD
 2. Develop incentive/disincentive to encourage electrification (Fall 2025 - Winter 2026)
 - Uses a stakeholder group with representatives from industry, impacted parties, utilities, and other stakeholders
 - Determine what and how to incentivize electrification
 - Discuss revenue source, if needed (e.g. fee)
 3. Monitor regulatory pathways for restricting gas (ongoing)
 - Update on legal context at end of year

Member Baunsgard stated that he was unhappy with the staff workplan and process, as it did not follow the direction of ECC, notably that the work plan paused policy recommendations without an advisory body discussion.

Lacy responded that staff decided to pause the regulatory pathways because staff felt the incentive program had a higher likelihood of achieving results.

Member Baunsgard spoke against pausing regulations and would like to see Step #3 of the work plan (regulations) accelerated and would like to start developing policy sooner. Baunsgard cited the carbon pollution fee recently passed in Ashland as a model.

Member Millar felt that there was still a lot of confusion among the joint committee attendees over whether there is a premium to electrifying. Millar expressed the importance of getting to a clear answer on relative cost of electrification and felt that would help drive the conversation faster.

Lacy read Member Hartwell's response to the joint committee meeting. Hartwell thought it was critical to get clarification as to whether or not electrification is locally cost effective and felt that it must be affordable to hold value.

Lacy agreed to the importance of determining the true cost of electrification and pointed out that there is data to show that electrification is more expensive than gas and vice versa. Lacy believed the answer might depend on building type. Lacy stated that she will be working to find accurate data and that time is needed for staff, and potentially consultants, to gather the data before implementing the public process in the fall.

Lacy stated that in her presentation to Council on April 16, 2025, she would frame the work plan as a staff proposal that was shared with the joint committee, and that it received general agreement with moving forward. Lacy stated that she would share that ECC did not agree with the delay of regulatory options.

Member Millar stated that he agreed with waiting for legal clarity regarding regulations, but thought that the timeline for Step #2 was too long and that it would not allow the City to reach its target reduction goal by 2030. Millar felt that the joint committee agreed with this sentiment regarding timeline, but that it was not reflected in the slides presented today.

Lacy invited ECC members to write a letter to Council, either as a committee or individually, to share their disagreement with work plan that would be presented at the April 16, 2025, Council meeting.

Additionally, Lacy stated that she did not feel Step #2 could be advanced due to the time needed by staff to do the work and felt that moving Step #2 up a month or two would not make a meaningful impact to the project. Lacy clarified that staff would be working on Step #2 between now and fall, that "Fall 2025-Winter 2026" refers to the start of the public process, and that "Winter 2026" refers to February/March 2026, not December 2026.

Member Baunsgard proposed writing a letter supporting development of a fee in the fall of 2025 and encouraging swifter action.

Member Isbell moved that the ECC write a letter to City Council for their next meeting, the 16th, that states these 2 points; the City should move forward with developing a climate pollution fee this fall, and 2. because it is a high priority in the adopted CCAP and the urgency of climate crisis demands strong local action. Member Chokshi seconded the motion.

Member Tabor asked if this work would coincide with the work on the incentives program, or if it would push back the development of incentives.

Lacy clarified that rather than explore other revenue sources, this proposal would focus on developing a fee and would not look at other incentives. The carbon pollution fee would generate a revenue source, which could fund the incentives.

The committee discussed additional clarification for the motion. No vote was taken.

Member Isbell rescinded and rephrased the motion.

Member Isbell moved that the ECC write a letter to Council for the next meeting recommending the City develop a climate pollution fee similar to the City of Ashland's that uses the fee to incentivize electrification because its priority in the CCAP and urgency of the climate crisis. Member Chokshi seconded the motion.

Member Tabor declared a conflict of interest due to her employment and recused from the vote.

The vote passed 5-2:

Yes: Isbell, Baunsgard, Nordquist, Mehta, Chokshi

No: Buckley, Millar

Tabor recused. Hartwell absent.

Members Isbell and Baunsgard agreed to write the letter on behalf of the Committee.

7. Climate Action Partner Grant Program

Skipped due to time.

8. Agenda Review

Slide:

- May 2025 – Energy Navigator program update and feedback
- June 2025
- July 2025 – no meeting?

9. Adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Bontje
Deputy City Recorder



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