

Excerpt from Feb 24, 2026 email to EPC from Climate Action Officer, Ryan Freed

RE: Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF): on how the Housing 2040 Plan incorporates specific sustainability recommendations

Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF): The Housing 2040 Plan incorporates specific sustainability recommendations – reflecting in the Plan many efforts and commitments that were already underway by the Offices of Housing and Climate Action. There is an upcoming opportunity to learn more and provide feedback about the Housing 2040 Plan this Saturday. Please consider attending. Registration is encouraged via this link: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/019be110f4d67453b89cfa14a2574b42> I've also attached the meeting flyer. Staff are soliciting comments on this version of the draft recommendations and strategies through March 22.

More details:

The EPC, through Yanique and Kathie, provided input during the drafting process. Using that guidance, Housing and OCA worked to incorporate sustainability and energy efficiency into the Housing 2040 Plan.

There is a specific Goal (#10) that relates directly to sustainability efforts, which I've pasted below. There are two recommendations, focused on improving the sustainability of (1) existing and (2) new housing. Building on the success of the recently passed Green Building Plan, the strategies include the City providing support for energy benchmarking, exploring financing, and more. The majority of these efforts will be through the Office of Climate Action and a couple upcoming programs: Eco-City CHAMPs (Climate and Health Actions in Multifamily Properties) – which will provide technical and financial resources to affordable housing providers to improve the health and efficiency of properties. And an upcoming Multifamily Challenge Program, which will provide technical assistance to apartment property managers or condos through the steps to benchmark/establish an energy baseline, set an energy savings target, and develop an energy plan to achieve those targets.

But that's not all! Sustainability and efficiency are mentioned throughout the plan, including

- Goal 2 (Preserve affordability and livability), Recommendation 3 (rehabilitate housing to improve livability).
- Goal 4 (Create rental housing that prioritizes affordability), Recommendation 2 (Strengthen public/private partnerships).
- Goal 6 (Strengthen condo communities to address deferred maintenance), Recommendation 1 (Build capacity among community members)

All in all – the connection of sustainability, efficiency, and affordability are clearly woven throughout this document. The Housing team has always prioritized these issues, and understands quite well the importance of energy efficiency to maintaining affordability. This document takes that existing commitment and sets it as clear commitments – both from the Office of Housing and the Office of Climate Action.

Goal #10: SUPPORT efficiency improvements and weatherization and **ADVANCE** green building practices to lower energy costs, make homes healthier, and build resilience to extreme temperatures and weather.

Recommendation 1: Support energy efficiency and weatherization retrofits for existing housing.

- a. Strategy: Use energy benchmarking, such as ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, in collaboration with the Office of Climate Action, to measure and track energy performance in existing multi-unit residential buildings against similar residential properties, to identify underperforming buildings for investment.
- b. Strategy: In collaboration with partners, provide multi-unit residential property owners with technical assistance and financing resources and options, such as C-PACE, to improve energy efficiency and indoor air quality.
- c. Strategy: Support and promote programs that help condominium and other common interest communities to reduce energy costs and meet City climate goals through building upgrades, including higher-performing HVAC systems, improved insulation, and EV charging infrastructure.
- d. Strategy: Provide support, through technical assistance or purchasing incentives, for the installation of solar and battery backup when feasible to provide backup power in times of power outages.
- e. Strategy: Continue partnerships with organizations that provide rehabilitation and environmental education services, including energy efficiency and weatherization retrofits, that complement City programs and educational efforts.
- f. Strategy: Continue to promote and improve access to existing energy efficiency and weatherization resources to individual homeowners by coordinating outreach, education, and assistance across City departments.

Recommendation 2: Advance green building practices in new residential development.

- a. Strategy: Support the implementation and evolution of the Green Building Plan.
 - Provide technical assistance to affordable housing partners to explore cost-effective best practices to incorporate green building and sustainability into their projects.
 - Encourage early planning for systems, such as geothermal HVAC systems, that have a long life and significantly contribute to lower energy bills and improved comfort.
 - Partner with the Commonwealth, Community Development Financial Institutions, and others financing entities to explore funding for designs that prioritize extremely high-performance designs, such as Passive House.
- b. Strategy: Explore and promote innovative housing models and emerging materials and technologies that improve energy efficiency and reduce resource use, including manufactured, prefabricated, and modular housing construction.