

# ANNUAL REPORT

---

## ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD

FY 2024

---

# ANNUAL REPORT

## SUMMARY OF REPORT

It is with great pleasure that we submit this summary of the work that the Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) has accomplished over the past year. We have been able to accomplish several of the items on our work plan in the last year and look forward to continuing our work in the year ahead to provide the City Council with invaluable information/guidance. A primary focus of our work plan relates to implementation actions that are being taken in support of Raleigh's Community Climate Action Plan. For a summary of our prioritized recommendations for the City Council, please refer to the Recommendations section.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The EAB is an all-volunteer board created by the City Council in 2006. The City Council deemed it in the public interest and affirmed the importance of protecting the environment by creating the board that provides the Council with expert and comprehensive advice on various matters related to environmental quality and safety.

## EAB RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Transit and Housing**

The Environmental Advisory Board discussed multiple related topics during its meetings in the first half of calendar year 2024. These involved transit infrastructure and investment and plans to create more opportunities for housing and other uses near transit and generally across the city.

The following are high level recommendations for staff to consider as they implement the rollout of bus rapid transit (BRT) and development patterns around these areas:

- The Board supports transit investments and a strategy of growing more around transit as a primary means of implementing the Community Climate Action plan. These actions increase density which reduces costs, infrastructure and creates more opportunities for efficiency, among other benefits. This also reduces vehicle miles traveled by providing more travel options and creating more inherently walkable communities, with jobs and shopping within short distances of where people live. They also create more opportunities for people to live in energy-efficient housing types.
- The City should ensure that equity, community health, and environmental justice impacts and mitigation strategies are included related to affordability, walkability, accessibility, and displacement as BRT projects are implemented and nearby development continues.
- The City should consider specific climate impacts and mitigation strategies as BRT projects are implemented and as development nearby continues. It is understood that denser development reduces many environmental impacts compared to car-oriented development on the edge of the region, however it is important that considerations in these areas and elsewhere include:
  - Small parks and green spaces that can utilize smaller plots of land or portions of larger developments that could be used by the larger community

- Street trees and other forms of urban heat island mitigation
- Flooding mitigation strategies
- Considering incentives (such as height, area and frontage restrictions) in return for sustainability-related elements in addition to affordability
- Sidewalks and overall walkability

These recommendations are broad, and in the EAB's upcoming FY25 work plan, the Board plans to further refine these topics as we further explore these issues. Those future recommendations may relate to suggested areas of focus for the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update.

### **Vehicle Fleet Electrification and Idling**

At its August 2023 meeting, the Environmental Advisory Board received a presentation from the City's Vehicle Fleet Services division. The presentation covered the City's plans for electrifying its vehicle fleet and taking other actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve resources, and reduce expenses. The Board discussed recommendations on this topic at its September meeting.

Following those discussions, the Board recommendations include:

- Continue anti-idling outreach and education efforts for the City vehicle fleet.
- Explore options for conducting anti-idling outreach and education in the community, including in conjunction with Wake County Public School System, such as school carpool lines.
- Continue funding for transitioning the City fleet to electric and for accompanying training and education.
- Support efforts to expand access to EV charging in the community through shared fleet charging sites.
- For vehicle fleet park-and-ride/charging hub sites, use existing parking lots rather than new sites in order to minimize the amount of new impervious surfaces.
- If new or expanded parking areas are created for the City fleet, study other areas to potentially consolidate parking and identify a similar number of existing parking spaces in other locations that could be removed and transitioned to a new use in hopes to reduce the overall impervious area owned by the city.

### **Clean Transportation Ordinance**

At its October and November meetings, the Environmental Advisory Board received a presentation and follow up information from Sustainability staff on the Clean Transportation Ordinance. The ordinance will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address equity by requiring electric vehicle charging infrastructure in new development including multifamily housing, prohibiting new drive-thrus in downtown and other walkable places, and creating more pedestrian and bike connections between new development projects and commercial areas, greenways, and residential areas.

The EV charging portion of the ordinance would require that new multifamily residential buildings, hotels, standalone parking facilities, and gas/fuel stations ensure that a percentage of parking spaces provided have the capability to install chargers. The EAB supports reducing barriers for future EV stations to be installed as uptake of EVs increases in Raleigh at an exponential rate, by supporting "EV Capable," meaning projects could meet this requirement by ensuring that 20 percent of any spaces provided have an electrical conduit connected to an adequately sized electrical panel. This approach greatly reduces costs for future conduit and electrical upfits if done during initial construction; and the actual EV charger could be installed later as demand continues to rise for EV charging. Alternatively, the EAB approved an alternative options that a project could provide two spaces with installed chargers, and a total of 15 percent of spaces that are EV Capable.

Feedback was received from the EAB and several other Boards and Commissions during the development of the Clean Transportation Ordinance package. The Board recommended that City Council approve the proposed Clean Transportation Ordinance.

The EAB also recommended a three-year review period to periodically review the ordinance to evaluate its use and impact in the community and any new best practices that could be considered. Staff plans to follow this recommendation and will continue to monitor EV installations across Raleigh.

## EAB ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The board worked through its work plan items in 2024, and proposes to continue to explore the transportation and housing topics outlined above. In addition to the recommendations that came from those board discussions, the EAB also:

- Selected the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Environmental Award Winners. The awards celebration was held on April 19, 2024, during the Earth Day celebration at Dix Park.
- Received a presentation from Vehicle Fleet Services on fleet electrification.
- Received a presentation from Sustainability staff on the Clean Transportation Ordinance.
- Received a presentation from Planning and Development staff on compact development options.
- Received a presentation from Transit staff on planning and implementation of bus rapid transit.
- Received a presentation from Planning and Development staff on the Equitable Development around Transit program.

## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

### 2024 Environmental Awards



The Raleigh Environmental Awards celebrate the best in climate action, community engagement, and corporate stewardship in our city. The City's Office of Sustainability supports the work of the EAB. Staff partner with the EAB to host the annual awards. Each year, the EAB recognizes organizations, businesses, projects and individuals that demonstrate positive environmental benefits and engage the community, mitigate climate change, contribute to environmental justice, and show the business case for environmental stewardship. In 2024, the Environmental Awards had a record-breaking number of applications, showcasing our community's increasing investment and engagement in climate action work.

The EAB held a jury day in March 2024, and invited other Boards and Commissions to assist in the selection process of the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Environmental Award Winners. Nine winners were selected to receive these prestigious awards. The Annual Awards Celebration was held on April 19, 2024, at a large Earth Day event at Dorothea Dix Park with over 2000 people in attendance.

These winners represent the hard work of dozens of community members to make Raleigh a healthier, greener, and more sustainable city; and represent our community's dedication to climate action, environmental stewardship, innovation and education.

In addition to the Environmental Awards, the Office of Sustainability partners with the Transportation Department, Stormwater Management Division, Raleigh Water, Solid Waste Services, and the Office of Strategy and Innovation on the following awards and contests:

- Commute Smart Award (Transportation)
- Capture it! Stormwater Arts Contest (Stormwater)
- Drinking Watershed Protection Award (Raleigh Water)
- Trashion Competition (Solid Waste Services)
- Dare to be Green Award (Strategy and Innovation)



The individuals and organizations recognized have made incredible contributions to preserve and enhance Raleigh's natural environment. This year's winners show a broad range of environmental actions and commitment to environmental stewardship. Each winner of a 2024 Raleigh Environmental Award also received a letter from the North Carolina Congresswoman Deborah Ross thanking them for their leadership.

### **Other Topics**

The Board supported other city efforts, including the upcoming Parks plan and the Sir Walter Raleigh Awards, by designating a board representative. The board also continues to communicate with the public about environmental issues and to promote city activities such as the Environmental Awards and Earth Day.

### **Environmental Advisory Board, June 2024**

Scott Greenman, Chair  
Denzel Burnside, Vice Chair  
Jess Anastes  
Lamya King  
Kevin Hernandez  
Zoey Niebuhr  
TJ Ridley  
Sana Siddiqui  
Coleen Sullins