



Environmental Advisory Board

Meeting Agenda

August 26, 2026, 3:00 P.M.

Centennial II Griesel Conference Room

Order of Business

- I. Public Comment**
- II. Call to Order**
- III. Administrative Action***
 - Approval of July 29, 2026 – Meeting minutes
- IV. Office of Environment and Sustainability Comments**
 - Storms and City response, Green Infrastructure report request
 - Benchmarking updates
 - Environmental Justice codification
- V. Information/Updates**
 - Western Hills Viaduct construction
- VI. Open Discussion**
 - House Bill 303 resolution
 - Sustainability Central resolution
- VII. Items for Vote***
 - House Bill 303 Resolution
 - Sustainability Central Resolution
- VIII. Presentations**
 - Green Umbrella Climate Action Fellowship Impact – Jamiya Barnett
- IX. Next Meeting**
 - The next EAB meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 30, 2026, at 3:00 PM.
- X. Adjournment**

Agenda Packet Materials:

- July 29, 2026 Meeting minutes
- Environmental Justice Recommendations letter
- House Bill 303 Resolution
- Sustainability Central draft letters of support

Environmental Advisory Board

Minutes of July 29, 2026

Members Present:

- **In Person:** Dave Schmitt; Douglas Walton; Susan Sprigg; Andrew Musgrave
- **Virtual:** Emmy Shroeder; Ericka Copeland; Kylie Johnson; Megan O'Keefe; Michael Roman; Monica Perdomo; Nathan Alley; Nayana Shah; Van Sullivan; Yasmine Allen

Members Absent: Ashlee Young; Briana Mazzolini-Blanchard; Carla Walker; Sarah Kent

Staff Present: Amanda Testerman; Lauren Clark; Ben Russ; Rachel Bickett; Rob McCracken

Meeting: A meeting of the Environmental Advisory Board was held on July 29, 2026, at 3:00 PM at Centennial II HR Conference Room A, 805 Central Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

Meeting Agenda:

- I. **Public Comment**
- II. **Call to Order at 3:05 PM**
- III. **Administrative Action***
 - Approval of June 24, 2026 – Meeting minutes
- IV. **Office of Environment & Sustainability Comments- Amanda Testerman, Lauren Clark, Rob McCracken, Rachel Bickett**
 - Benchmarking Policy draft – Rob McCracken
 - Seeds of Change awards – Rachel Bickett
 - Climate Equity Indicators Report update – Lauren Clark
 - West Fork Incinerator Demolition – Amanda Testerman
- V. **Items for Vote***
 - None
- VI. **Presentations-**
 - **Councilmember Ryan James**
 - **Sustainability Central** – Colleen McSwiggin
- VII. **Discussion**
 - Western Hills Viaduct
- VIII. **Next Meeting**
 - Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at 3:00 PM
- IX. **Adjournment at 4:34 PM**

To: Councilmember Meeka Owens
From: City of Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board
Date: December 18, 2025
Subject: Initial Recommendations for Codifying Environmental Justice in Cincinnati

Dear Councilmember Owens,

The Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) respectfully submits this set of initial recommendations for your consideration to advance codification of environmental justice in city decision-making mechanisms, with the attached Fair Shake Environmental Services assessment and Climate Equity Indicators Report as supporting documents.

We recommend both immediate steps and long-term exploration. By starting with an administrative baseline (recommendations 1 and 2) and directing staff to analyze more complex tools (recommendations 3 and 4), Council can ensure that Cincinnati builds a defensible, equitable framework that prioritizes community voice and aligns with the city's Climate Equity Indicators Report and the Green Cincinnati Plan. These recommendations represent the first phase of the Board's work, and additional recommendations may be offered in the future.

Recommendations:

1. **Update Climate Equity Indicators Report:** Request that Council submit a motion to update the 2021 report to track progress and disparities (e.g., urban heat, air quality, energy burden).
2. **Improve Citywide Language Access:** Work with the Administration on language access processes. Pilot a centralized contract and appoint a Language Access Coordinator; begin with translation of essential EJ-related materials.
3. **Explore Participatory Budgeting:** Direct staff to conduct a feasibility study, referencing Columbus' successful 2025 initiative and Cincinnati's charter city authority.
4. **Explore Community Benefits Fund:** Request legal and financial analysis of whether a dedicated revenue model (similar to Portland's Clean Energy Fund) is viable under Ohio law and in Cincinnati.

These recommendations reflect several months of EAB discussions with Fair Shake Legal Services and the Office of Environment and Sustainability. We have distilled those conversations into a phased approach tailored to Cincinnati's community and government landscape. Included below are key findings from the Fair Shake assessment that support our recommendations. We welcome further discussion and stand ready to support you and Council in advancing this work. Thank you for your continued equity and climate justice leadership for our city.

Sincerely,

City of Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board

Fair Shake Assessment Supporting Findings

- **Language Access (Page 4):** Cities budget \$200k-\$1.4M annually; centralized contracts reduce costs.
- **Participatory Budgeting (Page 8):** Columbus launched a \$9M initiative for 2026; Cleveland faced state preemption; Ohio law requires elected officials to sign off on expenditures, limiting community-only decision authority.
- **Portland Clean Energy Fund (Page 10):** Dedicated revenue stream for community-driven climate projects via surcharge on large retailers; governed by a community-appointed committee.
- **Cincinnati-specific considerations (Page 18):** Most tools in assessment are complementary; participatory budgeting must avoid state preemption; permit-denial authority may reduce needs for Community Benefit Agreements; administrative tools (language access, reporting) strengthen all other mechanisms by ensuring transparency and reducing redundancy.
- **Key Themes (Page 16):** Administrative actions are quick, low legal risk, low-cost; Contractual actions are enforceable with medium implementation complexity, but are limited in scope as they only apply to incentivized projects; Statutory actions are the strongest legal tool but legally complex.

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NO. _____ - 2026

DECLARING the Council of the City of Cincinnati's support for state legislation allowing for the creation of a Community Energy pilot program in the State of Ohio.

WHEREAS, community energy facilities allow customers to choose the source of their electricity, including customers that desire to purchase solar energy but do not have suitable conditions to install their own solar facilities; and

WHEREAS, community solar facilities are a more decentralized, resilient and efficient way to deliver electricity to ratepayers; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, Ohioans saw a 26 percent increase on their electricity bills, and community solar facilities have been shown to save households 5 percent to 20 percent on their electricity costs; and

WHEREAS, while Ohio imports 20 percent of its energy, and regional energy prices are increasing significantly, a community energy pilot program would produce energy locally, avoiding costly transmission upgrades and improving grid reliability for all ratepayers; and

WHEREAS, a study from Ohio University determined that a "Community Solar Pilot Program" would generate an estimated \$5.6 billion in gross output and \$409.5 million in local tax revenues; and

WHEREAS, Ohio-based solar manufacturing companies and workers will benefit from local community solar projects enabled by this legislation; and

WHEREAS, 24 other states currently have specific enabling legislation for community energy, which provides a framework that supports the production of community energy facilities in those states; and

WHEREAS, community energy is consistent with the goals and recommendations of the Green Cincinnati Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio Legislature is considering House Bill 303, the Community Energy pilot program, in this 136th General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 303 passed the Ohio House with a 77 to 8 affirmative vote and is awaiting passage in the Ohio Senate; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That the Council of the City of Cincinnati finds that House Bill 303, the Community Energy pilot program, is a suitable introduction to community energy and will benefit residents of the City of Cincinnati and Ohio.

Section 2. That the Council calls upon the Ohio legislature to authorize a community energy pilot program.

Section 3. That the Council urges the Ohio legislature to pass House Bill 303.

Passed: _____, 2026

Aftab Pureval, Mayor

Attest: _____
Clerk

To the Members of Cincinnati City Council:

On behalf of the Environmental Advisory Board for the City of Cincinnati, we are writing this letter in support of Sustainability Central and their acquisition of the soon-to-be-closed Cincinnati Police Department gun range in Evendale. Sustainability Central's plan to transform the site into a campus with space for multiple environmentally-oriented non-profit organizations and businesses is both visionary and needed in the region, since co-location will allow organizations to streamline processes, increase collaborations, and increase impacts in a number of areas, including workforce development, landfill diversion, and organics processing.

In addition, we believe the campus will be a community asset and help heal some of the damage that was done to the gun range's neighbors in Lincoln Heights and Woodlawn, who have had to listen to gunfire for decades. We know that Sustainability Central is also making a concerted effort to make sure that the neighbors of those villages have a say in "what comes next" at the site, and to make sure that neighbors will play an active role in the work done at the campus.

We hope you will consider supporting the formation of the sustainability campus, including one of the following options:

- donating the site to Sustainability Central,
- leasing it to them for \$1 a year for a minimum of 80 years (to match how long the gun range has been open), or
- selling it to them at a reduced rate.

We recommend that a Memorandum of Understanding be worked out between the City and Sustainability Central to delineate which of those relationships is most feasible for both parties, since we believe the benefits for the City, including impacts for dozens of the Green Cincinnati Plan's Priority Actions, will far outnumber Cincinnati's initial financial support.

Although we know it will take years for the entire campus to be built, we very much look forward to promoting the work that will be accomplished there.

Sincerely,

Dave Schmitt
City of Cincinnati
Environmental Advisory Board Chair

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Environmental Advisory Board for the City of Cincinnati, we are writing this letter in support of Sustainability Central and their acquisition of the soon-to-be-closed Cincinnati Police Department gun range in Evendale. Sustainability Central's plan to transform the site into a campus with space for multiple environmentally-oriented non-profit organizations and businesses is both visionary and needed in the region, since co-location will allow organizations to streamline processes, increase collaborations, and increase impacts in a number of areas, including workforce development, landfill diversion, and organics processing.

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Although we know it will take years for the entire campus to be built, we very much look forward to promoting the work that will be accomplished there, since we believe that the benefits to Cincinnati, including for dozens of the Green Cincinnati Plan's Priority Actions, and to the region will be considerable.

Sincerely,

Dave Schmitt
City of Cincinnati
Environmental Advisory Board Chair