

**City of Arcata Energy Committee
2024 Annual Report to the City Council
For Presentation to the City Council on September 3, 2025**

The Energy Committee meets on the third Monday of odd-numbered months and serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council, City Manager and City staff in energy matters related to policies, management, and projects. The Committee held four regular meetings and one special meeting during 2024. The regularly scheduled meeting in November of 2024 was adjourned due to lack of quorum.

2024 Committee Members:

George Williamson (Resigned after September 2024)
Michael Winkler, Chair
Andrea Alstone, Vice-Chair
Patrick Buckwalter

Dan Stockwell (Started in January 2024)
Gwelen Paliaga
Jim Zoellick

Committee Staff Liaisons:

Emily Benvie, Deputy Director - Community Services, Environmental Services Department
Morguine Sefcik, Environmental Programs Manager, Environmental Services Department

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Energy Committee was involved in the following activities in 2024:

Michael Winkler served as Chair and Andrea Alstone served as Vice-Chair in 2024. The Committee confirmed their meeting schedule, in which they hold regular meetings on odd-numbered months. The committee meetings were held in-person in 2024.

Arcata All Electric Initiative

The Committee continued work on the All-Electric Initiative. This initiative includes decarbonization and electrification of City and privately-owned buildings using a range of options, including enacting a municipal ordinance gas ban, decarbonizing City facilities, and investigating options to increase equity and affordability of electrification.

- The Committee received regular updates and provided input on decarbonization of City facilities. Specific examples included:
 - The Energy Conservation Assistance Act (ECAA) loan to provide energy efficiency upgrades, including LED lighting and installation of rooftop solar at the Arcata Community Center, which was approved by the California Energy Commission in the beginning of 2024.
 - Supporting Electric Vehicle Charging Station planning efforts for future Carlson Park development in coordination with Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA).
 - Supporting water heater replacement from gas to electric heat pumps at selected City facilities by partnering with Willdan & RCEA with funding through PG&E.
 - Providing input on potential uses for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) climate change allocations
- The Committee received a presentation from City Engineer, Netra Khatri, on recent and planned transportation mode shift projects in the City at their July meeting.

Collaboration

The Committee continues to consult and work collaboratively with community members and RCEA on energy and climate-related issues. The Committee provided support for the City's partnership with RCEA offering expanded e-bike vouchers for Arcata residents. The Committee's Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)/Transactions and Use Tax (TUT) Ballot Measure Subcommittee met during the early part of 2024 to provide input on potential new sources of tax revenue to fund a variety of programs and services, including funding for climate change

adaptation and mitigation projects. Committee Chair, Michael Winkler, volunteered to join the City's Transactions and Use Tax (TUT) ballot measure subcommittee led by Finance Manager Miller. In November 2024, the Measure H (TUT) ballot measure passed.

Regional Climate Action Plan

The Committee received updates throughout 2024 on the status of the Regional Climate Action Plan (CAP) which included the completion of the public administrative draft in August 2024, and announcement of a public workshop about the draft CAP held on September 10, 2024 at the Wharfinger Building in Eureka.

Biomass

The Committee first received two presentations at their September 2023 meeting on biomass energy production and local contracts. The first presentation was from Dr. Wendy Ring who requested the Committee support a resolution calling on RCEA to end biomass contracts. While three members of the public spoke in support of the resolution to end biomass contracts in 2023, the Committee did not recommend the resolution, as it was written, be approved by City Council in 2023. In February of 2024, the Arcata City Council took no action on the biomass item at their regular meeting.

Energy Committee Chair Winkler volunteered to attend the February 7, 2024 City Council meeting to participate in the report to the Council on the biomass resolution item that the Committee discussed in 2023 and be available to answer any questions from the Council. At their February 7, 2024 meeting, the Council decided to "Take No Action" on the biomass resolution item.

II. GOALS FOR COMING FISCAL YEAR

The Committee developed the following goals for FY 2025/2026. Furthermore, the Energy Committee committed to furthering energy-related Environmental Justice and Social Equity.

- 1) Climate Action Plan – Continue to work with the County to adopt and implement a regional Climate Action Plan.
- 2) Transportation Mode Shift - Consistent with the Climate Action Plan – continue to support staff with work related to shifting transportation toward walking, biking, public transportation, and low and zero emission modes of transport for privately and City-owned vehicles.
- 3) Arcata All Electric Initiative – Consistent with the Climate Action Plan, continue work to decarbonize and electrify new and existing construction and end-of-life equipment replacement for City and privately-owned buildings using a range of options, and investigate options to increase equity and affordability of electrification.
- 4) Support Staff to explore low carbon options for community resiliency, including the benefit of solar with battery backup options, microgrids, and grid-interactive efficient buildings.
- 5) Work on improving energy code compliance and enforcement through research into local third-party verifiers, education, and building official education.
- 6) Support the City's leadership in greenhouse gas emissions reduction through decarbonization of City-owned fleet and facilities.