## Sustainability & Climate Justice Commission Agenda

**Date**  
Monday, September 11th

**Time**  
5 pm

**Location**  
City Hall Council Chambers

**Watch Online**  
[https://www.youtube.com/@CityofIthacaPublicMeetings](https://www.youtube.com/@CityofIthacaPublicMeetings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Voting</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Time Allotted</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1. Call to Order  
1.1 Agenda Review  
1.2 Review and Approve Minutes | No Yes | David Kay, Chair | 10 |
| 2. Public Comment  
2.1 Statement from the Public  
2.2 Commission Response | No No | | 10 |
| 3. Announcements, Reports & Presentations  
3.1 Recommendations to Council | No | Lisa Nicholas, Director of Planning & Economic Development | 15 |
| 4. New Business  
4.1 Justice50 Framework – Presentation & Feedback | No | Rebecca Evans, Director of Sustainability | 45 |
| 5. Meeting Wrap-up  
5.1 Next Meeting: October 9th  
5.2 Agenda Planning for Next Meeting  
5.3 Adjournment | No Yes No | David Kay, Chair | 5 |
Defining Climate Justice

Impact
Climate change disproportionately impacts BIPOC and poor communities.

Intensity
The intensity of natural disasters is experienced more acutely in CJ communities.

Relationship
Climate is deeply entangled in existing social, economic, and racial disparity, acting as a threat multiplier or injustice accelerator to BIPOC and poor communities.
The Social + Environmental Disconnect

Too often we hear organizations refer to "environmental sustainability", separating climate change mitigation and racial and economic justice. This is both inaccurate and dangerous.

The climate crisis is rooted in a history of colonialism

The global elite have rendered communities & resources disposable

Climate change is caused by generations of violence and extraction

Climate solutions often perpetuate injustice & relegate sacrifice zones
Federal & State Precedent

EXECUTIVE ORDER 14008 & JUSTICE 40

NYS CLCPA & CLIMATE JUSTICE
PRESIDENT BIDEN’S EXECUTIVE ORDER 14008

Justice40

COMMITMENT

Federal agencies & authorities ensure at least 40% of overall benefits from federal climate, clean energy, clean water, sustainable housing, training & workforce development, remediation & reduction of legacy pollution, & development of water & wastewater infrastructure benefits serve DACs.

WHO IS IMPACTED

There are no federally defined DACs in Ithaca
FORMER GOVERNOR CUOMO, CLIMATE LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY PROTECTION ACT

NYS CLCPA

COMMITMENT
At least 35%, with a goal of 40%, of all climate benefits of spending serve DACs.

WHO IS IMPACTED
West Village, Titus Towers, Southside, Southwest Park, and areas in between are all State-defined DACs.
Why Act Locally?

Underserved communities in Ithaca are geographically dispersed and are not concentrated in census tracts like in larger cities.

Renters face disproportionate impacts
We have our own goals and our own spending
Communities that most need support are not geographically concentrated
Local commitments & protections will support anti-gentrification
The IGND & Worst Case Scenarios

What would happen if we didn’t implement Justice50 and why is it important to consider it now?

What are the local risks to vulnerable communities?

Why can’t we exclusively rely on plans at the state and federal level?
Scenario One: Building Electrification

LMI HOUSEHOLDS

- Tenants & property owners who cannot afford to electrify their heating systems will experience increased utility costs as wealthier neighborhoods electrify (e.g. distribution pressure).
- Households with no or low credit are unable to access low-interest rate loans that are available to wealthier community members.
- As electric demand increases, grid operators may have a difficult time maintaining supply and infrastructure, leading to potential blackouts and/or brownouts.

RENTERS

- Without comprehensive renter protections, renters stand to bear the financial burden of electrification as property owners pass costs onto tenants.
- Currently, state and federal incentives are available based on the demography or financial status of tenants.
Scenario Two: Workforce Development

NEW JOBS

- Estimated 24MM new jobs in the green energy economy
- >60% of existing green workforce is white men
- Those most impacted by climate change are not reaping benefits of transitioning to the new, green economy
  - Untapped potential
  - Clouded or blinded policy & infrastructure guidance
  - Wealth gap remains constant or widens
- Increased rates of recidivism
- Like-communities serving like-communities
  - Potential for concentration of air toxics
The J50 Solution

DIRECT INVESTMENT

PARTICIPATORY BUDGET

GREEN JOBS

INFRASTRUCTURE
Justice50
Development Process
Guidance

LOCAL
- Activist organizations
- Non-profit leaders
- Potentially impacted communities
- Education partners
- Common Council members

NATIONAL
- UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation
- Justice40 USDS Working Group
- DOE Economic Impact & Diversity
- USGBC LEED Equity Consultant

Direct financial investment
Justice50 Framework Proposal

There will need to be additional foundational work to determine specific processes for engagement, in addition to a comprehensive local census survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>% Allocated to CJC (est.)*</th>
<th>$ Allocated to CJC</th>
<th>Proposed Participatory Budget $</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023 Capital Project Budget</td>
<td>$15,413,754</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>$6,435,000</td>
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- Minimum investment floor of total IGND funding (including outside investment)
- Total capital project funding to serve CJC
- Goal of CJC participation in green workforce training and placement programs
- Total capital project budget to be reserved for participatory budgeting beginning 2024
To: Sustainability and Climate Justice Commission  
From: Lisa Nicholas, Director of Planning & Development  
Date: July 5, 2023  
Re: Orientation – How to write a recommendation to Council

At the July 18th meeting, we will discuss how to write a recommendation to the Common Council. An important part of the Commission’s work will be providing feedback and guidance to staff regarding the development of plans and policies to implement the City’s sustainability and climate justice goals. Once plans and policies have been drafted, the Commission will make recommendations to the Council regarding next steps, including adoption or implementation.

I have provided a selection of recommendations for your reference. At the July 18th meeting we will review these examples and I will provide additional guidance on how to draft an effective recommendation.

Please feel free to contact me at lnicholas@cityofithaca.org with any questions prior to the meeting.
To: Sustainability and Climate Justice Commission  
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WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan outlines a vision for the city’s future and serves as a guide for future decision-making, policies, and funding, and

WHEREAS, the City decided to pursue a two-phased approach to its new Comprehensive Plan, where Phase I entailed the preparation of an “umbrella” plan, Plan Ithaca, that sets forth broad goals and principles to guide future policies throughout the city and where Phase II includes the preparation of specific neighborhood and thematic plans, and

WHEREAS, the Common Council adopted Plan Ithaca in September 2015, and the planning process then began to focus on the Phase II plans, and

WHEREAS, the Phase II plans provide an opportunity to take a proactive look at specific areas throughout the city, particularly those with significant potential for change, and to implement policies and capital improvements to help implement a shared vision, and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the City of Ithaca Municipal Code and New York State General City Law, the Planning and Development Board is responsible for preparing and recommending a new Comprehensive Plan to the Common Council for adoption, and

WHEREAS, formed in September 2016, the Southside Neighborhood Plan Committee was composed of 15 area residents, including a member of the Planning and Development Board, and worked with City Planning staff to conduct public outreach and prepare the draft plan, and

WHEREAS, the complete draft Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan was made available for public review in September 2018, and the Committee hosted community events, neighborhood meetings, and an online survey to gather public comments on the draft plan, and

WHEREAS, following its review of the comments, the Committee revised the draft plan to incorporate public input, and

WHEREAS, at its meeting on December 19, 2018, the Southside Neighborhood Plan Committee voted to recommend the draft Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan, dated December 19, 2018, for review and consideration by the Planning and Development Board as part of Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the City of Ithaca Planning and Development Board recommends the draft Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan, dated December 19, 2018, for review and adoption by the Common Council as part of Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan:

Moved by: Jones
Seconded by: Petrina
In Favor: Blalock, Elliott, Glass, Johnston, Jones, Lewis, Petrina
Against: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None
To:       Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency  
From:     Ithaca Planning & Development Board  
Date:     July 24, 2019  
RE:       Maximizing Affordable Housing at the Green St Garage Mixed Use Redevelopment Project

The Planning and Development Board supports the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency's work on the Green Street Garage project. Affordable housing and conference space are both valuable additions to Ithaca's downtown, and this project promises to deliver both. However, conference centers are famously difficult to develop, and there is an open question as to what the project looks like in the absence of a conference center.

In the event that the conference center component of the project does not move forward, the Planning and Development Board unanimously encourages the IURA to maximize the amount of affordable housing developed. While there are trade-offs concerning height and construction impacts, this project presents a unique opportunity to supply affordable housing within walking distance to jobs and services. This opportunity should be maximized.

Maximizing the amount of affordable housing is not only good planning: It is in keeping with the mission of the IURA, which is charged with "...expanding access to quality affordable housing, strengthening neighborhoods and the local economy..." The Planning and Development Board supports this mission and this project, and looks forward to seeing both progress.
From: City of Ithaca Planning and Development Board

To: Common Council

Re: Planning Board Recommendation to Council Regarding the Proposed Amendments to the Waterfront Zoning Districts

Date: May 26, 2020

The Planning Board has reviewed the memo describing the proposed amendments to the waterfront zoning districts from Jennifer Kusznir, Senior Planner, dated May 8, 2020 to the Planning and Economic Committee.

The Board has no objections to the addition of needed definitions and updated primary uses. The Board does not recommend any proposed amendments that make zoning more restrictive for the following reasons:

- The current zoning was thoughtfully deliberated and developed in order to encourage a new kind of development in this special area of the City. There is now an influx of projects that the zoning was meant to encourage. Before acting to change the zoning, we need to observe the impacts over time, particularly the interplay between the zoning and the Design Guidelines.

- The Planning Board already possesses the authority and tools to uphold the principals of the Waterfront Plan without a change to zoning. Each proposal and development site is measured against the principals in the Comprehensive Plan, the Waterfront Plan and the Waterfront Design Guidelines. In addition, the Site Plan Review Ordinance gives the Board very broad authority to influence design.

- Board members, many of whom are trained designers, feel that they can achieve better outcomes without more restrictive zoning, such as a maximum building length. More zoning flexibility allows more creative solutions that are unique to a project and its site.

- The Board has seen several exciting and well-designed proposals for waterfront development, most of which would be negatively impacted, if not rendered unfeasible with the more restrictive proposed amendments.

- The City has limited area left for development. The waterfront area has a huge potential to infuse the City with vibrant mixed use development in walkable neighborhoods proximate to jobs, services, housing and retail. More restrictive zoning could prevent the realization of this potential as properties in this area are particularly expensive to develop due to soils conditions and other constraints.
Cherry Street is emerging as a unique and vibrant mixed-income neighborhood with potential opportunities for developers to partner with the art community in creative placemaking, as expressed in the attached letter from Sam Buggeln, Artistic Director of the Cherry Arts, dated May 26, 2020. Again, the Board feels that more restrictive zoning could curtail positive momentum of this emerging neighborhood.
To: Planning & Economic Development Committee  
From: Planning & Development Board  
Date: December 3, 2019  
RE: Planning Board comments on the Establishment of Regulations for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

At their November 26 meeting, the Planning and Development Board reviewed the proposal to establish regulations for developing ADUs in the R-1 and R-2 zoning districts. The Board discussed the proposal and agreed to submit the following comments for your consideration:

- The Board strongly supports the goal of the proposed ADU regulation: “to remove or reduce regulatory barriers that limit the number and variety of housing options in single family zoning districts”.
- The Board believes many concerns about the impact of ADUs will be effectively addressed when the Board reviews their size, design, and placement for neighborhood compatibility during site plan review.
- DADUs in existing buildings should not be limited to a percentage of the primary structure (or its interior) as there is no significant exterior change to the structures and therefore limited impact to the neighborhood.
- DADUs should not be limited to 800 SF, provided that size is limited to 75% of the primary dwelling and that some greenspace is maintained. 800 SF is too small for families.
- The Board did not reach consensus on contiguous greenspace. Some feel a 35% requirement will prove too burdensome for Ithaca’s more urban neighborhoods.
- The Board leans towards not requiring owner occupancy.
  - First, it places a regulatory burden on the City that will be impossible to enforce with current staffing levels.
  - Second, this restriction could encourage gray market renting.
- In addition, the Board encourages Council to direct staff to create legislation that allows pocket neighborhoods, especially in the zoning districts impacted by this legislation.