

ATTACHMENT 6: May 2021 Sustainable Commission's Letter to  
City Council, including the Proposed Green New Deal

To the Esteemed Members of the Burbank City Council,

We, the members of the Sustainable Burbank Commission, are writing to voice our unanimous support for an ambitious climate change package that was brought to us by Sunrise LA: a Green New Deal for Burbank, drafted with input and feedback from many Burbank stakeholders including our Commission. This letter reflects our support for “Batch 1” of this Burbank Green New Deal, and we’d like to give you an overview and some context for our endorsement.

The Green New Deal (GND) “Batch 1” is organized into 4 sections: electricity, transit, building codes, and workforce transformation. With electricity, it establishes a goal of 100% carbon neutrality by 2030, a position for which our Commission has advocated for years. With technology advancing at an unprecedented rate and growing support from state and federal government, this goal is becoming more realistic and mainstream every day.

Regarding transit, the GND encourages our City to explore incentives for our local businesses to continue encouraging telework and flex workweeks. The remarkable drop in transit-related emissions is one of the few silver linings of the pandemic, and in a City such as ours with so many commuters, working with businesses to ensure these reductions don’t vanish after the pandemic will go a long way to reducing our emissions and making our air cleaner.

For building codes, the GND recommends requiring new construction in Burbank to be all-electric, following the example of many other Californian cities that are moving away from natural gas, or methane which is an extremely potent greenhouse gas (86x more potent than carbon dioxide). We want new construction in Burbank to be looking ahead rather than behind to dirty energy sources that are rapidly falling out of favor.

These three areas of focus probably sound familiar, because they’re areas that our wonderful staff in the Community Development Department have been focusing on with the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan (GGRP) update, a project that the Sustainable Burbank Commission has been honored to be a part of for over a year. It’s our belief that the overlaps in these two documents are anything but redundant and that they could work together very effectively if given the proper consideration.

The fourth section of the GND voices the need for a “Just Transition,” where former fossil fuel employees are given the training and opportunity to move into the new positions that will be created by a clean energy future, ensuring no one is left behind. This is very important for Burbank, where we employ many hard-working

people at our local power plant. Our Commission was very happy to learn recently that this is already being discussed within BWP and we would love to see this commitment formalized.

Our Commission has long advocated for many of the goals laid out in the Green New Deal for Burbank. But we recognize that we're not the ones that will ultimately have to turn those goals into action - that falls to staff. So we'd like to acknowledge the remarkable staff we have here in Burbank, many of whom this Commission has worked with on the GGRP update. We've seen first hand how their diligence, insight, willingness to collaborate and innovate has transformed ambitious goals into achievable action. And that's the spirit it's going to take for Burbank to rise to what BWP's fantastic new General Manager, Dawn Roth Lindell, accurately called "the defining challenge of our time."

Thank you for taking the time to consider our endorsement. We hope this is just the beginning of a very important and constructive conversation!

## A Green New Deal for Burbank

The UN, the US government, and climate scientists are all in agreement: [the world must halve its carbon emissions by 2030 in order to avoid civilization-ending consequences](#). Even hitting this goal is unlikely to spare us from significant social and economic destabilization. The scale of the problem is so vast that it is tempting to resort to denial, but we must resist that urge and instead fight for ourselves and our children.

As fires spread across California, and droughts drain our farms and valleys, it has become clear that the times require bold leadership. Our economy, until now reliant on fossil fuels, must undergo deep, systemic changes. To achieve this ambitious and necessary goal, America must begin a WWII-scale mobilization that shifts our economy away from fossil fuels and onto cheap, clean renewable energy.

- Direct BWP to move to **100% carbon-neutral electricity by 2030**.
  - **110% by 2035:** by 2035, export the equivalent of 10% of Burbank's energy consumption as clean energy, to other cities and utilities, for profit.
  - One project BWP is already pursuing that would assist with this goal should be implemented: a plan to shift the gas-fired plant at Magnolia to green hydrogen.
  - Must include a worker retention clause to require the utility to keep its employees currently employed in fossil fuel plants on during the transition to clean energy, without modifying their pay or benefits, providing retraining as necessary.
- Burbank shall target 2050 as the year the City will go totally carbon-neutral across its economy. Typically, targets like these are aspirational, without an enforcement mechanism. But the goals in **the Green New Deal for Burbank will be a [legally-enforcible contract](#)** between the City, the environment, and the citizens, similar to legislation considered in New York. This is to make it more likely that Burbank will actually reach its goals.
- **Pass a resolution calling on LADWP to make the [Intermountain Power Plant run on 100% renewable hydrogen from Day 1 in 2025](#)**. LADWP has said that this goal is possible, yet frustratingly refuses to pursue it.
  - Burbank should call for an all-renewable solution at the site that provides jobs & a just transition for the community affected.
- Require BWP to participate in a **demand response program that would reduce peak load**.
- **Direct the City Attorney to join [other cities in filing lawsuits against the fossil fuel industry](#) for climate damages.**
- **Hire a full-time Sustainability Coordinator.**
- All City buildings and properties:
  - Must have all available roof space covered in solar within six months.
  - Must be retrofitted to use zero methane / natural gas for heating, cooking, heating water, or for any other purpose, by the end of 2028.

- By the end of 2021, must be fitted with plaques, visible from the main entrance, describing its current conservation contributions and ongoing projects, and how a private property owner can do the same.
- **All new construction in Burbank must be all-electric**, as [dozens of Californian cities](#) have [begun opting out of gas](#).
  - Require [new residential buildings be fitted with high-voltage outlets](#) to accommodate electric vehicles?
- Adopt a [low-carbon concrete code](#).
- **Up-ballot advocacy:** Pass a Resolution calling on State and Federal representatives to take comprehensive action on climate change.
- **Modified workweek for city employees.**
  - **Teleworking for city workers.** All City employees with office jobs where 50% or more of their work is done on a computer should be entitled to at least 75 work from home days every year. That's about 1.5 days per week. As we can see from air quality improvements during the Covid crisis, working from home massively reduces carbon emissions, not just from transportation, but also from power generation and building heating/cooling.
    - Studies show that by decreasing their travel time, employees have more time to spend with their families, are happier and more focused on work tasks, and are less likely to be injured, or killed, or experience financial hardship due to a traffic accident.
  - **Optional 4-day work week.** The City will offer its [employees the option to work four days per week](#). These employees would work more hours per day, rather than a traditional five day week.
    - Departments may request exemption, but to be approved, an exemption must be approved by both the Sustainability Coordinator and the City Manager. An exemption can be overridden by the Council.
    - Employees may individually opt for a traditional five-day week if they prefer it.
    - This too would save many commutes without requiring new infrastructure, all while empowering employees.
- **Incentives or rules for private employers to allow telecommuting & flex workweeks.**
- A plan for the City to replace fossil fuel vehicles from its fleets with zero-carbon vehicles as they become available. The idea is that, as a vehicle ages out, the Department should look at zero carbon replacements. Each Department will have a date by which they are required to only consider zero-carbon vehicles as replacements.
  - Biofuels are not considered zero-carbon for the purpose of this ordinance, but electric and hydrogen vehicles are. Hybrids are not considered zero-carbon vehicles.
  - For all departments with only light-duty vehicles, including police, the policy enters effect immediately, and the Department can only consider zero-carbon vehicles.

- If the city owns any garbage trucks, the date by which those must be electric is 2023, as vehicles which start and stop frequently are easier to electrify.
- The Transportation Commission's electric bus requirement should be passed into law.
- The Fire department should have the latest date, perhaps as late as 2030.
- At existing gas lines, gas companies [will be required to repair Level 3 leaks they might normally ignore.](#)
- Shift all public park maintenance to use zero carbon equipment, replacing equipment as it ages out on a rolling basis or by 2028 at the latest.
- Ban the use of gas leafblowers on private property citywide.
  - The entity which gets the fine is the owner of the leafblower, not the operator. This would mean a homeowner using their own gas leafblower would pay the fine, or if a lawncare service employee uses one, the company they work for gets the fine. A working-class employee of a lawncare company should not be fined for using the equipment their company provides.
  - The fines from this program will help pay for a rebate program, where the City will offer rebates to lawncare companies within its borders that have to purchase new electric leafblowers. (Amount of rebate TBD.)
- Immediately **add recycling and composting bins anywhere in the city that currently has a public trash can.**
- **Make it illegal for new HOA covenants to require grass lawns, or to prohibit solar panels or rainwater storage, or to prohibit hanging laundry to dry outdoors.**
- California has a new requirement that all vehicles sold in the State by 2035 be electric. To ensure automakers do not procrastinate on this requirement until the very end of the timeline, we will place a midpoint **requiring all car dealerships operating in Burbank to have 50% of their stock be carbon-neutral by 2028.**
  - Hybrids and biofuel cars are not counted as carbon-neutral. Electric cars and hydrogen fuel cell cars are considered carbon-neutral.
- An **anti-idling ordinance**, to prevent people from running their vehicles while parked. (Exceptions are carved out for days that are excessively hot or cold.)
- **Direct all city agencies and departments to preferentially hire workers formerly employed by the fossil fuels industry**, and set aside money for job retraining for this purpose.
  - As the region moves to shut down carbon extraction, that is certain to impact workers. As rank-and-file workers have no role in creating the climate crisis - they are simply seeking to provide for themselves and their families - considerations must be made to ensure they are not abandoned in the transition away from fossil fuels.
  - No hydrocarbon company operating in Burbank, including gas stations, will be permitted to lay off, fire, or reduce the hours of an employee or contractor without informing them of the city's preferential hiring program.