



Wednesday, January 5, 2022
6:30 P.M.
via Zoom

**AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

Commissioners:	Nadine Gills-Ward	Lillian Hopson	William Koons (Vice Chair)
	Freeman Watkins	Angela Isaiah-Payne	Hourie Taylor
	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant

Alternates:	Eleanor Mack Alt 1	Celia Villalpando, Alt 2	Rudolfo "Val" Brillantes Alt 3
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Staff:	Eliza Jane Whitman, PE, LEED AP, ENV SP Director of Public Works	Reata Kulcsar, Sustainability Administrator - Utilities	Jessica Coria, Senior Clerk
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"In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, if you require a disability related modification or accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please call the Public Works Department office at 310-952-1700 ext. 1823 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting."
(Government Code Section 54954.2)

PUBLIC INFORMATION

SPECIAL NOTICE: DUE TO CORONA VIRUS COVID-19, NO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WILL BE ALLOWED INTO CITY HALL DURING THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING. THE MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED VIA REMOTE TELECONFERENCING USING THE ELECTRONIC "ZOOM" APPLICATION.

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Any members of the public wishing to provide public comment for the item(s) on the agenda may do so as follows:

1. Live via Zoom Application. Members of the public wishing to provide public comment in real-time can join the Zoom meeting remotely to provide their public comment live with their audio/video presented to the Environmental Commission. Members of the public wishing to do so should email jcoria@carsonca.gov, providing their real name and the phone number they will use to call in from, no later than 6:00 p.m. on the date of the meeting. For further details/requirements and meeting invite information, please email jcoria@carsonca.gov no later than 6:00 p.m. on the date of the meeting.
2. Email: You can email comments to jcoria@carsonca.gov no later than 3:00 p.m. before the meeting. Please identify the Agenda item you wish to address in your comments. Written public comments received will not be read aloud and will be circulated to the Environmental Commissioners and incorporated into the record.
3. Telephone: You can provide real-time public comment by calling 1-669-900-6833, entering the Meeting ID: 990 2636 4306 on the date of the meeting up until the time that the applicable public comment period (generally during the portion of the agenda entitled "Oral Communications") concludes. While participating, please state your name and identify the agenda item you wish to address in your comments.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

IV. INTRODUCTIONS/PRESENTATIONS

None

V. PUBLIC ORAL COMMUNICATIONS ON AGENDA ITEMS

The public may address the Commission on any matters within the jurisdiction of the Carson Environmental Commission or on any items on the agenda of the Carson Environmental Commission, prior to any action taken on the agenda. Speakers are limited to no more than three minutes, speaking once. Oral communications will be limited to one (1) hour unless extended by order of the Chair with the approval of the Environmental Commission.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Minutes for October 28, 2021
2. Receive and File – Article from the LA Times titled, “Poor Neighborhoods Bear the Brunt of Extreme Heat.”
3. Receive and File – Press Release, “South Coast AQMD Governing Board adopts rules to reduce pollution from refineries by nearly 8 tons per day, protect communities.”

VII. CONTINUED/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4. Continue to discuss Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

5. Organization: Nominate and Elect Members to Serve as Chair and Vice Chair

IX. PUBLIC ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR MATTERS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA

The public may at this time address the members of the Environmental Commission on any matters within the jurisdiction of the Environmental Commission. No action may be taken on non-agendized items except as authorized by law. Speakers are requested to limit their comments to no more than three minutes each, speaking once.

X. COMMISSION MEMBERS ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

XI. STAFF ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Upcoming Meetings:

February 2, 2022

March 2, 2022

April 6, 2022

This Board/Commission/Committee is subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act. Among other things, the Brown Act requires that the Board/Commission/Committees agenda be posted at least 72 hours in advance of each meeting and that the public be allowed to comment on agenda items before the Board/ Commission/ Committee and items not on the Board/Commission/Committee agenda but are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board/ Commission/ Committee. The Board/Commission/Committee may limit public comments to a reasonable amount of time, generally three (3) minutes per person.

MINUTES
OCTOBER 28, 2021
SPECIAL MEETING
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

AGENDA POSTING: OCTOBER 27, 2021

Given the emergency declaration through the State related to COVID-19 this meeting is being held pursuant through zoom application. Members of the public wishing to provide public input may do so in real time, via the zoom meeting link that is provided in the agenda packet. They may also email comments and may provide real time public comments by calling the number that is listed in the agenda packet. In accordance with the Brown Act, as amended on January 1, 1987, a copy of the Agenda Face Sheet for this meeting was posted in five (6) public places throughout the city designated for the posting of such notices twenty-four (24) hours prior to this meeting.

CALL TO ORDER: Sustainability Administrator – Utilities Reata Kulcsar called to order the meeting of the Environmental Commission Special Meeting to start recording via zoom at 6:37 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Sustainability Administrator – Utilities Reata Kulcsar

ROLL CALL: Recording Secretary Coria noted the following:

Present: Commissioners Koons, Gills-Ward, Isiah-Payne, Taylor, Pulido and Alternate Commissioner Mack

Absent: Commissioners Watkins and Hopson and Alternate Brillantes

Also Present: Public Works Director Whitman, Sustainability Administrator – Utilities Kulcsar and Recording Secretary Coria

INTRODUCTIONS/ PRESENTATIONS:

- a. Introduction of Commission Members that were present
- b. Introduction of City Staff that were present also including Sanitation Officer Jon Sakamoto and Lona Laymon from the City Attorney office

PUBLIC ORAL COMMUNICATIONS OF AGENDA ITEMS:

Isa Pulido, resident & City employee, called into zoom to speak on Items 1 & 2. Speaking on Item 1, he wants to the person nominated for Chair and Vice Chair who will work hard on the environmental issues. Speaking on item 4 on new business wants to see what the City will be doing with the stormwater permit. Wants to work with non-profits and work on getting grants to help with issues in the City.

CONTINUED/ UNFINISHED BUSINESS

City staff states there is none based on the information that was provided from the former staff liaison. Commissioners Pulido and Koons raise concerns that there was unfinished business from their last meeting sometime in 2020. Koons states that there was unfinished business concerning fireworks and that a letter was sent to the City Council in January 2020 to do away with fireworks in the City. Concerns were also shared Inland Star storing hazardous chemicals in the City and the need for an update.

NEW BUSINESS:

VIII (1): ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Staff Recommendation: RECOMMEND to nominate and elect members to serve as Chair and Vice Chair.

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Gills-Ward, seconded by Commissioner Mack, to nominate Commissioner Pulido as Chair was approved and unanimously carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Pulido, Gills-Ward, Koons, Taylor, and Mack
Noes: None
Abstain: Isiah-Payne
Absent: Hopson, Watkins, Brillantes

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Pulido, seconded by Commissioner Taylor, to nominate Commissioner Koons as Vice Chair was approved and unanimously carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Pulido, Gills-Ward, Koons, Taylor, and Mack
Noes: None
Abstain: Isiah-Payne
Absent: Hopson, Watkins, Brillantes

Public Comments:

None

VIII (2): REVIEW DUTIES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Staff Recommendation: RECOMMEND receive and file

ACTION: No motion was made. Received and filed.

VIII (3): DISCUSS WORK PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022

Staff Recommendation: Discuss Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

ACTION: Continued, the Commission Members discussed what to include in the work plan, which included the following:

- Put in place an emergency plan to notify citizens of emergencies
- Identify polluters in the City
- Update on oil refineries and trash companies in the City and their impact on the City.
- Impacts of truck routes
- Desire for a representative from the public safety commission to meet and discuss the emergency preparedness plan
- Increase tree planting to help with climate change
- Identify mitigation strategies so that the Dominguez Channel issue doesn't happen again.
- Promoting AQMD Rule 1109.1
- Desire to work with other agencies and commissions

Public Comments:

None

VIII (4): ORAL UPDATE FROM CITY STAFF ON STORM WATER PERMIT AND WASTE ORDINANCE

Public Works Director Whitman provide an update on the storm water permit and Sanitation Officer Jon Sakamoto provided an update on the waste ordinance.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ORAL COMMUNICATION:

Commissioner Koons motion to have a special Environmental Commission meeting on November 4th to prep for 1109 letter and wants the commission to be involved with the recycle program. Chair Pulido takes a vote to see if a meeting should be held. Commissioner Taylor states to wait till the next scheduled meeting and Pulido seconds motion.

For upcoming meeting, Pulido wants City Council and City Manager to look into letter for H2S and wants a presentation from Jesse Marquez from Collation for Safe Environment. Vice Chair Koons wants to discuss at the next meeting the Dominguez Channel.

STAFF ORAL COMMUNICATION:

None.

ORAL COMMUNICATION:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further discussion, on a motion by Chair Pulido, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m. to a regular meeting to be held on the 1st day of December 2021, at the hour of 6:30 p.m., via zoom.

CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

RECORDING SECRETARY

DRAFT

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
JANUARY 5, 2022**

TO: ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

**FROM: ELIZA JANE WHITMAN, PE, LEED AP, ENV SP
DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: ARTICLE FROM THE LA TIMES TITLED, "POOR NEIGHBORHOODS
BEAR THE BRUNT OF EXTREME HEAT"**

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and File.

ATTACHMENT

1. Article from the LA Times titled, "Poor Neighborhoods Bear the Brunt of Extreme Heat."

CALIFORNIA

Poor neighborhoods bear the brunt of extreme heat, ‘legacies of racist decision-making’



Felisa Benitez, 86, wipes the sweat from her brow while taking a break from cleaning her electric fan on the porch of her home at the San Fernando Gardens public housing complex in Pacoima. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

BY TONY BARBOZA, RUBEN VIVES

Photography by GENARO MOLINA

OCT. 28, 2021 5 AM PT



It was a typical summer day in Los Angeles, but a satellite orbiting hundreds of miles above Earth could detect that it was getting much hotter in some neighborhoods than others.

In a majority-white area of Silver Lake — where median household income is more than \$98,000 a year and mature trees dapple the hilly streets with shade — the

surface temperature was 96.4 degrees.

Less than a mile away, in a corner of East Hollywood, it was 102.7 degrees. The predominantly Latino and Asian area, where median household income is less than \$27,000 a year, is packed with older, two- and three-story apartment buildings. It has few trees big enough to provide shade, and less than one-third the canopy of Silver Lake, ranking it among the lowest-coverage areas in the city.

“Look up and down the street, there’s not a lot of trees down here,” said David Paque, who lives in that part of East Hollywood in a wood-sided, one-story house built in 1919 that on summer afternoons can feel 10 degrees hotter inside.

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Such “thermal inequities,” as scientists call them, checker the landscape of L.A. and other cities as they heat up from climate change. In a recent study that used satellite data from 2013 to 2019, UC Davis researchers found that California’s metro areas have greater temperature disparities between their poorest and wealthiest neighborhoods than any other state in the southwestern U.S.

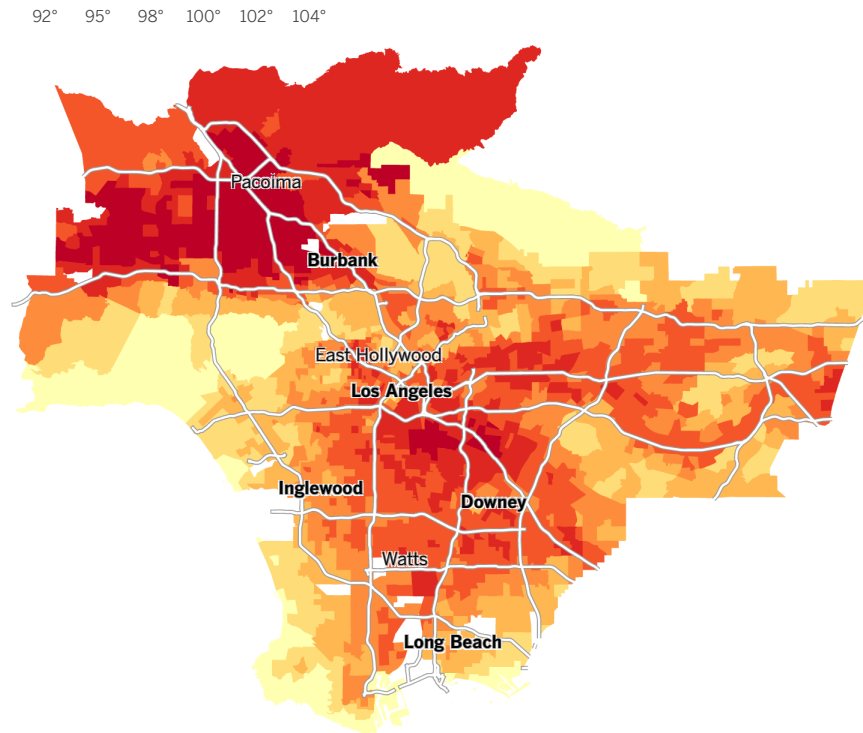
That doesn’t come as a surprise to Paque. He knows global warming is making summers more brutal and has spent nearly 20 years turning his frontyard into a shaded refuge of guava, mango and avocado trees to shield his property from heat. But he fears rising temperatures will only make his neighborhood more miserable.

“I’m worried about the kids, our babies, and what kind of future they’re going to have,” Paque, 57, said. “What planet are we leaving them?”

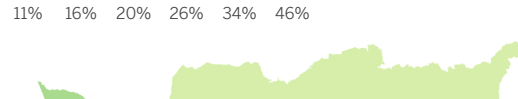
Tree canopy is distributed unevenly across L.A. County. So is the heat.

Hotter neighborhoods in the east and south regions of Los Angeles County, as well as parts of the San Fernando Valley, have less of their area covered by tree canopy.

Daytime temperature



Tree canopy coverage



Extreme heat is [killing far more Californians](#) than the state acknowledges, a Los Angeles Times analysis has found, but climate change isn't the only cause of this rising toll.

People's risk of heat-related illness and death is also a product of the built environment around them. The amount of paved surfaces and tree cover where they live and work, the quality of their housing and their ability to pay to cool their surroundings can make the difference between death or mere discomfort.

The unequal distribution of cooling infrastructure in Los Angeles and other cities is a big reason the health effects of worsening heat waves fall disproportionately on the poor and communities of color while those with money and privilege remain relatively shielded from the problem — by trees and parks, better housing and the power to crank up the air conditioning whenever they want.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

Heat waves are far deadlier than we think. How California neglects this climate threat

Oct. 7, 2021

Fueling these disparities is the heat island effect: Neighborhoods with few trees and a lot of pavement, large buildings and other heat-absorbing surfaces can be 10 degrees warmer than surrounding areas.

Black, Asian and Latino Californians are more likely to live in these hotter areas, in part because of a history of discriminatory redlining policies that excluded them from real estate investment, and environmental racism that targeted their neighborhoods for industrial facilities and freeways instead of parks and green space.



Eduardo Armenta of North East Trees plants a tree at the Imperial Courts public housing project in Watts. The group plants and maintains trees in the South L.A. community to eventually increase shade and reduce heat. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

“These microclimates aren’t natural, they are man-made,” said Rachel Morello-Frosch, an environmental health scientist at UC Berkeley. She called them “legacies of racist decision-making” that decades later “still determine how resilient neighborhoods can be in the face of climate change events like heat waves.”

State and local officials said that as they work to slash planet-warming emissions, they are also taking steps — planting trees and switching to solar-reflective roofs and pavement — to cool neighborhoods that suffer disproportionately. But such improvements could take decades to be felt, leaving some residents to wonder why more isn't being done to help with air conditioning, insulation and other protections that could provide immediate relief and help save lives now.

Housing risks



Wendy Mejia waters down her home in the San Fernando Gardens public housing complex in Pacoima. She said watering the exterior of her home may cool her place by a few degrees. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

During heat waves, indoor temperatures can build to levels higher than outdoors and persist well into the night as buildings slowly radiate the heat they've absorbed. People living in older, less insulated homes are at higher risk from extreme heat, especially if they lack air conditioning or can't afford to run it.



Juan Duran heads to his porch to enjoy the shade in front of his home in the San Fernando Gardens public housing complex in Pacoima in June. Duran and his family use a swamp cooler, fans and an air conditioner. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

Pacoima, one of the hottest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, is in an area that has warmed nearly two degrees since the San Fernando Gardens — a 448-unit public housing complex — was completed there in 1955, according to [the research nonprofit Berkeley Earth](#). The city housing authority doesn't provide air conditioning, however, and those who have installed it often struggle to pay their electric bills. As a result, tenants must invent ways to cope with ever more punishing heat spells.

Juan Duran and Wendy Mejia said it gets so hot inside their unit in the low-slung development of blocky, garden-style apartments that they can literally see waves of heat rising through the air into their teenage daughter's upstairs bedroom.

"The second floor is unbearable," Duran said, so bad that as a present for her middle school graduation, his daughter asked for an air conditioner.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

The L.A. Times investigation into extreme heat's deadly toll

Oct. 7, 2021

Each year Mejia plants sunflowers to shade the building. On summer afternoons she hoses down the exterior of its cinder block walls. She'll take three or four showers a day just trying to stay cool.

Mejia, who manages a McDonald's, and Duran, a convenience store clerk, said they don't earn enough to run air conditioners around the clock. Instead, they spend their free afternoons outside their home under a sliver of shade and grill food to avoid using the stove inside. At bedtime they crank up the air conditioning unit they installed upstairs to create a cool zone, but much of the rest of the house remains uncomfortably hot.

"With the heat you feel suffocated," Mejia said, "like you can't breathe."



Ruben Ledesma of Community Advancing With Purpose brings water to Felisa Benitez, center, Marin Paltera Saldido and Ingrid Landaverde, left, at the San Fernando Gardens public housing complex in Pacoima. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

Lizette Gonzalez, 32, who lives in San Fernando Gardens with her husband and five children, said she can feel the heat radiating into her apartment by touching its block walls from the inside.

They've installed one air conditioner and use fans to try to blow the cooled air around the house. But after five years living here, Gonzalez said, she does not understand why her unit did not come with air conditioning to begin with.



Leanna Ayala pours a cup of water over her head while cooling off with her sister and brother in a small inflatable pool on a hot afternoon at the San Fernando Gardens public housing complex in June. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

“They provide heaters, so I don’t know why they don’t provide air,” she said. “Without a heater you can use blankets. But without A/C, even if you’re indoors, you can’t cool down.”

The housing authority said that most of the city’s public housing was built between the 1930s and the 1950s, before air conditioning was considered essential. The agency said it lacks the money to install air conditioning now.

Gonzalez said her family deals with the heat by drinking ice water, using a kiddie pool outside or escaping to an air-conditioned mall so their youngest can cool down enough to fall asleep. One summer day it got so hot Gonzalez resorted to putting the kids in the tub with ice.

“I don’t know what else we can do to withstand this heat,” she said.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

How to protect yourself and your loved ones from extreme heat

Oct. 7, 2021

Much of California's housing stock was built before energy efficiency standards first took effect in the 1970s, and those older buildings pose elevated risks because they tend to be less well insulated, said Max Wei, research scientist at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab. "These homes heat up more quickly and the upper floors can be even higher temperature," he said.

Wei, who is conducting a multiyear research project in Fresno aimed at helping vulnerable communities better withstand extreme heat, said that there needs to be more focus on preventing people's homes from overheating and that policymakers should be asking whether air conditioning can be enshrined in California's building codes.



"Miserable hot," said Wanda Kelly, who cools off with an electric fan on the front porch. She lives with her son and daughter at the San Fernando Gardens public housing in Pacoima. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

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California law and building codes require residential units to have heating. But there is no requirement for air conditioning.

“As it is now, cooling is used more as an amenity than as a requirement,” Wei said. “We wouldn’t think that homes in the Northeast or Minnesota wouldn’t require furnaces. So why should we think that homes in hot areas don’t require air conditioning?”

Kyle Krause, deputy director of codes and standards at the California Department of Housing and Community Development, said his agency has the power to propose adoption of building standards that address health and safety issues “of statewide significance, however not all climate zones in the state need air conditioning.” He said the issue could be evaluated and discussed with stakeholders and potentially proposed through regulatory action or in response to legislation.

Falling between the cracks

Mobile homes are a particular concern, not only because they are more susceptible to overheating than traditional homes, but because they tend to house more elderly residents who may choose to stay at home even when it is dangerously hot inside. A recently released climate assessment by Los Angeles County found that 56% of mobile home residents live in areas of high heat exposure, compared with 38% of all county residents.

At a mobile home park in the Riverside County community of Desert Edge, residents have for years complained of power outages that come at the worst time imaginable: during bouts of extreme heat that have pushed temperatures above 120 degrees.



Porfirio Juarez wipes his face underneath a new AC unit the family recently installed in their mobile home at the Corkill Mobile and RV Park in Desert Edge. The AC unit is the only one the family uses during the day as it cools down the kitchen, dining area and living room. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)



Emma Duarte uncovers the generator the family bought in case of a power outage at their mobile home in Desert Edge. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

When a strong heat wave hit in June, causing a power outage, Porfirio Juarez and Emma Duarte took refuge in a shaded area outside while their 2-year-old and 4-year-old daughters used a portable swimming pool to keep cool. Other residents of the Corkill Mobile and RV Park sat in their cars with the air conditioning on while they waited more than three hours for the power to return.

“People say it’s crazy to live here,” Juarez said. “They tell me to move, but it’s harder to do that when you have a family.”

Dozens of the RV park residents filed a lawsuit in 2019 accusing the property owners of failing to maintain the mobile park, including the community swimming pool that they said was often closed.

Tejas M. Modi, president of Durant Property Investments LLC, which owns the RV park, said he's trying to fix the electrical problems that have caused outages and other problems raised by residents. He said years of neglect by the previous owner led to the current conditions.

For one former resident of the park, Allan Wanner, 61, the last straw came when his best friend was found dead on the morning of Aug. 8, 2020.



Allan Wanner gets emotional as he recalls the loss of his neighbor Gerald Floyd Rice, who died during a hot summer in 2020 in Desert Edge. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

A Riverside County coroner's report said heart disease and alcohol abuse may have contributed to the death of 59-year-old Gerald Floyd Rice, but Wanner suspects the heat, which reached triple digits that week and brought power outages, played a role.

Wanner, who suffers from congestive heart failure and relies on an oxygen concentrator, said he was sometimes forced to rent a hotel room to escape the heat and have access to reliable power.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

As heat waves intensify, access to air conditioning can mean life or death

Oct. 7, 2021

"I can't do this anymore," he said before moving in June — to Arizona. "If I don't get out of here, I'm going to die."

Patricia Solís, executive director of the Knowledge Exchange for Resilience at Arizona State University, said her research in Maricopa County has found that people who live in mobile homes are six to eight times more likely to die from heat-associated causes than people who live in other types of housing. She said surveys found residents paying as much as \$400 a month to cool a space that's the size of a large room. She has taken readings inside trailers where people were living with temperatures as high as 115 degrees.



Emma Duarte and daughter Emily try to catch a breeze in the doorway of their mobile home in the Corkill Mobile and RV Park in Desert Edge. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

“They’re like tin cans on a parking lot,” Solís said.

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But mobile homes are ineligible for federal aid such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which helps millions of households with their power bills, because they are not counted as structures, Solís said. People living in trailer parks

may also miss out on utility company assistance programs because they are often not direct customers and instead pay their landlords through a parkwide account.

“So they fall between the cracks,” Solís said.

An uneven toll

[In their study](#) of 20 metro areas in the southwestern U.S., UC Davis researchers found that on extreme heat days, California’s poorest neighborhoods were nearly five degrees hotter, on average, than the wealthiest neighborhoods. Their research found an even stronger correlation for the most heavily Latino neighborhoods, which in the Los Angeles area were found to be 6.7 degrees hotter than neighborhoods with few Latino residents.

The effects of rising temperatures are expected to grow significantly in the coming decades, according to a [climate vulnerability assessment](#) released this month by Los Angeles County. It found that more than 1 million people live in areas of the county that by midcentury will experience an additional 30 extreme heat days a year, with the largest temperature increases expected in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita valleys.



Tree coverage varies widely between L.A. neighborhoods. Above, Silver Lake and East Hollywood. (Genaro Molina/Los Angeles Times)

The assessment also found that Black and Latino residents face disproportionate risk. Latino residents make up 48.5% of L.A. County but 66.9% of the population in communities identified as having high vulnerability to extreme heat.

“That points to a history of disinvestment in those communities, where there’s a lack of tree canopy, a lot of hot, paved surfaces and older housing stock that’s less well insulated and less likely to have air conditioning,” said Gary Gero, the county’s chief sustainability officer.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

How hot is it inside Southern California’s warehouses? Ask the workers at Rite Aid

Oct. 12, 2021

[In a study](#) published last year, researchers found that in cities across the U.S., land surface temperatures in formerly redlined neighborhoods — areas the federal government designated nearly a century ago as “hazardous” to real estate investment due largely to their racial makeup — are nearly five degrees hotter than other areas. Study authors wrote that historical housing policies, such as denying residents federally backed home loans, may be directly responsible for their disproportionate exposure to heat.

Those underpinnings make heat a “discriminating killer,” said study co-author Vivek Shandas, a professor of urban studies and planning at Portland State University. “Heat waves don’t just kill people by coincidence. There’s really a set of conditions that are in place.”

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Growing resilience

There are ways to alleviate the uneven toll. California could invest in the “physical environments of these neighborhoods that have disproportionately suffered from these heat waves,” said UC Berkeley’s Morello-Frosch, who has studied the health effects of extreme heat and disparities in access to green space.

Improving the quality and insulation of housing and enhancing green space can save lives, she said, and tree planting is especially effective. [One study](#) conducted in

Madison, Wis., found that tree canopy coverage above 40% can cool the air by as much as 10 degrees.

“The path to protecting public health is fairly straightforward,” Morello-Frosch said. “We just need to have collective will and invest the resources to make it happen.”

[A 2020 study](#) by a group of researchers and experts called the Los Angeles Urban Cooling Collaborative found that widespread tree planting and installation of solar-reflective roofs and pavement could reduce temperatures in Los Angeles enough to save 1 in 4 lives currently lost to heat waves, largely in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.



Edith de Guzman, a UCLA researcher and director of the Los Angeles Urban Cooling Collaborative, takes a thermal photograph of a street scene in San Fernando on June 18. De Guzman has been studying the effects of heat in neighborhoods around Los Angeles. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

Los Angeles [changed its building code](#) in 2014 to require reflective “cool roofs” and in recent years has begun [pouring cool pavement](#) designed to reflect more of the sun’s rays in some of its hottest neighborhoods. The city plans to coat 200 more city blocks by next summer, said Greg Spotts, assistant director of the Bureau of Street Services.

Los Angeles officials are also pushing to plant more trees across the city and increase canopy in the highest-need areas. But the city appears to be falling short of reaching [Mayor Eric Garcetti’s 2019 goal](#) to “plant and maintain” at least 90,000 trees by the end of this year.

Just over 54,000 trees had been planted on public and private property by the end of August, City Forest Officer Rachel Malarich said.

Malarich said the environmental benefits from increasing tree canopy are “not just about the number of trees planted, but what species are planted and where they are planted.” She said the city is working to plant trees in high-need areas, but acknowledged being constrained by insufficient data, responsibilities that are spread across several city departments and differing levels of community interest in receiving and caring for the trees.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

Climate change is supercharging California heat waves, and the state isn't ready

Oct. 7, 2021

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Extreme Heat

The inequality of heat dangers

Heat waves' deadly toll

Warehouse workers face dangers

How to protect yourself

Malarich said the city is about halfway through conducting a [neighborhood-by-neighborhood tree inventory](#) that will help guide its efforts to grow and manage its urban forest.



Eduardo Armenta of North East Trees delivers a tree to a resident on 113th Street in Watts. They have planted over 1,500 trees. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

In Watts, the groups North East Trees and TreePeople are in the middle of a multiyear effort to plant thousands of trees in the shade-poor South Los Angeles neighborhood. It's part of a state-funded project to gird the area for the impacts of climate change. The goal is to saturate the community with trees wherever there is room, including along parkways and sidewalks, and by distributing free fruit and shade trees to residents to plant in their yards.

Slender saplings are being spread around the predominantly Black and Latino neighborhood and staked outside of schools and next to houses and apartments. They will need years of supplemental watering before they can survive on their own.

A row of young African fern pines now stands between busy Imperial Highway and the Imperial Courts public housing complex. Someday, they will provide shade for the hot, south-facing side of the apartment buildings, as well as buffer vehicle noise and pollution.

"It's going to completely cool off this entire block," crew supervisor Ladale Hayes, 44, said as he stood next to the row of 10-foot-tall trees planted into holes cut out of the sidewalk. "It was a bare sidewalk with no shade canopy whatsoever. And now those trees are flourishing."



Ladale Hayes, crew supervisor with North East Trees, reflects over a tree he planted outside a resident's apartment at Imperial Courts public housing in Watts in memory of man who was murdered. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

Longtime Imperial Courts resident Loretha West, 78, dutifully waters the paperbark tree Hayes planted last year outside her apartment, which she requested as a memorial to her son, who was murdered at age 29.

West said she is looking forward to when its smooth green leaves spread overhead and help cool her building.

“I’m proud of the tree,” she said, “and I will take care of it as long as I’m here.”

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Times staff writer Sean Greene contributed to this report.

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Tony Barboza



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Tony Barboza is an editorial writer focusing on climate change and environmental justice. Before joining the editorial board in November 2021, he worked for 15 years as a news reporter for the Times’ California section, covering air quality, climate change, environmental health and other topics. Barboza was born and raised in Colorado and is a graduate of Pomona College.



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Ruben Vives is a general assignment reporter for the Los Angeles Times. A native of Guatemala, he got his start in journalism by writing for The Times' Homicide Report in 2007. He helped uncover the financial corruption in the city of Bell that led to criminal charges against eight city officials. The 2010 investigative series won the Pulitzer Prize for public service and other prestigious awards.



Genaro Molina

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Genaro Molina is an award-winning staff photographer for the Los Angeles Times. He has worked in journalism for more than 35 years starting at the San Francisco Chronicle. Molina has photographed the life and death of Pope John Paul II, the tragedy of AIDS in Africa, the impact of Hurricane Katrina, and Cuba after Castro. His work has appeared in nine books and his photographs have been exhibited extensively including at the Smithsonian Institute and the Annenberg Space for Photography.

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**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
JANUARY 5, 2022**

TO: ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

**FROM: ELIZA JANE WHITMAN, PE, LEED AP, ENV SP
DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: PRESS RELEASE - SOUTH COAST AQMD GOVERNING BOARD ADOPTS
RULES TO REDUCE POLLUTION FROM REFINERIES BY NEARLY 8 TONS
PER DAY, PROTECT COMMUNITIES**

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and File.

ATTACHMENT

1. Press Release from the South Coast AQMD regarding recently adopted rules to reduce pollution from refineries.



SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT PRESS RELEASE

www.aqmd.gov

@SouthCoastAQMD    

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 5, 2021

MEDIA CONTACT:

Nahal Mogharabi, (909) 396-3773, Cell: (909) 837-2431

Kim White, (909) 396-3456, Cell: (909) 323-9479

press@aqmd.gov

South Coast AQMD Governing Board adopts rules to reduce pollution from refineries by nearly 8 tons per day, protect communities

DIAMOND BAR, CA – Today, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) Governing Board adopted Rule 1109.1 which requires additional emissions controls on equipment, reducing nitrogen oxide (NOx) pollution by almost eight tons per day (tpd). NOx is a precursor to ozone (smog) and the reductions attained by this rule will make up 40 percent of the overall reductions needed by stationary sources to meet federal standards by 2031.

“Once implemented, this rule will have immediate benefits to our air quality, especially for those living near these facilities who are directly impacted,” said Ben J. Benoit, Chair of the South Coast AQMD Governing Board. “We estimate the public health benefits achieved through this rule will help avoid 370 premature deaths and more than 6,200 asthma attacks.”

As part of the rule, facilities are required to apply for a permit that limits NOx and carbon monoxide (CO) emissions from combustion equipment used as part of refinery operations. The rules are projected to reduce between 7.7 to 7.9 tpd of NOx over the next 14 years, with nearly half of those reductions expected by 2023. Approximately 75 percent of the emission reductions are anticipated to be achieved by 2027 with 90 percent being achieved by 2031. The rule will also have a positive economic impact resulting in 213 jobs added to the workforce every year.

In addition to petroleum refineries, Rule 1109.1 establishes NOx limits for asphalt plants, biofuel plants, hydrogen production plants and sulfuric acid plants. The rule will impact 16 facilities and nearly 300 pieces of combustion equipment such as boilers, gas turbines and vapor incinerators in the South Coast Air Quality Management’s jurisdiction.

Three companion rules (429.1, 1304, and 2005) were also adopted today to support Rule 1109.1 by providing exemptions for emission increases during startup, shutdown, commissioning, maintenance events, and for installation of add-on air pollution control equipment needed to meet the required NOx concentration limits.

South Coast AQMD is the regulatory agency responsible for improving air quality for large areas of Los Angeles, Orange County, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, including the Coachella Valley. For news, air quality alerts, event updates and more, please visit us at www.aqmd.gov, download our award-winning app, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
JANUARY 5, 2022**

TO: ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

**FROM: ELIZA JANE WHITMAN, PE, LEED AP, ENV SP
DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

BY: REATA KULCSAR, SUSTAINABILITY ADMINISTRATOR – UTILITIES

**SUBJECT: CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF A WORK PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR
2021-2022**

I. SUMMARY

The Environmental Commission is tasked with developing a work plan for City Council review and approval.

II. RECOMMENDATION

CONTINUE Discussion of Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

III. ALTERNATIVES

CONTINUE this item to a future meeting.

IV. BACKGROUND

During the last Environmental Commission Meeting that was held on October 28, 2021, the commission members discussed including the following items in the work plan:

- Put in place an emergency plan to notify citizens of emergencies
- Identify polluters in the City
- Update on oil refineries and trash companies in the City and their impact on the City
- Impacts of truck routes
- Desire for a representative from the public safety commission to meet and discuss the emergency preparedness plan
- Increase tree planting to help with climate change
- Identify mitigation strategies so that the Dominquez Channel issue doesn't happen again

- Promoting AQMD Rule 1109.1
- Desire to work with other agencies and commissions

Next steps:

- Continue to discuss and outline any priorities established by City Council
- Continue to brainstorm goals, projects, or priorities of the Commission
- Prepare final work plan for submission to City Council for review and approval

V. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

VI. EXHIBITS

None.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

January 5, 2022

TO: ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

**FROM: ELIZA JANE WHITMAN, PE, LEED AP, ENV SP
DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**BY: REATA KULCSAR, SUSTAINABILITY
ADMINISTRATOR – UTILITIES**

SUBJECT: ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

I. SUMMARY

The Commission will nominate and elect a Chair and Vice-Chair to serve for the balance of this year. Most recently, Commissioner Pulido served as Chair and Commissioner Koons served as Vice-Chair.

II. RECOMMENDATION

To nominate and elect members to serve as Chair and Vice Chair.

III. ALTERNATIVES

Postpone the election to a future meeting.

IV. BACKGROUND

The election of Chair and Vice-Chair is governed by the City Charter Article 6, Section 603. Chairs; Meetings; Staff; Rules, which states, "As soon as practicable, following the first day of every calendar year, or such other time as may be designated by resolution of the city council, the members of each advisory board, committee or commission shall appoint a member to serve as chair and/or as vice-chair(s) of such board, committee or commission..." The past Chair will ask for nominations for the position of Chair. Any member may nominate another to serve. Once a member has been nominated for Chair, the Commission will vote. If a majority of members approve, that member will be deemed Chair. The process will then repeat for the election of Vice-Chair.

The Chair and Vice-Chair will serve in the role for the balance of the calendar year.

Upon the conclusion of the election process for Chair and Vice-Chair, the person elected Chair will take over as president of the meeting.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

VI. EXHIBITS

None.