

# Environmental Quality Commission



## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** 8/21/2024  
**Time:** 6:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Teleconference and  
City Hall Downtown Conference Room, 1st Floor  
701 Laurel St., Menlo Park. CA 94025

### A. Call To Order

Chair Schmidt called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

### B. Roll Call

**Present:** Hill, Hedley, Meyer, Vice Chair McKenna, Pelegri-Llopart, Chair Schmidt  
**Absent:** Kissel  
**Staff:** Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer, Management Analyst II Ori Paz

### C. Public Comment

None.

### D. Regular Business

- D1. Approve the July 17, 2024 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes (Attachment)

**ACTION:** Motion and second (Hedley/ Hill), to approve the July 17, 2024 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes, with a modification to remove the Education and Outreach Subcommittee from the Commission work plan for 2024-2025, passed 6-0 (Kissel absent).

- D2. Presentation from San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) (Presentation)

Chair Schmidt introduced the item.

Sam Fishman and Sarah Atkinson with SPUR made the presentation.

The Commission received clarification on site designations and State Bill 272.

- Cagla Ruacan spoke in support of building electrification and collaboration with SPUR and requested clarification regarding the analysis of rainwater reuse.
- Brian Schmidt spoke in support of SPUR's work, the importance of microgrids, local examples of building electrification and support for groundwater overlay.

The Commission discussed the interrelated policy issues of climate adaptation, housing, transportation and the work outlined in SPUR's presentation.

- D3. Discuss student engagement goals and plan (Presentation)

Chair Schmidt introduced the item (Attachment).

The Commission discussed equity, engaging Menlo Park Youth Advisory Committee, building a pilot program and involving youth in the Climate Action Plan implementation.

- D4. Extend duration of the Heritage Tree Ordinance Administrative Guidelines Ad Hoc Subcommittee to October 2024

Chair Schmidt introduced the item.

The Commission received clarification on the sequencing of the administrative guidelines.

**ACTION:** Motion and second (McKenna/ Hedley), to extend the Heritage Tree Ordinance Administrative Guidelines Ad Hoc Subcommittee, passed 6-0 (Commissioner Kissel absent).

## **E. Reports and Announcements**

- E1. Reports and announcements from staff and Commissioners

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer reported out on the San Mateo County Youth Ambassador climate action and leadership education opportunity, Washington Post article review chat bot tool, upcoming Planning Commission meeting on the Environmental Justice Element on August 26, City Council August 27 discussion on the 2025 – 2030 Climate Action Plan (CAP) implementation scope of work and cross-county work on an Inflation Reduction Act federal grant.

Management Analyst II Ori Paz reported out on the City's progress on the Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE) GovPV reroofing and solar projects, the Tesla pilot update report to the City Council on August 27, electric vehicle (EV) charging and County electrification education/public awareness campaign, and GovBE project.

Commissioner McKenna reported out on the California State Equitable Building Decarbonization (EBD) program for a statewide direct install electrification program for low-income residents and the Menlo Park Home Upgrade Program in partnership with PCE.

Commissioner Hill reported out on opportunities to do joint commission meetings to discuss topics that relate to multiple commissions such as transportation.

Chair Schmidt reported out on the CALFire grant, school electrification and climate action bond measure, Senate Bill 1374 on solar for schools, opportunities for future recruitment and meetings in District 1.

## **F. Adjournment**

Chair Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Management Analyst II Ori Paz

Minutes approved at the September 18, 2024 Environmental Quality Commission meeting



# Advocating for a sustainable, resilient, and equitable Bay Area

*Menlo Park Environmental Quality Commission  
August 21, 2024*

27 STORIES - 303,760 SQ. FT. AVAILABLE • ALL-GLASS CURTAIN WALL • 33 FOOT COLUMN-FREE BAY CEILING  
PRE-CERTIFIED LEED GOLD • ON-SITE PARKING • AVAILABLE FOR TENANT IMPROVEMENTS OCTOBER 2024

535 MISSION

**Sam Fishman**  
Sustainability & Resilience Policy Manager

**Sarah Atkinson**  
Hazard Resilience Sr. Policy Manager

# Agenda

- SPUR's Mission, History, & Policy Areas
- Overview of SPUR's Sustainability and Resilience Policy Priorities
- Deep Dive Priority #1: Decarbonization
- Deep Dive Priority #2: Multi-hazard Resilience



# What is SPUR?

An urban planning & public policy organization







## SPUR's Mission

Through research, education and advocacy, SPUR works to create an equitable, sustainable and prosperous region in which all people thrive.





- Hazards
- Protection
- Transit - densest mixed use
- Transit - mixed use
- Commercial corridors
- Pre-war downtowns
- High opportunity areas
- Single family areas

0 10 20  
MILES

SPUR works at the intersection of **housing, transportation, planning, good governance, & sustainability & resilience** to create a better future for the Bay





## Planning

We Believe: Growth can be good and should be directed to areas that will support equitable development and sustainability.

[Read More >](#)

## Housing

We Believe: Housing is a human right and should be affordable to everyone.

[Read More >](#)

## Transportation

We believe: Walking, biking, and taking transit should be the safest and best ways to get around for people of all ages and abilities.

[Read More >](#)

## Good Government

We believe: The public sector can and should serve the collective good.

[Read More >](#)

## Sustainability and Resilience

We believe: The region should be environmentally just, carbon-neutral, and resilient to climate change and earthquakes.

[Read More >](#)

## Economic Justice

We believe: Prosperity is essential to a thriving region and should be planned for, supported, and shared so that all people can participate in and benefit from economic growth.

[Read More >](#)

# Sustainability + Resilience

**Platform:** The region should be environmentally just, carbon-neutral, and resilient to climate change and earthquakes.

**Plank 1: Decarbonize buildings.** Eliminate the use of fossil fuels in buildings to make the air healthier and reduce climate pollution.

**Plank 2: Make the region resilient to sea level rise and other climate-driven natural disasters.** Support coordinated, community-led sea level rise plans and prioritize nature-based solutions to address the region's climate hazards.

**Plank 3: Improve communities' resilience to earthquakes.** Enhance the seismic safety of buildings and communities to help the region recover quickly and equitably.

# Plank 1: Decarbonize buildings. Eliminate the use of fossil fuels in buildings to make the air healthier and reduce climate pollution.

## A Toolbox for Transitioning to Zero-Pollution Equipment

*Five strategies and thirty actions policymakers and advocates can take to affordably, equitably, and smoothly transition off gas heating in buildings*

### Summary

Gas-powered space and water heating in homes and businesses is a significant driver of unhealthy air quality in the Bay Area, responsible for more lung-damaging nitrogen oxide pollution than the region's passenger cars. This pollution disproportionately burdens communities of color and low-income communities.

To improve air quality, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District passed an air standard in 2023 that will ensure that only pollution-free HVACs and water heaters can be sold or installed in Bay Area homes and businesses, starting in 2027 for residential water heaters and 2029 for residential HVAC systems. Other jurisdictions throughout California and the country are now actively considering similar standards.

In the years before the standard goes into effect, local, regional, and state policymakers have a critical window of opportunity to develop implementation strategies that will ensure the transition to pollution-free heating equipment advances as smoothly and equitably as possible.

The Toolbox was created to enable policymakers and advocacy groups to identify action steps they can take to support the successful implementation of the Bay Area's nation-leading air quality standard. The toolbox is also available for other jurisdictions outside of the Bay Area considering similar zero-pollution heating equipment standards.



## Focus Area 1: Panel and Service Upsizing

- **Research:** Solutions and tools to avoiding, and streamlining, costly and time consuming electrical panel and service upsizing
- **Advocacy:** Working with the Panel Optimization Work and Electrical Retrofits (POWER) group to advocate for panel optimization strategies. Engage at CPUC to implement state level solutions.
- **Education:** Host briefings with city officials, CCAs, and state agencies on panel optimization; Media outreach



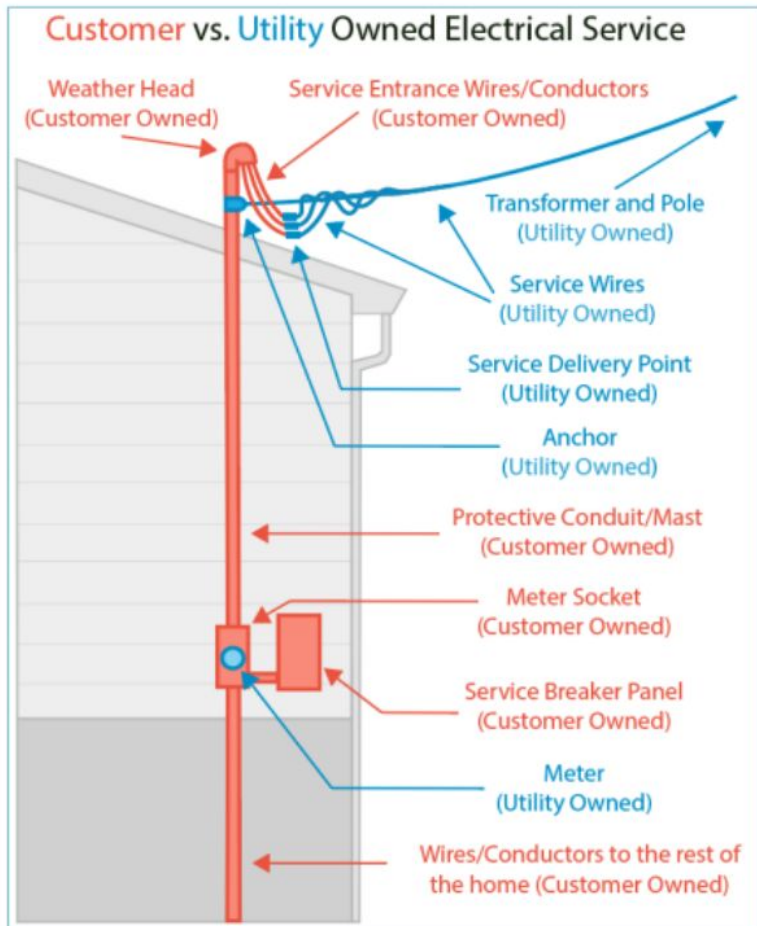
POLICY BRIEF MAY 2024

### Solving the Panel Puzzle

Avoiding and streamlining electric panel and service upsizing to accelerate building decarbonization



# Barrier: Electrical panel and service upsizing is costly and time consuming



## Modify Electric Underground less than 400 amp

Print



### Low end range

- No Right of Way or Easement Required
- No Upgrades to Infrastructure Required
- Trenching Outsourced

### High end range

- Right of Way or Easement Required
- Upgrades to Infrastructure Required
  - Trenching Completed by PG&E
  - Difficult Conditions or Long Trench Required

Feedback

## Modify Electric Overhead Service less than 400amp

Print



### Low end range

- No Right of Way or Easement Required
- No Additional Infrastructure Required

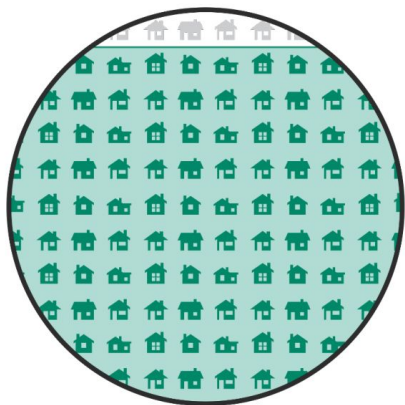
### High end range

- Right of Way or Easement Required
- Additional and/or Upgrades to Infrastructure Required

Feedback

The range is based on historical project costs.

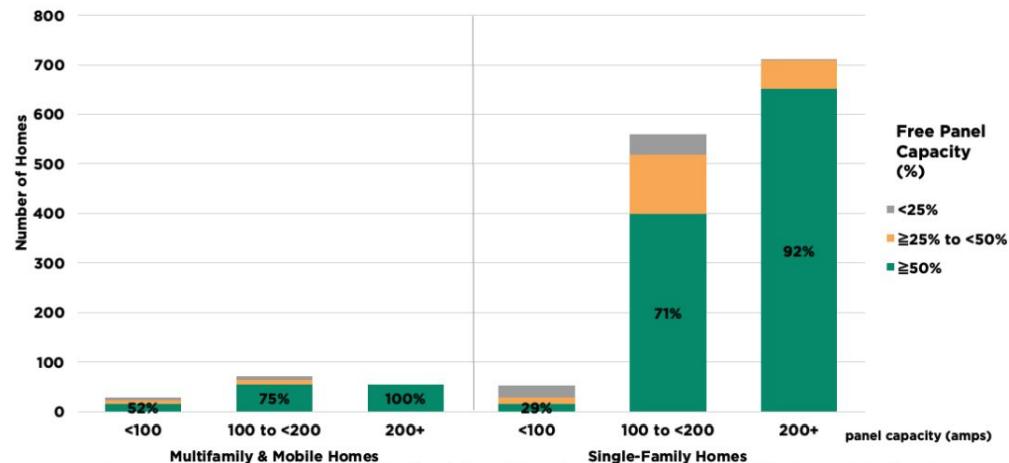
# Avoiding Unnecessary Panel Upsizing



With thoughtful  
policy and  
design decisions,

**MOST HOMES**

could electrify without  
complicated and expensive  
panel upgrades.



Source: Home Energy Analytics (HEA), "Dataset on Residential Panel Capacity and Utilization." Shared by Steven Schmidt of HEA.

Note: Data are from 1,477 homes in PG&E service territory.

# Right Sizing Equipment, and Optimizing Panels

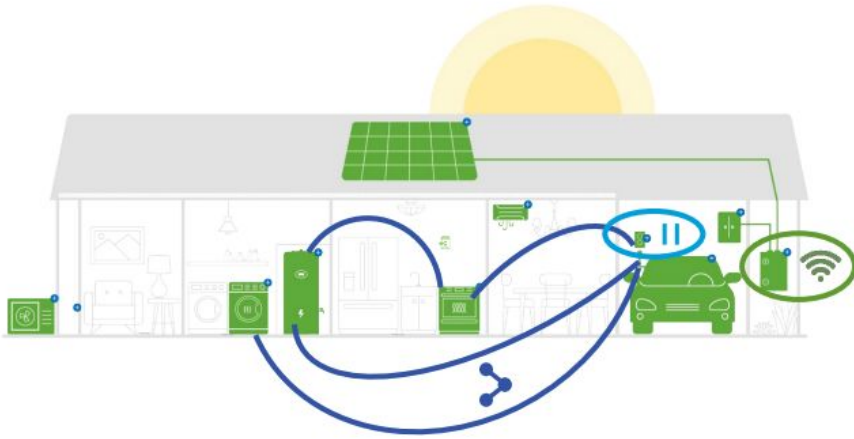


Image courtesy of Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE)

## Option 1

### Control



Use a circuit pauser on the Level 2 EV charger

## Option 2

### Control



Use a **circuit-sharing** device with  
EV charger + range  
EV charger + water heater  
EV charger + clothes dryer  
Range + water heater

## Option 3

### Control



Use a smart panel



Image by ClipperCreek



Image by Rheem

# SPUR's Plan of Action

## Recommendations for local, Regional, state, and national decision makers

### Example recommendations

- Rec 1: Incorporate subsidies in incentive programs for load management technologies that mitigate the need to upsize a panel.
- Rec 9: Direct electric utilities to authorize any meter collar adapter that meets a set of minimum specifications.
- Rec 12: Direct electric utilities to adopt best practices to process service modification applications, along with target and maximum timelines that reflect streamlined processes.

Some forums and actors SPUR's engaged with:



CALIFORNIA

### Public Utilities Commission

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Order Instituting Rulemaking to  
Establish Energization Timelines.

Rulemaking 24-01-018

Order Instituting Rulemaking Regarding  
Building Decarbonization.

Rulemaking 19-01-011  
(Filed January 31, 2019)



CALIFORNIA  
ENERGY COMMISSION





## Focus Area 2: Smoothing the transition to clean heating - permitting and city codes

- **Research:** Where are contractors running into trouble trying to navigate city rules to permit and install heat pumps
- **Advocacy:** Working with cities, CCAs, digital permitting companies, and advocates to identify recommendations for cities and state lawmakers
- **Education:** SPUR articles, speaking events, and SPUR organized events focusing in on these barriers

### Smoothing the Transition to Heat Pumps — Part 1: Code Changes

By Sam Fishman, Sustainability and Resilience Policy Manager

August 6, 2024



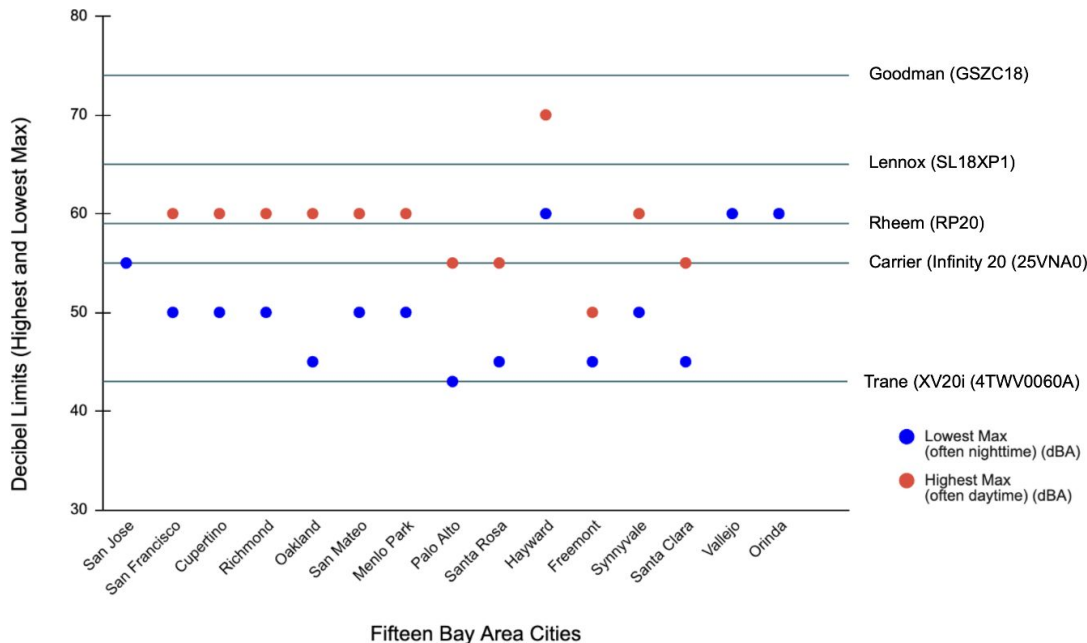
Bay Area planners need to amend municipal codes and permitting processes to accelerate home electrification in the Bay Area. One task is making it easier to install compressors for heat pumps in yards.

Photo courtesy of [rawpixel.com](https://rawpixel.com)

# Example: Noise Ordinances

- Noise levels of heat pumps not well aligned with city codes
- Inverter technologies are changing the game!
- Recommendations: increase decibel limits, add exemptions, eliminate sound engineering requirements

## Bay Area Noise Ordinances and Heat Pump Noise Ratings for Single-Family-Home Zones



Source: SPUR.

Note: Table only reflects exemptions impacting heat pumps.

# Example: Zoning codes

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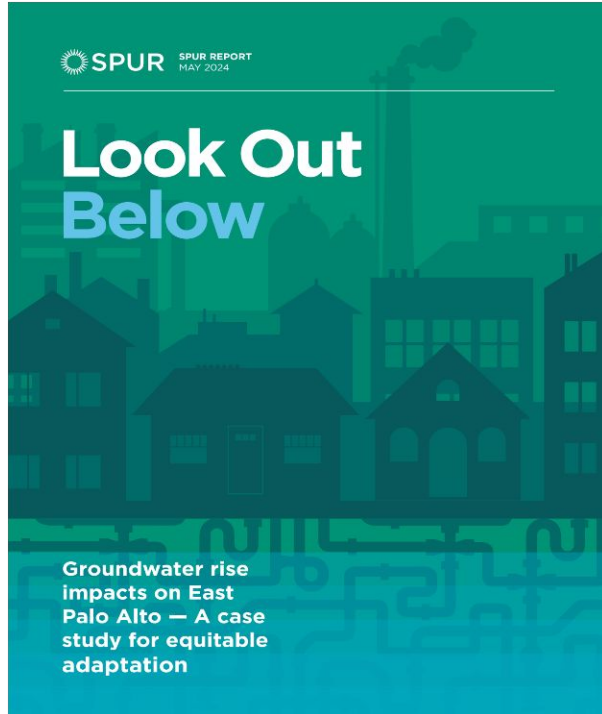


## REMOVING KNOWN BARRIERS: CHANGING ZONING TO HELP ELECTRIFY EXISTING HOMES

December 7, 2023 BAYREN Forum – Presented by Ori Paz



## Plank 2: Make the region resilient to sea level rise and other climate-driven natural disasters.



Bay Area communities are planning for sea level rise resilience with a focus on equity, nature-based solutions, the compounding effects of groundwater rise, and cooperation across jurisdictions.



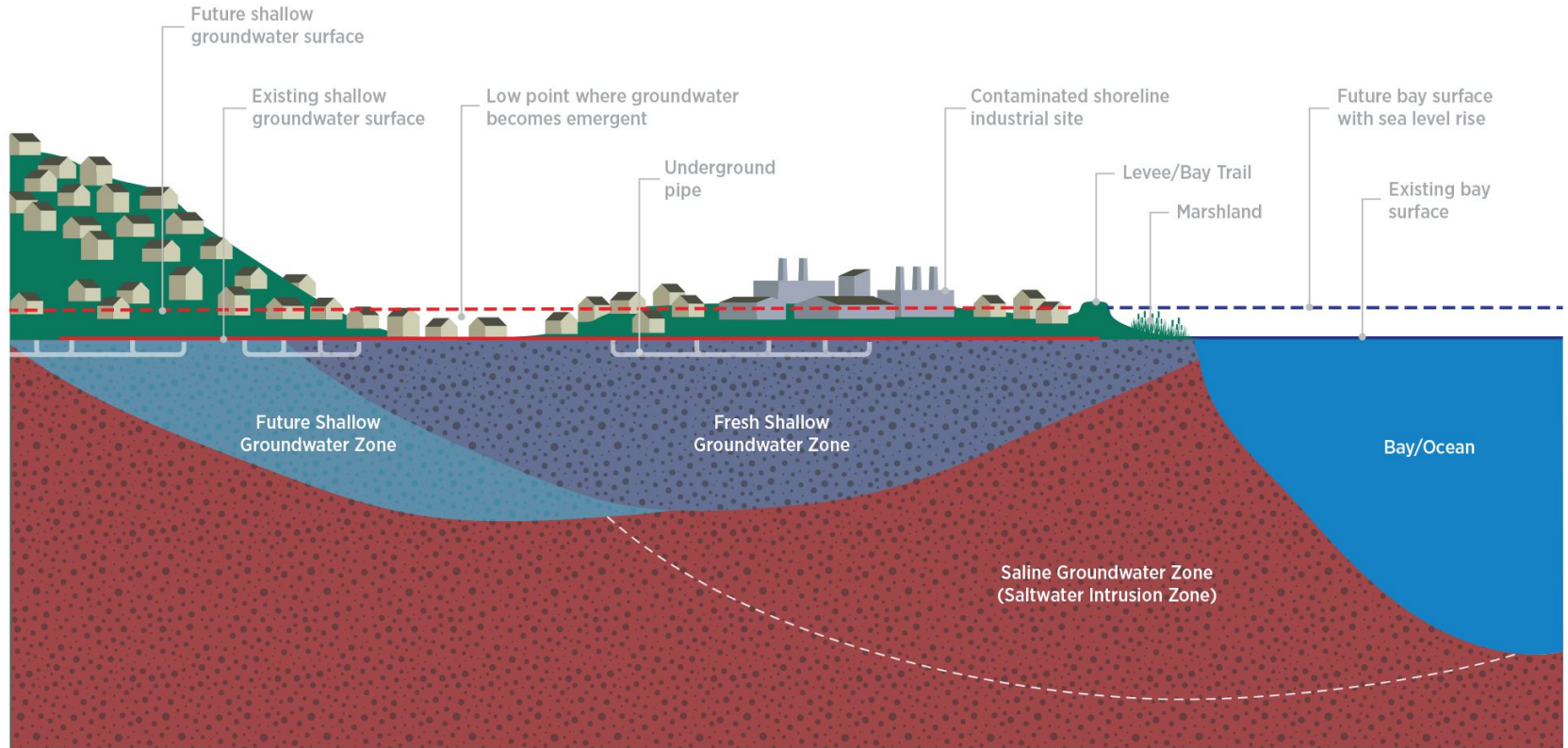
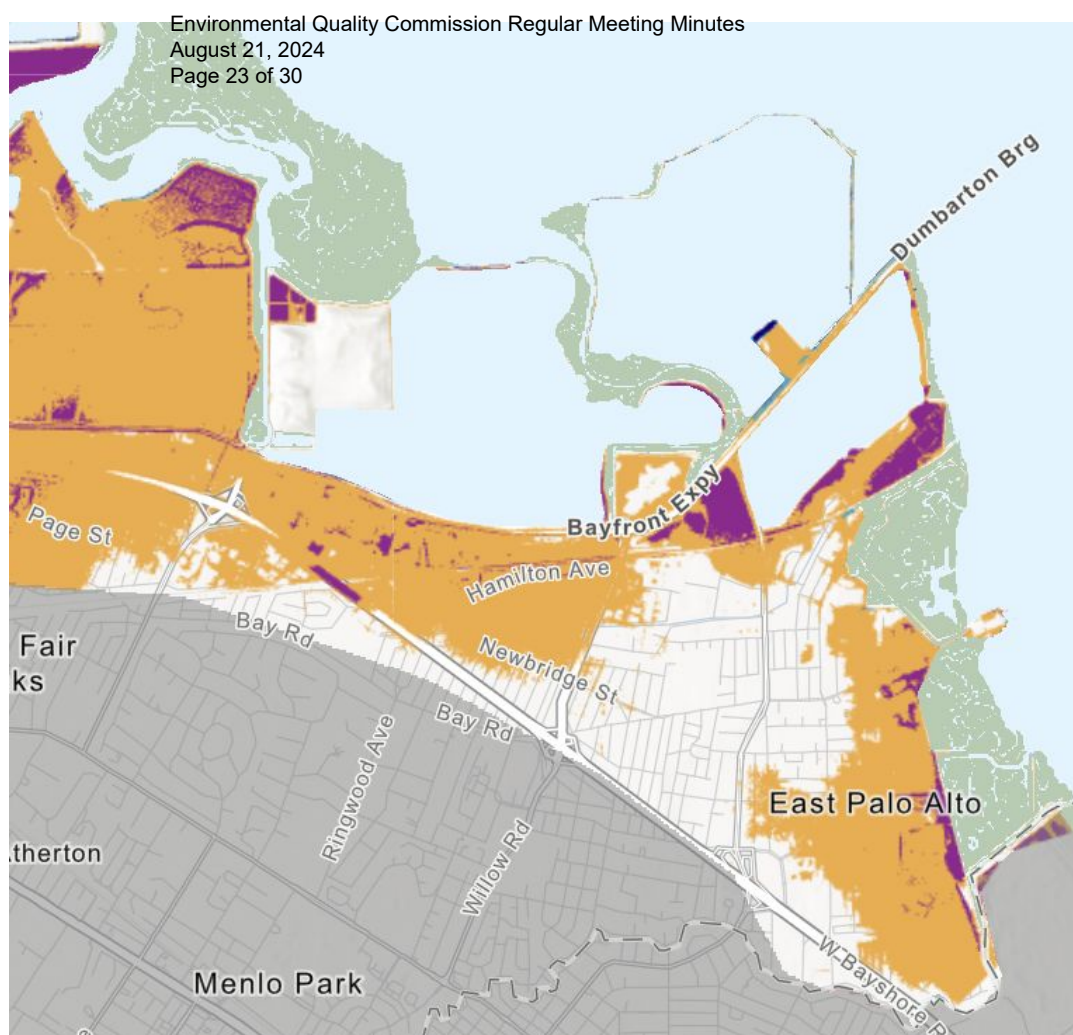


Image: SFEI & Pathways Climate Institute



# Depth to Groundwater Projection, 1 foot of Sea Level Rise

## 12" Sea-Level Rise

12" SLR: Coastal Flooding & Emergent  
Groundwater



12" SLR: Emergent Groundwater



12" SLR: Coastal Flooding (BCDC Adapting to  
Rising Tides)

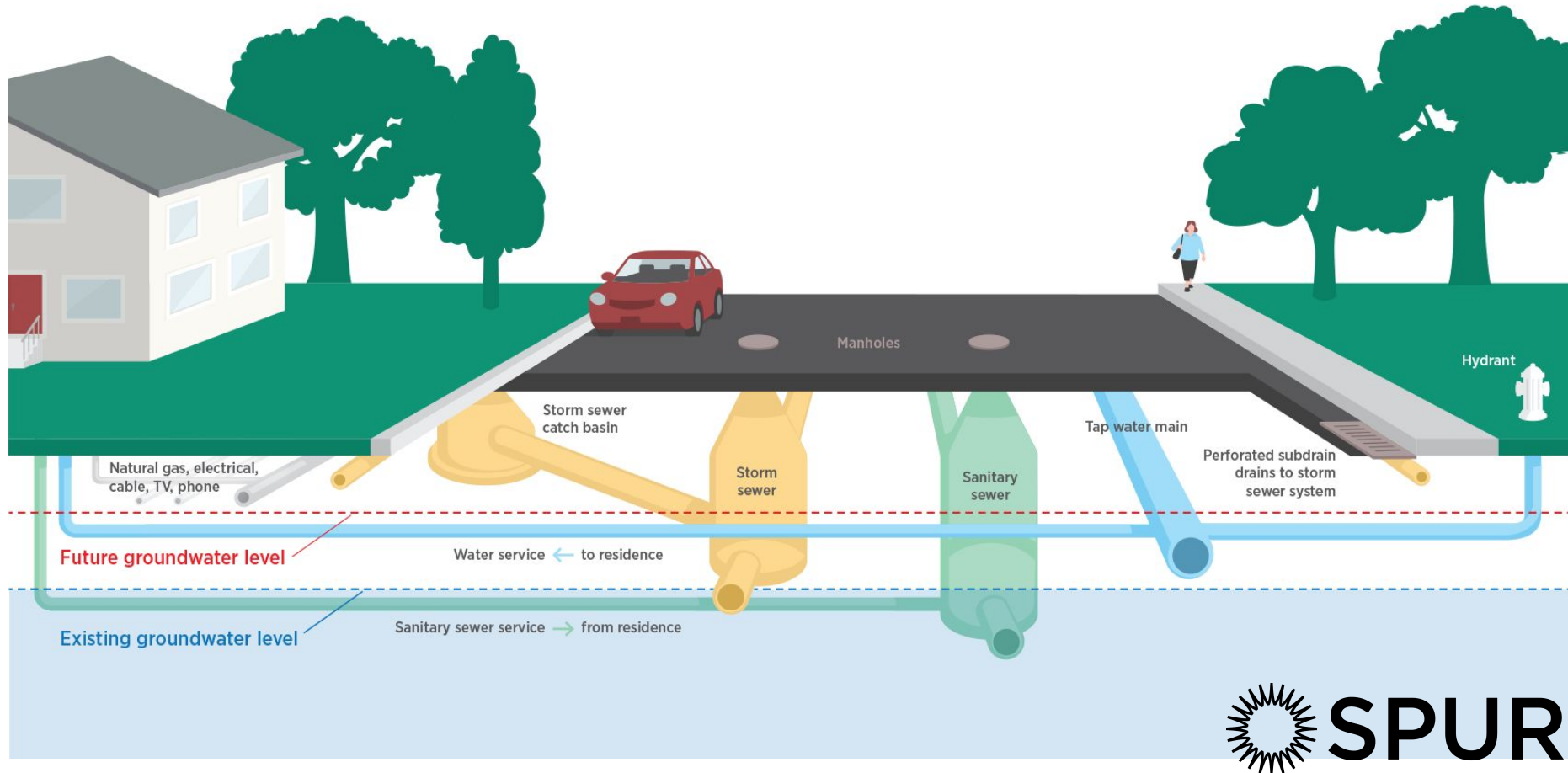


12" SLR: Groundwater Within 6ft of Ground  
Surface

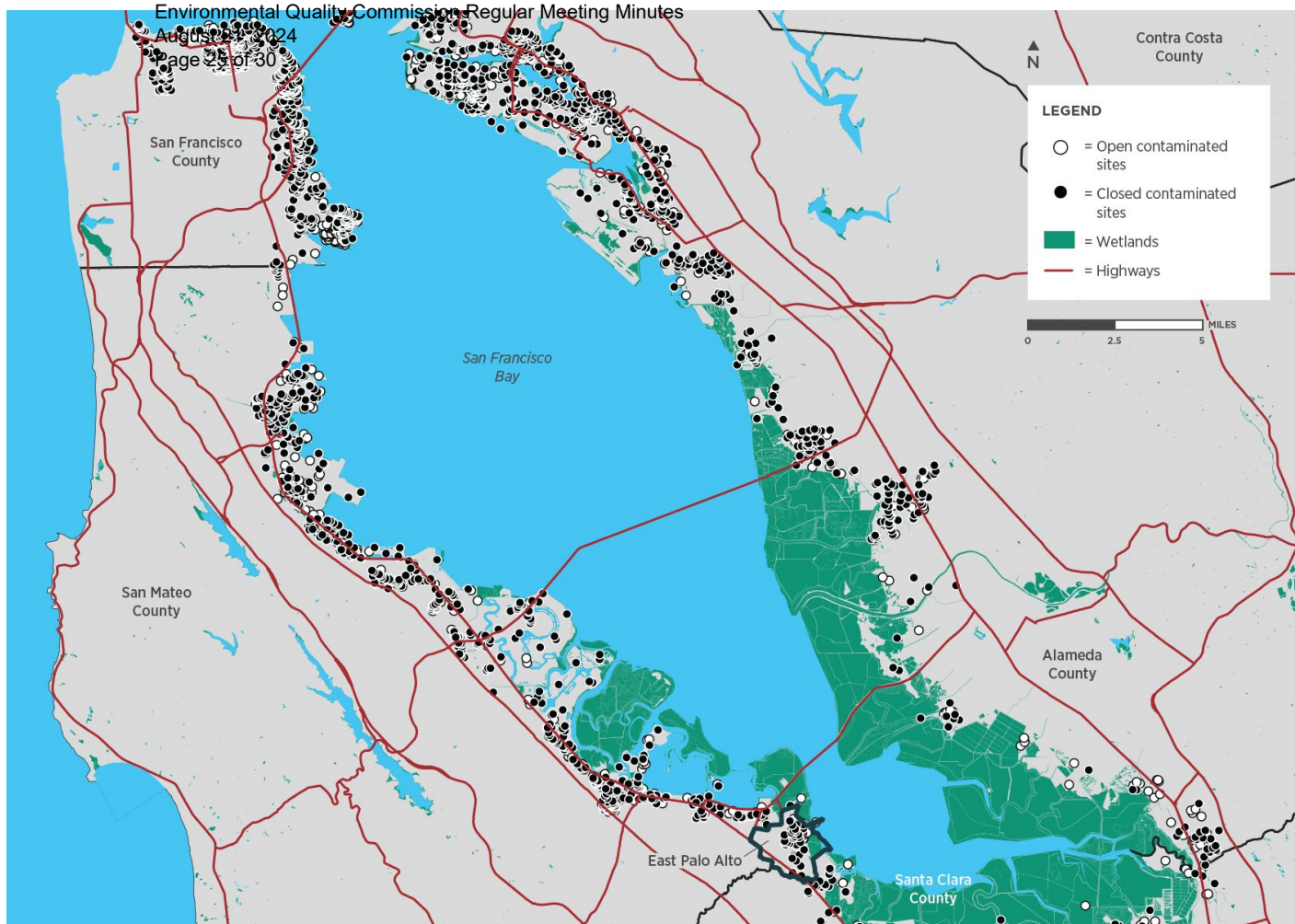


Image: SFEI & Pathways Climate Institute









# Bayshore Contaminated Sites

## Menlo Park Contaminated Sites

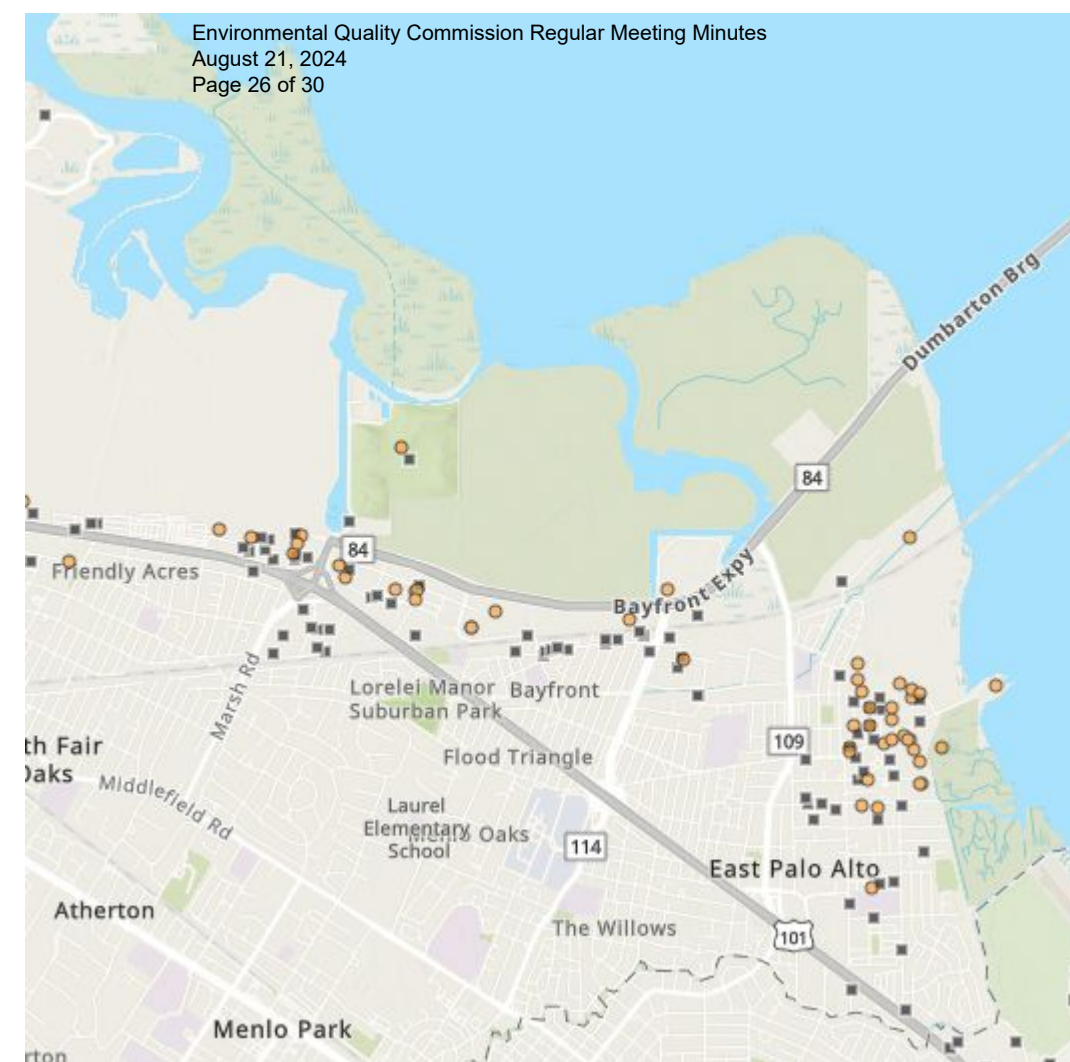


Image: KQED

# Look Out Belows Policy Recommendations

## Recommendation 1

Require all city plans and infrastructure projects to assess the risks of groundwater rise and compound flooding.

## Recommendation 2

Consider adopting Shallow Groundwater Rise Overlay Districts, which specify design and retrofit requirements for underground infrastructure, roadways, and new shoreline development in high-hazard areas.

## Recommendation 3

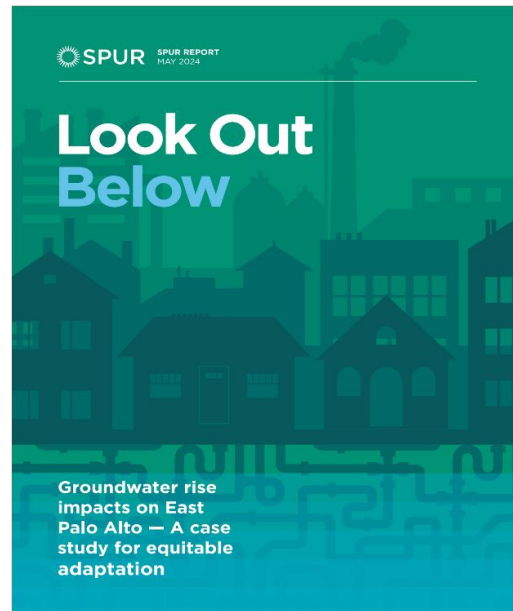
In partnership with impacted communities, update guidance for remediation requirements of shoreline sites to incorporate risks of contaminant mobilization from groundwater and sea level rise.

## Recommendation 4

Update sea level rise and flood maps to reflect shallow groundwater rise so that relevant agencies can begin planning processes to address it.

## Recommendation 5

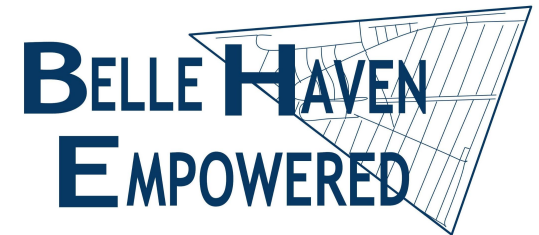
Pursue a variety of innovative funding mechanisms to support groundwater rise research, adaptation planning, and implementation projects.



# Peninsula Accountability for Contamination Team (PACT)

## Mission Statement:

Our mission is to advocate alongside community members to advance **contaminated site clean-up and infrastructure resilience**, addressing the impacts of sea level and groundwater rise in **low-lying areas of the Peninsula**. Through this work, we aim to safeguard the health and well-being of our community for generations to come.



# Partnership Opportunities: SPUR & Menlo Park EQC

- **Citywide climate planning**
  - SPUR working with San Jose on CARP
- **Community & stakeholder engagement, coalition partnerships**
- **Regional, state, & federal funding applications**
  - SPUR has partnered with other cities on federal grants (Climate Pollution Reduction Grant App with South Bay Cities)
- **Document/Policy Review**
  - SPUR has worked with cities on plan and policy development (e.g. Safety Elements, LHMP, CAP, seismic ordinances)
- **Regional leadership and collaboration**
  - Menlo Park can be a regional leader! Work with SPUR on sharing lessons with other municipal leaders
  - **Research partnerships** and policy piloting





# Thank You!

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## Questions?

