



County of Los Angeles  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

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February 3, 2020

TO: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Chair  
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis  
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Supervisor Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor Janice Hahn

FROM: Sachi A. Hamai  
Chief Executive Officer

**REPORT BACK ON THE CREATION OF A YOUTH CLIMATE COMMISSION (ITEM NO. 2, AGENDA OF OCTOBER 15, 2019)**

On October 15, 2019, the Board passed a motion directing the Chief Sustainability Office (CSO), in collaboration with stakeholders, to report back on steps and a framework for establishing a Los Angeles County (County) Youth Climate Commission (Commission). The motion indicated that the Commission should have a total of 25 Commissioners, including five from each supervisorial district, and that it should be representative of the geographic and socioeconomic diversity of the region.

This report outlines the recommended framework for the Commission, including its structure, responsibilities and activities; support that the County must provide to ensure meaningful participation; timeline and budget/staffing needs; and next steps. To develop the framework, the CSO consulted over 30 internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders included County staff that have worked with youth in a similar capacity and were able to advise on best practices, as well as those who have expertise on laws and standards relevant to Commissions and to engaging youth. External stakeholders included staff from organizations focused on youth leadership, environmental conservation and education, and environmental and social justice. A full list of stakeholders consulted is included in Attachment I.

**Commission Structure**

Recommended membership parameters for the Commission are outlined below. These parameters do not address the internal governance of the Commission, such as chairs or committee heads, which should be left to the discretion of the Commission once

established. See Attachment II for a detailed description of the recommended recruitment and application process.

- **Target age range:** It is recommended that Commissioners be recruited and selected from a target age range of approximately 15 to 22 years.
- **Term length:** The recommended term length is two years, in accordance with standard term length for most County Commissions, with the option of renewal for a second term.

### **Commission Responsibilities and Activities**

It is recommended that the Commission's primary responsibility be to offer recommendations, ideas, and advice on County goals, plans, actions, and policies related to climate mitigation and adaptation. To support the Commission in fulfilling this responsibility, County staff should keep the Commission apprised of relevant work and decision points by, for example, offering overviews and regular updates on the implementation of the County's Climate Action Plan and climate-related content in the OurCounty Sustainability Plan (OurCounty) during Commission meetings. There will be three specific occasions each year for which the CSO will seek Commissioner input and/or feedback on climate-related County initiatives: the development of near-term OurCounty priorities and funding strategies, the release of annual updates on OurCounty progress, and the development of sustainability guidance/input for the County legislative agenda.

County staff should identify opportunities for Commissioners to participate, as desired, in additional climate-related County planning or decision-making processes outside of Commission meetings. Commissioners should also have authority to spearhead or participate in optional climate-related activities in the realms of stakeholder outreach and engagement, partnership development, and local project implementation, to the extent that they are aligned with Board policy and priorities.

For the Commission to fulfill its responsibilities, it is recommended that the County convene the Commission for half-day, in-person meetings on weekends once a quarter, and for shorter remote meetings once a month. Additional meetings may take place on a more frequent basis as needed, such as for site visits to climate-related County projects.

Additionally, the Commission will be expected to release an annual report on its activities. This would include a summary of how it fulfilled its primary responsibilities and a description of any optional activities that members conducted in their roles as Commissioners over the year.

### **Support for the Commission**

It will be important to offer stipends to the Commissioners as compensation for the time they dedicate to Commission activities. This is particularly salient to the aim of recruiting a Commission that represents the socioeconomic diversity of the County, because youth from

low-income families might need to dedicate their limited free time to income-generating activities.

Additionally, given the unique nature of a Commission composed of youth, it is important for the County to consider providing various types of support that are not typically offered to Commissioners, including:

- **Orientation Retreat:** To help Commissioners from diverse backgrounds develop a common understanding of climate science and mitigation/adaptation strategies, as well as to develop trusting relationships and a cohesive group identity, the County should organize an orientation retreat to take place shortly after the launch of the Commission.
- **Educational and skill-building opportunities:** To support the positive emotional, cognitive, and overall leadership development of the Commissioners, the County should incorporate educational and skill-building opportunities throughout Commission activities.
- **Youth-centered and accessible activities and materials:** This should include interactive presentations and engaging documents that are tailored to the reading and attention levels of the Commissioners, ample opportunities for peer learning and dialogue with Commission guests, and site visits to locations where Commissioners can observe climate impacts or climate mitigation activities firsthand.
- **Technical advisors and/or mentors:** Commissioners may have limited access to climate scientists or technical experts in their daily lives; therefore, it is recommended that the County identify and recruit professionals in climate-related fields to serve as technical advisors and/or mentors to the Commissioners. These advisors would be expected to respond to inquiries and engage Commissioners in discussion about the implications of proposed activities or recommendations, up to a specified level of commitment (e.g., 12 hours per year).
- **Transportation:** At a minimum, Commissioners should be reimbursed for transportation costs to Commission meetings (e.g., provided transit passes or mileage reimbursement). It is recommended that the County also allocate some transportation funding for on-site visits and partnership development activities (e.g., travel to conferences).
- **Food:** In order to support positive social environments and learning experiences at half-day, in-person Commission meetings, it will be important to offer breakfast and/or lunch to the Commissioners. This is particularly salient for Commissioners representing disadvantaged communities, who may be food insecure.

CSO should seek to identify any additional forms of support that may be valuable by consulting directly with youth prior to the recruitment phase and by getting input from Commission applicants.

**Next Steps**

We plan to provide a budget recommendation on this matter during the 2020-21 Recommended Budget. This will allow recommendations to be made within the context of the overall budget and numerous competing funding priorities and requests.

Thereafter, it is recommended that the Commission be established as soon as practicable, which would require sufficient lead time for recruitment, formal appointment, and onboarding of Commissioners.

Lastly, when a timeline has been finalized, it is recommended that the CSO explore engagement of a short-term educational consultant to lead the development of an educational agenda for the first year of the Commission.

**Conclusion**

The CSO recommends that the County take immediate steps to implement the framework outlined above. Please contact Gary Gero at [ggero@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:ggero@ceo.lacounty.gov) with any questions.

SAH:FAD:TJM  
GG:AF:jg

Attachments

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel

## Stakeholders Consulted

County of Los Angeles staff from the following:

- Chief Executive Office
- County Counsel
- Arts and Culture
- Commission of Child and Family Services
- Los Angeles County Library
- Natural History Museum
- Office of Commission Services
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Health

Staff from the following external organizations:

- Active San Gabriel Valley
- Alliance for Boys and Girls Clubs
- Asian Youth Center
- Boy Scouts of America - LA Chapter
- California State University Dominguez Hills
- City of Los Angeles Mayor's Office of Sustainability
- Communities for a Better Environment
- Conservation Corps of Long Beach
- Day One
- In the Making
- InnerCity Struggle
- LAUSD
- Liberty Hill Foundation
- Pacoima Beautiful
- Prevention Institute
- San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps
- Southeast LA Collaborative (SELA)
- UCLA

**Recommended Recruitment and Selection Process**

1. Referencing input from County staff and stakeholders, CSO will develop application forms and selection process.
  - a. Application to include information on Commissioner expectations, including required dates of in-person attendance (orientation, quarterly meetings).
2. Announcement and application to be disseminated through diverse partners (potentially including County programs, schools, Community Based Organizations, libraries, police departments) to achieve diverse range of applicants.
  - a. Applicants and anyone serving on the Commission should be advised that compensation received from Commission work constitutes income and could impact any public benefits.
3. CSO to host an informational webinar on the Commission goals, expectations, and application process while the application is open.
4. Once application is closed, CSO will audit submissions for completion.
5. Selection panel may include CSO staff, Board staff, and/or outside stakeholders. Their responsibilities will be to:
  - a. Review applications to identify no more than 10 candidates per district to be invited to interviews.
  - b. Conduct brief (20 min) interviews by phone, skype, or other remote technology.
  - c. Identify five candidates per district to be recommended to the Board.
6. Selection criteria will take the following into consideration: geographic and socioeconomic diversity, diverse institutional affiliation, previous personal experience or engagement with climate or related issues, cognitive and emotional maturity, collaboration skills, candidate commitment to regulations/participation policies.
7. CSO will submit a list of recommended individuals to the Board, which will announce Commissioner appointments.