



**HEALTH, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA
TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2025**

The Health, Social and Environmental Affairs Committee will conduct a meeting on Tuesday, July 15, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. at Busby Street Community Center, 1735 Busby Street, Columbia, SC 29203. Members of the public may view the meeting online at www.columbiasc.gov. Please contact the City Clerk's Office at (803)545-3045 or cityclerk@columbiasc.gov if you have questions regarding this meeting.

The Honorable Aditi Bussells, Chair

The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr., District II ▪ The Honorable Tyler D. Bailey, At-Large

Prior to entering the meeting, please silence all electronic communication devices. All presenters are asked to speak directly into the microphone for recording purposes.

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of May 27, 2025 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

PRESENTATIONS

2. EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Update – Mr. Jory Fleming, CPRG Planning Grant Manager; Mr. Gregory Spouse, Director of Research, Planning, and Development; and Ms. Jocelyn Falkenstine, CPRG Implementation Grant Manager/ Central Midlands Council of Governments
3. Beat the Heat, Plant a Tree: The Sequel – Mr. Brian Neiger, Superintendent, Forestry and Beautification
4. Bee City USA Initiative – Ms. Mary Pat Baldauf, Sustainability Facilitator

ADJOURNMENT



MEETING DATE: July 15, 2025

DEPARTMENT: City Clerk

FROM: *Erika Hammond, City Clerk*

SUBJECT: Approval of May 27, 2025 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

FUNDING SOURCE & ORIGINAL BUDGET:

ATTACHMENTS:

- **#a:** HSEAC_MN_052725 (DOCX)



**HEALTH, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

The Health, Social and Environmental Affairs Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Second Floor, Columbia, SC 29201. The Honorable Aditi Bussells, Chair called the meeting order at 1:01 p.m. and the following members were present:

| Attendee Name | Title | Status |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Aditi Bussells | Chair | Present |
| Edward H. McDowell | Member | Present |
| Tyler D. Bailey | Member | Present |

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of April 22, 2025 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Bailey, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the April 22, 2025 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes.

PRESENTATIONS

2. Climate Protection Action Committee Update - Mr. Bob Petriulus, Chair, Climate Protection Action Committee – *Received as information.*

Mr. Bob Petrulis, Chair/ Climate Protection Action Committee (CPAC) reported that all CPAC seats are now filled, with Secretary Gretchen Lambert's term ending this year. CPAC continues to support the City's 2036 clean energy goal by tracking projects like the Canal Hydro Plant renovation, a proposed solar farm, city building energy audits, and methane capture. The committee hosted a Climate Action Fair with 300–500 attendees and is developing a public dashboard. CPAC also awarded 17 Bloomberg Youth Climate Leadership grants and advocated for updating the City's climate plan.

There was discussion about prioritizing benchmarks, LEED certification renewal, the smart growth plan, and Bee Cities.



**HEALTH, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
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COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

3. Impact of Delivery Robots - Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Planning and Development Services – *Received as information.*

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Planning and Development Services gave an overview of autonomous delivery devices, which typically operate on sidewalks rather than roadways. She noted one active operator, Starship Technologies via GrubHub at USC and reviewed regulatory considerations, including weight, speed, automation level, right-of-way usage, and local control.

Ms. Kelly Smith, Business License Administrator stated that the only current requirement is a business license and the robots are restricted to campus delivery.

Mr. Clete Myers, USC Dining Services explained that the robots are maintained and charged on campus, with human staff managing orders. The devices are programmed to avoid pedestrians, navigate peak times like class changes, and they contribute to campus job creation.

There was discussion about broader regulatory needs, insurance requirements, concerns about competitive fairness, delivery radius, programming with GPS, whether each unit needs a decal, the recording capabilities of onboard cameras, weight of robots, damages to robots, a map of the service areas, and scheduling an in-person demo.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC, CPM
City Clerk



MEETING DATE: July 15, 2025

DEPARTMENT: City Clerk

FROM: *Erika Hammond, City Clerk*

SUBJECT: EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Update – Mr. Jory Fleming, CPRG Planning Grant Manager; Mr. Gregory Spouse, Director of Research, Planning, and Development; and Ms. Jocelyn Falkenstine, CPRG Implementation Grant Manager/ Central Midlands Council of Governments

FUNDING SOURCE & ORIGINAL BUDGET:

ATTACHMENTS:

- **#a:** EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Update__presentation (PDF)

EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Update



Fund for Municipal Solar + Smart Surfaces (S3) Projects in the Midlands of South Carolina

Award: \$8,739,181

Timeframe: November 2024 >>
November 2029

Awardee: Central Midlands
COG, in partnership with local
municipalities

Projects: 8 in Phase 1 (next
slide>>)

****Grant remains active and
obligated****



Smart Surface Examples

Reflective/Cool Roofs



Green Roofs



Porous & Permeable
Pavements



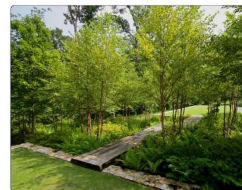
Solar Photovoltaics



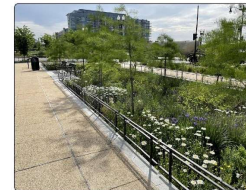
Reflective/Cool
Pavements



Trees



Green Stormwater
Infrastructure



Zero & Negative-
Carbon Concrete



Estimated Expenditures by Project

| Partner | Type/Desc | IRS Direct Pay @ 40% | S3 Fund Tier | S3 Fund | Municipality Portion Remaining |
|---|--|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| City of Newberry | Urban Tree Canopy, 500 trees @ \$285 | N/A | 2+3 | \$85,500 | \$57,000 |
| City of Columbia Public Works | Cool Pavements Pilots, 8.8MM ft ² @ +\$0.30 | N/A | 2+3 | \$1,584,000 | \$1,060,000 |
| Columbia Metro WWTP (Columbia Water, Cayce Utilities, East Richland Utilities, Richland County Utilities) | 2 MW Solar @ \$5 MM estimate | \$2,000,000 | 2+3 | \$1,800,000 | \$1,200,000 |
| Kershaw County WWTP | 0.5 MW Solar @ \$2.15/watt | \$430,000 | 3 | \$361,200 | \$283,800 |
| Town of Batesburg-Leesville WWTP | 0.5 MW Solar @ \$2.15/watt | \$430,000 | 2+3 | \$387,000 | \$258,000 |
| Saluda County Solar | 0.25 MW Solar @ \$2.15/watt | \$215,000 | 2+3 | \$193,500 | \$129,000 |
| Fairfield County Solar | 0.25 MW Solar @ \$2.15/watt | \$215,000 | 2+3 | \$193,500 | \$129,000 |
| Eastover Solar | 0.08 MW Solar @ \$293,000 estimate | \$117,200 | 2+3 | \$105,480 | \$70,320 |
| Total | | \$3,407,200 | | \$4,710,180 | \$3,187,120 |

Estimated Expenditure

| Partner | Type/Desc | IRS Direct Pay @ 40% | S3 Fund Tier | S3 Fund | Municipality Portion Remaining | S3 Fund (W/o Tax Credit) | Municipality Remaining Portion (W/o Tax Credit) |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Columbia Metro WWTP (Columbia Water, Cayce Utilities, East Richland Utilities, Richland County Utilities) | 2 MW Solar @ \$5 MM estimate | \$2,000,000 | 2+3 | \$1,800,000 | \$1,200,000 | \$3,000,000 | \$2,000,000 |

Economic Value

- 1) Project would generate large savings on electric costs to power the facility. Simple rate of return estimated at ~10 years [NREL simple model]
- 2) Expected useful life of 30+ years leads to a long-term investment at an important facility
- 3) Maximizes the leverage available from obligated federal grant funds

Map



Partnership Model

The following partners signed an MOU with no financial commitment and potential to withdrawal at any time to jointly explore the project and issue an RFP.

- Columbia Water
- Richland County
- East Richland Utilities
- City of Cayce Utilities

The intention is for project partners to view RFP submissions, and then decide on an expanded intergovernmental agreement to co-invest and share “profits” [i.e., avoided electricity payments] proportionately.

Tax Credit Implications

The budget bill passed by Congress and signed July 4th, 2025 eliminates the solar investment tax credit (ITC) that was planned to cover 40% of project costs.

- 1) ITC remains available IF projects “begin construction” by July 4th, 2026
- 2) New “foreign entity of concern” requirements *may* make the credit impracticable, even if it is available. CMCOG is evaluating policy implications against our grant terms and conditions (which require Build America, Buy America and may automatically avoid new FEOC rules)
- 3) Policy barriers imposed by Congress will probably impact the commercial solar sector in the next ~6 months, which may make initial project estimates inaccurate.

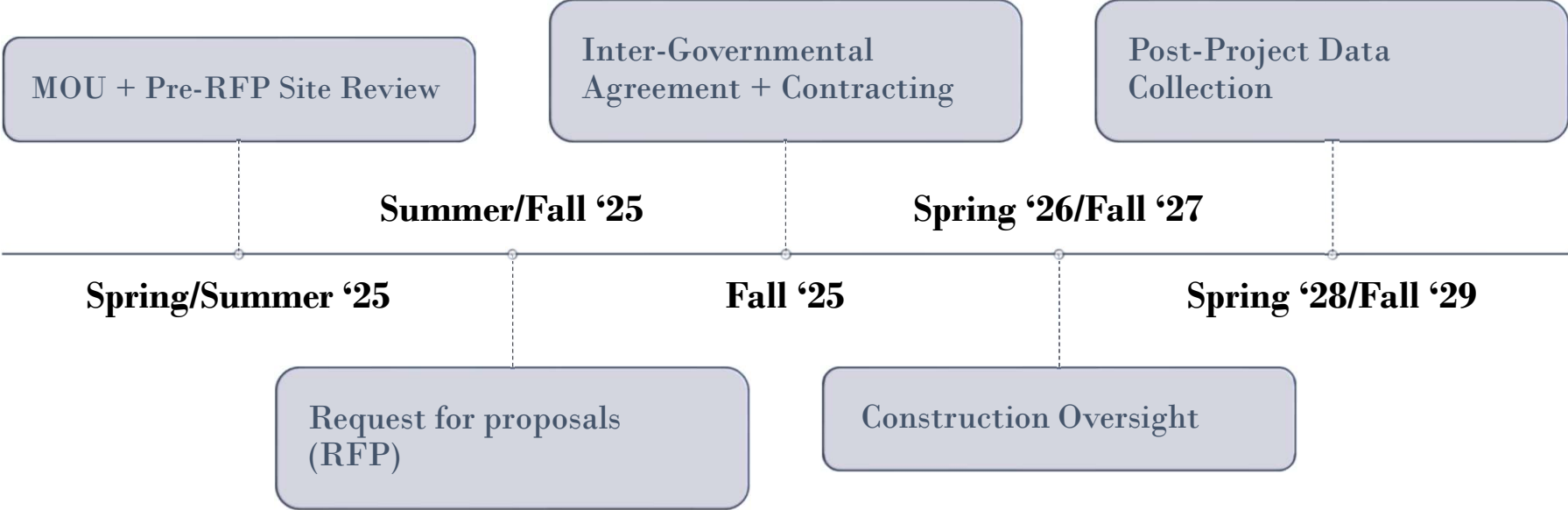
****In any case, the first step remains to issue an RFP and evaluate the project’s return on investment and benefits from bid submissions.****

Project Benefits

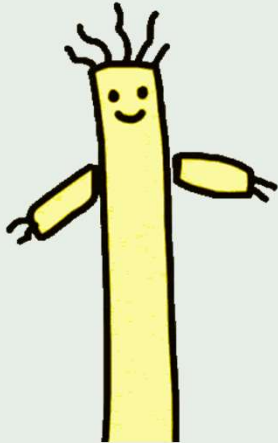
- **Economic:** project will reduce electricity bills at a high usage site for 30+ years
- **Community:** 15% of project's energy savings will benefit local communities (e.g., water utility assistance fund)
- **Health:** reduced air pollution
- **Land:** opportunity for native plants and pollinator habitat underneath solar panels [100% grant funded]



Estimated Project Timeline



Thank You



Jocelyn Falkenstine
jfalkenstine@centralmidlands.org

Jory Fleming
jfleming@centralmidlands.org

Gregory Sprouse
gsprouse@centralmidlands.org



MEETING DATE: July 15, 2025

DEPARTMENT: City Clerk

FROM: *Erika Hammond, City Clerk*

SUBJECT: **Beat the Heat, Plant a Tree: The Sequel – Mr. Brian Neiger, Superintendent, Forestry and Beautification**

FUNDING SOURCE & ORIGINAL BUDGET:

ATTACHMENTS:

- **#a:** Beat the Heat_ Columbia Green Partnerships_presentation (PDF)

City of Columbia

Continued Partnership with Columbia Green

*On the Beat the Heat – Plant a Tree “**the Sequel**”*

The best time to plant a tree is 30 years ago; the second-best time is now.



Original Beat the Heat Grant Overview

- **Grant Applicant**
 - City of Columbia
 - Columbia Green
- **Funding:**
- \$295,000 USDA via Arbor Day Foundation supported by the Inflation Reduction Act
- **Program/Goals:**
 - 5-Year Goal:
 - 1,500 in Justice40 neighborhoods
 - 250 citywide via Columbia Green
 - 20 quarterly events:
 - Seeking 90 applicants per quarterly event
 - Lunch and education for community outreach

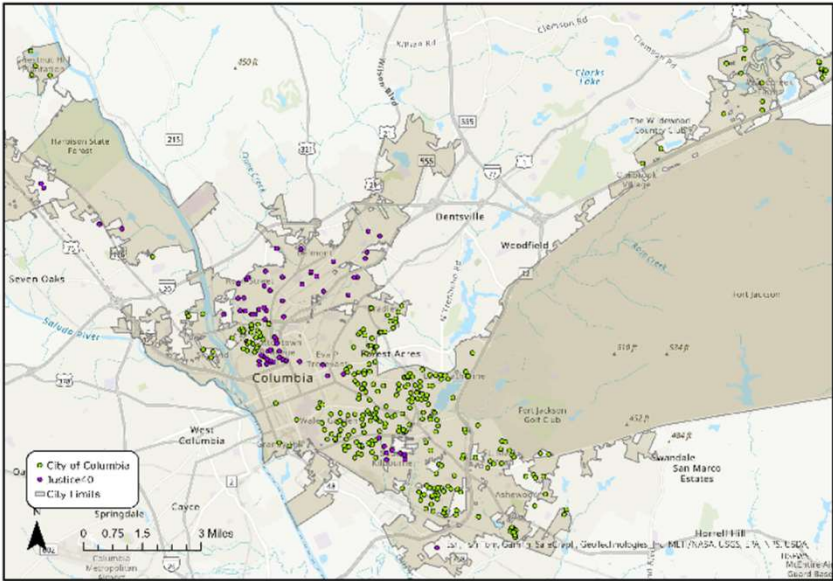




Beat the Heat Program Accomplishments

- **Community Demand:**
 - Over 1,000 tree requests in three educational and outreach sessions
 - 835 from outside grant coverage areas
- **Columbia Green Response:**
 - Overwhelming response
 - 835 trees
 - Additional Support:
 - \$25,000 grants from International Paper
 - \$61,200 in private donations
- **Partnership Milestone:**
 - 990 trees delivered in 6 months vs. 5-year projection
 - \$43,100 of the federal grant money spent
- **Grant cancelled in February of 2025 with only 3 quarterly events**

Beat the Heat - Plant a Tree
City of Columbia Applications





Beat the Heat – Plant a Tree, “the Sequel” Proposed Plan

- Columbia Green presented a proposal to the City to continue the program
- **Columbia Green Commitment:**
 - Administer the program
 - Manage the application portals
 - Host quarterly educational and outreach events
 - Light refreshments
 - Pursue partnerships with other counties/municipalities
 - Actively seek additional grant funding for trees
 - Continue private fundraising through donations
 - Continue to develop educational materials





Beat the Heat – Plant a Tree, “the Sequel” Proposed Plan

- **City of Columbia Responsibilities**
 - Provide a venue for a quarterly educational and outreach event
 - Printing educational materials
 - Approximately \$3000
 - Public Relations support
 - Logistical support for
 - Tree orders
 - Receipts
 - Delivery coordination within city limits
 - Tree delivery to property owners inside city limits
 - Approximately \$4500 (Staff time and vehicle usage)
- Current funding levels can absorb the approximately \$7500 costs associated with this proposal



Questions



MEETING DATE: July 15, 2025

DEPARTMENT: City Clerk

FROM: *Erika Hammond, City Clerk*

SUBJECT: **Bee City USA Initiative – Ms. Mary Pat Baldauf,
Sustainability Facilitator**

**FUNDING SOURCE &
ORIGINAL BUDGET:**

ATTACHMENTS:

- **#a:** Bee_City_Presentation (PDF)

City of Columbia

CPAC Driven

Bee City USA Initiative

Making the world safer for pollinators one city at a time.



Bee City USA Overview

- **Significance of the Initiative:**
 - Pollinators are essential to food systems and healthy ecosystems
 - Support biodiversity, sustainability, and climate resilience
- **Program Purpose:**
 - Raise awareness and support for pollinator protection
 - Expand pollinator plantings on City properties
 - Increase community engagement
- **Program Goals:**
 - Conserve native pollinators
 - Thoughtful land management practice
 - Integrate pollinator friendly policies
 - Maintain Bee City USA commitments as outlined in the resolution





Bee City USA – Action Plan

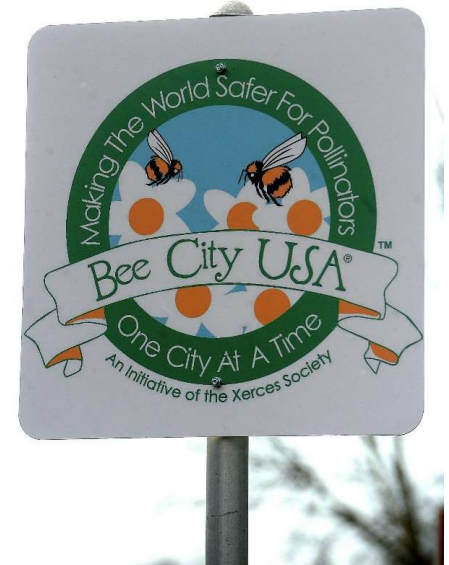
- **Designate a Sponsor and Liaison:**
 - **Sponsor:** Climate Protection Action Committee (CPAC)
 - **Liaison:** City’s Sustainability Facilitator
- **Form a Committee:**
 - Minimum of five internal and external members
 - **Chair:** CPAC Appointee
 - **Committee:** Forestry and Beautification, Parks and Rec, CPAC, Columbia Green
 - Responsible for ensuring compliance with the Bee City USA Resolution
 - Establish a regular public meeting schedule
 - Coordinate efforts with Columbia Green





Bee City USA – Committee Responsibilities

- **Committee Responsibilities:**
 - **Bee City USA Signage**
 - At minimum one Bee City USA sign in a prominent location
 - **Host an Annual Event**
 - Integrate pollinator conservation into an existing City event
 - In conjunction with Beat the Heat “the Sequel”
 - **Create a Dedicated Webpage**
 - Attach a Bee City USA section to the CPAC website
 - Include the resolution, updates, and annual reports
 - **Promote Native Plantings and Thoughtful Land Management**
 - Reduce pesticide use
 - Inventory the City’s suitable properties for pollinator-friendly plantings
 - Provide a list of recommended native plant species





Bee City USA – City Council and Staff Action and Citywide Benefits

- **City Council Action:**
 - **Resolution**
 - **Align with City Planning**
 - Incorporate pollinator protection into Columbia Compass: Envision 2036
- **Staff Action**
 - **Initial Application**
 - \$500 fee
 - **Apply for Renewal**
 - Each February apply for renewal of the City’s designation
 - Submit application, and the previous year’s Bee City USA report
 - \$500 renewal fee
- **City Benefits:**
 - Help ensure the health of essential pollinators
 - Promote safe pest management
 - Heighten community awareness of biological diversity



Making the world safer for pollinators one city at a time.

Questions