

Davis 2020 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
Technical Advisory Committee
Member Biography and Climate Action Success Statements

Agriculture, Urban Forest, Open Space and Habitat

Arnold Bloom, UC Davis Professor of Plant Physiology

I have authored textbooks on Plant Physiology, Plant Mineral Nutrition, and Global Climate Change and led the effort funded by the National Science Foundation to develop online content about Climate Change for undergraduates in the United States. The multi-media book *Climate Change: Causes, Consequences, and Solutions*, which is available for free at <https://indd.adobe.com/view/a0b0bdf4-20c3-4dd0-8408-716a7ba03f03>, derives from a general education course that I have offered for the past two decades and that has an annual enrollment of over two hundred students.

Greg McPherson, Forester/Researcher, USDA Forest Service (retired)

Greg McPherson is a retired Research Forester with the USDA Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Research Station located in Davis, CA. His team has measured and modeled tree growth and the monetary value of nature's services in cities across the U.S. His research informs urban forest management and fuels advocacy for tree planting and stewardship.

Success means participation in a process that engages the public and builds mechanisms for action and accountability to reach agreed-upon goals.

Kate Scow, UC Davis Professor of Soil Science and Soil Microbial Ecologist, Department of Land, Air, Water Resources

Kate Scow is Distinguished Professor of Soil Science and Microbial Ecology in the Department of Land, Air and Water Resources at UC Davis since 1989. She is Chair of the International Agricultural Development graduate group and was Director of the Russell Ranch Sustainable Agriculture Facility. Scow's [research program](#) investigates relationships between soil microbial diversity and critical soil functions: biogeochemical cycling, soil structure, organic matter and carbon sequestration, as well as connections between soil biology and the rapidly evolving concept of soil health. Other work includes how indigenous microbial communities can help restore polluted ecosystems and design of low-cost treatment systems to promote bioremediation.

Success means realistic, not oversold, solutions that raise awareness, combined with an emphasis on the larger scale, policy-based solutions to put pressure on reduction of fossil fuel emissions.

Energy, Waste and Water Efficiency

Nathan Bengtsson, PG&E Climate Resilience Program

Nathan Bengtsson has spent the last three years building out PG&E's climate resilience and adaptation program with particular focus on integrating climate change considerations into PG&E decision-making. Nathan is currently leading the community engagement element of PG&E's multi-year, territory-wide Climate Vulnerability Assessment. Nathan is an expert in California adaptation policy, the intersection of critical infrastructure, climate

hazards, and community impacts, and the internal workings of PG&E. As a native Northern Californian and new Sacramento resident, Nathan is excited to lend his experience to the City of Davis' adaptation efforts.

Successful climate action planning in the Davis context means:

- Davis decision-makers have clarity about the nature, severity, and general timing of the climate-hazards that will impact Davis, information which will eventually form the basis of a prioritized adaptation plan
- Davis decision-makers' technical understanding of climate impacts is supplemented with information from a diverse, representative cross-section of community-members about what these impacts mean to them, and how existing community adaptive capacity will mitigate climate impacts (or not).
- City of Davis climate action and adaptation planning explicitly considers the regional context, pursues "no-regrets" policies that tie to the regional context, and avoids maladaptive solutions (e.g., diesel backup generation and associated emissions) whenever possible.

Ben Finkelor, Director, UC Davis Energy and Efficiency Institute

Benjamin Finkelor is Executive Director of the UC Davis Energy and Efficiency Institute. Prior to joining the EEI, he served in a variety of roles within the clean technology sector, including director of business development for Sierra Energy, interim executive director for CleanStart (a Sacramento-based business incubator supporting local clean energy technology ventures and entrepreneurs), and as a cleantech analyst for the private equity arm of the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). Every Winter Ben teaches a Sustainable Energy Industry Immersion course at the UC Davis Graduate School of Management, where he received his MBA and studied Technology Management and Management of Innovation.

In my role at the University, I seek to build partnerships to accelerate the development, demonstration, and deployment of sustainable energy solutions. Partnering with a leading municipality like Davis would be a great way to advance energy solutions that help mitigate and adapt to climate change. As a long-time resident of Davis, I'd personally like to see our city lead in such efforts. Success from my perspective would come in the form of R&D and demonstration projects, large-scale deployment of solutions, and local and regional businesses that expand to support scaling of those solutions.

Kristin George Bagdanov, Building Decarbonization Coalition

Kristin George Bagdanov is an associate with the Building Decarbonization Coalition, where she works on the public engagement campaign, [The Switch Is On](#), to educate consumers about the climate and health benefits of residential electrification. She is also a PhD candidate in the English department at UC Davis, where she is completing a dissertation on the relationship between energy transitions, social movements, and cultural production. At UC Davis, she teaches courses on environmental literature and co-organizes an interdisciplinary working group on the Green New Deal.

I would like to see Davis continue to advance its commitments to building electrification as a key pathway to reaching carbon neutrality. I would also like to ensure that social justice and equity are centered in discussions to ensure that all Davis residents, regardless of income or property ownership, have access to living spaces that are healthy for themselves and the community.

Meena Venkatraman, UC Davis Energy Conservation Office

Meena is a Masters student in the Energy Graduate Group at UC Davis. She also works as a graduate student researcher for the Energy Conservation Office, helping to implement energy-saving projects in buildings around campus. Meena enjoys conducting interdisciplinary research at the intersection of engineering and policy, with a particular focus on building energy efficiency and the transition to renewable energy.

Success means planning that accounts for diverse perspectives from the beginning, and puts Davis on track to achieve or even surpass the climate action goals set by California and the City, so that Davis can act as an example for other cities.

Kevin Robert Perry, Principal, Urban Rain Design, Inc., Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Design

Kevin Robert Perry is an internationally recognized leader in successfully integrating stormwater management with high-quality urban design. For nearly two decades, Kevin has worked on over 90 green infrastructure projects throughout North America. He has received multiple national and regional awards for his work in green infrastructure and was elevated as a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2017. In 2012, Kevin launched his design studio, Urban Rain Design, which aims to provide comprehensive green infrastructure visioning, planning, and design strategies to communities across the United States. Kevin Robert Perry received his bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture in 1996 at the University of California, Davis. Kevin has now come full circle and regularly teaches advanced studio courses in green infrastructure at the UC Davis Landscape Architecture Department. He also founded the California Student Leadership in Green Infrastructure; a volunteer student group at UC Davis and other California universities that designs, constructs, and provides advocacy for small-scale Tactical Green Infrastructure projects throughout California.

To me Davis is so well-poised to not just look at planning for climate action but identifying immediate points of action and methods of implementation. Within our community, we have the unique amenity of UC Davis as a highly ranked research university and a model for sustainability. We also have an engaged city government and citizenry who cares deeply about resiliency and environmental stewardship throughout Davis and beyond. I would like to see our Climate Action Planning effort harness this unique Davis energy to provide both fast-paced, but bold and measurable climate change mitigation strategies that achieve multiple benefits.

Local/Regional Planning and Sustainability, Financial and Implementation Approaches

Erik de Kok, Program Manager for Planning and Community, California Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Erik de Kok has over 20 years of public, private and non-profit sector planning and community development experience. He currently serves as Program Manager for Planning and Community development at the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), where he leads policy development and local and regional planning guidance in furtherance of the State's planning priorities and climate goals. Prior to joining OPR, he worked as a senior project manager for seven years with Ascent Environmental Inc., where he developed and lead much of the firm's work on climate action and adaptation planning. He also served as a public-sector planner for nine years at the City of Sacramento, where he led preparation of the City's first climate action plans in 2010-2012.

I have worked on several projects in Davis in recent years in a consulting role, including work focused on climate action and sustainability in the City's planning and development work. I am familiar with the City's original CAAP and various related implementation efforts, as well as other efforts underway in greater Yolo County to take action on climate at the local to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to climate change. Davis has always been a leader and early-adopter in sustainability and climate action efforts, and I see this CAAP update as an opportunity for the City and its community stakeholders to continue to lead by example and establish a model for other cities to follow.

Camille Kirk, Director of Sustainability and Campus Sustainability Planner, UC Davis Office of Sustainability

Camille Kirk leads the UC Davis [Sustainability](#) program, and maintains the campus Climate Action Plan and Drought Response and Water Action Plan, among other planning initiatives that provide vision, direction and support for sustainability efforts across UC Davis. The Sustainability office is working in collaborative partnership with UC Davis Global Affairs and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion offices to complete a [Voluntary University Review](#) under the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Beyond the campus, Camille works on regional water supply and management efforts, as well as resiliency and adaptation planning. She serves on a number of regional and national boards, steering committees, and task forces, including the [Woodland-Davis Clean Water Agency](#), the [Yolo Subbasin Groundwater Agency](#), the Yolo County Climate Compact, the [Capital Regional Climate Readiness Collaborative Steering Committee](#), the [University of California Carbon Offset Project](#) and Carbon Abatement Technical Committee, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System ([STARS](#)) [Steering Committee](#), The Climate Registry's [Net Zero Advisory Committee](#), and the [Universitas 21](#) Sustainability Community of Practice.

We have such formidable power here in Davis with our location in Yolo County, a history of collaborative and innovative approaches to big problems, and our proximity to the research powerhouse of UC Davis. We also have real challenges with income inequality, vulnerable community members, increased heat impacts from climate change, and fairly typical western U.S. growth and land use patterns, to name a few. Our climate action planning process needs to graciously build on our sources of power, and fully acknowledge and grapple with our challenges. To me, successful climate action planning for Davis would: a) couple equity, inclusion, and climate justice with resiliency planning; b) reclaim a leadership role for the city in sustainability and climate action innovation; c) reduce GHG emissions while investing in our city and regional infrastructure; and d) deeply engage our citizens in a lasting fashion.

Social Equity and Environmental Justice, Health and Food Security

Bernadette Austin, Acting Director, UC Davis Center for Regional Change

As Acting Director of the UC Davis Center for Regional Change, Bernadette Austin works to build bridges across disciplines and support research that is community-engaged, policy-oriented, and equity-focused. The Center's goal is to support the building of healthy, equitable, prosperous, and sustainable regions in California and beyond.

A successful climate action plan will not only take into account community input on the plan. It will also result in actionable items as well as documents that are useful to community leaders and stakeholders outside of the City of Davis.

Lucia Kaiser, UC Davis Nutrition Department, Emerita

With more than 25 years of work experience in public health nutrition, including government food assistance and extension programs, I have a doctoral degree from UC Davis in nutrition, and am a registered dietitian. My expertise includes obesity and nutrition-related chronic diseases; food security; and cultural food choices of Latin American and ethnically diverse audiences. Since my retirement in 2016, I have volunteered in Yolo County programs to promote adult literacy (Yolo Reads), environmental education (Yolo Basin Foundation), positive youth development (Girl Scouts), and voter registration (League of Women Voters).

My hope is that Davis will recover from the pandemic and recession with a strengthened commitment to designing a healthy food system and community for all residents, while achieving renewable energy, waste reduction, water conservation, and other sustainability goals.

Tessa Smith, Yolo County Mental Health Outreach Specialist, and Co-Chair, Resilient Yolo

Tessa Smith works for Yolo County HHS in the Mental Health Services Act Unit. She serves in a dual capacity as a Strategic Plan Objective Lead tasked with developing and implementing programming addressing systemic inequities and advancing racial equity initiatives. Tessa is also the Mental Health Prevention and Early Intervention Specialist, providing training and educational programming on Mental Illness and Suicide Prevention. In January of this year Tessa was elected Co-Chair of Resilient Yolo, a community-based organization dedicated to the prevention and reduction of Adverse Childhood Experiences and Adverse Community Environments through the provision of trauma-informed care education and programming.

The commitment on the part of the City of Davis to reduce its carbon footprint and emissions, to educate the community and invite its participation in this process, and to plan for the equitable distribution of resources in the event of crisis has all the earmarks of successful climate action planning.

Transportation

Giovanni Circella, Honda Distinguished Scholar for New Mobility Studies and the UC Davis Director, 3 Revolutions Future Mobility Program

Dr. Circella's interests include travel behavior, emerging mobility services, travel demand modeling and travel survey methods. His recent research has focused on the impacts of ICT, shared mobility, micromobility and vehicle automation on travel behavior and auto ownership, the evolving lifestyles and mobility patterns of various population segments (e.g. "millennials") in various regions of the U.S., Europe, South America and the Middle East, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on transportation. Giovanni is the Chair of the Standing Committee on ICT and Transportation (AEP35) of the Transportation Research Board and a member of the Executive Board of the International Association for Travel Behaviour Research (IATBR).

In terms of what success in climate action planning in the Davis means to me, there could be many things. Starting from transportation (my field of expertise), we need to promote sustainable forms of transportation, including the promotion of active travel, walking and bicycling and even more travel multimodality (even beyond what the current levels for Davis are) also through harvesting the benefits from technology, new forms of app-based mobility, integration of transportation modes, real-time booking features, and increase in efficiency of transportation, to ensure long-term shifts in travel behavior, a drastic reduction in GHG emissions as well as addressing land use issues, land scarcity and the consumption of farmland and natural resources. More broadly, the actions needed not only cover transportation, but also land use - transportation coordination, urban and building design, green areas, energy efficiency, and strong actions aimed at the reduction of the use of water and energy, waste management and a strong limitation to the use (or abuse) of plastic with all related environmental issues associated with it (which go well beyond the problem of GHG emissions).

Mollie D'Agostino, Policy Director, UC Davis Policy Institute for Energy, Environment, and the Economy, and Institute of Transportation Studies

Jeffrey Flynn, General Manager, UC Davis Unitrans

Jeff Flynn has served in various roles in public transportation for 20 years, starting as a part-time bus driver here in Davis at Unitrans and now serving as General Manager for Unitrans, the City of Davis and the University of California-Davis' public transit agency. Learning about public transit as a college student in Davis taught Jeff about the importance that reducing single occupancy motorized transportation trips has on our local and global environment. Jeff's focus in Davis includes maintaining and improving local public transit and starting Unitrans' transition to an all battery electric bus fleet with six buses expected by the end of 2021.

For me, success in Davis means coordinating and implementing holistic plans across all sectors of life that reduce our carbon footprint and serving as a sustainable model for communities in the US and abroad.

Susan Handy, Director, National Center for Sustainable Transportation, Bicycling Plus Research Collaborative

Susan Handy is a Professor of Environmental Science and Policy and Director of the National Center for Sustainable Transportation at the University of California, Davis, where she also chairs the graduate program in Transportation Technology and Policy. Her research focuses on the intersection between transportation and land use. Recent projects focus on bicycling as a mode of transportation and strategies for reducing automobile dependence.

Davis is the little city that could, as exemplified by the Healthy Together initiative between the city and the university on COVID testing that has brought national acclaim. Davis can be a model on climate change as well if the city puts a commitment to trying new things together with the world-renowned expertise found at UC Davis.

Gil Tal, Director, UC Davis Plug-in Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Research Center