



City of Sebastopol

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: October 6, 2026

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

From: City Councilmember Carter
Climate Action Committee

Responsible Department: Planning Department

Subject: Amendment to the Climate Action Committee's Youth Representative Eligibility Requirements

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RECOMMENDATION(s): That the City Council:

1. Approve amending the Climate Action Committee's eligibility requirement for the Youth Representative position from ages 17-23 to ages 15-23;
2. Approve that the youth residency does not need to be limited to Sebastopol City limits, but that the youth must attend a school within city limits; and
3. Direct staff to update the Committee's eligibility criteria and any related bylaws, applications, or recruitment materials to reflect the amended requirement.

PROCESS OF AGENDA ITEM:

- If the item remains on the Consent Calendar, no presentation is required, and the item will be approved as part of the Consent Calendar.
- If the item is removed from the Consent Calendar, it will be heard as a regular agenda item and will proceed as follows:
 - a. Presentation by staff
 - b. Council questions and discussion
 - c. Public comment
 - d. Council deliberation and action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Climate Action Committee currently requires that its Youth Representative(s) be between the ages of 17 and 23. This item, brought forward by Councilmember Carter on behalf of the Climate Action Committee, proposes widening eligibility so that the position is open to residents between the ages of 15 and 23. The change is intended to allow younger high school-age students to apply and serve, bringing a broader range of youth perspectives into City climate policy discussions earlier, consistent with youth engagement practices used by other City committees.

BACKGROUND:

The Climate Action Committee (CAC) consists of seven (7) members, including one (1) City Councilmember and six (6) community members. Committee membership is intended to reflect a range of experience and perspectives related to climate action, sustainability, and community engagement. Membership categories include:

- One (1) City Councilmember
- Youth Representative (currently ages 17–23)
- Climate Change Background
- Sebastopol Business Owner
- Local Climate Action Group Representative
- Environmental Justice & Equity Background



- Rights of Nature Background
- Energy Background
- Transportation Background

During the early 2026 recruitment for a single vacancy on the Climate Action Committee, the city received three (3) total applications. However, two (2) of the applicants were 15 years old and therefore did not meet the current eligibility requirements. The CAC requested that staff explore the possibility of lowering the minimum age requirement for the Youth Representative position from seventeen (17) to fifteen (15) years of age to encourage broader youth participation and engagement in local climate action efforts.

To evaluate potential liability and participation considerations, staff consulted with the City's insurance provider, California Intergovernmental Risk Authority (CIRA). CIRA provided recommended parental/guardian consent language for youth applicants under the age of eighteen (18). The proposed consent language has been incorporated into the Youth Application and is attached for review. The item was brought to the Climate Action Committee on June 9, 2026, for discussion and then again on August 11, 2026, for a decision and recommendation to Council.

Because the age requirement is established by City Council action, any amendment to the Youth Representative eligibility criteria would require City Council review and approval.

DISCUSSION:

The Climate Action Committee's Youth Representative seat is intended to bring the perspective of young people into City climate policy discussions. Under the current eligibility criteria, only residents between the ages of 17 and 23 may serve in this seat.

The Climate Action Committee and Councilmember Carter have requested that the City Council consider amending this requirement so that the position is open to residents between the ages of 15 and 23, rather than the current 17-23 range.

Widening eligibility to age 15 would allow younger high school-age residents to apply and serve on the Climate Action Committee and would expand the pool of eligible youth applicants and allow younger voices to participate earlier in the Committee's work, consistent with youth engagement practices used by other City boards and committees.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

That the City Council consider and approve amending the Climate Action Committee's Youth Representative eligibility requirement from ages 17-23 to ages 15-23; does not need to be limited to Sebastopol City limits; but that the youth must attend a school within city limits; and direct staff to update the Committee's eligibility criteria and recruitment materials accordingly. This is anticipated to require minimal staff time.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS/PRIORITIES AND GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

This agenda item represents the City Council goals/priorities as follows:

Goal 4: High-Performance Organization

Restoring public trust through transparent and inclusive processes

Improve public communication.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, public comment on this item has not been received. If staff receives public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report, such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of the agenda item.



City of Sebastopol

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the recommended action tonight. Approving the requests from the Climate Action Committee is allocated in staff budgeted hours.

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve amending the Climate Action Committee's eligibility requirement for the Youth Representative position from ages 17-23 to ages 15-23;
2. Approve that the youth residency does not need to be limited to Sebastopol City limits, but that the youth must attend a school within city limits; and
3. Direct staff to update the Committee's eligibility criteria and any related bylaws, applications, or recruitment materials to reflect the amended requirement.

OPTIONS:

1. Approve the amended eligibility requirement as proposed (ages 15-23), with a residency condition; or
2. Modify the proposed eligibility requirement (e.g., a different age range, or a different residency/attendance condition); or
3. Take no action and retain the current eligibility requirement (ages 17-23).

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution XXX-2026

Youth Application

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval:

Approval Date: 9/28/2026

CEQA Determination (Planning):

Approval Date: 9/28/2026

This action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Administrative Services (Financial)

Approval Date: N/A

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: N/A – no cost associated with this action

City Attorney Approval:

Approval Date: 9/28/2026

City Manager Approval:

Approval Date: 9/28/2026



**ATTACHMENT 1
DRAFT – REDLINE**

RESOLUTION NUMBER ____-2026

A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Sebastopol Amending the Climate Action Committee Composition to Amend the Youth Representative Eligibility Requirements of the Climate Action Committee

WHEREAS, the City Council previously adopted the current composition on March 18, 2025, establishing the composition and eligibility requirements for the Climate Action Committee, including a Youth Representative position limited to residents between the ages of seventeen (17) and twenty-three (23); and

WHEREAS, the Climate Action Committee and Councilmember Carter have requested that the City Council widen this eligibility requirement to allow younger, high school-age residents to apply for and serve in the Youth Representative position, and to clarify the residency and school-attendance requirements applicable to that position; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to amend the Resolution to lower the minimum age for the Youth Representative position and to provide that residency within Sebastopol city limits is not required, provided the Youth Representative attends a school within city limits;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Sebastopol that the Youth Representative eligibility provision of the March 18, 2025, Climate Action Committee composition is hereby amended to read as follows (additions shown in underline; deletions shown in strikethrough):

Youth Representative Eligibility. The Youth Representative shall be a resident between the ages of ~~seventeen (17)~~ fifteen (15) and twenty-three (23). ~~The Youth Representative must reside within Sebastopol city limits.~~ The Youth Representative is not required to reside within Sebastopol city limits, but must attend a school located within Sebastopol city limits.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, except as expressly amended herein, the March 18, 2025, Climate Action Committee composition remains in full force and effect.

The above and foregoing Resolution was duly passed, approved, and adopted at a meeting of the City Council on the 6th day of October, 2026.

VOTE:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

APPROVED: _____

Mayor Jill McLewis

ATTEST: _____

Mary C. Gourley, City Manager

APPROVED AS TO FORM: _____

Alex Mog, City Attorney



Youth Application Instructions

Use this form to apply to serve on the City of Sebastopol's Climate Action Committee.

Please complete the entire form and either print and mail it to the address above or email your completed application to planning@cityofsebastopol.gov. If a question does not apply, please note it as not applicable. Please deliver the completed form by the date and time due to the Planning Department. All applications will be reviewed by the City Council. Interviews may be required by the City Council. If appointed, you have a choice whether you wish to have your contact information visible to the public; however, your information may be made public upon request by (a) member(s) of the public.

Name: _____ **Age:** _____

Home Address, City, State, and Zip Code:

Phone Number: _____

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I am a minor (your phone number will not be made public)

E-Mail Address: _____

If appointed, do you want this address to be visible to the public?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I am a minor (your email will not be made public)

Do you live in Sebastopol?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Do you go to school in Sebastopol?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Have you attended a meeting of this body? If so, when?

Can you make a one-year commitment to participating on this Committee?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Have you served on, interviewed for, or applied for this body previously?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If so, when? _____

Do you have a job?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, who is your present employer: _____

Job Title: _____

Please list school clubs and/or civic or charitable organizations to which you belong or have belonged:

Describe the activities you have helped organize or taken part in through these groups or organizations:

What special interests, skills, and talents would you bring to this Committee?

Please list any educational programs or courses you have taken that relate to the work of this Committee:

Have you previously served on any governmental bodies? If so, please list position held and dates:

Please state why you would like to become a member of this Committee:

To your knowledge, are you associated with any organization/employment that might be deemed a conflict of interest in performing your duties if appointed to this position?

☐ No

☐ Yes

If yes, please state name of organization/employment: _____

Are there particular issues you think the Committee should concentrate on?

What exciting possibilities do you see for Sebastopol as a community in the future, and how might this Committee help us get there?

Is there any other information that you feel would be useful to the City Council in reviewing your application and materials provided with the application?

I certify that I have thoroughly read and understand all material in this application.

Applicant's Signature: _____

Applicant's Name (PLEASE PRINT): _____

Date: _____

Parental Consent: *(If applicable)*

If the applicant is under age 18, the parent/guardian must complete the following:

As parent/guardian of this minor, I have reviewed the volunteer application form and give my consent for (name): _____, (age) _____: to participate in this volunteer committee/commission/board with the City of Sebastopol (City). I further agree to hold harmless the City in regard to any injury sustained by the above-listed minor during the time he/she is engaged as a volunteer. I also agree to authorize City to utilize any photographs or videos of such minor in program publicity and for other uses consistent with the law without any further written agreement or authorization. I hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless City, its officers, employees, or agents from any and all liability for damages, loss, or injuries, either to person or property, which the said minor may sustain while engaged in volunteer activity with City. I further certify that I have legal custody by virtue of being the parent or legal guardian by court order.

Signature of Parent: _____

Date: _____