Environmental Quality & Public Works (EQPW) Committee

June 16, 2026

Summary and Motions

Chair Dave Sevigny called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Committee Members James Brown, Tyler Morton, Tom Eblen, Emma Curtis, Liz Sheehan, Lisa Higgins-Hord, Joseph Hale, Amy Beasley, and Hil Boone were in attendance as voting members. Council Member Jennifer Reynolds was present as a non-voting member.

I. APPROVAL OF MAY 12, 2026 COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Motion by Higgins-Hord to approve the May 12, 2026 Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee Summary. Seconded by Curtis. Motion passed unanimously.

II. COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN MANUAL

The Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee received an update on Lexington's proposed Complete Streets Design Manual, which is intended to implement the Council-adopted Complete Streets Policy (2022), Complete Streets Action Plan (2023), and Vision Zero Policy (2025). The manual establishes modern street design standards focused on improving safety, accessibility, and mobility for all users, regardless of age, ability, income, or mode of transportation.

The manual replaces outdated roadway design practices that were primarily vehicle-focused with standards that better accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists. Key changes include context-sensitive street design based on surrounding land uses, protected bicycle facilities, safer intersection designs, wider sidewalks, required medians on major roadways, expanded street tree requirements, and planting standards that support long-term tree health. The goal is to reduce vehicle speeds, improve safety, and minimize serious crashes and fatalities.

The manual will serve as an official LFUCG engineering manual and will apply to new development, infill projects, and future roadway improvement projects. Development of the manual included extensive stakeholder engagement involving LFUCG divisions, engineers, developers, utility companies, advocacy groups, educational institutions, and the general public.

Staff outlined the anticipated adoption timeline, including a report back to Council in August 2026, Council adoption of the manual later this summer, initiation of related Subdivision Regulation Amendments by the Planning Commission in early fall, and final Council approval of those amendments later in the year.

Motion by Morton to approve the adoption of the Complete Streets Design Manual, which establishes standards and requirements governing the design and construction of streets within Lexington-Fayette County, as an engineering manual of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government. Seconded by Curtis. Motion passed without dissent.

III. EMPOWER LEXINGTON UPDATE

The Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee received an update on Empower Lexington, the community's sustainability strategy focused on advancing environmental stewardship, economic resilience, and quality of life. The initiative is guided by Lexington's greenhouse gas inventories, the *Empower Lexington: A Plan for a Resilient Community*, and the Race to Net Zero Emissions Reduction Plan, which was formally adopted by Council in 2024.

A major focus of the presentation was the success of the Solarize Lexington Program, which has provided nearly $2 million in grant funding and supported 128 residential solar installations, including 84 installations for low- to moderate-income households. The 2026 program has expanded beyond Fayette County to include the six-county metropolitan area and will continue serving homeowners who were previously waitlisted for assistance.

Staff also highlighted the Green Check Certification Program, which has helped more than 80 businesses, nonprofits, and places of worship adopt sustainable practices since 2016. Additional community engagement efforts include Common Threads LEX, a partnership with the University of Kentucky and Fayette County Public Schools designed to foster community dialogue around sustainability and environmental issues.

The presentation reviewed several ongoing sustainability initiatives, including the Beat the Heat program, which distributes cooling kits to vulnerable residents during extreme heat events, and the Pickleball Recycling Program, which has diverted more than 69 pounds of plastic from landfills through partnerships with local organizations. Staff also discussed regional work under the EPA-funded Climate Pollution Reduction Planning Grant, which supports emissions-reduction planning across the six-county Lexington metropolitan area.

Internally, LFUCG continues to advance sustainability through employee engagement programs, waste-reduction efforts, water conservation education, and initiatives aimed at reducing plastic pollution. The Sustainability Section also maintains partnerships with numerous local governments, educational institutions, utilities, nonprofit organizations, and community groups to advance implementation of Lexington's sustainability goals.

IV. DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY STORMWATER PROJECTS UPDATE

The Division of Water Quality provided an update on Lexington's Stormwater Drainage and Flooding Program, highlighting progress on priority flooding mitigation projects, capital improvements, and ongoing infrastructure maintenance efforts. The program focuses on addressing recurring flooding issues through a prioritized project list based on documented structure flooding and significant roadway flooding events.

Staff reported completion of the Joyland Area Stormwater Project (District 6), which addressed undersized infrastructure and inadequate stormwater detention through construction of detention basins and additional storm sewer improvements. The project was completed in two phases totaling approximately $2.6 million and received nearly $1 million in FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant funding. The Cooper Drive Stormwater Project (District 5) was also completed, replacing undersized storm sewer infrastructure along Cooper Drive, Romany Road, Duke Road, and Indian Mound Road at a cost of approximately $2.1 million.

Several major projects remain underway. The Mentelle Park Stormwater Project (District 3) is advancing through both construction and design phases to replace aging and undersized infrastructure, with the northern phase anticipated for completion in summer 2027. The Idle Hour Drive Stormwater Project (District 5) is currently in preliminary design and evaluating alternatives to address localized flooding and inadequate drainage infrastructure.

In addition to large capital projects, the Division continues to implement a robust Capital Maintenance Program focused on nuisance flooding reduction, infrastructure rehabilitation, storm sewer repairs, and system cleaning. Multiple maintenance projects have been completed across the county, while additional projects are in construction, design, or engineering review phases. Staff also highlighted ongoing efforts to address blocked inlets, damaged storm pipes, debris accumulation, and other maintenance issues that can contribute to localized flooding.

V. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

There was no discussion on this item.

The meeting adjourned at 2:16 pm.