



STAFF REPORT

AGENDA NO: 7c

MEETING DATE: April 20, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

Date: April 20, 2026

From: Sigalle Michael, Sustainability Program Manager – (650) 558-7274

Subject: Update on Sustainability-Related Rebates and Incentive Programs

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council receive a report summarizing the City's sustainability-related rebate and incentive programs.

BACKGROUND

The City of Burlingame is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) as part of its Climate Action Plan and alignment with California climate action goals. The largest sources of GHG emissions are emitted from the burning of fossil fuels in buildings and transportation. The City's Climate Action Plan contains measures to address these emissions. The following measures are supported by the rebate and incentive programs highlighted in this report:

- **Measure 5, Bicycle Sharing Program:** The City shall implement a bicycle sharing program to provide an alternative to driving, enhance bicycle accessibility, and offer a last-mile option to transit.
- **Measure 9, Electrification of Yard and Garden Equipment:** The City shall support an ordinance prohibiting the use of gas-powered yard and garden equipment; and shall explore incentive options for residents to make purchase electric alternatives.
- **Measure 15, Alternatively Powered Residential Water Heaters:** The City shall support the transition from gas water heaters to electric alternatives.
- **Measure 17, Water Conservation:** The City shall encourage drought-tolerant landscaping and efficient irrigation systems.

DISCUSSION

The City offers several rebates and incentives to encourage residents to convert to water and energy-saving habits and reduce GHG emissions. Switching to cleaner and more sustainable practices often requires upfront investment for long-term energy and cost savings. These programs are intended to assist Burlingame residents and businesses with those upfront costs.

Electrification

The City received a \$540,317 member agency grant from Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE) to support electrification in City facilities and community-wide. The majority of the grant is being allocated to

convert the City's landscaping equipment fleet from gas burning to all-electric; to install EV charging infrastructure in the Corp Yard to support an electric fleet; and to convert gas appliances to electric ones in City facilities. A portion of the grant is supporting rebates and small grants for residents and local businesses to switch their gas burning appliances to electric alternatives, including an Electric Leaf Blower Rebate and a Green Business Mini Grant.

- **Electric Leaf Blower:** The City is offering residents a \$100 rebate and commercial landscaping businesses a \$500 rebate for the purchase of a new electric leaf blower and charging equipment. The rebate was launched following the City's adoption of an ordinance to ban the use of gas-powered leaf blowers. The rebate program has been popular and, to date, the City has distributed rebates to 264 residents and 16 commercial landscaping businesses. Approximately \$5,000 of the \$40,000 allocation remains for these rebates.

Staff is conducting ongoing outreach through the City's eNews, social media, and garbage bill inserts. A letter with application was sent to all commercial landscape businesses with Burlingame businesses licenses to encourage their participation in the program.

- **Green Business Mini Grant:** The City is offering mini grants of \$1,000 to assist certified green businesses with retrofits. So far, two businesses have received the mini grant.
 - o Broadway Grill is a fine dining restaurant located in Downtown Broadway. The green business-certified restaurant used the \$1,000 mini grant to purchase a new, significantly more efficient line refrigerator.
 - o Fika Café is an adored café located in the Burlingame Main Library and is certified as a green business. They used the \$1,000 mini grant to purchase a much-needed new and more efficient countertop oven and portable induction cooktop.

Staff is coordinating outreach to recruit more businesses with the Burlingame downtown business improvement districts, the Burlingame/SFO Chamber of Commerce, and the San Mateo Green Business Program.

In addition to rebates, the City offers two incentive programs to encourage residents to choose electric appliances for their homes; and an annual clean energy discount program.

- **Induction Cooktop:** The Induction Cooktop Loaner program offers residents the chance to borrow a portable induction cooktop to try cooking with induction at home. Induction cooktops are high performing, easy to clean, safe to use, and significantly reduce indoor air pollution compared to gas cooking. More than 100 people have borrowed the induction cooktop kit, and 90% of the survey respondents (participants receive a survey after they return the cooktop) indicated that they would consider purchasing an induction cooktop in the future. Other comments from respondents include, "This program is very important. Thank you;" and "It was good to actually use this and see its benefits."
- **Zero Permit Fee Heat Pumps:** The Burlingame Building Department charges no fees for heat pump permits. This effort aims to minimize the costs associated with a new heat pump for residents. About 90 permits were issued in Burlingame in 2025. PCE provides rebates to significantly lower the cost of purchasing a new heat pump. For example, through May 31, 2026,

PCE increased their heat pump rebate for heating and cooling to \$4,000.

- **SunShares:** The City participates in the annual SunShares program to provide discounted solar to residents generally between September and November. SunShares is a bulk solar purchasing program with vetted contractors. In 2025, 11 households signed up with SunShares to receive a free solar and battery audit.

Micromobility

The City of Burlingame, in partnership with the City of Millbrae, signed an Agreement with Spin to operate a Multijurisdictional Electric Bicycle Sharing Program to support last mile commuting and alternative transportation. The Program is in its third year and maintains about 200 electric bikes at numerous designated preferred parking zones across the two cities. The Cities received a grant award from the San Mateo County Transportation Authority to support the program. The grant funds were used primarily to subsidize rides for users. Rides generally cost one dollar to unlock and \$0.42 a minute to ride. Using the SMCTA grant, rides in Burlingame and Millbrae cost just \$1.00. The grant funds ended in August 2025. The Cities reapplied for the grant and were again awarded funding for a second and final time. Burlingame and Millbrae plan to relaunch the bike subsidies in May 2026 in time for bike month.

The Spin bike sharing program has achieved the following:

- ~46,000 trips
- ~110,000 miles traveled
- 2.36 miles average trip distance
- Embassy Suites and Marriot SFO have partnered with Spin to be designated bike zones
- 5,518 kg of CO₂eq avoided

The new SMCTA grant will also fund a pilot rebate program for electric cargo bicycles. E-cargo bikes allow riders to transport heavier items, such as children and groceries, that would generally require a vehicle. The pilot project would offer a \$1,000 rebate to all Burlingame residents for purchasing an e-cargo bike. The rebate may be coupled with PCE's e-bike rebate for income-qualifying residents. Staff plans to launch the pilot rebate in May 2026 for bike month.

Water Conservation

In partnership with the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA), Burlingame offers residents two water conservation rebates:

- **Lawn Be Gone:** The City of Burlingame participates in the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency's (BAWSCA) Lawn Be Gone program. To date, ten residents have received a \$500 rebate for replacing at least 250 sq. ft. of existing lawn to landscaping.
- **Rain Barrels:** Burlingame residents are eligible for a \$200 rebate for a qualifying rain barrel. Rain barrels are used to collect and store rainwater from rooftops for future irrigation uses. Ten residents have received the rain barrel rebate between 2024-2026.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with receiving this annual report.

Spin Bike Sharing

46,000
Trips

110,000
Miles traveled



Electric Leaf Blower Rebate

264 Rebates to Residents

16 Rebates to Commercial Landscapers



Sustainability Programs



Lawn Be Gone

10 Lawns replaced with landscaping



Before



After

Induction Cooktop



100
Residents have borrowed the induction cooktop kit



90%
Of survey responders would consider switching to induction