



County of Santa Cruz

COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, SUITE 400, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073
(831) 454-2580 Fax: (831) 454-2131 TDD/TTY – Call 711

July 26, 2019

Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Members of the Board,

As you are aware, the Board declared “an existential climate emergency” at your January 29, 2019, Board meeting that committed the County to numerous specific actions (see Board letter and adopted resolution attached.) In addition, the Commission has followed with interest as the County’s Strategic Plan 2018-2024 was adopted on June 26, 2018, and as the Operational Plan 2019- 2021 was adopted on June 25, 2019. These Plans identified goals, strategies and objectives to address this climate emergency. The Commission acknowledges that these actions will represent significant steps forward and we appreciate the demonstrable commitment to tangible action from both the Board and the executive staff.

We commend the progress the County has made over the past few years to significantly lower emissions and other environmental impacts within its own operations, as articulated in the 2019 Climate Action Strategy annual report received by the Board on May 21, 2019 (attached). As you are aware, one of the most effective initiatives the County has undertaken was to be the founding jurisdiction and driving force behind the establishment of Monterey Bay Community Power, the formation of which the Commission strongly recommended the County lead. The Commission recognized that community choice energy was the most effective greenhouse gas reduction policy the County could implement to lower the highest amount of emissions within the energy sector, and we applaud the County’s regional leadership.

The Commission especially applauds the Strategic Plan’s overall goal to “... increase resilience to climate change impacts, including sea-level rise and changing weather patterns,” and the Operations Plan strategy to “...be prepared for and respond to natural disasters, including those resulting from climate change.” The six objectives to meet this goal outlined on page 68 of the Operational Plan are significant initial actions that the Commission fully supports.

Clearly, the Board and executive staff are supportive of addressing the serious worldwide health threats to the environment, populations and economies of every corner of our planet due to impacts from climate change. To that end, it was particularly encouraging to see “sustainability” identified as a cross-cutting concept, impacting and integrated into all Strategic Goals and Operational Plan strategies and objectives.

We are writing, however, to express our ongoing concern that capacity and resources are lacking to accelerate a coordinated response to climate change.

Moreover, it is clear that the climate change adaptation initiatives identified in the County's Climate Action Strategy need more diligent attention. This is not a negative commentary on the County's efforts so far, but an acknowledgement that the County's work has focused on mitigating and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and rightly so. However, the Commission has no doubt that, even with drastic emissions reductions, our seaside community will suffer impacts to our wildfire-prone forests, our weather-dependent water supply, our bluffs and beaches threatened by sea level rise, our flood-prone low-lying areas, our agricultural industry, and other critical features of our community that are threatened by climate change. We will need to make substantial changes to our infrastructure and operations to minimize these impacts.

These consequences of climate change are already locked-in as a result of the fossil fuel industry's production, promotion, and marketing of products they knew would cause those problems, as well as its decades of deception about climate change and its impacts. Thus the County and other agencies and community groups must take steps to prepare for the impacts of climate change including holding fossil fuel companies accountable for the costs of those measures so that those expenses don't fall solely on taxpayers. We are encouraged that the County filed the climate lawsuit against fossil fuel companies and encourage the County to proactively plan and implement projects necessary to prepare for this challenge.

The Commission's highest priority adaptation initiative identified in the Climate Action Strategy is already in the County's Operational Plan, #123 Disaster Mitigation: updating the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan by 2020. This is a tremendous first step, but we must do more to be prepared. Recent analysis in the climate adaptation and hazard mitigation field indicates that for every dollar invested in climate resilience, six dollars in damages are avoided.

To that end, the Commission strongly recommends that the Board investigate establishing a Climate Action Manager position to be located within the County Administrative Office. We envision this role as coordinating existing work by County departments to continue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from County operations and in the community, and maintain the focus on adaptation initiatives within the Climate Action Strategy and be enabled to pursue grant funding to expand the County's capacity and resources to address this pressing issue. Without a single, dedicated staff member focused on emissions reduction and climate adaptation, the County will struggle to make progress on the Sustainable Environment Climate Change objectives called out in the Operational Plan.

We urge you to accelerate progress toward establishing and hiring this crucial position. We understand the Board just approved a two-year budget for the County after a long process that began in October of 2018 and that the process will begin again in October 2019 for year two of the current budget. We recommend the Board consider an adjustment to the projected budget for fiscal year 2020/2021 to include a Climate Action Manager position.

It is reasonable to project that the budget impacts of such a new position could be mitigated with grant funding and cost savings from energy projects. Two prominent projects that are already producing cost savings include the County solar project and Monterey Bay Community Power. The solar installations are saving the County hundreds of thousands of dollars per year in energy costs for a total estimated cost saving of over seventeen million dollars over the entire financing period. The value of the rebates the County receives from MBCP are estimated to be approximately forty thousand dollars per year. These are just two examples and there is certainly more opportunity for cost savings through energy efficiency, fuel efficiency, renewable energy production and storage. Regarding adaptation initiatives, again, it is estimated that for every dollar invested in climate resilience, six dollars in damages are avoided.

We also welcome the opportunity to engage in dialogue as to how this role would best serve the County and stand ready to assist in developing a value-added job description for the Climate Action Manager position that includes performance measurement and a reporting function. It is even possible to combine coordination, reporting and funding functions for both emissions reduction and climate adaptation into one role, as is the case at the City of Santa Cruz.

Thank you for your continued support to address climate change and for your time and consideration regarding the Commission's recommendations.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tiffany Wise-West".

Dr. Tiffany Wise-West, PE, LEED AP
Chair, Commission on the Environment

Attachments:

January 29, 2019 Board Letter and Adopted Resolution
2019 Climate Action Strategy annual report



**County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors
Agenda Item Submittal**

From: John Leopold, First District Supervisor and Ryan Coonerty, Third District Supervisor
(831) 454-2200

Subject: Resolution Endorsing Declaration of a Climate Emergency and Requesting Regional Collaboration on a Mobilization Effort to Restore a Safe Climate

Meeting Date: January 29, 2019

Recommended Action(s):

- 1) Adopt resolution endorsing the declaration of a Climate Emergency and requesting regional collaboration on a mobilization effort to restore a safe climate; and
- 2) Direct the Clerk of the Board to distribute the resolution to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior; the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Acting Director; Governor Newsom; U.S. Senators Feinstein and Harris; U.S. Representatives Eshoo and Panetta; State Senator Monning; and Assemblymembers Stone and Rivas.

Executive Summary

An existential climate emergency threatens not only our immediate community, but our great state and beyond. Therefore, The County requests regional collaboration on a mobilization effort to reverse global warming by drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions and drawing down carbon from the atmosphere as soon as possible.

The attached resolution includes County commitments to take action to continue to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

Background

The County of Santa Cruz joined the “We Are Still In” coalition on June 28, 2017, as part of our commitment to the principles of the Paris Agreement that world leaders from over 197 countries signed in April 2016, as an effort to combat the threat of climate change and the urgent need to restrict global temperature rise in this century to within 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels regardless of the Trump’s Administration’s withdrawal from the agreement.

We remain committed to this effort as reflected in our County’s long history of leading environmental efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Monterey Bay region. Most recently, Santa Cruz County was the lead agency behind the formation of Monterey Bay Community Power, a joint powers authority comprised of 19 local governments around the Monterey Bay that came together in an unprecedented show of unity to benefit local communities and address climate change in hopes to reduce region-wide electricity emissions to zero.

Our Board continues to be a leader in environmental stewardship and protection by reducing human contributions to climate change by adopting the Climate Action Strategy (CAS). This document serves as an important framework for the actions that our County and the unincorporated community can take to both lessen our contribution to climate change and prepare for the impacts when they do occur. Santa Cruz County has already met the 2020 emissions reduction target recommended by the state and will continue to respond to impacts as they occur along with other partnerships in order to stay on course to reduce emissions to 59 percent below 2009 levels in 2050.

Santa Cruz County's long history and recent actions to protect the environment include banning oil drilling in Santa Cruz County and banning onshore facilities intended to support drilling on offshore oil wells; banning fracking in the Monterey Bay; filing a law suit against 29 major oil, coal and gas companies for climate change related damages associated with sea level rise and for changes to the hydrologic cycle caused by greenhouse gas pollution from the companies' products, including more frequent and severe wildfires, drought, and extreme precipitation events, and we further reduced our carbon footprint by approving the installation of eight solar arrays at County facilities which will save the County several factors more in energy costs over the expected life of the arrays, while offsetting 637 tonnes (metric tons) of carbon emissions annually. The Sustainable Santa Cruz Plan also supports fewer miles traveled by allowing the development of more affordable housing and multi-use development close to transit corridors in an effort to strengthen economic functioning and reduce emissions.

Analysis

Through this resolution, the County of Santa Cruz declares that an existential climate emergency threatens our cities, towns, region, state, nation, civilization humanity and the natural world and endorses a just, countywide emergency climate action mobilization effort to reverse global warming, to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere as quickly as possible. Specifically, the County commits to:

- Consider revising its existing policy, priorities, processes, and distribution of resources to enable emergency climate action measures in the County;
- Develop a Socially and Environmentally Responsible Governance Policy including an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy to guide efficient, consistent and just action;
- Reducing auto dependency through a robust Transportation Demand Management program and other measures as appropriate;
- Support both affordable housing and transit-oriented development;
- Investigate how to support wide-spread transitions to Climate Smart Agriculture
- Continue educating our residents about the climate emergency and working to catalyze a just emergency climate mobilization at the local, regional, state, national, and global levels to protect our residents as well as all the people and species of the world;

- Funding an update to the County's' Climate Action Plan, and consider ambitious but achievable goals, consistent with or exceeding state goals and objectives. Integrated into a state-of-the-art Climate and Energy Action Plan 2030;
- Keeping the consideration of vulnerable communities central to all emergency climate action planning processes and to inviting and encouraging such communities to actively participate in order to advocate directly for their needs.

By passing this resolution, the County also will rise to the challenge of this great crisis with the active consultation, participation, and benefit of workers and disadvantaged communities. The County underscores the need for full community participation and support, and recognizes that the residents of Santa Cruz, the University of California Santa Cruz, the Citizens Climate Lobby, Santa Cruz Climate Action Network, 350 Santa Cruz, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation, Regeneración and the County Commission on the Environment and other community organizations will be integral to the emergency climate action mobilization effort. The County of Santa Cruz calls on the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission and other appropriate local agencies to participate in this regional emergency climate action mobilization effort. In order to ensure a just transition, the County will consult with community, labor, environmental justice, economic justice, and racial justice organizations at every step of the emergency climate action planning process, as appropriate.

Strategic Plan Element(s)

This action supports the Strategic Plan elements of a Sustainable Environment:

- 4.A (Outdoor Experience)
- 4.B (Natural Resources)
- 4.C (Local Conservation)
- 4.D (Climate Change)

Attachments:

Resolution

cc:

Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Kamala Harris
Governor Gavin Newsom
Congressmember Anna Eshoo
Senator Bill Monning
Congressmember Jimmy Panetta
Assemblymember Mark Stone
Assemblymember Robert Rivas
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Acting Director
U.S. Secretary of the Interior
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO. 16-2019

On the motion of Leopold
duly seconded by McPherson
the following resolution is adopted

RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND
REQUESTING REGIONAL COLLABORATION ON A MOBILIZATION EFFORT
TO RESTORE A SAFE CLIMATE

WHEREAS, in April 2016, world leaders from 175 countries recognized the threat of climate change and the urgent need to combat it by signing the Paris Agreement, agreeing to keep warming “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and to “pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C”; and

WHEREAS, the October 8, 2018 special report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projected that curtailing warming to 1.5°C to reduce the risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, economic growth and plant and animal life this century, will require an unprecedented transformation of every sector of the global economy over the next 12 years; and

WHEREAS, on November 23, 2018, 13 U.S. federal agencies issued the *Fourth National Climate Assessment* detailing the massive threat that climate change poses to the American economy and underscoring the need for immediate emergency action by every level of government to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases; and

WHEREAS, the *Fourth National Climate Assessment* further indicates that the death and destruction already wrought by global warming of approximately 1.1°C above late 19th century levels demonstrates that the Earth is already too hot for humanity to safely and justly exist, as attested by increased and intensifying wildfires, floods, rising seas, diseases, droughts and extreme weather; and

WHEREAS, 40 mayors in the greater San Francisco Bay Area have committed to adopt, honor, and uphold the Paris Agreement, noting, “We will intensify efforts to meet each of our cities’ current climate goals, push for new action to meet the 1.5 degrees Celsius target, and work together to create a 21st century clean energy economy . . . The world cannot wait — and neither will we”; and

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RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, the United States has disproportionately contributed to the climate and extinction emergencies (see the Global Carbon Project's *Cumulative CO₂ emissions* data) and has repeatedly obstructed global efforts to transition toward a green economy, and thus bears an extraordinary responsibility to rapidly address these existential threats; and

WHEREAS, restoring a safe and stable climate requires a whole-of-society "Climate Mobilization" at all levels of government, on a scale not seen since World War II, to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors at emergency speed, to rapidly and safely draw down or remove all the excess carbon from the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, actions to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and/or draw down greenhouse gases may include improving resilience to the effects of climate change; and

WHEREAS, in the County of Santa Cruz, transportation contributes to over half of our carbon emissions according to the County's *Climate Action Strategy*; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Cruz is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change including sea-level rise, coastal erosion, flooding, salt water intrusion, drought, wildfire, and increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events; and

WHEREAS, as cited by the Climate Mobilization Project, a growing list of cities, districts and counties across the world representing over 15 million people collectively have declared or officially acknowledged the existence of a global climate emergency, including the California cities of Santa Cruz, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oakland, and Richmond; and

WHEREAS, many scientific studies, such as those published by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Carbon Cycle Institute, and the California Climate & Agriculture Network, have shown that changes in farming methods (Climate-Smart Agriculture) can increase fertility, water retention and significantly improve long term carbon sequestration in the soil; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Cruz has an opportunity to continue to be a global leader by endorsing a regional emergency climate mobilization effort; and

WHEREAS, both the 4th California Climate Change Assessment report, published August 27, 2018, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, published October 8, 2018, both stress that climate change is accelerating and urgent action is needed.

RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz declares that an existential climate emergency threatens our cities, towns, region, state, nation, civilization, humanity and the natural world.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz commits to review its existing policy, priorities, processes, and distribution of resources to enable emergency climate action measures in the County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz commits to develop a Socially and Environmentally Responsible Governance Policy including an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy to guide efficient, consistent and just action.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz commits to supporting a robust Transportation Demand Management program, and other measures as appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz commits to support both affordable housing and transit-oriented development.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz shall investigate ways to support transitions to Climate Smart Agriculture, including farm management practices such as cover crop, no-till, reduced-till, mulching, compost application, conservation plantings and active stock rotation, by way of education, and by providing information on available State and Federal conservation grants and incentives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz commits to funding an update to its Climate Action Plan, and consider ambitious but achievable goals, consistent with or exceeding state goals and objectives, integrated into a state-of-the-art Climate and Energy Action Plan 2030.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz commits to continue educating our residents about the climate emergency and working to catalyze a just emergency climate mobilization at the local, regional, state, national, and global levels to protect our residents as well as all the people and species of the world.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz realizes the need for full community participation and support, and recognizes that the residents of Santa Cruz County, the University of California Santa Cruz, the Citizens Climate Lobby, Santa Cruz Climate Action Network, 350 Santa Cruz, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation, Regeneracion, and the County's Commission on the Environment, and other community organizations will be integral to the emergency climate action mobilization effort.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz commits to keeping the considerations of vulnerable communities central to all emergency climate action

RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

planning processes and to inviting and encouraging such communities to actively participate in order to advocate directly for their needs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz, will consult with community, labor, environmental justice, economic justice, and racial justice organizations at every step of the emergency climate action planning process, as appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz endorses a just, countywide emergency climate action mobilization effort to reverse global warming by drastically reducing county-wide greenhouse gas emissions and safely drawing down carbon from the atmosphere as quickly as possible.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz calls on other regional and local agencies to participate in this regional emergency climate action mobilization effort.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County of Santa Cruz calls for a regional emergency climate action mobilization collaborative effort, inviting concerned residents, youth, faith, labor, business, environmental, economic, racial and social justice organizations as well as other community groups, and all elected officials in and from Santa Cruz and nearby Counties and especially all the mayors who have signed on to enact the Paris Agreement.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this 29th day of January, 2019, by the following vote:

AYES:	SUPERVISOR	Leopold, Friend, Caput, McPherson, Coonerty
NOES:	SUPERVISOR	None
ABSENT:	SUPERVISOR	None

RYAN COONERTY

CHAIR
Board of Supervisors

ATTEST: SUSAN GALLOWAY
Clerk of said Board

Approved as to form:



County Counsel



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Planning: Sustainability and Special Projects
(831) 454-2580

Subject: Climate Action Strategy Annual Report

Meeting Date: May 21, 2019

Recommended Action(s):

Accept and file the Climate Action Strategy Annual Report.

Executive Summary

Implementation of the Climate Action Strategy (CAS) involves a wide variety of activities by multiple County departments addressing greenhouse gas emissions reduction and preparation for the anticipated impacts of climate change. Periodic evaluation of greenhouse gas emissions has shown these efforts are resulting in measurable emissions reductions at major County government facilities and in the residential and commercial sectors of the community. While our success in reducing current emissions from major County facilities is a critically important part of addressing climate change, the County must also prepare for rising seas and other consequences of climate change that are already locked-in as a result of the emissions from the use of fossil fuel over time. The County, other agencies, and community groups are therefore taking steps to prepare for the impacts of climate change involving fire and flood hazards, sea level rise, drought, public health and agriculture, including holding fossil fuel companies accountable for the costs of those measures so that those expenses don't fall solely on taxpayers.

Background

On February 26, 2013 the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution approving the CAS. The Board also directed the Planning Department to oversee implementation of the CAS and to report on implementation of the CAS each year. This effort is led by the Sustainability and Special Projects division of the Planning Department.

Previous annual reports the past two years included updated emissions inventories of greenhouse gas emissions. Those updates in 2015 and 2016 documented measurable emissions reductions at County facilities and throughout the community. The results show that overall the County has reduced emissions from major facilities by 18 percent in 2016 compared to the baseline year of 2005, and that overall community emissions have also decreased by 18 percent in 2015 compared to the baseline year of 2005.

As staff to the Commission on the Environment (COE), the Planning Department has been supporting the efforts of the COE to prioritize strategies to prepare for the impacts of climate change. Included in the 2018 CAS annual report to the Board of Supervisors was a February letter from the COE presenting a list of priority actions based on analysis of the climate change adaptation strategies in the CAS. At the direction of the

Board in fall 2018, staff followed up on the February COE letter in a report to the Board with information about the status and the feasibility of addressing each item. The County, other agencies, and community groups are taking steps to prepare for the impacts of climate change in terms of capital improvement projects, fire and flood hazards, sea level rise, drought, public health and agriculture. However, the report concluded it is not feasible to develop a detailed priority list for addressing public infrastructure that has been identified as vulnerable to climate change impacts. Such a project would require funding and dedication of County resources that are not available. Transportation infrastructure, County road maintenance and storm damage repair, as well as planned capital improvement projects pose significant existing burdens for the Department of Public Works, for example. The additional burden necessary to plan for, prevent, and mitigate future impacts and damage related to climate change is overwhelming and future costs are expected to be enormous. The Board accepted and filed the report with additional direction that staff investigate resources that could potentially support implementing the adaptation priorities identified by the COE in their February letter, and report back to the Board.

Analysis

The CAS lists a number of specific actions to implement each emissions reduction strategy, as well as a set of possible adaptation actions, or strategies, for each of the climate change vulnerabilities and impacts that have been recognized and evaluated. This report highlights actions by the County and the community that are facilitating the recently documented emissions reductions and helping prepare the County and community for the impacts of climate change. Attachment 1 includes a list of recent accomplishments and current initiatives by the County and partners to achieve the twin goals of emissions reduction and climate change adaptation.

Many of the programs and projects included in the CAS were not conceived specifically to implement the CAS. Instead, they arose from longstanding County policies addressing green purchasing, fuel efficiency, and energy conservation, including a Green IT policy, implemented to reduce reliance on fossil fuel, reduce emission of greenhouse gases and lower County costs. These policies in some cases date back to the late 1970s. However, they also address various aspects of emissions reduction and climate change adaptation reflected in the CAS.

The actions listed in Attachment 1 address the reduction of emissions through energy efficiency and renewable energy development, reduction of emissions in the transportation and solid waste sectors, and adaptation to climate change. The highlights show the County is taking a wide variety of actions to successfully reduce energy use and emissions in the community and from County operations. Through these actions the County is reducing its own energy costs and has reduced energy costs in the community as a result of the County's leadership in the establishment of Monterey Bay Community Power.

Regarding adaptation to climate change, staff has further considered the feasibility of developing a detailed priority list for addressing public infrastructure that has been identified as vulnerable to climate change impacts. Vulnerable infrastructure includes transportation systems, buildings, communications, utilities, beaches and other amenities that support the community, tourism, agriculture and commercial activity.

During the next year, Planning Department staff will be working on the required five-year update of the County's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). This involves assessing the vulnerability of the community to a range of potential hazards, including the impacts of climate change. The vulnerability assessment will identify the types and numbers of existing buildings, facilities, and infrastructure vulnerable to each hazard and will develop mitigation strategies and actions to reduce the effects of each hazard, with particular emphasis on new and existing buildings and infrastructure. Therefore, the LHMP update will address a high priority of the CAS identified by the COE to assess climate change impacts on public infrastructure. This includes preparation for rising seas and other consequences of climate change that are already locked-in as a result of the fossil fuel industry's production, promotion, and marketing of products they knew would cause those problems, as well as its decades of misinformation about climate change and its impacts. Thus, the County, through the LHMP update, other initiatives, as well as other agencies and community groups are taking steps to prepare for the impacts of climate change, including holding fossil fuel companies accountable for the costs of those measures so that those expenses don't fall solely on taxpayers.

The LHMP update must be completed by August of 2021 for the County to remain eligible for project grants under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program, and for points under the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System, which can lower flood insurance rates in the community. The LHMP update process will be accomplished with staff resources within the Planning Department Sustainability and Special Projects division in collaboration with staff from other County departments. Following completion of the current effort to update the Safety Element and related County Code sections addressing the hazard of sea level rise and land use along the coast, Planning Department staff will prioritize the LHMP update. Consequently, implementation of other strategies and actions in the CAS, or to update the CAS, would not occur without additional staff resources. To this end, the COE in their work plan will continue to focus on plans and initiatives to implement mitigation and adaptation priorities in the CAS, including advocating for the creation of a full-time Sustainability Coordinator position for the County.

Financial Impact

County cost savings from energy efficiency and renewable energy projects as described in the CAS Annual Report and attachments. The costs of future programs and staffing could be incurred in the future but are currently unknown.

Strategic Plan Element(s)

This item supports the Strategic Plan Elements of Sustainable Environment.

Implementation of the CAS promotes the following goals:

Local Conservation: Support and strengthen efforts for clean air and water, conservation, renewable energy, recycling and reuse.

Climate Change: Increase resilience to climate change impacts, including sea-level rise and changing weather patterns.

Submitted by:

Kathleen Molloy, Planning Director

Recommended by:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Attachments:

Highlights of Emissions Reduction and Adaptation Actions

Climate Change Emergency Resolution

- Through a resolution, adopted January 29, 2019, the County of Santa Cruz declared that an existential climate emergency threatens our cities, towns, region, state, nation, civilization, humanity and the natural world and endorsed a just, countywide emergency climate action mobilization effort to reverse global warming, to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere as quickly as possible.

Energy Sector Emissions Reduction

- The General Services Department continues to implement projects at County facilities to improve energy efficiency of buildings, including the heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.
- Solar power installations occurred in 2018 at 1080 Emeline, 1400 Emeline, Main County Building, Men's Detention Center, Public Safety Center, Animal Shelter, Simpkins Swim Center and Brommer Yard. Construction at all locations is complete.
- Updated emissions inventories were completed in 2015 and 2016. Overall the County has reduced emissions from major facilities by 18 percent in 2016 compared to the baseline year of 2005. Overall community emissions have also decreased by 18 percent in 2015 compared to the baseline year of 2005.
- The Beacon Award is a program of the Institute for Local Government that encourages, supports and recognizes voluntary action by local governments throughout California to conserve natural resources, promote energy innovation and create healthier communities. In 2018 the County of Santa Cruz received the following Beacon Awards:
 - Gold Beacon Award
 - Gold Level Award for Agency Greenhouse Gas Reductions
 - Platinum Level Award for 28 percent Energy Savings
 - Gold Level Award for 13 percent Natural Gas Savings
 - Platinum Level Award in Sustainability Best Practices
- As a result of the County's leadership establishing Monterey Bay Community Power (MBCP) which launched in March 2018, there has been further significant reductions in community wide greenhouse gas emissions. The electricity provided by MBCP is carbon-free which means greenhouse gas emissions related to electricity in County facilities and homes and businesses in Santa Cruz County have been eliminated (100 percent reduction). This represents another approximately 20 percent reduction in overall emissions, which includes emissions from the transportation, solid waste, and energy sectors.
- In addition to providing carbon free power MBCP is implementing complementary energy programs to further reduce greenhouse gas emission.

- EV Incentive Program to improve awareness and access to electric vehicles. MBCP works with dealers who offer aggressive discounts off MSRP. These discounts will be combined with MBCP incentive offerings. Vehicles can be purchased or leased. New, full-battery electric vehicles only. MBCP residential customers, public agencies, non-profits. Strong incentives for income-qualified.
- Project Sunshine - solar for low-income housing. MBCP is partnering with GRID Alternatives to install 20 solar systems on single family affordable housing in Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey Counties
- Electrification strategic plans. Researching and Illustrating the best approach to electrifying our community with an eye for underserved communities and emergency preparedness

Transportation Sector Emissions Reduction

- The Climate Action Strategy identifies reducing vehicle miles traveled as a key strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector. The Planning Department is implementing this strategy by changing how CEQA project analysis of transportation impacts is conducted. The new CEQA Guidelines no longer relies upon measurements of automobile delay, including Level of Service (LOS), in evaluating transportation impacts and replaces LOS/delay metrics with Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), based on a goal of reducing statewide GHG emissions by 15% by the year 2020. Tying significance thresholds to the State's GHG reduction goals, the guidance recommends a threshold reduction of 15% under current average VMT levels for residential projects (per capita) and office projects (per employee), and a tour-based reduction from current trips for retail projects. (LOS impacts on local roads and intersections will continue to be assessed by the Department of Public Works for the purpose of defining needed traffic mitigation and improvements.)
- The General Services Department regularly participates in a grant program administered by the Monterey Bay Air Resources District to help with the purchase of electric vehicles for the County fleet. In 2018 the County received four vouchers for \$10,000 each for the purchase of four additional electric vehicles.
- On January 23, 2018, the Board approved a grant from Caltrans, Division of Transportation Planning in the amount of \$366,504 to develop a Complete Streets to Schools Plan. HSA and the Department of Public Works applied for the funds, partnering with Ecology Action as a sub-grantee, and with the City of Scotts Valley providing match funds as a project beneficiary. The Plan will define tools to help reduce barriers to walking and biking for parents and students. The Plan will provide a systematic and comprehensive assessment and analysis of the greatest barriers to increased school-based active transportation and access to public transit. Plan deliverables include conducting audits of parent and student impediments to walking or biking to school, garnering community support and feedback, creating mapping of

school transportation routes, and identifying priority projects that encourage increased active transportation.

- In 2019, the Sustainability Policy and Regulatory Update will move forward with the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the package, which will also include proposed code modernization amendments to the Zoning Ordinance along with the General Plan/Local Coastal Program Sustainability Update. The package will amend and update the Land Use, Circulation and Community Design Elements to incorporate sustainability policies and several new land use designations, many as articulated in the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan. The project is expected to address strategies for reducing land use and transportation related greenhouse gas emissions, as required by State Law (AB 32, SB 375 and SB 743), and as detailed in the County Climate Action Strategy (2013).

Solid Waste Sector Emissions Reduction

- Solid waste including organics in municipal landfills produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. The County maintains methane capture systems and burns captured methane at the Buena Vista landfill in engine generators to produce electricity. These systems are not 100 percent effective and landfill methane emissions remain a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. Solid waste reduction is necessary to reduce emissions and other impacts of solid waste disposal. On January 26, 2016, the Board adopted a Zero Waste Plan addressing zero waste and organics diversion. The County's new exclusive waste hauling franchise with GreenWaste Recovery (GWR) provides a number of provisions designed to improve waste diversion and progress toward Zero Waste. These include:
 - Two new County outreach and education positions funded by GWR.
 - All large public events now include food waste collection.
 - All collection vehicles have been replaced with cleaner, greener trucks.
 - Expanded large item collection has helped reduce illegal dumping.
 - More businesses are being signed up for organic waste collection.
- Organics Diversion. Public Works is working on a number of fronts to expand the diversion of organic waste in our County. A new contract for processing of yard and wood waste was approved by the Board on August 8, 2017, and the new contractor is performing very well. A biotic study is underway for a potential composting site near the County's Buena Vista Landfill, which would allow for greater processing of organic material locally. Planning and permitting will follow completion of the study. Public Works is meeting regularly with representatives of local cities and the University of California, Santa Cruz, to explore opportunities for working together on organics diversion. At the same time, discussions are underway with the Monterey Regional Waste Management District about the potential for broader regional cooperation.

Adaptation to Climate Change

- The Planning Department is responsible for updating the County's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and we will begin that process in 2019. Grant funding may be available to help fund this project and information from the State indicates a fall 2019 timeframe for such funding opportunities. The update will include updating our current assessments of vulnerability to a range of hazards including climate change related hazards like fire, flood, drought, and sea level rise.
- State planning law requires update of the flood and fire hazard policies in the General Plan Safety Element upon each update of the Housing Element. State law also requires incorporation of climate change resiliency policies in the General Plan Safety Element upon the next update of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). These requirements are being addressed in proposed updates and amendments currently being considered at public hearings before the Planning Commission, and it is anticipated that the Board will hold its public hearing to consider adoption of the regulations in May 2019
- The Public Works Department is working diligently to solve the issues that have delayed the Pajaro River flood control improvement project and complete the project.
- Efforts to prevent and reduce fire hazards in the community include collaboration between fire agencies, the Resource Conservation District, and local Fire Safe Councils to complete inspections, advise property owners, and complete fuel reduction projects in high fire hazard areas. The Planning Department joined this partnership to help produce a publication called *Living with Fire in Santa Cruz County*, which includes information on how to protect sensitive habitat where fuel-reduction projects occur.
- For both groundwater and water supply in general, the County, through the Water Resources Manager, is participating in efforts to address groundwater supply and conjunctive use among groundwater management agencies and water districts. Feasible water supply alternatives are being considered.
- The Rio Del Mar drainage improvement project addresses the recurring flooding problems in this coastal neighborhood. Using grant funds, the project has been designed and permitted. Due to the estimated cost of construction for the project of \$4,800,000, Public Works staff is seeking additional grant funding to construct the improvements.

Regional Collaboration

- The Monterey Bay Regional Climate Action Compact (CAC) is an action network of government agencies, educational institutions, private businesses, non-profit, and non-governmental organizations who are committed to working collaboratively to address the causes and effects of global climate change through local initiatives that focus on economic vitality and reduce environmental impacts for the region. County staff participates in quarterly meetings of the CAC. To help sustain this regional

collaboration the County may consider sponsoring the CAC with a financial contribution.

- The Central Coast Climate Collaborative is a membership organization fostering a network of local and regional community leaders throughout six Central Coast counties to address climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Collaborative involves representatives from local and regional government, business and agriculture, academia, and diverse community groups to share information and best practices, leverage efforts and resources and identify critical issues and needs. The Collaborative engages all communities throughout the region to help ensure a resilient and low-carbon Central Coast prepared for the impacts of climate change. To support the efforts of the Collaborative the County may consider membership through a financial contribution.
- *Resilient Coast Santa Cruz* is a collaborative initiative led by the City of Santa Cruz to develop a vision for resilient coastal management to address sea level rise and its associated hazards. The initiative consists of two separate, yet similar, projects that are being carried out along parallel timelines throughout 2019 and 2020. The first is the **West Cliff Drive Adaptation and Management Plan**, funded by CalTrans, which will lead to implementation and development of adaptation projects and policies to address the impacts of climate change on the transportation network, as well as protect coastal recreation and access and preserve habitat. The second project, funded by the California Coastal Commission, entails the **Development of Local Coastal Program Strategies & Policies to Support Beach and Public Access Protection** in the context of sea level rise. The goal of this project is to provide the Santa Cruz community and decision makers with more comprehensive information and recommendations for programs, policies and actions that can achieve resilient coastal access, use and beach management considering sea level rise and to integrate them into a Local Coastal Program Update. County staff will join other technical experts to serve on the *Resilient Coast Santa Cruz* initiative's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
- The Commission on the Environment will continue to focus on issues pertaining to climate change within the County and the Monterey Bay Region by supporting municipal planning and regional program development. The Commission will update its work plan for the next two year period and continue to focus on plans and initiatives to implement mitigation and adaptation priorities in the County Climate Action Strategy, including creation of a full-time Sustainability Coordinator position for the County.