

Public Outreach and Engagement Plan

Climate Action Plan

County of San Diego



PREPARED FOR

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Purpose of the Outreach/Engagement Process.....	1
1.2 Goals and Principles.....	1
1.3 Climate Action Plan and Environmental Impact Report Process	1
1.4 Public Involvement Requirements.....	4
2 GENERAL OUTREACH INFORMATION	5
2.1 Outreach/Engagement Coordinator.....	5
2.2 Media Strategies	5
2.3 Synchronization of Outreach with Project Milestones	5
3 PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM.....	6
3.1 Stakeholder Notification List	6
3.2 Environmental Impact Report Notices	6
3.3 Meetings and Public Hearings.....	6
3.4 Other Engagement Tools.....	8

Figure 1

Climate Action Plan – Tentative Project Schedule

Figure 2

Climate Action Planning Process

1 INTRODUCTION

This Public Outreach and Engagement Plan (Plan) summarizes the strategies to engage the public and other interested parties in the preparation of a successful Climate Action Plan (CAP) along with the associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This Plan is intended to guide the efforts of the County of San Diego (County) and the consultant, Ascent Environmental. Goals and guiding principles for public engagement and outreach are described below, followed by a summary of specific outreach methods to be used during the climate action planning process. The major phases and outreach opportunities are illustrated in the Climate Action Plan Tentative Project Schedule on Figure 1. The outreach and engagement program may evolve and change from that published in the Final Plan at the County's discretion to meet the CAP program needs and accommodate varying circumstances.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE OUTREACH/ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The purpose of the outreach strategies and activities presented in this Plan are to provide local communities, residents, stakeholders, interested parties, and other affected agencies and/or individuals with opportunities to become actively involved in development of the County's CAP and the evaluation of associated environmental issues. The outreach program in this Plan will assist the County in both providing timely information to and receiving input from interested parties during the development of the CAP and EIR.

1.2 GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

The goals of outreach and engagement are to: (1) raise awareness of the CAP; (2) educate the public and other organizations about the CAP; (3) provide opportunities for input at the various steps of CAP development as discussed in Section 1.3.1.; (4) provide opportunities to influence decision-making on the CAP; and (5) provide a public process that meets the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. The rationale for each of these goals includes the following principles:

- ▲ *Awareness* – Stakeholders must be aware of the planning process before they can participate.
- ▲ *Education* – Stakeholders must be educated and knowledgeable about the CAP and planning process before they can participate effectively.
- ▲ *Input* – Stakeholders' knowledge and perspectives help the planning team verify or expand on available information.
- ▲ *Decision-making* – Stakeholders are encouraged to engage in the decision-making process.
- ▲ *Open and public process* – As stated in CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5 (b)(1)(F), a "qualified" GHG reduction plan must be adopted in a public process. Once adopted, the CAP would represent a qualified plan for reduction of GHG emissions, consistent with the requirement set forth in the *CEQA Guidelines* section cited above, and would support tiering of future development projects for purposes of CEQA review of GHG impacts. Having a clear process by which the public can be involved, review, and comment on the draft CAP will result in a better document that can be used later to streamline CEQA analysis and compliance for many types of projects in the County.

1.3 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT PROCESS

The Tentative Project Schedule on Figure 1 shows a brief overview of the CAP and EIR processes and how they connect to the outreach activities that are addressed in more detail in Section 3.

Climate Action Plan

Tentative Project Schedule

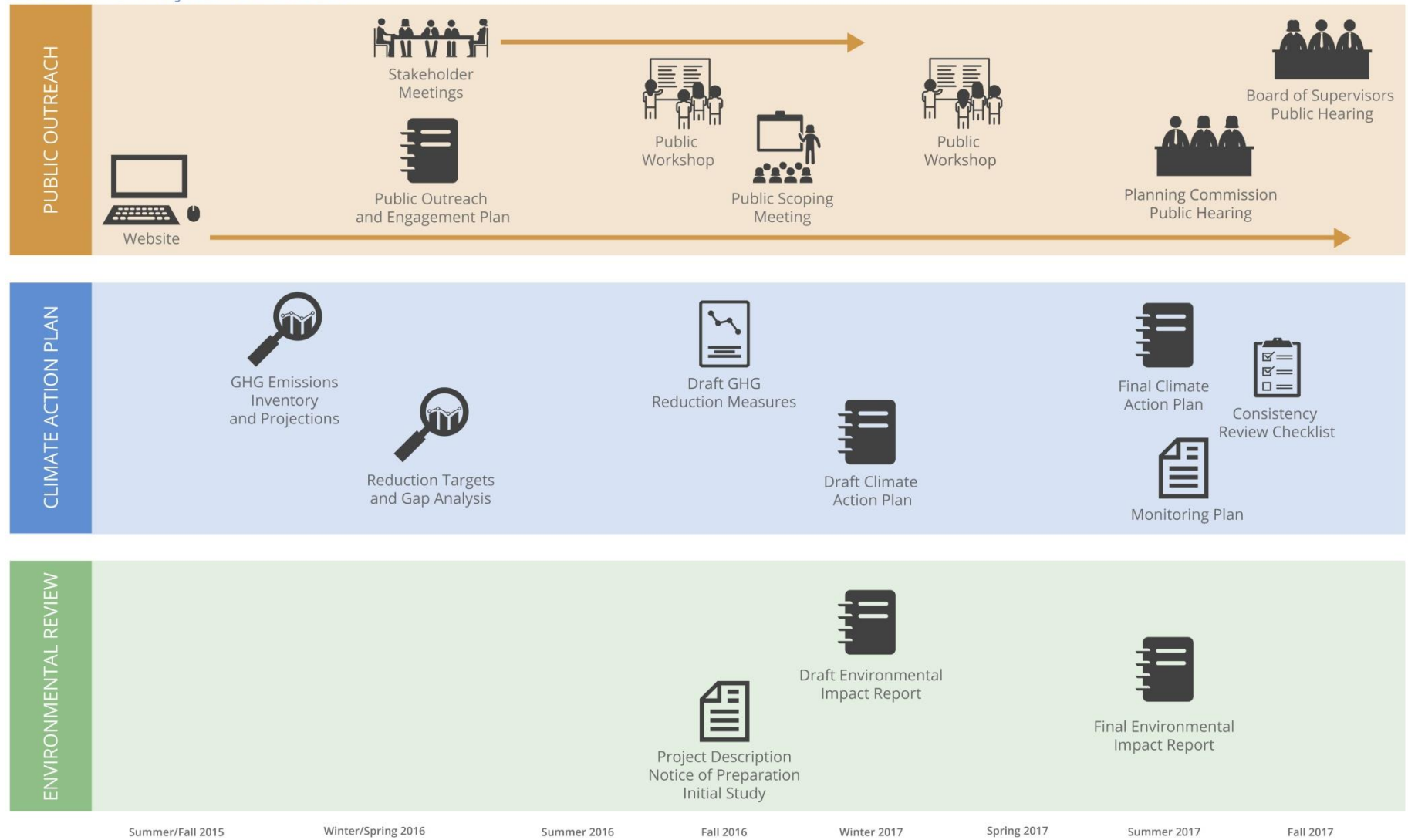


Figure 1: Climate Action Plan – Tentative Project Schedule

1.3.1 Climate Action Planning

The County of San Diego will use a five-step process for climate action planning that was modeled after guidance from the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI). ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection™ Campaign assists local jurisdictions to adopt policies and implement quantifiable measures to reduce local GHG emissions, improve air quality, and enhance livability, sustainability, and resiliency. ICLEI's recommended five step process for climate action planning is summarized as follows (see Figure 2):

▲ Step 1. Conduct a baseline emissions inventory and develop forecasts for future emissions

The County will calculate GHG emissions for a 2014 base year and for forecast years aligned with California's milestone years for GHG reduction (e.g. 2020, 2030, 2040, and 2050) based on local consumption and growth data for various sectors. The inventory and forecasts provide a benchmark against which the County can measure progress.

▲ Step 2. Establish an emissions reduction target for the forecast years

The County will establish emission reduction targets for communitywide GHG emissions for the unincorporated County area and for County local government operations. The targets both foster political will and create a framework to guide the planning and implementation of measures.

▲ Step 3. Develop and adopt a Climate Action Plan

Through a multi-stakeholder process, the County will develop a CAP that describes the policies and measures that the local government may take to reduce GHG emissions and achieve its emissions reduction targets. The CAP will include a timeline, a description of financing mechanisms, and an assignment of responsibility to departments and staff. In addition to direct GHG reduction measures, the CAP will also incorporate public awareness and education efforts. Adoption of the CAP will require County Board of Supervisors approval.

▲ Step 4. Implement policies and measures

The County will implement the policies and measures contained in the CAP after the CAP has been adopted by the Board of Supervisors. Policies and measures implemented by the County encompass a variety of emissions sectors such as transportation, energy use, water consumption, waste generation, and other sectors that are part of the communitywide and local government emissions inventory.

▲ Step 5. Monitor and verify progress

Monitoring and verifying progress on the implementation of measures to reduce or avoid GHG emissions is an ongoing process. Monitoring begins once measures are implemented and continues for the life of the measures, providing important feedback that can be used to improve the measures over time.



Figure 2: Climate Action Planning Process

The five steps provide a flexible framework that can accommodate varying levels of analysis, effort, and availability of data. Climate action planning is an iterative process and needs to be revisited at regular intervals to ensure successful outcomes. This outreach and engagement program addresses how the County will engage with its citizens and stakeholders for the current iteration which will result in a qualified CAP as described in Section 1.4.1.

1.3.2 Environmental Review

The County will be preparing an EIR that will disclose potential environmental impacts attributable to GHG emissions from development within the County, provide a reasonable range of alternatives that may reduce the impacts, and provide mitigation measures to avoid or reduce significant impacts. The EIR will be developed concurrently with the CAP and both the draft CAP and draft EIR will be released for public review at the same time. The process for creating an EIR can be summarized as follows:

- ▲ Environmental Scoping – At this stage, the lead agency (County of San Diego) will release a Notice of Preparation (NOP) announcing the initiation of an environmental review process and requesting input on the scope of the environmental document from agencies, stakeholders, and the public.
- ▲ Draft EIR – Using the draft CAP, the County will analyze the potential impacts of future development, disclose those impacts, and identify mitigation measures to avoid or reduce significant impacts. In addition, the County will analyze potential alternatives to the project consistent with CEQA requirements.
- ▲ Public Review of Draft EIR – The County will release the draft EIR for public review and request agencies and the public to review and provide written feedback to the County on its analysis, disclosure of the environmental issues, and feasible mitigation measures of the proposed project (i.e. the CAP).
- ▲ Response to Comments – The County will provide written responses to comments received on the draft EIR.
- ▲ Certification of Final EIR – The County will develop a Final EIR and the Board of Supervisors will consider whether to certify the Final EIR which includes the draft EIR, Responses to Comments, and changes to the draft EIR that may have been necessary to respond to comments.

1.4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT REQUIREMENTS

1.4.1 Climate Action Plans

In 2010, additional guidance was added to the CEQA Guidelines which states that a qualified plan for the reduction of GHG emissions must “be adopted in a public process following environmental review” (CEQA Guidelines 15183.5 (b)(1)(F)). The County intends to develop the CAP to be consistent with the components of a qualified CAP per the Guidelines and provide a thorough outreach and engagement program as discussed in Section 3.

1.4.2 Environmental Impact Reports

When developing an EIR, CEQA requires the lead agency to notify the public at distinct stages of the process. CEQA also requires the lead agency to provide opportunities for public comment. The goal of these requirements is to fully inform the public, affected government agencies, and other interested parties of the environmental effects of the project and to provide opportunities to the public to comment on the impact conclusions, mitigation measures, and alternatives analysis. Public involvement in the CEQA process aims to ensure that the public has a voice in the decision-making process; specifically, that public concerns about

environmental issues and the potential effects of the project on the physical environment are addressed prior to project approval. The legal public notification and commenting requirements associated with the EIR are outlined in Section 3 of this Plan.

2 GENERAL OUTREACH INFORMATION

2.1 OUTREACH/ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

The role of the Outreach/Engagement Coordinator will be to serve as a central contact for the public and stakeholders for the CAP and EIR. For this project, the Outreach/Engagement Coordinator is also the CAP Project Manager and will participate in and help coordinate all facets of the implementation of the Public Outreach and Engagement Plan for the CAP and EIR. Anyone seeking information on the CAP or EIR should contact:

Bulmaro Canseco, CAP Project Manager
Planning & Development Services
County of San Diego
Bulmaro.Canseco@sdcounty.ca.gov
(858) 694-2216

2.2 MEDIA STRATEGIES

The County will actively engage and alert appropriate media outlets with project updates at applicable milestones throughout the CAP and EIR process. Press releases will be circulated to announce public workshops and hearings, and the County will work with local media outlets and encourage them to follow the planning process and include features in local publications. Media strategies will be led by the Land Use and Environment Group – Communications Officer and supported by the planning team.

Media inquiries should be addressed to:

Alex Bell, Group Communications Officer
Land Use and Environment Group
County of San Diego
Alex.Bell@sdcounty.ca.gov
(619) 531-5410

2.3 SYNCHRONIZATION OF OUTREACH WITH PROJECT MILESTONES

The County is committed to listening and demonstrating responsiveness to the community's input at each step in the planning process. As technical information and draft recommendations are available, they will be presented on the website, in fact sheets, and at the public workshops to allow participants to provide input and feedback. This input and feedback will be synthesized and used to guide the final recommendations in the development of the CAP. Through the CEQA process, the public will be given the opportunity to review and comment on environmental analysis of the proposed CAP.

3 PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

This section includes a brief description of each tool that the County plans to use as part of the outreach and engagement program along with a short explanation of the tool, including the following milestone indicator:

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** Indicates the target date(s) or project milestone(s) of the CAP/EIR process in which the tool will be used.

3.1 STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION LIST

The County has researched potential stakeholders and has compiled an initial contact list from existing resources. The notification list will be used as a means to notify interested parties of upcoming events and of postings of new materials on the project website. Persons will be added to the mailing list throughout the CAP and EIR process and may sign up by sending a request to the CAP Project Manager at Bulmaro.Canseco@sdcounty.ca.gov.

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** Ongoing.

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT NOTICES

The County will prepare all California environmental process notices to alert the public and stakeholders at critical points in the environmental review. The notices shall comply with CEQA and will be filed with the State Clearinghouse, as appropriate. The State Clearinghouse sends notices to State agencies, departments, boards, and commissions for review and comment; however, the County may have specific agency contacts when agency representatives have been working more closely with the County. Where possible, the County will send the notices directly to these specific contacts. The EIR notices include the following: Notice of Preparation (NOP), Notice of Completion (NOC), Notice of Availability (NOA), and Notice of Determination (NOD).

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** Target dates.

NOP – Fall 2016, prior to scoping period.

NOC and NOA – Winter 2017, when the draft CAP and draft EIR are released for public review.

NOD – Fall 2017, if the Board of Supervisors adopts the CAP and certifies the Final EIR, then the NOD will be filed with the County Clerk by the CAP Project Manager.

3.3 MEETINGS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

3.3.1 Scoping Meeting

The scoping meeting is an opportunity for agencies and members of the public to learn about the CAP and EIR development process and provide input to the County on topics of environmental concern that should be addressed in the EIR. The scoping meeting provides an opportunity for face-to-face communication early in the environmental review process.

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** Target date – Fall 2016, after the NOP has been released, during the scoping period.

3.3.2 Community Events

To engage with members of the public that are unable to attend formal meetings or are unaware of the CAP, the County may set up a booth or table at community events to disseminate information about the CAP, environmental review process, and gain input.

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** As needed.

3.3.3 External Stakeholder Meetings



Stakeholder meetings provide a smaller venue for focused discussions.

County staff will consult broad groups of stakeholders throughout the unincorporated County. These meetings could include representatives of public agencies, business organizations, environmental conservation groups, and other interested parties. Meetings/briefings will include meeting with the chairs of the 26 Community Planning/Sponsor Groups.

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** Begins after the GHG Emissions Inventory is drafted (Spring 2016) and continues through the public review period (Spring 2017).

3.3.4 Communitywide Public Workshops



The planning team will host public workshops to provide the community an opportunity to learn more and provide input.

County staff will conduct two (2) public workshops at strategic times during the planning process where members of the public will be able to receive up-to-date information on the planning process and provide input at critical steps.

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** Target dates.

Fall 2016 – the first public workshop will be held during the development of the draft GHG reduction measures.

Winter/Spring 2017 – the second public workshop will be held prior to or during the public review period of the draft CAP and draft EIR.

3.3.5 Planning Commission Study Session(s)

County staff may present to the Planning Commission in one or more public study sessions to provide information at strategic points in the planning process and receive feedback from this appointed body prior to formal public hearings. The public will be invited to listen. No actions will be taken during these meetings. The study sessions provide an information exchange between the planning team and the Planning Commission. It is anticipated that these study sessions will take place just after the communitywide public workshops so that the Planning Commission is updated on what was presented to the public and their comments.

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** Tentatively planned for the following milestone.

Fall 2016 – After the planning team has inventoried existing GHG emissions, projected what GHG emissions are likely to be in the future, and prepared draft GHG reduction measures.

3.3.6 Public Hearings

The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will hold public hearings on the final draft CAP and final draft EIR. These hearings will proceed in accordance with the County's public hearing requirements and will be announced via the County's newspaper legal advertisement requirements, including advertising the public hearings on the project's website and sending an email notification to the stakeholder notification mailing list (see Section 3.4.2). The public will be invited to comment during the public hearings.

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** Target dates.

Summer 2017 – A Planning Commission public hearing on the final draft CAP and final draft EIR.

Fall 2017 – The Board of Supervisors will consider the Planning Commission's recommendations and will meet to determine if they will adopt the CAP and certify the EIR.

3.4 OTHER ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

3.4.1 Project Website

The planning team will develop a page on the County's website dedicated to the CAP and EIR processes. Interested parties will be able to sign up for the email notification list, view project documents, and find contact information to send comments and suggestions. Some interactive activities may be developed to mirror activities provided at the public workshops to allow interested parties to provide meaningful input if they are unable to attend a meeting in-person. The website address is:

<http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/pds/advance/climateactionplan.html>

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** Website launched for the public in Summer 2015 and available throughout the planning process.

3.4.2 Electronic Mail Notifications

Using the stakeholder notification list (see Section 3.1), County staff will send email updates at key milestones in the planning process.

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** At least a week prior to meetings, the day a document is released for public review, prior to the close of comment periods, and other times, as needed.

3.4.3 Newsletters

At significant steps of the planning and environmental review processes, the planning team will prepare and distribute newsletters to update the public and interested stakeholders on important project developments. Newsletters will be posted on the project website and distributed to identified stakeholders and community members.

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** Quarterly or as needed.

3.4.4 Press Releases

Press releases will be circulated to announce public workshops and public hearings. The County will work with local media outlets and encourage them to follow the planning process and include features in local publications. Media strategies will be led by the Group Communications Officer and supported by the planning team.

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** Prior to, or after, major milestones in the planning process such as meetings, workshops, hearings, community events, document releases, public review periods, etc.

3.4.5 Public Collaboration Portal and Social Media

The County may consider the use of an online collaboration tool and social media sites like Facebook and Twitter that would allow for similar interactions and presentations as those that would be available at in-person meetings and events, including advising followers of outreach activities, posting of outreach materials, and posting of articles related to climate planning. If used, this would provide an interactive interface linked from the project website so that individuals could view and comment on information from any device with access to the internet.

- ▲ **Timing/Project Milestone:** As needed.