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April 11, 2022

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CAP Update Progress Report

Overview

On January 13, 2021 (5), the County of San Diego (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) approved new policy guidelines for the Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update to establish actions to meet a net zero greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) reduction goal by 2035-2045. The CAP Update is a mitigation measure for GHG emissions associated with existing and future development anticipated to occur in the unincorporated area under the County's 2011 General Plan. The primary objective of the CAP Update is to reduce GHG emissions generated from current and future activities within the unincorporated area of the county, and emissions generated by County facilities and operations. Staff's key accomplishments on the CAP Update through March 2022 include creating a draft list of hundreds of actions to reduce GHG, hosting over 100 focused stakeholder meetings, hosting 10 community workshops, preparing a GHG emissions inventory, and continuing to implement the 26 GHG reduction measures in the 2018 CAP.

Staff have presented two progress reports to the Board since the CAP Update was initiated in late 2020. On July 14, 2021 (2) and October 20, 2021 (3), staff presented the approach to developing new CAP measures, engaging diverse stakeholders, and prioritizing equity. The presentations also discussed the preparation of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (Supplemental EIR) for the CAP Update and the court-ordered smart growth alternatives for inclusion within the report. The Supplemental EIR

adds to the previous environmental analysis included in the 2011 General Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report, which did not consider potential impacts on the environment from the new CAP measures.

This memorandum reports on CAP Update progress, including technical work to complete the preparation of a GHG emissions inventory, projections, and targets, CAP measure development, and outreach efforts with a focus on environmental justice and equity.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, Projections, and Targets

Significant progress has been made on the preparation of an updated GHG emissions inventory, which is the technical foundation for the CAP Update. The inventory will include a baseline update of GHG emissions associated with existing development and from County operations in 2019, and a projection of those emissions through 2050. The inventory quantifies emissions from various sources (e.g., transportation, electricity, natural gas, agriculture, wastewater, etc.) to inform the five GHG emission sectors of built environment and transportation, energy, solid waste, agriculture and conservation, and water and wastewater. Across all GHG emissions sectors, the County is responsible for reducing emissions in two categories: 1) County operations and facilities in the unincorporated area and in incorporated cities, such as tailpipe emissions from County fleet vehicles and emissions associated with energy and water use at County facilities; and, 2) communitywide emissions from the unincorporated area, such as tailpipe emissions from private vehicles, residential and industrial water consumption, energy use, waste generation, and emissions from agricultural activities.

Since the last progress report, the project team has compiled a draft inventory of GHG emissions for energy, solid waste, agriculture and conservation, and water and wastewater sectors for County operations and facilities, as well as communitywide emissions. The final outstanding component of the emissions inventory is emissions data from vehicle use and travel in the unincorporated area.

Though a full emissions inventory of the transportation sector is pending, emissions from this sector are expected to be the largest source of emissions in the CAP Update. In the 2018 CAP, transportation emissions accounted for 45% of total emissions in the unincorporated area. Transportation emissions are estimated using a custom version of the San Diego Association of Government's (SANDAG) transportation demand model used for the 2021 Regional Plan and approved by SANDAG's Board in December 2021. Modeling services from SANDAG were anticipated to be available in January 2022. However, the project team was notified by SANDAG in March that their model will not be ready for use until June 2022. The project team has investigated other options to estimate transportation emissions, including having consultants prepare the necessary emissions estimate. However, the SANDAG model is widely considered the best and most defensible data source for this application because it provides the highest sophistication in cataloging and predicting regional activities and behaviors that contribute to transportation emissions. Upon availability, SANDAG will run a custom model of future

activities based upon anticipated growth in the unincorporated area through 2050 and phased transportation improvements as defined in the 2021 Regional Plan. Use of the SANDAG custom modeling services will provide an opportunity to consider transportation emissions for future unincorporated area projects and long-range planning efforts using the same regional assumptions regarding future transportation network improvements that other local agencies use for this purpose. The project team has prepared the necessary land use inputs and submitted the request for services to SANDAG in order to expedite the process once the modeling services are available.

The project team will continue to focus on the development of CAP measures in partnership with stakeholders and with a focus on building equity, preparation of the CAP document and narrative, and preparation of the Supplemental EIR while the model is being developed. Staff anticipates that the project schedule will be pushed out six months in order to accommodate the use of the SANDAG model and as a result will be heard by the Board in the Spring of 2024 rather than in late 2023.

CAP Measure Development and Public Engagement

Public Engagement to Date

Stakeholder feedback continues to shape the CAP Update. At the project outset, staff held workshops to gather initial feedback and determine the scope of the environmental analysis. The feedback received early in the planning process informed the design of measures for the CAP Update, guided staff in creating a public participation plan, and helped inform the project team of issues that are important to stakeholders.

In summer 2021, staff hosted three virtual workshops to gather feedback on the five emissions sectors of built environment and transportation, energy, solid waste, agriculture and conservation, and water and wastewater. The workshops provided an overview of the CAP Update project components and CAP measure development process and provided an opportunity for participants to describe their vision for an equitable net-zero emissions future and provide feedback on the types of CAP measures they would like to see included in the CAP Update. In general, stakeholders asked the County to urgently address climate change, and do so in a way that is equitable, protects human health and the natural environment, and benefits communities.

In addition to workshops, staff presented project updates at three public hearings. At two Board hearings in July and October 2021, public comments largely focused on urging the County to hasten climate change mitigation while Board members spoke of embracing technology, balancing housing and environmental concerns, and continuing to engage the public in the development of the CAP Update. At a Planning Commission hearing in October 2021, Commissioners asked how staff were reaching communities that are not traditionally represented in planning processes and how equity is being applied in the CAP Update. Commissioners also commented about considering how growth in neighboring counties impacts the San Diego region, how the County can balance housing

production and affordability with climate action, and how smart growth principles could be effectively applied in the unincorporated area.

Environmental justice and equity have been central to the CAP Update engagement process. In June 2021, staff hosted an equity-focused virtual public workshop, in which participants called for an inclusive, accessible, and fair CAP Update development process. Participants emphasized the importance of expanding meeting options to increase input and inclusion, with the purpose of building transparency and trust in the process. Stakeholders called on staff to expand their approach by hosting in-person meetings, diversifying modes of outreach (e.g., social media, small group meetings, phone calls), increasing language accessibility, and drawing on connections between the CAP Update and public health, transportation options, and affordable housing.

Staff followed stakeholder recommendations by hosting a community workshop in each of the four Environmental Justice Communities (EJC) in the unincorporated area that are identified in the County's Environmental Justice Element, which are Sweetwater, Spring Valley, North Lemon Grove, and North El Cajon. The meetings were held between October 2021 and February 2022 and offered a smaller forum for community members to discuss climate change and issues important to their lives and communities. They also served as a platform to hear from and build relationships with community members in some of the most environmentally burdened locations in the unincorporated area.

Staff have held additional ad hoc meetings with individual and community group stakeholders to gather their feedback on the CAP Update. To date, staff have facilitated over 100 meetings where stakeholders shared their considerations, input on CAP measures, and discussed issues important to them, such as a desire for more climate change education, equitable implementation of the CAP Update, and consideration of public health impacts.

To provide additional opportunities for stakeholder engagement and feedback, staff maintain a project website, publish a monthly newsletter, post regularly on Facebook and Twitter, and have an open invitation for stakeholders in the unincorporated area to request a presentation on the CAP Update.

CAP Measure Development to Date

Stakeholder feedback has been central to developing a list of hundreds of potential GHG reduction opportunities for consideration in the CAP Update. The comprehensive list has been developed by the consultant team and includes the full array of actions that may be available for the County to consider as part of the CAP Update. The current list includes 116 measures related to transportation and the built environment, 73 related to energy, 43 related to solid waste, 74 related to agriculture and conservation, and 65 related to water and wastewater sectors. The potential CAP measures were influenced by stakeholders in two primary ways: 1) stakeholder feedback helped craft draft equitable net-zero emissions future vision statements for each of the five emissions sectors to

describe an ideal state for each emissions sector, and the project team subsequently created the list of potential measures that help actualize those visions; and, 2) staff refined potential measures in the list and added new measures in response to stakeholder requests for the CAP Update to consider specific actions to reduce GHG emissions. Staff do not anticipate including the full list of potential GHG reduction opportunities in the CAP Update and will continue to refine the list based upon considerations such as jurisdiction, additionality, feasibility, data availability, and technology status.

The following examples illustrate how staff have been and will continue to incorporate feedback in developing measures for the CAP Update. Some stakeholders have expressed interest in reducing energy demand to protect the environment and save residents and businesses money on energy bills. Staff have ensured that the list of potential CAP measures includes actions to improve energy efficiency. Staff have also received feedback about the availability of transportation options, with numerous stakeholders expressing a desire for safe paths of travel for people walking and riding bicycles. As a result, the CAP Update will consider measures that help to improve walking and cycling paths, including planting street trees and upgrading and installing infrastructure that make it safer to walk and ride a bicycle.

In addition to engaging with the public on CAP measure development, Planning & Development Services (PDS) staff hosted meetings with subject matter experts from seven other County departments to further evaluate actions that the County could take to reduce GHG emissions in the unincorporated area and at County facilities. These departments were selected based on their potential role in administering existing and future programs and policies that could reduce GHG emissions and included the Department of General Services, Department of Public Works, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Environmental Health and Quality, Department of Human Resources, Public Health Services, and Agriculture, Weights, and Measures. The meetings provided an opportunity for staff to work through implementation logistics and understand the practical implications of taking forward CAP measures that would be implemented by various County departments. Coordination meetings across departments will continue to evaluate where there are opportunities to increase commitments to measures from the 2018 CAP, where the County is already doing work that could be captured in the CAP Update (such as efforts identified in Departmental Sustainability Plans), and how the County could plan to achieve net-zero GHG emissions in County facilities.

Future Outreach and Measure Development

Staff will continue to engage the public to gather input on the CAP Update. In the next round of workshops, staff will introduce strategies and measures to meet the public's vision for an equitable net-zero emissions future in order to obtain feedback and refine the list of potential CAP measures. For example, within the built environment and transportation sector, in order to support the use of alternative modes of transportation,

staff might propose measures that include expanding access to transit or developing designated walking and biking infrastructure. Upcoming outreach will also solicit input on how staff should evaluate measures and their potential complimentary benefits. For example, stakeholders will be asked how they think the measures in the CAP Update can maximize GHG emission reductions while also prioritizing equity and community benefits such as clean air, safer transportation, and economic growth. This feedback will be used to help determine how to prioritize and implement measures. In addition, staff will continue to host ad hoc meetings with individual and community stakeholders and coordination meetings with County departments to further refine the list of potential CAP measures for incorporation into the draft CAP Update document.

Preparation of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (Supplemental EIR) and Smart Growth Alternatives

Work on the Supplemental EIR was initiated in December 2020. A Notice of Preparation of a Supplemental EIR was released on December 10, 2020, and a revised Notice of Preparation was released on December 23, 2020, extending the public comment period to a total of 57 days (nearly twice as long as the required 30 days), concluding February 4, 2021. A virtual scoping meeting was held January 28, 2021, to hear from interested stakeholders and solicit comments regarding the scope and analysis for the Supplemental EIR. To date, the preliminary efforts on the document have included outreach to the community and stakeholders about the development of project alternatives, consideration of key assumptions that will inform the analysis, assimilation of background and setting materials, and initial drafts of the project description and objectives. The team is positioned to begin evaluation of potential environmental impacts once the GHG inventory, projections, targets have been set and the list of draft CAP measures has been identified.

Consistent with direction from the Court of Appeals, the County will analyze at least one smart growth alternative in the Supplemental EIR that can reduce vehicle miles traveled. Staff conducted outreach with environmental groups, industry, community planning and sponsor groups, community members, and organizations to get input on what should go into a smart growth alternative for inclusion in the Supplemental EIR. Stakeholders presented varying ideas on smart growth, including ways to reduce vehicle miles traveled and other environmental impacts. Staff compiled all information and have begun drafting smart growth alternatives maps and geographic information systems (GIS) data for all stakeholders to use to determine smart growth locations. An interactive map is accessible under the “Land Use Overlays” section at this website:

<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/sustainability/climateactionplan.html>. The Supplemental EIR will evaluate how each of the alternatives can reduce impacts. The project team began stakeholder outreach on the Supplemental EIR in 2020 and will continue throughout the process.

Relationship to Regional Decarbonization Framework

On January 27, 2021 (3), the San Diego County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Chief Administrative Officer to develop the Regional Decarbonization Framework (Framework), a guide to achieve zero carbon emissions in the region. This Framework, created in partnership with the University of California San Diego (UC San Diego) School of Global Policy and Strategy and the University of San Diego Energy Policy Initiatives Center (EPIC), includes strategies and initiatives to achieve zero carbon emissions in the region by mid-century to align with State targets.

The draft Framework presents a science-based approach to help the San Diego region plan for policies and investments to achieve carbon emission reductions consistent with the State's target of reaching carbon neutrality by 2045 or sooner. The draft Framework begins with the premise that regional and local policies should be informed by detailed analyses of regional energy, transportation, and land use emission sources, and that these should be consistent with a system-wide path to decarbonization at regional, state, and national levels.

The draft Framework shares a common objective of reducing GHG emissions but also has several key differences from the CAP Update. The CAP Update is a requirement of the County's 2011 General Plan to mitigate GHG emissions associated with existing and new development within the unincorporated area and County facilities throughout the region. The CAP Update is developed, managed, and implemented solely by the County of San Diego, while the draft Framework is being developed to achieve zero carbon emissions throughout the San Diego region. Ultimately, this Framework will outline decarbonization pathways that will be implemented by all entities in the San Diego region (e.g., local and regional agencies, institutions, non-profits, businesses, residents).

The CAP Update team will be working closely with the Framework team throughout the development of both efforts. Staff will incorporate any policy, programming, and/or project guidance identified by the Framework that may apply to the CAP Update project. This may impact CAP measures, workforce development programs and policies, regional collaboration efforts, or any other identified item that overlaps in scope and application.

Upcoming Project Activities at a Glance

In 2022, staff will continue building on progress made on public engagement and development of CAP Update technical components. From May through August, staff will host a mix of virtual and in-person workshops to share potential CAP measures and obtain public feedback from stakeholders in EJC's and throughout the unincorporated area. During this time, the project team will work to finalize the GHG emissions inventory, projections, and targets, pending availability of SANDAG modelling services. Once the inventory and projections are complete, the project team will quantify GHG emissions reductions from potential CAP measures and continue working with other County departments to further refine the list of potential CAP measures.

Staff will host another round of public workshops in late fall to gather public input on the CAP measures before they are included in the draft CAP Update document. The project team will also continue to develop the smart growth alternatives for inclusion in the Supplemental EIR. The work on the CAP Update will culminate in the release of the draft CAP Update in mid-2023, which will kick off the environmental and draft document public review periods. Staff will post updates on the CAP website and report progress on all these steps to the Board throughout the timeframe as information is available.

As part of its ongoing commitment to the environment, the County continues to implement 2018 CAP measures to reduce GHGs while developing the CAP Update. A 2018 CAP Annual Monitoring Report will be released this summer to show 2021 implementation highlights and progress.

Visit the CAP website to subscribe to notifications about upcoming outreach workshops and to see CAP Update project materials, including summaries of public outreach workshops and progress toward implementing the 2018 CAP:

<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/sustainability/climateactionplan.html>. To

request further information, ask a question, or share a comment, please email cap@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Respectfully,


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cc: Sarah Aghassi, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer,

Land Use & Environment Group
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