



County of San Diego

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TO: Supervisor Nora Vargas, Chairwoman
Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer, Vice Chair
Supervisor Joel Anderson
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CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATE PROGRESS REPORT: STATUS OF UPDATING THE COUNTY'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Overview

On September 30, 2020 (4), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) voted to set aside its approval of the County of San Diego's (County) 2018 Climate Action Plan (2018 CAP) and related actions because the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (2018 CAP SEIR) was found to be out of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by the Superior Court (Court). In response to this Board action, staff are preparing a Climate Action Plan Update (CAP Update) to revise the 2018 CAP and correct the items identified by the Court within the Final 2018 CAP SEIR that were not compliant. The court ruling struck down part of the 2018 CAP's EIR but did not find fault with its 26 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction measures. The County continues to implement these measures to effectively reduce greenhouse gases GHGs as part of its ongoing commitment to the environment.

On January 13, 2021 (5), the Board approved policy guidelines for the CAP Update to establish actions to meet a net zero GHG emissions reduction goal by 2035-2045. The CAP Update is a mitigation measure for the County's 2011 General Plan to reduce GHG emissions associated with energy use, transportation, and waste generation, from existing and future development anticipated to occur in the unincorporated area. The primary objective of the CAP Update is to reduce GHG emissions generated within the county's unincorporated area and from County facilities and operations in the region through the implementation of CAP Measures. Staff's key accomplishments on the CAP Update since the last progress report on February 10, 2023, include the completion of an

inventory of GHG emissions from 2019 to establish the CAP Update baseline, engagement with stakeholders through community-centered outreach and workshops, and continued coordination with County departments on the development of new CAP Measures.

Staff have made three presentations to the Board and provided three progress report memoranda 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 CAP Measures, engaging diverse stakeholders, prioritizing equity, and preparation of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (Supplemental EIR) for the CAP Update. On August 31, 2022 (6), staff presented an update on the [County Facilities Zero Carbon Portfolio Plan](#) and received direction to develop two programs and three reports that advance sustainability initiatives for inclusion in the CAP Update and in support of the Regional Decarbonization Framework (RDF). Progress report memoranda submitted in April and June 2022 and February 2023 described progress on CAP Update development, 2018 CAP Measure implementation results, outreach and engagement processes, and the relationship between the CAP Update and other related sustainability efforts, such as the RDF and the Sustainable Land Use Framework.

Climate change is a global issue that is addressed through local actions including implementation of the County's CAP. This memorandum reports on CAP Update progress, including outreach and engagement and how stakeholders are shaping the CAP Update process, an overview of the 2019 GHG inventory, and the next steps for preparing the Draft CAP and Draft Supplemental EIR for public review by Fall 2023. The County is committed to creating an updated CAP that serves the community and our mission to protect the public's health and safety, sustain the environment, and improve the quality of life for our residents.

Outreach and Engagement

Creating opportunities for meaningful community engagement continues to be integral to developing a CAP Update shaped by community input. Since the beginning of 2023, staff released an [Unincorporated County Climate Action Plan Survey](#) for unincorporated area residents, provided classroom workshops to five high school classes and one youth-led climate group throughout the unincorporated area, hosted two workshops on co-benefits (i.e., the additional positive benefits, such as clean air and water, that result from climate action) and CAP Measures, presented at public events, and began a series of presentations to Community Planning and Sponsor Groups. Additionally, staff has continued regular engagement through online and social media platforms to raise awareness and engagement with the CAP Update process. These efforts have led to a 50% increase in followers on platforms such as Instagram, with over 500 current followers and significant engagement through reposting of information.

Co-Benefits

On March 21, 2023, staff hosted a co-benefits workshop with 34 attendees. The workshop was promoted to the CAP's listserv, through social media, and direct invitations were sent. Attendees included a variety of stakeholders from the building industry, to environmental groups, to unincorporated area residents. Since initiating the CAP Update outreach process, much of the feedback from stakeholders is related to co-benefits, or the additional benefits that occur from taking climate action. For instance, reducing County fleet emissions reduces GHG emissions, but it also has the added benefit of improving air quality. Stakeholders have indicated that these co-benefits are important for the County to consider when identifying which CAP Measures to prioritize. The workshop was hosted in coordination with the Office of Equity and Racial Justice (OERJ) and the Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice (OSEJ).

The purpose of the workshop was to develop a shared, working definition of co-benefits to include in the CAP Update, to collect input on which co-benefits are most important to stakeholders, and to get feedback on a Co-Benefits Tool (evaluation tool) staff are developing to integrate this feedback into the CAP Update. The input was collected throughout the workshop using virtual polling tools, Zoom Q&A and chat features, breakout rooms facilitated by County staff, and an open-ended discussion at the conclusion of the workshop. Spanish interpretation was available, with other languages available upon request, and slides were also translated into Spanish. The evaluation tool will show each CAP Measure's relative impact across a broad range of potential co-benefits, emphasizing those with the greatest impacts to co-benefits most important to stakeholders in the community. The tool does not eliminate any measures from the CAP Update but allows stakeholder input to be evaluated alongside other data-driven metrics presented with each CAP Measure. Ultimately, this information will show the relative co-benefit and community priority scores for each CAP Measure alongside GHG reductions, timeline, cost, and equity objectives for the Board to consider when deciding which CAP Measures to prioritize in the CAP Update. Stakeholders can continue to provide input for incorporation into the evaluation tool through participation in the Unincorporated County Climate Action Plan Survey.

The Unincorporated County Climate Action Plan Survey, available in all eight County threshold languages, has received 552 responses since its release on February 13, 2023, via an online tool and through prepaid hard copy postcards. These postcards were distributed to all 18 County Library branches in the unincorporated area, through Health and Human Services (HHSA) Aging & Independence Services meal distribution sites, and various community events in the unincorporated area. To reach younger audiences, staff also provided an in-person lesson, during their class time on climate change, the CAP Update process, and the County government structure to 242 students across the unincorporated area. As part of this effort, personal narratives were collected to learn more about climate change concerns of students, how they believe the County should work to address their concerns, and their vision for the future as action is taken. Staff also attended in-person events such as the new Lakeside Library opening, a Fallbrook clean-

up event, the 2nd Annual Ramona Earth Day Festival, and Spring Valley Day where they shared information about the CAP Update and how to get involved.

On May 24, 2023, staff hosted a general CAP overview workshop with 26 attendees. The workshop presented information on CAP Update project components, including a sampling of potential measures to be included in the Draft CAP, implementation components to be included with the description of each CAP measure, and a facilitated discussion around CAP implementation. The same methods of engagement and accessibility options (i.e., interpretation and translation) included in the description of the co-benefits workshop were also provided for this workshop.

Looking forward, ongoing outreach and engagement efforts will focus on preparing the public to provide input on the Draft CAP. This will include hosting a series of overview workshops, publishing an interactive website through EngagementHQ, and facilitating in-person and virtual office hours during the public review period.

CAP community outreach and engagement efforts have benefited greatly from grant funding provided by Public Health Services (PHS) within the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). In the summer of 2021, PHS received funding from the *National Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities Among Populations at High-Risk and Underserved, Including Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations and Rural Communities*. The grant funds various activities to address racial and ethnic inequities highlighted and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the grant is funding an expansion of outreach and engagement efforts, identifying co-benefits, developing measures that address health equity issues, and developing clear goals and measurable metrics to show how the project ensures equity, including in racial and ethnic minority populations and in rural communities, such as those located adjacent to the international border, in the unincorporated area. These grant deliverables align with both the Board direction on January 13, 2021 (5), which called for a CAP Update that emphasizes environmental justice and equity and is shaped by community input, and the County's new General Management System, which centers around community engagement and includes a commitment to equity, sustainability, and access (among others). These activities help implement one of the grant's strategies of "mobiliz[ing] partners and collaborators to advance health equity and address social determinants of health" while strengthening the CAP Update. The partnership between PHS and PDS creates a robust and holistic approach to the CAP Update. Additionally, this relationship has expanded staff's capacity to collaborate on grant funded activities and ensure public health practices and expertise inform planning activities. This existing relationship and expanded capacity will be essential in developing the CAP Update's implementation plan, including identifying future funding opportunities.

GHG Emissions Inventory and Projections

The GHG inventory is an estimate of GHG emissions that can be readily projected, monitored, and reduced by County actions within the County's jurisdiction. Establishing

the baseline inventory is integral to understanding where emissions come from within the county (in the unincorporated area and at County facilities), projecting future emission trends, developing targets for reducing emissions, and tracking progress over time. The inventory follows the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) U.S. Community Protocol for Accounting and Reporting of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and ICLEI Local Government Operations Protocol. The inventory includes emissions from activities (e.g., transportation, electricity, and natural gas use, agricultural operations, water and wastewater treatment) within the unincorporated area that are within the County’s municipal land use jurisdiction (i.e., excluding tribal and military lands) and County owned and operated facilities regardless of their location.

The CAP Update emissions inventory uses 2019 data because this was the most recent year of available data that was unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The total 2019 GHG emissions from the county (unincorporated community and County facilities) were estimated at 2,983,713 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent which is equivalent to 663,966 gas-powered cars driven for one year. Emissions categories, in order of the amount of emissions they produced in the 2019 baseline year, include: on-road transportation, electricity, natural gas, waste, agriculture, propane, off-road transportation, water, and wastewater. Figure 1 provides a percentage breakdown of the emissions associated with each category.

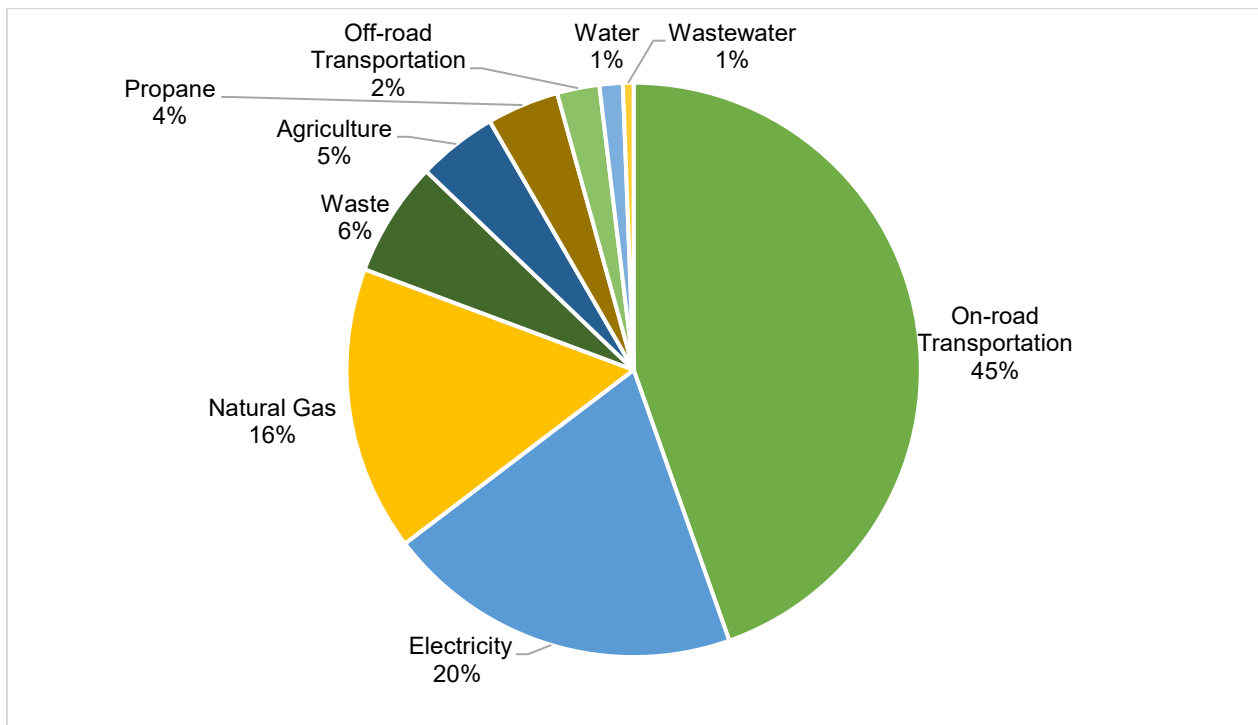


Figure 1: CAP Update 2019 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory by Emission Category

In addition to identifying where emissions are coming from, the 2019 inventory demonstrates emissions reduction progress since the County’s previous emissions inventory from 2014. The County’s 2018 CAP established a 2014 baseline inventory

which estimated emissions at 3,211,505 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent and a target to reduce emissions to 3,147,275 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2020. The 2019 emissions inventory shows that the County is ahead of its original 2020 target emissions from the 2018 CAP. Since 2018, the County has monitored CAP measure implementation and publishes the [Climate Action Plan - Annual Monitoring Report](#), an annual report demonstrating GHG reduction progress towards emissions reduction targets. Figure 2 below shows how the CAP Update's 2019 baseline inventory compares to the 2018 CAP's inventory and 2020 GHG reduction target.

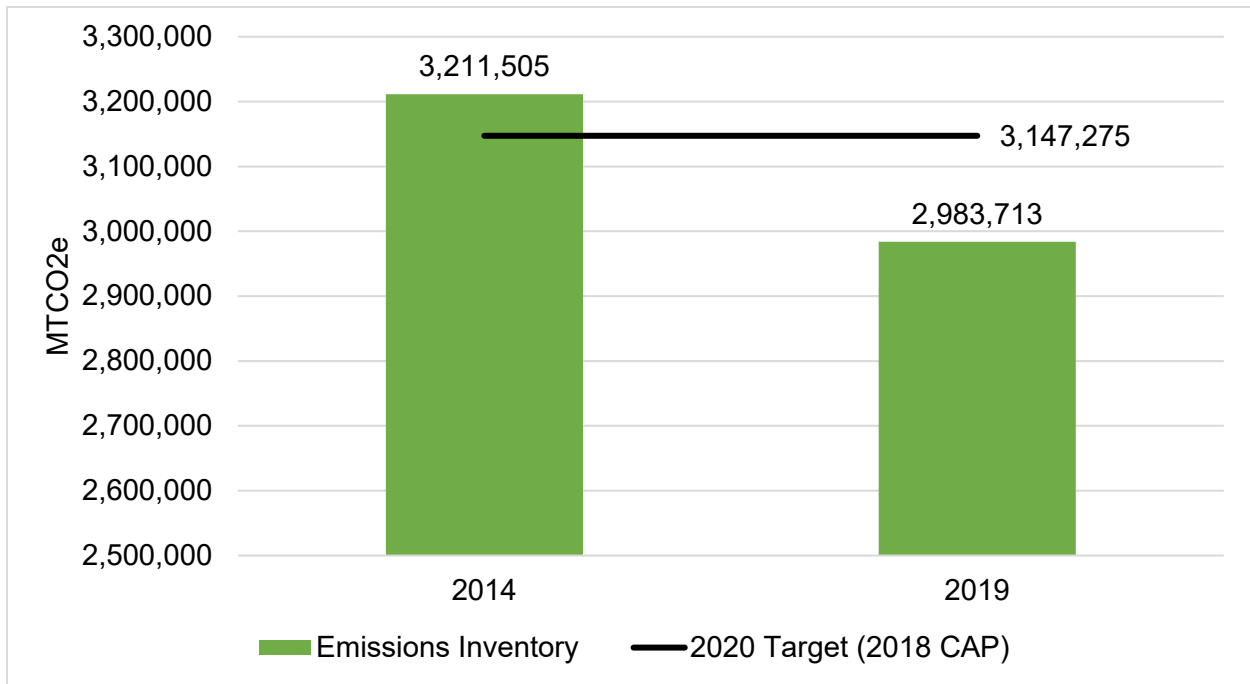


Figure 2: County CAP GHG Inventories from 2014 and 2019

With the CAP Update emissions inventory in place, staff is working to develop projections to understand what future emissions might look like based on the continuation of current trends in human activities, population growth, and legislative actions. These projections reflect how GHG emissions would change over time in the unincorporated area without any County action to reduce emissions through CAP measure implementation. From there, GHG emission reduction targets will be established to meet Board direction from January 13, 2021 (5), to meet and exceed Senate Bill 32 greenhouse gas emissions reductions of 40% below the 1990 level by 2030 and establish actions to meet a goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2035-2045 (in line with Executive Order -55-18).

Upcoming Project Activities at a Glance

Next steps in the CAP Update process include finalizing GHG projections, the carbon storage inventory, establishing GHG reduction targets, finalizing draft CAP Measures, and developing the implementation plan, including an implementation cost analysis, cost effectiveness analysis, disproportionate cost analysis (i.e., an analysis of which groups

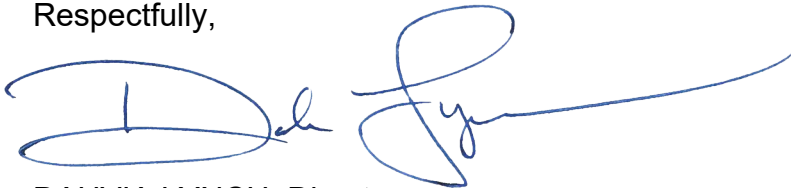
and communities will bear a disproportionate burden either for environmental conditions or to implement proposed measures), and an equity implementation framework. Additionally, staff will continue to engage stakeholders through various outreach events and venues, including virtual workshops on CAP Measures, presentations to the Community Planning and Sponsor Groups and other stakeholder groups, and various touchpoints for the public to ask questions, receive information, and ensure the CAP is reflective of public interests. These efforts will result in preparing a Draft CAP and Supplemental EIR, which will be available for public review by Fall 2023.

There are many ways to stay involved in the CAP Update. For more information on opportunities to provide feedback on the CAP Update, interested persons are encouraged to visit the project website (sandiegocounty.gov/sustainability) to subscribe to notifications about upcoming outreach workshops and to see CAP Update project materials, including summaries of public outreach workshops or follow the CAP Update progress on social media:

- Facebook: facebook.com/SDCountySustainable,
- Twitter: twitter.com/SDCoSustainable, or
- Instagram: instagram.com/sdcountysustainable/

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me at (858) 694-2962 or via email at Dahvia.Lynch@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Respectfully,



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Andrew Potter, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors