



# Solid Waste Conceptual Measures Workshop

## San Diego County Climate Action Plan Update

### Introduction

As part of the public involvement process for the **Climate Action Plan Update** (CAP Update), the County of San Diego (County) is conducting intentional engagement centered on conceptual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction measures.



Wednesday June 1, 2022  
6:00 p.m.  
Zoom

On Wednesday June 1, 2022, County staff held a virtual public workshop to discuss conceptual measures in the Solid Waste sector, the first in a series of meetings focused on each emissions reduction sector. In advance of the meeting, staff promoted the event through e-blasts, social media posts, and direct emails to relevant and interested stakeholders. During the event, 21 participants joined representing environmental, economic, and community organizations as well as individuals. This summary documents meeting objectives and format, how input was solicited, and what was learned from the participants.

### Objectives

The meeting was organized and conducted to accomplish the following objectives:

- Create a comfortable, engaging environment where all participants have an opportunity to provide meaningful input and share concerns.
- Obtain input to help develop the Climate Action Plan Update GHG reduction measures and the vision statement for the Solid Waste sector.
- Explore opportunities and challenges related to greenhouse gas reduction measures that may be considered for the Climate Action Plan Update.
- Provide an overview of the Climate Action Plan Update in a clear and easy to understand way, including the purpose, process, outcomes, timeline, and future opportunities to provide input.

### Format

At the virtual meeting, community members participated in a staff-led presentation and polling questions. The workshop was centered around three topics: Basics of Solid Waste sector emissions; Draft equitable, net-zero vision statement for the sector; Strategies and conceptual measures to reach the draft vision. Throughout the workshop, community members were invited to share their perspectives through the chat, polls, and open discussion. The workshop and prompts were designed so that staff could learn more about community members' perspectives about climate change and potential actions to reduce greenhouse gases.

An interpreter was in attendance for community members whose primary language is Spanish. The meeting materials were also offered in Spanish.

### Major Themes

Major themes common to all the input received from participants are listed below. The ordering does not reflect importance or frequency.



- Economic development and job creation was of interest to participants
- Stakeholders brought up equity throughout the workshop and one participant noted that equity is what brought them to the workshop. Participants shared that increasing access to waste and recycling facilities, clean air, food, and energy would help promote equity.
- Waste to energy was of interest for some participants who suggested it as a way to turn solid waste into renewable natural gas.
- Creating a circular economy was mentioned, and one participant suggested implementing glass take-backs at grocery stores.
- Educating the community about ways to reduce waste and increase recycling, composting, and material reuse was an important topic for participants. One stakeholder suggested partnering with organizations to help repurpose waste.

## Feedback on Conceptual Measures

Three conceptual measures were presented to participants:

1. Develop policies and programs to reduce, adequately separate, and/or repurpose the use of organic/ compostable and recyclable materials in County Operations.
2. Increase diversion of food, landscaping, C&D, recyclable, and other refuse items from the solid waste stream through policies and programs that reduce, adequately separate, and/or repurpose materials.
3. Improve refuse management practices to reduce emissions and support energy generation.

Stakeholders expressed interest in all conceptual measures, with a slight preference for the second conceptual measure above when asked which one was most exciting to them. Other topics that came up when asked if there were any other strategies, measures, or actions the County should consider were resource recovery and recycling, highlighting the entrepreneurial, economic development, and workforce growth component of solid waste, and waste to fuel.

## Poll Everywhere Responses

Staff asked 13 questions throughout the workshop, and a total of 10 workshop participants responded.

**Welcome! What brought you here today?**

*Total responses* 13  
*Unique participants* 7

***General Interest or Curiosity:***

Information

Nosey that way

Curiosity

Sustainability

Concerns about solid waste

***Effects on Workplace and Industry:***

Requirements for Place of Work



Workforce

EQUITY

**Waste Reduction Goals & Methods:**

Zero waste

waste to fuel

Renewable natural gas

Reuse

Hydrogen

**I am a...**

Total responses 11  
Unique participants 8

**Responses:**

	Count	Percent
resident of the unincorporated county	3	27.27
resident of an incorporated city (e.g., City of San Diego, Poway, Encinitas...)	4	36.36
resident of a Native American reservation	0	0
resident of another area (outside of SD County, on a military base, etc.)	0	0
solid waste industry professional	0	0
community-based organization representative	2	18.18
County employee	2	18.18
other	0	0

**Did we get it right? Does "County-wide culture of avoiding, recycling, and/or composting waste, where emissions associated with landfills have been eliminated, and people have access to recycling and compost facilities" reflect your prior comments?**

Total responses 3  
Unique participants 3

**Responses:**

	Count	Percent
Yes	0	0
Almost There	0	0
Not Quite	2	66.67
No	1	33.33

**For those of you who think we're almost or not quite there, what else do you think should be included?**

Total responses 8  
Unique participants 5

**Waste to energy:**

Plastic into renewable energy

Waste to renewable natural gas




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Utilizing waste to renewable sustainable energy

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Biomass of waste

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**Economic & Equity considerations:**

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Economic development and job creation through repurposing and reuse of materials

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Equitable access to facilities and proper recycling and composting.

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**Other:**

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the wholly unnecessary plastic turf fields

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I missed the previous page. 🙄

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**Are there additional ways you think we could reduce waste produced by County operations?**

Total responses 3  
Unique participants 3

**Responses:**

	Upvotes	Downvotes
Create a circular economy	5	0
Renewable diesel	2	0
Renewable sustainable waste to energy	2	0
Partnering with orgs to repurpose waste.	2	0
Waste to Hydrogen	2	0
Biomass	2	0
Edible Food Recovery	2	1
Pyrolysis of waste	2	2
Sustainable aviation fuel	1	1
Spending getting best for now and future	1	0
Zero waste	1	0

**What would make it easier for you to reduce the amount of trash you produce?**

Total responses 5  
Unique participants 4

**Responses:**

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There has to be an intentional, comprehensive, culturally translated education about waste and how we have created the culture of waste and how to unlearn these practices.

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Build a waste processing center to create sustainable gases

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Proper food storage

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Reuse packaging

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Waste to energy

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**How can we increase reuse and recycling in your community?**

Total responses 8  
Unique participants 4

**Policies and education:**

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Yes! We need policy changes. It's not all on the consumer. The same way we changed bag usage we can do it with other waste products. Just

The majority of greenhouse gases are from the private industry. We need business models to encourage the private industry to change

Helping community members identify what we already recycle and reuse. We do it more often than we think. Give us our props and then let's kick it up a notch and go a bit further.

**Circular economy:**

glass take back in grocery stores

circular economy is the only way to increase reuse and recycling in our communities

**Waste to energy:**

Waste of hydrogen is a great way to transition the fossil fuel industries

Waste to energy

Pyrolysis

**Which action would you most like to see implemented in your community?**

Total responses 8  
Unique participants 4

**Responses:**

	Upvotes	Downvotes
A circular economy	3	0
Drawing on the practices of our ancestors and remembering and revisiting those practices.	2	0
Eliminate the use and generation of single use plastics in the County and edible food recovery.	2	0
Culturally translated waste education.	2	0
City should control the waste system.	1	0
All of the above approach to energy	1	0
Middle class careers created from waste projects!	1	0
drawing o	0	0

**Why does reducing waste matter to you most?**

Total responses 8  
Unique participants 4

**General sustainability and Climate Action:**

The governor has touted an all of the above approach. We need every opportunity to create dispatchable of all renewable sources of energy to create electricity for electrification.

There are solutions for waste. We should tap into that solution

All of it seems like such a Herculean task, #climateaction, waste is something I can personally do that seems like a no brainer. Mostly everyone can agree and get behind the fact that we shouldn't be wasteful. Other measures not so much.

Landfills are a linear system. I would like to see a solution to landfills

**Future generations:**

Plan for 7 generations



Defined, sustainable development is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The UCLA Sustainability Committee notes: "In simplest terms, sustainability is about our children and our grandchildren, and the world we will leave them".

Our children should not inherit our landfills

**Economic factors:**

With electrification comes the loss of natural gas jobs. Waste to fuel is an opportunity to transition our natural gas workers

**Of all the measures we shared, which one is most exciting to you?** Total responses 6  
Unique participants 6

<b>Responses:</b>	Count	Percent
Develop policies and programs to reduce, adequately separate, and/or repurpose the use of organic/ compostable and recyclable materials in County Operations.	1	16.67
Increase diversion of food, landscaping, C&D, recyclable, and other refuse items from the solid waste stream through policies and programs that reduce, adequately separate, and/or repurpose materials.	3	50
Improve refuse management practices to reduce emissions and support energy generation	2	33.33

**Are there any other strategies, measures, or actions the County should consider?** Total responses 12  
Unique participants 5

**Resource recovery & recycling:**

Let's recycle solar panels and batteries with a circular economy in the future!  
Enhance resource recovery- only around 20% of electronic waste is recycled- circular economy is necessary

**Waste to energy:**

Demonstration projects for waste to fuel  
Sustainable aviation fuel is created from waste  
Sustainable aviation fuel for all County Airports  
Convert all waste to sustainable fuels and dramatically reduce the carbon footprint through a circular economy  
Waste to renewable fuels  
Renewable green hydrogen from waste

**Economic factors:**

The county should really consider all of that entrepreneurship and economic development opportunities in waste diversion. The workforce component is needed. Also, education to those who aren't in these kinds of meetings. Preaching to the choir isn't gonna cut it. How do you reach folks focused on simply surviving? It's hard out here.



just as Prince George's County Public Schools, in their CAP, transition from plastic turf to natural grass. Create organic natural grass management educational programs for schools...sustainable grass for sustainable jobs

**Policies and targets:**

A specific zero waste target that specifically commits to at least a 90% waste diversion or more by 2035  
Let's capture all federal and state funding to solve our Waste problems

**Which co-benefits are most important to you? Choose your top 3.**

Total responses 18  
Unique participants 6

<b>Responses:</b>	Count	Percent
Air Quality	0	0
Biological Resources	1	5.56
Carbon Sequestration	4	22.22
Community Health	2	11.11
Cost Savings	2	11.11
Energy Savings	1	5.56
Improved Mobility	1	5.56
Job Generation	4	22.22
Noise Reduction	0	0
Public Health	3	16.67
Water Quality	0	0
Water Savings	0	0
Other	0	0

**Given the following list, what other criteria are important to you when evaluating measures? GHG reduction; Cost (to County, cost to residents); Equity considerations; Timeliness (how soon GHG reductions start); Co-benefits**

Total responses 13  
Unique participants 7

**GHG Reduction:**

GHG reduction, lower cost of energy- utilities, gas

**Cost:**

Cost savings

**Equity considerations:**

Equity, increasing access to clean air & communities as well as food. Waste diversion also leads to good, high-paying jobs.

For the trash and pollution in low income communities statement, I would like to add in addition to public health, how about social or self imaging? What or how does it affect your self image, self esteem when you live in a systemic trash dump?



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intentional and targeted outreach to less participatory segments of the populations as well as purposeful diversity

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**Combination of the above topics:**

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Carbon capture can create sustainable Aviation fuel. Let's take care of two problems at once

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Lower cost, energy abundance would lead to access and equity for all

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Sustainable society

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Industrial scale Carbon Capture. Creates tons of middle-class jobs

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**Other:**

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synthetic turf begins to off gas the moment they are rolled out and continue in ever increasing amounts for the 450+ years it takes for them to decompose. they represent MANY negative human and environmental health impacts and they are NOT necessary

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Electric vehicles and Hydro fuel-cell vehicles

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Having a use for waste would decrease trash on freeways and in neighborhoods

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Great seminar

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