



January 12, 2018

Mayor Arapostathis and Council
City of La Mesa
City Council Chambers
La Mesa City Hall
8130 Allison Ave.
La Mesa, CA 91942

Re: Recommendations to Strengthen La Mesa’s Draft Climate Action Plan

Dear Mayor Arapostathis and Council,

Climate Action Campaign is a non-profit organization working to stop climate change and improve the quality of life through planning, policies, and programs at the local level. We have been participating in the development process of La Mesa’s Climate Action Plan (CAP), and we commend staff for their responsiveness to our feedback on draft versions of the document.

We look forward to adoption of the CAP this spring, and we offer the following recommendations to strengthen the CAP and ensure its equitable implementation.

1. Inclusion of a 100% Clean Energy Target.

Transitioning to 100% renewable electricity for homes and businesses is the most powerful strategy a city can embrace to reduce emissions. Already in San Diego County, five local governments have adopted 100% clean energy targets (more than any other county in the United States), and that number will likely grow to six when Encinitas adopts its CAP this month. With the introduction of SB 100 at the state level, California’s transition to 100% renewables is all but assured. Clean and renewable energy is the future toward which our region and our state are driving, and we encourage the City of La Mesa to embrace this decisive shift away from fossil fuels by adopting a 100% clean energy target in the CAP.

With the inclusion of Community Choice Energy as a strategy in La Mesa’s CAP and continued support for rooftop solar and energy efficiency, the City is already well on its way to planning for a 100% clean energy future. We recommend that La Mesa make it official and join the over 50 cities in the United States committed to a future powered by renewable energy.

2. Inclusion of Mode Share Targets in Future CAP Updates

We are grateful to staff for noting in the January 2018 CAP Draft that mode share data has been requested from SANDAG and that mode share goals will be set in future CAP updates. Mode share targets, which establish what percentage of commuters travel by



walking, biking, and transit, allow the development of aligned strategies to ensure goals are met, resulting in an evidence-based roadmap toward those targets. They also help cities plan and budget to facilitate a shift away from car-centric development, as well as advocate for assistance for better transit infrastructure.

We recommend that in any motion to adopt the CAP, Council include a commitment to incorporating mode share targets within a year of adoption. While the CAP Implementation and Monitoring provisions call for updates every five years, the omission of mode share targets from the current version of the CAP is significant and should be remedied on a timeline accelerated beyond the regular five-year schedule.

3. Inclusion of a Social Equity and Green Jobs Section

Sustainability has been described as a “[three legged stool](#)”, where economic prosperity, ecological integrity, and social equity are the pillars required to achieve an equitable, livable, and economically healthy community. An explicit commitment to social equity in the CAP, with guidelines for how equity and jobs will be measured and tracked, will help ensure that the benefits of environmental protection are distributed justly and support a thriving La Mesa for all.

The Draft CAP acknowledges that under SB 1000, which requires cities to include Environmental Justice elements in General Plans updated after January 1, 2018 (or integrate EJ goals and policies into each element), La Mesa will be required to address EJ in future General Plan updates. That does not and should not, however, preclude the City from proactively addressing equity in the CAP.

Actions that support social equity might include ensuring all populations in the City have access to solar energy, home energy efficiency upgrades, and green spaces. To support well-paying green jobs, the City can foster programs to create employment in the clean energy sector and other CAP-related arenas and ensure CAP-related work done through city City programs complies with the California Statewide Prevailing Wage Ordinance.

Cities in the region are at different stages in the process of developing metrics and guidelines to help actualize their commitments to social equity and green jobs, and Climate Action Campaign will be happy to partner with La Mesa to navigate the process of prioritizing equity in CAP implementation.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important document. We are available as a resource to further discuss these recommendations or other elements of the CAP, and we look forward to continuing to partner with the City through the implementation process.



Sincerely,

Sophie Wolfram

Sophie Wolfram, Policy Advocate