



May 12, 2022

Mayor Gloria and Council
San Diego City Hall
202 C Street
San Diego, CA 92102
Via Email

RE: Recommendations for the Climate Action Plan Update to Meet State Law

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers,

Climate Action Campaign is a non-profit organization based in San Diego with a simple mission: stop the climate crisis through effective and equitable policy action.

We commend the City for its commitment to a zero emissions target by 2035 in its Climate Action Plan Update (Update) and including new best practices that have evolved since the original 2015 CAP. These actions are in alignment with climate science and state law, and if implemented, would help protect public health and make us climate safe and climate ready.

However, we are concerned that many of the key strategies, measures, and actions used to meet state law lack specificity, timelines, cost analysis, funding, or evidence they can be achieved. As proposed, we do not believe the Project complies with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines and therefore cannot be used as a greenhouse gas reduction plan for streamlining purposes or serve as a mitigation document for the city's General Plan Update.

To comply with state law, **we recommend that the City complete a comprehensive funding and implementation plan** with associated costs, existing and potential funding sources, and planning and project timelines *before* adopting the CAP Update. We oppose the piecemeal approach to developing and implementing the CAP Update package.

As importantly, the lack of specificity in the CAP Update plans and programs, along with a lack of analysis of associated costs, **puts at risk our ability to successfully compete for the billions of dollars that will be available through federal and state climate investments.**

Overall 2022 CAP Update Reflections and Recommendations:

What's Working:

- **Zero Carbon Target:** We applaud the City for setting a 2035 zero carbon target in alignment with climate science and state mandate under Executive Order B-55-18.
- **Strong Equity Components:** By intentionally incorporating equity throughout the Update, the City is setting the table for inclusive climate action.
- **Building Decarbonization:** We appreciate the City recognizing the need to address the public health and climate danger of methane gas in our atmosphere, homes, and lungs.

What's Missing:

- **Detailed and Specific Evidence:** Throughout the Update there are numerous actions that do not have detailed and specific evidence on *how* the City will reduce emissions. This is particularly concerning for the CAP to remain a CEQA mitigation document for the city General Plan Update and CEQA-qualified for permit development project streamlining.
- **Implementation Planning:** While the City appears to be enacting the recommendations of last year's CAP Performance Audit, we are concerned that the scale, scope, costs, and timelines for implementation remain vague and at risk of further delay. We need the funding and budget needs tabulated and released concurrently with the Update.

How to fix it:

- **Prioritize Early:** Identify key measures and actions early that will result in the highest, fastest, and most equitable GHG reductions, while ensuring the City is well-positioned for state and federal funds, particularly for Strategies 1 and 3.
- **Strengthen Engagement:** Engage diverse community stakeholders early and often, setting up efficient and focused task forces where necessary, prioritizing working-class communities of color who are most vulnerable to climate impacts.
- **Provide Evidence:** Provide specific details and substantial evidence on how proposed actions will be implemented and result in promised GHG reductions. This must include information on the scope, scale, costs, and timelines per action as required by CEQA for the privilege of project development streamlining.
- **Follow Performance Audit Recommendations:** As outlined in the 2021 CAP Performance Audit, the City has a roadmap to get back on track to implement the CAP.¹
- **Plan for CAP Implementation:** Develop a comprehensive CAP Implementation Plan with associated costs, existing and potential funding sources, and timelines.
- **Budget for CAP Implementation:** Provide a 5-year budget outlook for CAP implementation funding needs, and align those outlooks in annual budgeting processes.
- **Ensure Interdepartmental Collaboration:** Ensure all City departments communicate and collaborate in the development and implementation of CAP measures through annual budgeting and department work plans as recommended by the City's CAP Audit.

¹ City of San Diego. Office of the City Auditor. [Performance Audit of the City's Climate Action Plan](#). (February 2021).

- **Implement the CAP:** Prioritize, budget, and implement the CAP.
- **Foster Regional Climate Action:** Support and collaborate with cities, agencies and institutions in collective efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and support AB 1640 (Ward)—state legislation authorizing regions to create “Regional Climate Networks” at Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) such as SANDAG.

How we got here: contextual analysis of the City’s climate action efforts

In 2015 the City of San Diego [adopted a landmark and nationally lauded Climate Action Plan](#) (CAP). The City’s CAP committed to numerous greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction and mitigation actions organized under five strategies: Water & Energy Efficient Buildings; Clean & Renewable Energy; Bicycling, Walking, Transit and Land Use; Zero Waste (Gas & Waste Management); and Climate Resiliency (Trees). In total, the CAP committed to a 50 percent reduction in GHG emissions from a 2010 baseline by 2035.²

The CAP was both mitigation for the emissions projected for the 30-year lifespan of the updated General Plan as well as a qualified CAP under CEQA to allow for streamlined approval of new project developments.

Unfortunately, since the CAPs adoption nearly seven years ago, little progress has been made in meeting the City’s legally-binding targets. Year after year, the City has delayed implementation of the majority of CAP strategies and refused to provide a detailed funding analysis of implementation and/or 5-year budget outlooks, [resulting in minimal if any local GHG reduction outcomes](#).³

CAC has consistently elevated the City’s lack of progress through letters, testimony, meetings, and detailed analyses in our annual [Climate Action Plan Report Card](#).⁴ The city itself has released Annual Reports that reveal minimal implementation and minimal accounting of progress. At one of the lowest points in CAP history, the City claimed and celebrated a 24% reduction in GHG emissions. The City later recounted that progress and acknowledged they were using flawed data and methodology.⁵

In 2021, the City released an [official audit](#) that outlined a number of deficiencies in implementation planning, funding, and the lack of prioritization and organization in top city management.⁶

² City of San Diego. Sustainability Department. [City of San Diego Climate Action Plan](#). (December 2015). Pages 20-21.

³ City of San Diego. Sustainability Department. [Climate Action Plan Annual Reports](#). (December 2020).

⁴ Climate Action Campaign. [Climate Action Plan Report Cards](#). (February 2020).

⁵ Emerson Smith, Joshua. *San Diego Union Tribune*. [San Diego continues to tout greenhouse-gas reductions that never happened](#). (December 30, 2020).

⁶ City of San Diego. Office of the City Auditor. [Performance Audit of the City’s Climate Action Plan](#). (February 2021).

The lack of progress can be directly attributed to poorly implemented CAP actions. While the City has made progress on Strategy 2, Clean & Renewable Energy, by co-establishing a regional Community Choice Energy program ([San Diego Community Power](#)) to help achieve its 100 percent clean electricity target, little else has been done.

Transportation is the City's Weakest Link: CAP Strategy 3

Consider the City's failures in implementing the CAP's "Strategy 3: Biking, Walking, Transit & Land Use." In 2016, it seemed the City would take the opportunity to update various neighborhood Community Plans (most of which were close to downtown and in highly urban areas) to align with CAP mode shift targets from driving to biking, walking and transit. Instead, the city failed to meet CAP goals with each plan and promised to make up the gaps in future plans—often touting actions and analysis never included in or relevant to the CAP. Instead, with each subsequent Community Plan Update that passed over the years, the gap widened and no new transportation strategies were deployed, putting San Diego farther and farther behind on meeting legally-binding targets. More details are below.

Failure One: CPUs as CAP Implementation Tools

Under Strategy 3 actions, the City committed to implement the "City of Villages Strategy" and "transit-oriented development" in Transit Priority Areas.⁷ At the time of the CAP's adoption, the City was in the middle of multi-year efforts to complete Community Plan Updates (CPUs), presenting an opportunity to align the City's CAP transportation and land use strategies with the CPUs. However, by early 2016, the Golden Hill, North Park, San Ysidro, and Uptown CPUs were on track for approval without CAP mode share alignment.

In July 2016, CAC became so alarmed by the City's imminent failure to implement Strategy 3 in CPUs that we [sent a legal memo](#) to the Planning Department outlining shortfalls that would compromise CAP mode share targets.⁸ These concerns would go unheeded as the City would approve various CPUs throughout the fall and winter of 2016.⁹ As a result, CPUs as a tool to implement Strategy 3 would dead end, and no CPU approved since has aligned with CAP mode share targets. The lack of CPU and CAP goal alignment is disappointing given that the City has already demonstrated the ability to measure the successful buildout of local plans against the CAP's mode shift targets, as evidenced by the [Downtown Mobility Plan](#).¹⁰

⁷ City of San Diego. Sustainability Department. [City of San Diego Climate Action Plan](#). (December 2015). Pages 37-39.

⁸ Climate Action Campaign, Coast Law Group. [San Ysidro, North Park, Uptown, and Golden Hill Community Plan Updates](#). (July 8, 2016).

⁹ Bowen, Andrew. KPBS News. [San Diego City Council Approves Update To North Park Growth Plans](#). (October 25, 2016).

¹⁰ City of San Diego. Civic San Diego. [Downtown San Diego Mobility Plan](#). (June 2016).

Failure Two: Transportation Master Plan

In an attempt to demonstrate progress on Strategy 3 outside of Community Plan Updates and other land use strategies, the City pivoted in 2017, promising to develop a comprehensive mode share road map called the “Transportation Master Plan” (TMP).¹¹ The proposed TMP would provide the City and communities with clear actions, policies, projects and programs to meet CAP mode share targets. Unfortunately, the TMP was delayed and stalled for two years and was never developed.

Failure Three: Mobility Action Plan

In 2019 the City recast the TMP into the [Mobility Action Plan](#) (MAP) with a more limited scope.¹² Instead of the intended roadmap to achieving the City’s mode share targets, the MAP evolved into a visioning document, which provided a high-level framework of mobility best practices. When MAP was completed and presented to Council in late 2019, the City was four years into CAP implementation with little progress on Strategy 3, and still no roadmap to reaching mode share targets or identifying implementation costs and funding sources.

In 2020, recognizing that MAP was not the promised solution to meeting CAP mode share targets, CAC urged the City to revise MAP during the FY 2021 budget cycle.¹³ Unfortunately, our requests were ignored.

Failure Four: Mobility Action Plan Phase II

Finally, in 2021 the City acknowledged failures on implementing transportation strategies and proposed “Mobility Action Plan Phase II” (MAP 2.0), with the stated intention of fulfilling the previous TMP’s primary objective: providing a clear roadmap for meeting CAP mode share targets.

CAC pressed the City during the FY 2022 budget cycle to fully fund and accelerate MAP 2.0’s development, noting the city was already six years behind in Strategy 3 implementation.¹⁴

At the May 6, 2021 Budget Review Committee hearing, city staff laid out a three year timeline, and proposed nominal City funds to pay for only part of MAP 2.0, with a [Caltrans planning grant](#) proposed to close the funding gap.¹⁵

¹¹ Climate Action Campaign. [2nd Edition Climate Action Plan Report Card](#). (February 2018). Page 39.

¹² City of San Diego. [Mobility Action Plan](#). (October 2019).

¹³ Climate Action Campaign. [Recommended Items for FY 2021 Final Budget Modifications](#). (April 27, 2020).

¹⁴ Climate Action Campaign. [CAC FY 2022 Budget Priorities](#). (April 14, 2021).

¹⁵ City of San Diego. [Mobility Department: Fiscal Year 2022 Proposed Budget](#). (May 6, 2021); City of San Diego. City Clerk. [Mobility Board Meeting Notice and Agenda](#). (February 3, 2021).

When pressed by Council at Budget Review Committee on whether the timeline and funding allocations for MAP 2.0 were sufficient, city staff assured Councilmembers that time was necessary and the Caltrans grant would come through.¹⁶

Unfortunately, the City's Caltrans grant application was denied, and the City was left with only seed funds to begin scoping work for MAP 2.0.¹⁷ CAC efforts to secure a Mid-Year budget revision to fully fund MAP 2.0 in FY 2022 were also unsuccessful.¹⁸

Pending Failure? Mobility Master Plan

In fall 2021, the City announced its "[Our Climate. Our Future](#)" initiative, which included a renaming of MAP 2.0 to the Mobility Master Plan (MMP), the fourth name change in five years. The announcement came with no additional details on whether the City intended to accelerate the timeline or fully fund the MMP, nor if the plan would be a roadmap to reach the CAP binding mode share goals.

CAC has elevated timeline acceleration and full funding as part of our FY 2023 budget advocacy, as the City continues to work on the MMP at a slow pace with limited funds.¹⁹ The City's second attempt to secure a Caltrans planning grant failed, and while the Mayor has proposed \$350,000 for the MMP in the FY23 budget, the MMP is not expected to be complete until FY 2024, three years after its renaming, and nearly a decade after the original CAP's adoption.²⁰

And while SANDAG's recently adopted 2021 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) will make great strides for sustainable transportation, it will not be enough to meet what the CAP requires for mode shift, and the City still has no roadmap to close the gap between the RTP's achievements and the CAP's binding targets for biking, walking, and transit.²¹

According to data provided by SANDAG, the 2021 Regional Transportation Plan will only achieve 27% of commuters taking bike, walk, and transit in City of San Diego TPAs by 2035. While this is a significant improvement when compared to the 2015 Regional Plan, it is not enough to meet the City's original 50% mode shift target (as set in the 2015 CAP), as it still leaves a 23% gap. It remains mathematically impossible for the City of San Diego to achieve its climate goals if it were to rely solely on SANDAG's 2021 Regional Plan.

¹⁶ City of San Diego. City Clerk. [FY 2022 Budget Review Committee Hearing](#). (May 6, 2021).

¹⁷ Caltrans. [FY 2021-22 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program Non-Award List](#). (June 14, 2021). Page 16.

¹⁸ Climate Action Campaign. [Climate Action Campaign Urges City of San Diego to Fully Fund and Accelerate Mobility Action Plan 2.0 \(MAP 2.0\)](#). (July 17, 2021); Climate Action Campaign. [Climate Action Campaign Mid-Year FY 2022 Budget Priorities Memo](#). (November 10, 2021).

¹⁹ Climate Action Campaign. [Climate Action Campaign FY 2023 Budget Priorities Memo](#). (December 17, 2021).

²⁰ Caltrans. [FY 2022-23 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program Non-Award List](#). (March 18, 2022). Page 9; City of San Diego. Office of the Independent Budget Analyst. [Review of FY 2023 Proposed Budget](#). (April 29, 2022) Pages 193-196.

²¹ Climate Action Campaign. [Missing the Mark](#). (October, 21, 2021).

What these failures mean:

The history of Strategy 3 exemplifies the City's failure to faithfully implement the CAP by refusing to prioritize, budget, and plan. The failed opportunities with CPUs, repeated delays in planning, and broken promises to meet CAP mode share targets should be an alarm bell as the City looks to make the necessary commitments to achieve a zero carbon future by 2035. It is also a signal to the community that the City is willing to put itself at legal risk for failing to meet or demonstrate progress toward its legally-binding CAP targets.

CAC Recommendations on CAP Update by Strategy and Measure

CAC recommendations are organized below by the strategies and measures outlined in the proposed Update. We hope these recommendations and the City's CAP implementation history will be taken into consideration as the City charts a path toward zero carbon and maintaining a CEQA-qualified CAP.

Strategy 1: Decarbonization of the Built Environment

We applaud the City for recognizing building decarbonization as a key component to achieving a zero carbon future. Methane gas in buildings make up 20% of the City's GHG emissions.²² It is also a dangerous indoor air pollutant.²³ Successful building decarbonization must center equity and sustainability, which means conducting extensive community and stakeholder engagement, inclusive implementation policy and planning prescriptions, and the only actual economic and environmentally sustainable pathway to full building decarbonization: electrification.

We also support many of the recommendations elevated by our partners in the San Diego Building Electrification Coalition, sent to the city via electronic letter earlier this year.²⁴

Building Electrification versus Fossil Fuel Industry-based solutions

Across the world, fossil fuel companies are offering false solutions to the real and present danger their products, including methane gas, are to public health and climate. Dead-end technologies like "low carbon" and "clean" fuels, "renewable natural gas," biomethane, "clean hydrogen" and other hydrogen-based fuels should not take precedence over proven, cost-effective, and scalable electrification solutions.²⁵ These unproven alternatives are being

²² City of San Diego. Sustainability & Mobility Department. [Climate Action Plan: Our Climate, Our Future](#). (October 27, 2021). Page 41.

²³ Physicians for Social Responsibility, Rocky Mountain Institute, et al. ["Gas Stoves: Health and Air Quality Impacts and Solutions."](#) (2020)

²⁴ San Diego Building Electrification Coalition. "Comments on draft City of San Diego Climate Action Plan." (January 31, 2022).

²⁵ EarthJustice. ["Hydrogen No Silver Bullet for Climate Crisis, Focus on Electrification."](#) (August 31, 2021); EarthJustice and Sierra Club. ["Rhetoric vs. Reality: The Myth of "Renewable Natural Gas" for Building Decarbonization."](#) (July 14, 2020); Cleantechica. ["Another Carbon Capture & Storage \(CCS\) Project Doesn't Live Up To Its Targets."](#) (September 13, 2021).

elevated by fossil fuel corporations and their allies in order to extend the life of their infrastructure and profits, not to decarbonize our communities. In comparison, electrification pathways are proven, climate-friendly, promote public health, and are beginning to be deployed at scale in communities across the nation.²⁶

Recent geopolitical events have only further clarified electrification's key role in not only stopping the climate crisis, but creating true energy independence from dangerous and unpredictable petrol states and fossil fuel corporations.²⁷

An unfortunate example of the fossil fuel industry attempting to thwart proven climate solutions exists in our own backyard with SDG&E's recent report outlining their own recommendations to achieve "net zero." As we elevated in an April letter to the City, SDG&E's proposed solutions are not in service to City and community zero carbon goals; SDG&E is solely interested in maintaining its fossil fuel infrastructure and high profit margins for decades to come at the expense of our communities and climate, and is attempting to greenwash its infrastructure and products to justify their continued use and harm.²⁸

Instead of following the lead of the fossil fuel industry, the CAP Update must focus on existing all-electric opportunities and proven technologies for its building decarbonization efforts, not greenwashed proposals that will lock in more emissions and toxic pollution for decades to come.

Building Electrification and Public Health

Building electrification is not only critical to our climate, but also public health. Methane gas pumped into our homes has been proven countless times to increase negative health outcomes.²⁹ A recent study in Australia linked indoor air pollution from methane gas as equivalent to secondhand smoke in asthmatic children.³⁰ We have known about the negative health impacts of methane gas for decades, including a 1992 study that found children who live in a home with a methane gas stove have a nearly 20% increased risk of developing respiratory illnesses.³¹

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has started exploring rules and regulations to stop the harmful spread of methane gas and nitrogen oxides in our homes. CARB adopted a resolution in November 2020 promising to move forward with policies to reduce indoor air

²⁶ The Architects Network. [Ithaca will decarbonize all 6,000 of the city's buildings](#). (November 10, 2021); City of San Jose. Department of Environmental Services. [Healthy Homes, Healthy Air: A Framework for Existing Building Electrification Centered on Community Priorities](#). (February 25, 2022).

²⁷ Washington Post. [U.S. to ban oil imports from Russia as White House explores drastic plans to buffer economy from energy shock](#). (March 8, 2022).

²⁸ Climate Action Campaign. [Climate Action Campaign Response to SDG&E Greenwashing Report](#). (April 27, 2022).

²⁹ Power Past Fracked Gas. ["Methane Gas: Health, Safety, & Decarbonization."](#) (August 2021).

³⁰ Climate Council. ["Kicking the habit: How gas is harming our health."](#) (2021).

³¹ Journal of the Air & Waste Management Association. ["Synthesis of Environmental Evidence: Nitrogen Dioxide Epidemiology Studies."](#) (1992).

pollution.³² This recognition makes sense as one in eight Californians has asthma (with higher asthma rates in working class communities of color), 12 million Californians live in homes with a gas stove billowing nitrogen dioxide that would be illegal outdoors, and building emissions are the primary source of premature deaths from air pollution statewide, accounting for more than 6,000 premature deaths every year.³³

The Aliso Canyon gas leak also demonstrated the dangers of methane gas to outdoor air quality as well.³⁴ The science is clear: methane gas is a public health disaster.

Building Electrification and Community and Worker Partnership

Building electrification must be completed with careful consideration of community and worker impacts. Equitable electrification for communities of concern and new job opportunities for fossil fuel workers must be key elements of any building electrification strategy. There has been significant research and progress made on how to engage with communities and workers. The Greenlining Institute’s “Equitable Building Electrification” report includes some key case studies of communities in California who have undergone building electrification, which may prove insightful for our region.³⁵

We recommend the City continue to engage our partners in labor to co-create worker impact studies, and develop a robust community engagement plan in partnership with place-based organizations, specifically in working-class communities of color identified as vulnerable by the Climate Equity Index. In addition to the City’s commissioned jobs impact analysis, the County’s workforce development study, part of the Regional Decarbonization Framework, may provide helpful insights on green job opportunities for fossil fuel workers.³⁶

Building Electrification and Starting-Line Disparities

There are significant starting-line disparities in building electrification. Deferred maintenance in older buildings, which are more likely to be occupied by working-class communities of color and low income families, face deadly health impacts from lead, mold, asbestos, and other structural deficiencies. The City’s building electrification policies and programs must recognize these risks, and prioritize equity in electrification which may require significant, targeted investments in pre-weatherization and weatherization in communities of concern. The Green and Healthy

³² State of California Air Resources Board. [California Indoor Air Quality Program Update](#). (November 19, 2020).

³³ Grab, Denise. Cal Matters. [Agencies should follow CARB’s leadership on emissions from gas appliances](#). (December 1, 2020).

³⁴ California Air Resource Board. [Aliso Canyon Natural Gas Leak](#). (2021).

³⁵ The Greenlining Institute. [Equitable Building Electrification: A Framework for Powering Resilient Communities](#). (September 30, 2021).

³⁶ Building Electrification Institute and Inclusive Economics. [San Diego Jobs Impact Analysis](#). (December 2021); County of San Diego. [Regional Decarbonization Framework, Workforce Development Study](#). (March 16, 2022).

Homes Initiative 2020 report on this issue is a good resource to explore and understand starting-line disparities.³⁷

Strategy 1: Measure 1.1: Decarbonize Existing Buildings

We support the City’s bold building decarbonization targets, however, there are no detailed actions outlined under this measure. The single recommended action to “develop a comprehensive roadmap to achieve decarbonization of the existing building stock” should include scope, scale, estimated costs, specific planning and implementation timelines, and an outline for community and stakeholder engagement. Without these details and commitments to follow through, the City’s building electrification efforts may well follow its failed CAP Strategy 3 mode shift implementation.

The City has a growing number of examples and models for all-electric building decarbonization efforts from across the country:

- **San Jose, CA** recently released a comprehensive citywide existing building retrofit plan centering equity and inclusive community engagement.³⁸
- **Denver, CO** passed an all-electric building efficiency and electrification plan for buildings over 25,000 square feet.³⁹
- **Berkeley, CA** created an electrification strategy for building decarbonization, and has been testing methods for community electrification.⁴⁰
- **Ithaca, NY** partnered with two private companies, BlocPower and Alturus, to electrify all of their buildings by 2030.⁴¹

We recommend the City research these and other plans prior to the CAP Update’s adoption to at least share more information on the scope, scale, estimated costs, project timelines, and community engagement plans, and provide substantial evidence for CEQA qualification and reasonable compliance.

Additionally, there is a growing ecosystem of building electrification consultants, experts and community coalitions who can help support the city’s all-electric efforts. We recommend the City engage with the following organization to learn more about building electrification best practices:

³⁷ Green and Healthy Homes Initiatives. [Leading with Equity and Justice in the Clean Energy Transition: Getting to the Starting Line for Residential Building Electrification](#). (2020).

³⁸ City of San Jose. [Healthy Homes. Healthy Air: A Framework for Existing Building Electrification Centered on Community Priorities](#). (February 25, 2022).

³⁹ City of Denver. [Bill 21-1310](#). (November 21, 2021); Institute for Market Transformation. [Denver Passes Building Performance Standard](#). (November 23, 2021).

⁴⁰ City of Berkeley. [Existing Building Electrification Strategy](#). (November 2021).

⁴¹ McDonald, Jordan. *Emerging Tech Brew*. [Ithaca wants to decarbonize all of its buildings by 2030—here’s how it will work](#). (March 4, 2022).

- [Building Decarbonization Coalition](#)
- [Building Electrification Institute](#)
- [Greenlining Institute](#)
- [New Building Institute](#)
- [Rocky Mountain Institute](#)
- [San Diego Building Electrification Coalition](#)

Without these necessary implementation planning efforts, CAC does not believe the City is on firm footing to declare this a CEQA-qualified measure.

Strategy 1: Measure 1.2: Decarbonize New Building Development

We are disappointed the City has not yet taken action in stopping the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure in our communities by adopting a comprehensive all-electric reach code.

Over 54 cities in California have already adopted all-electric reach codes for new construction, including three in San Diego County (Carlsbad, Encinitas and Solana Beach).⁴² While the state of California adopted some all-electric new construction policies in 2021, they do not go far enough in preventing new fossil fuel infrastructure from being built and harming our communities.⁴³

San Diego should follow suit promptly to catch up to its peers, ideally passing a comprehensive all-electric reach code with minimal to no-exemptions by year’s end as recommended in the Update. Resources and templates on how cities can adopt all-electric reach codes can be found at the [Building Decarbonization Coalition website](#).⁴⁴

Strategy 1: Measure 1.3: Decarbonize City Facilities

We support the City’s language committing to building electrification, on-site renewable electricity, energy storage and microgrids, and energy efficiency efforts for municipal facilities as part of the [Municipal Energy Strategy](#) and Implementation Plan.⁴⁵

We also support the development of a municipal zero carbon emissions buildings and operations policy, though we caution the City from including previously mentioned dead end, fossil fuel industry supported technologies in the final policy in place of proven electrification strategies. We are still waiting to see the timeline for implementation of these great ideas.

⁴² Sierra Club. [California’s Cities Lead the Way to a Gas-Free Future](#). (July 22, 2021).

⁴³ Balaraman, Kavya. *Utility Dive*. [California greenlights first-of-its-kind energy code to encourage electrified buildings](#). (August 12, 2021).

⁴⁴ Building Decarbonization Coalition. [Reach Codes and Stretch Codes](#). (2022).

⁴⁵ City of San Diego. Sustainability Department. [Municipal Energy Strategy](#). (2021).

A Note on Worker Policies and Protections:

As the City begins to decarbonize various sectors of the economy, it is important to continue to center the voices and perspectives of workers who may face displacement. We encourage the City to engage and work with our partners in labor to understand their needs and address their concerns with policies, programs, and protections so no worker is left behind in a decarbonized San Diego.

Illinois Clean Energy Jobs Act

A helpful framework for the City may be the Illinois Clean Energy Jobs Act (CEJA).⁴⁶ A comprehensive framework, CEJA includes a number of critical components to ensuring a just transition for displaced fossil fuel workers, coupled with policies and programs designed to increase renewable energy development and high-road jobs and careers. As key element of CEJA is “The Displaced Energy Workers Bill of Rights” which includes:

- Advanced notice of closure
- Financial advice to displaced workers
- Continued health care and retirement packages; and
- Full tuition scholarships at state and community colleges and trade programs with guaranteed state funding⁴⁷

We hope the City will incorporate elements of these policies throughout the CAP wherever worker impacts are anticipated, and lobby state officials for legislation as comprehensive as Illinois’ CEJA approach.

Authentic Engagement with Workers

As the City looks to green existing and future jobs, we also recommend it do so in an equitable way that approaches these complex issues with sensitivity and cultural competency. We recommend the Equity Research Institutes “Just Transition/Transition to Justice” report that provides some concrete ideas on how to engage and decarbonize our communities with a focus on equity and social justice.⁴⁸

Good Union Jobs and Equitable Access to High-Road Careers

Having high worker standards will be key to building community buy-in for full decarbonization. As the draft County’s Regional Decarbonization Framework discovered, many of the best paying jobs are union jobs, protected by collective bargaining, and offering prevailing wages, healthcare

⁴⁶ State of Illinois. [Gov. Pritzker Signs Transformative Legislation Establishing Illinois as a National Leader on Climate Action](#). (September 15, 2021).

⁴⁷ Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition. [Supporting Fossil Fuel Workers and Communities, A Just Transition to a Clean Energy Economy](#). (September 2021).

⁴⁸ Equity Research Institute. [Just Transition/Transition to Justice: Power, Policy and Possibilities](#). (June 2021).

benefits, and pensions.⁴⁹ We recommend the City work with regional partners to ensure the transition to an all-electric and fossil fuel free future be built by a skilled and trained union workforce.

Equally important will be ensuring equitable access to these jobs for working-class communities of color, which can be accomplished through targeted zip code hiring requirements, and government, workforce development, contractor and union investments in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs in communities of concern. The City should encourage and support union, and public and private sector investments in workforce diversity to advance economic, social, and racial justice in decarbonization efforts.

Strategy 2: Access to Clean & Renewable Energy

We applaud the City for leading on equitable access to clean and renewable electricity by co-establishing San Diego Community Power (SDCP) with the cities of Chula Vista, Encinitas, Imperial Beach and La Mesa in 2019.⁵⁰ With the additions of the County of San Diego and National City in 2021, SDCP will provide nearly 2.4 million people with cost-competitive renewable electricity, significant GHG emissions reductions, and equitable investment in local clean energy projects and good jobs to help meet City and state climate, clean energy, and equity goals.⁵¹

We look forward to seeing the City further develop and expand upon its successes in renewable energy programs and policies—the City’s one success in CAP implementation.

Strategy 2: Measure 2.1: Citywide Renewable Energy Generation

We support the City’s efforts to expand local Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) throughout San Diego, and in particular, communities of concern. Local DERs are the most climate resilient renewable energy systems that exist. On-site solar panels, battery storage, and microgrids can provide ample protection from ever more frequent climate disasters.⁵²

For example, while SDG&E public safety power shut offs may disable large parts of the grid during high-risk wildfire conditions, homes, businesses, and public facilities with solar panels and battery storage that are connected to sectioned and separable community transmission and distribution microgrid systems can keep the lights on.⁵³

⁴⁹ County of San Diego. [Regional Decarbonization Framework](#), Employment Impacts. (March 2022). Pages 209-230.

⁵⁰ Nikolewski, Rob. *San Diego Union Tribune*. [San Diego City Council takes the leap into community choice energy](#). (September 17, 2019).

⁵¹ CalCCA. [San Diego Community Power Expands Board of Directors to Include San Diego County and National City](#). (December 17, 2021).

⁵² Nanavatty, Rushad and Tyson, Madeline. Rocky Mountain Institute. [Adapting to Fire: How Cities Can Enhance Resilience with Distributed Energy](#). (March 3, 2020).

⁵³ Bay Area Monitor. [Keeping the Lights on with Microgrids](#). (June 2021).

We recommend the City further explore existing and new opportunities to develop programs and initiatives to incentivize and subsidize DERs for working-class communities of color who may not have access to capital and financial resources, or regulatory tools to develop them independently. Protect Our Communities Foundation’s informative report “Roadmap to 100 Percent Local Solar Build-Out by 2030 in the City of San Diego” provides a helpful foundation for developing local DERs.⁵⁴

We also recommend the City track SDCP’s development of a Community Power Plan (CPP). SDCP’s CPP will be modeled after East Bay Community Energy and Clean Power Alliance’s respective Local Development Business Plan and Local Programs for a Clean Energy Future Strategic Plan, which provide a community needs assessment, program catalog, and other detailed information on DER and other clean energy opportunities for CCE member jurisdictions to consider.⁵⁵

Strategy 2: Measure 2.2: Increase Municipal Zero Emission Vehicles

On October 19, 2021, the San Diego City Council unanimously approved an additional \$10,000,000 “for purchases of vehicles, cars, vans, SUVs, and light trucks with related equipment, accessories, and services.” Many if not most of these vehicle purchases will be for fossil fuel internal combustion engine vehicles.⁵⁶ The year prior, the City reported that only 2% of its municipal vehicle fleet was electric (EV), even though the CAP set a target for a 50% EV fleet by 2020.⁵⁷

Clearly, the City is behind on its legally-binding municipal EV fleet goals.

For this measure, we are concerned about the proposed action to “develop a City Fleet Vehicle Replacement and Electrification strategy” as the solution. As with the City’s plans for developing comprehensive building and transportation decarbonization plans, this proposed action does not include a specific scope, scale, estimated costs, and project timelines to ensure its development and implementation. Without these specific details, it’s difficult to determine when or if the City will ever develop the plan.

We recommend the City provide a detailed and specific “Vehicle Replacement and Electrification” plan and implementation plan to provide both clarity to the community and substantial evidence for CEQA qualification.

Without these necessary implementation planning efforts, CAC does not believe the City is on firm legal footing to declare this a CEQA-qualified measure.

⁵⁴ Protect Our Communities Foundation. [Roadmap to 100 Percent Local Solar Build-Out by 2030 in the City of San Diego](#). (May 2020).

⁵⁵ East Bay Community Energy. [Local Development Business Plan](#). (July 18, 2018); Clean Power Alliance. [Local Programs for a Clean Energy Future Strategic Plan](#). (June 4, 2020).

⁵⁶ City of San Diego. City Clerk. [Minutes for the Regular Council Meeting](#). (October 21, 2021).

⁵⁷ City of San Diego. Sustainability Department. [Climate Action Plan Annual Report 2020. CAP Action Table](#). (2020).

Strategy 2: Measure 2.3: Increase Electric Vehicle Adoption

We are similarly concerned about the proposed action to “develop a city-wide electric vehicle strategy” for the broader community. Again, without specific details on scope, scale, estimated costs, and project timelines, we cannot determine if the City is serious about this action. Considering the significant GHG reduction potential of this measure (667,458 MT CO₂e of claimed reductions by 2035), it’s critical that the City make its intentions clear and specific, as required by CEQA in order to permit project development streamlining.

We do support the supporting actions listed under this measure, though we will note that they, unlike the actions, are not CEQA-qualified and do not require substantial evidence as part of the CAP’s CEQA qualification.

We will also elevate that while we support increased EV adoption, CARB has made clear that even the most ambitious transition to EVs will not be enough to achieve state climate goals. Reducing vehicle miles traveled is more impactful to slashing transportation emissions fast enough to secure a climate-safe future.⁵⁸ **Mode shift is critical and must be prioritized.**

Strategy 3: Mobility & Land Use

We appreciate the City’s enthusiasm that transportation, land use and infrastructure are some “of the most important and exciting ways the City can address climate change.”⁵⁹ However, as we have explained, the last seven years of Strategy 3 implementation has proven the limitations of the City’s current and planned approach. CAC remains concerned that the City is, once again, setting itself up for failure by not taking more specific, evidence-based actions to reduce transportation emissions as part of the CAP Update.

We are hopeful the City will recognize the deficiencies in planning, strategies, and CAP actions, and will provide alternatives to induce the necessary mode shift from fossil fuel vehicles, to biking, walking, and all-electric transit.

City of San Diego CAP and SANDAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

SANDAG’s 2021 RTP will not meet the City’s current or proposed mode share targets. CAC and Circulate San Diego came to this conclusion after analyzing SANDAG’s projected mode shift for the buildout of the RTP within the City of San Diego—the RTP “will only achieve 27% of commuters taking bike, walk, and transit in City of San Diego TPAs by 2035,” which is not enough to meet the City CAP’s 50% target, let alone the proposed transition from TPA commuters to all citywide trips.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ California Air Resources Board. [2017 Scoping Plan-Identified VMT Reductions and Relationship to State Climate Goals](#). (January 2019).

⁵⁹ City of San Diego. Sustainability & Mobility Department. [Climate Action Plan, Our Climate, Our Future](#). (October 27, 2021). Page 52.

⁶⁰ Climate Action Campaign. [Missing the Mark: City of San Diego must double down on Bike/Walk/Transit Targets in Climate Action Plan](#). (October 2021).

The City must be aware of these projections as it considers its Strategy 3 next steps.

City of San Diego Shift from Commuter Trips to All Resident Trips

When the City announced that the Update would include a major change in what trips it would aim to mode shift, CAC took a deeper dive into the math to understand the changes and their impact on the CAP. Below are tables that showcase the changes from “commuter mode share” to “mode share of all resident trips:”

2015 CAP - BIKE/WALK		
	Goal	Projected GHG Reduction
2030 Target	10% bike/walk commuter mode share in TPAs	20,169 MT CO2e
2035 Target	25% bike/walk commuter mode share in TPAs	52,062 MT CO2e

2022 CAP - BIKE/WALK (DRAFT)		
	Goal	Projected GHG Reduction
2030 Target	26% bike/walk mode share of all resident trips	79,722 MT CO2e
2035 Target	35% bike/walk mode share of all resident trips	115,315 MT CO2e

2015 CAP - TRANSIT		
	Goal	Projected GHG Reduction
2020 Target	12% transit mode share in TPAs	119,234 MT CO2e
2035 Target	25% transit mode share in TPAs	213,573 MT CO2e

2022 CAP - TRANSIT (DRAFT)		
	Goal	Projected GHG Reduction
2030 Target	10% transit mode share for all resident trips	181,205 MT CO2e
2035 Target	15% transit mode share for all resident trips	242,177 MT CO2e

Key takeaways:

- A significant difference between the original mode shift targets and Update’s revised mode shift targets are their geographic scope (TPAs vs citywide) and trip type (commute trips vs all resident trips), which makes comparison difficult. Reviewing projected GHG reductions provides the best sense for their potential impact towards climate goals.
- The Update’s revised 2035 bike/walk mode shift target’s projected GHG reduction is **121% larger** than the original target’s projected GHG reduction. This may signal an

increased interest in bike/walk investments to achieve climate goals, since the City has more ability to oversee active transportation infrastructure than mass transit.

- The Update's revised 2035 transit mode shift target's projected GHG reduction is only **13% larger** than the original target's projected GHG reduction, a negligible change.

We appreciate the City for recognizing the potential of increased bike, walk and transit mode shift, but remain concerned that the more aggressive targets are not commensurate with the proposed Update Strategy 3 measures and actions.

Strategy 3: Measure 3.1: Safe and Enjoyable Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists

We applaud the City for prioritizing pedestrian and cyclist safety as a specific measure in the CAP Update. This prioritization is in alignment not only with necessary and legally-binding GHG reduction targets, but the City's Vision Zero commitment and broader public health and safety goals.⁶¹ From 2015 to June 2020, 304 people have died from traffic violence in San Diego.⁶² These tragedies could have been partially avoided if the City had prioritized pedestrian and cyclist safety since the CAP's adoption seven years ago. The Update is an opportunity to recalibrate the City's policies to address existing dangers and inequities for those who bike and walk in San Diego.

Measure 3.1 ultimately calls for *35% of all San Diego resident trips to be taken by cycling or walking by 2035*; this level of mode shift over the next 13 years will require a profound, unprecedented transformation of the City's bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and such ambitious targets will never be achieved without a well-planned and proactively implemented active transportation network.

Unfortunately, many of the proposed actions listed under this measure continue to be vague and nonspecific. The following proposed actions do not include any details on scope, scale, estimated cost, or project timelines:

- Develop a Mobility Master Plan
- Update Bicycle Master Plan
- Develop a Safe Routes to Schools safety plan

Without specific details on what, when and how the City will complete these plans, we are left with the impression that Strategy 3 will continue to languish in planning paralysis, nevermind begin comprehensive implementation. We recommend the City quickly complete the long-promised Mobility Master Plan with specific details and evidence on how it will protect lives and meet its current and proposed legally-binding mode share targets.

⁶¹ City of San Diego. Transportation & Stormwater Department. [Vision Zero: Strategic Plan](#). (December 4, 2020).

⁶² City of San Diego. Transportation & Stormwater Department. [Vision Zero Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#). (December 4, 2020). Page 9.

We are also concerned that the City’s “emphasis” toward separated (Class I and IV) bikeways is not a firm commitment to public safety. The research is clear, Class I and IV facilities are the most effective way to induce mode shift and promote public safety.⁶³ Creating a connected network of separated bikeways across the City should not be emphasized, it should be required.

Case Study: Chollas Creek Coalition

One hopeful example of community-led, city-supported climate action is the Chollas Creek Coalition.⁶⁴ Led by place-based organization, [Groundwork San Diego](#), in partnership with other place-based organizations, nonprofits, the City of San Diego, MTS, and community members, the coalition is working to bring historically divested and diverse neighborhoods together through a watershed-wide system of trails, bikeways, pedestrian enhancements, and parks and visitor destinations along the Chollas Creek. By working collaboratively to bring a community vision for more climate safe and resilient neighborhoods, the coalition is exemplifying how governments and agencies can better partner and develop much needed improvements to communities of concern.

Strategy 3: Measure 3.2: Increase Safe, Convenient, and Enjoyable Transit Use

We applaud the City for elevating “safe, convenient and enjoyable transit use” as a key measure in Strategy 3. After two years, the pandemic toll on transit systems is dissipating, and the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) is projecting ridership to reach pre-pandemic levels by this summer.⁶⁵ Now is the time to explore, refine, and commit to specific CAP actions related to transit use to provide equitable transportation options and reduce GHG emissions.

CAC supports the proposed actions under this measure, though specific details and more concrete actions will be needed to assure the community’s desire to have safe, convenient and enjoyable transit becomes a reality.

For example, the proposed action to “work with SANDAG and MTS to develop dedicated bus lanes or shared bus and bike lanes” should include details on scope, scale, costs and timelines, and there should be a requirement for bus-only and bus/bike-only lanes for current and future MTS *Rapid*, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and similar projects. The City has purview over streets, and dedicated bus lanes should be standard. Vancouver’s Climate Emergency Action Plan’s Appendix B may be helpful in modeling bus and BRT prioritization and implementation.⁶⁶

These could be policies developed and included in a comprehensive and city-wide Complete Streets policy, something the City’s Mobility Board was considering before the pandemic, but

⁶³ Ferenchak, Nicholas N., and Marshalla, Wesley E. *Journal of Transport & Health*. [Why cities with high bicycling rates are safer for all road users](#). (June 2019).

⁶⁴ Groundwork San Diego-Chollas Creek. [Impact, Parks and Trails](#), Chollas Creek to Bayshore Bikeway. (2022).

⁶⁵ Emerson Smith, Joshua. *San Diego Union Tribune*. [MTS bus, trolley ridership trending upward as Omicron surge wanes](#). (February 23, 2022).

⁶⁶ City of Vancouver. [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#), Appendix B. (October 22, 2020). Pages 13-19.

has not come forward in recent years. We support Complete Streets as a supporting action under this measure, though we will stress the need for scope, scale, costs, and timelines for completion.

We also applaud the City for elevating a “youth transit pass program” as an action. “Youth Opportunity Passes” (YOP), as the City Heights-based nonprofit [Mid-City CAN](#) and community advocates call them, is a critical transportation justice initiative to provide greater economic mobility and social equity, while promoting sustainable transportation options.⁶⁷ We appreciate the City’s support at SANDAG for a pilot YOP program, and recommend the City support a permanent, regional YOP program for youth up to age 24.⁶⁸ Orange County, surprisingly, may provide a model for how the City and regional partners can sustainably fund YOP, permanently.⁶⁹

Strategy 3: Measure 3.3: Increase Telecommuting

The pandemic has left its mark on commuting patterns as more people work from home, and 25% of all professional jobs being remote this year.⁷⁰ However, we recommend the City tread cautiously into telecommuting policy. The long term ramifications for telecommuting are unknown, and some preliminary studies have shown that telecommuting may increase transportation emissions, harm small businesses and city tax revenue, and negatively impact public health.⁷¹ Plus, jobs that can be done from home are [disproportionately held by white, higher-income workers](#), raising significant equity and accessibility concerns.⁷²

This measure is also staking a considerable amount of expected GHG reductions (242,177 MT CO₂e by 2035) with limited details and evidence. Like with other proposed actions, we recommend the City provide more detailed and specific information on the scope, scale, estimated costs and project implementation timelines associated with the telecommuting measure, and careful study of what the real climate, economic, equity and public health implications of remote work may be.

Strategy 3: Measure 3.4: Reduce Traffic Congestion to Improve Air Quality and Trip Length

⁶⁷ Mid-City CAN. [About Youth Opportunity Passes](#). (2021).

⁶⁸ Bowen, Andrew. *KPBS News*. [SANDAG board approves equity pilot program including free youth transit passes](#). (October 21, 2021).

⁶⁹ Orange County Transit Authority. [OCTA Permanently Offers Free Bus Rides for All OC Youth](#). (February 24, 2022).

⁷⁰ Robinson, Bryan. *Forbes*. [Remote Work Is Here To Stay And Will Increase Into 2023, Experts Say](#). (February 1, 2022).

⁷¹ Winck, Ben. *Business Insider*. [People are going to spend up to 10% less in cities because of working from home, study says](#). (April 26, 2021). Drummond, Cyra-Lea. *Verywell Health*. [3 Surprising Health Risks of Working From Home](#). (October 7, 2020).

⁷² Ashmore, Jacqueline, et. al. *PBS News*. [Analysis: Telework mostly benefits white, affluent Americans – and offers few climate benefits](#). (July 27, 2020).

We support this measure, and recommend the City continue to consult with communities and place-based organizations near the Port of San Diego to identify strategies to improve air quality and public health.

Strategy 3: Measure 3.5: Climate-Focused Land Use

We appreciate the City elevating land use as a measure under Strategy 3. As the County's Regional Decarbonization Framework and countless other studies have highlighted, land use and transportation policy go hand in hand.⁷³

However, we are concerned, once again, by the lack of specificity in the proposed actions under this measure. Under CEQA, actions must be quantifiable and specific, with evidence to prove how actions will result in GHG reductions. Under this measure, it is not clear how the City will “focus new development” in TPAs and VMT efficient areas or “plan for land uses that will allow residents” to bike, walk and take transit.

We can only assume that the City is tacitly referencing its current efforts to revamp its failed CPU processes via Blueprint SD.⁷⁴ However, while there is a timeline for Blueprint SD's development, we aren't certain how or when it will be implemented. And that's assuming Blueprint SD actually does what the City is claiming it will do—incorporating the CAP, including mode share targets, into CPUs. See [our letter from last year](#) regarding our recommendations for Blueprint SD.⁷⁵

For a measure that is claiming to reduce emissions by over 605,185 MT CO₂e by 2035, the City must provide more details to be CEQA-qualified.

Centering Equity in Land Use and Housing Policy:

It is important to center equity into the City's land use and housing policies. While we applaud many of the recent supply-side reforms at the City, there is a noticeable delay in anti-displacement and tenant protection policies.

This is concerning because accessible, healthy, and safe affordable housing near jobs and transit is a key climate strategy. A 2014 study found that lower income households drive 50 percent fewer miles when living within a quarter mile of transit, and 25-30 percent fewer miles when living within a half mile of transit.⁷⁶ Developing more and protecting existing deed-restricted and naturally occurring affordable housing near transit is not only important in meeting GHG and mode shift targets, but also in advancing social, economic, and racial justice.

⁷³ County of San Diego. [Draft Regional Decarbonization Framework: Chapter 3: Accelerating Deep Decarbonization in the Transportation Sector](#). (2021). Page 68.

⁷⁴ City of San Diego. Planning Department. [Blueprint SD](#). (July 19, 2021).

⁷⁵ Climate Action Campaign. [Recommendations for the Blueprint San Diego Proposed Program Environmental Impact Report \(PEIR\)](#). (August 17, 2021).

⁷⁶ TransForm, the California Housing Partnership Corporation. [Why Creating and Preserving Affordable Homes Near Transit is a Highly Effective Climate Protection Strategy](#). (2014).

With that context, actions such as creating a rent registry and tenants protection board should be considered as equally important climate measures, and we encourage the City to engage with place-based organizations such as the [Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans](#) to learn more.⁷⁷

Strategy 3: Measure 3.6: Vehicle Management

We support these concrete actions to eliminate parking minimum requirements, establish parking maximum requirements, and prohibit auto-centric land uses in TPAs. The fact is, after careful study, we know San Diego can and must actively disincentivize fossil fuel vehicles through its parking and land use policies.⁷⁸ CAC supported past reforms, welcomes additional reforms, and hopes the City will include specific timelines for developing and implementing them.

Strategy 4: Circular Economy & Clean Communities

CAC acknowledges zero waste as an important GHG reduction strategy, and is committed to working with the City and community to equitably eliminate landfill waste streams.

Strategy 4: Measure 4.1: Changes to the Waste Stream

Polystyrene foam is a primary contributor to litter in San Diego because of its ability to fragment into smaller pieces.⁷⁹ Polystyrene foam and single use plastics are also fossil fuel based products, contributing to GHG emissions driving the climate crisis.⁸⁰ CAC supports the City's proposal to expand the Polystyrene Foam and Single Use Plastics Ordinance to phase-out Single-Use materials. We supported the City's original 2018 ordinance to remove this climate and environmental threat, and look forward to its expansion and implementation.⁸¹

Strategy 4: Measure 4.2: Municipal Waste Reduction

We support the City's efforts to reduce municipal waste. To maximize benefits, we recommend the City adopt an equitable purchasing policy, ensuring that all food purchased by the City has limited carbon emissions and multiple community benefits. We suggest that the City looks into

⁷⁷ Climate Action Campaign. [Solving Sprawl: Building Housing for A Sustainable and Equitable San Diego](#). (September 2021). Pages 33-38.

⁷⁸ City of San Diego. Planning Department. [Transit Priority Area Multifamily Residential Parking Standards Study](#). (January 16, 2019); City of San Diego. Planning Department. [San Diego City Council Votes to Eliminate Parking Minimums for Commercial Areas](#). (November 16, 2021).

⁷⁹ Surfrider Foundation. [San Diego City Council Finalizes a Strong Plastics Reduction Ordinance](#). (January 08, 2019).

⁸⁰ University of California Santa Barbara. [Plastic's carbon footprint: Researchers conduct first global assessment of the life cycle greenhouse gas emissions from plastics](#). (15 April 2019).

⁸¹ Climate Action Campaign, et. al. [Support for a Ban of Polystyrene Foam and Restrictions on Single Use Plastics](#). (July 9, 2018).

the Good Food Purchasing program, which provides guidance and tools for public institutions seeking to create equitable food systems.⁸²

Strategy 4: Measure 4.3: Local Food Systems & Food Recovery

The overall goal of this measure should be to integrate food systems into the CAP as a climate resiliency and food security method, while prioritizing carbon sequestration. In order to achieve this goal, we recommend the City to do a deeper analysis of the supporting actions which can bring multiple community benefits.

For instance, investing in a network of local food sourcing, aggregation, distribution and processing infrastructure not only enhances local food systems but has the potential to create well-paid, green jobs. Therefore, we recommend the City prioritize this initiative and the other initiatives as actions rather than listing them as supporting actions.

We also suggest the City integrate a food security emergency response initiative to tackle challenges such as climate emergency price spike, crop failure, supply chain disruptions, etc.⁸³

Finally, we recommend the City offer official support for Senate Bill AB 125 Equitable Economic Recovery, Healthy Food Access, Climate Resilient Farms, and Worker Protections Bond Act of 2022.⁸⁴ The bill will be voted on in November 2022 and could be a potential source of financing for CAP Measure 4.3 related programs.

Strategy 4: Measure 4.4: Zero Waste to Landfill

In order to advance a circular economy, the City should increase public awareness of and access to opportunities for reuse, product rentals, repair and donation. Specifically, we recommend the City to create a grant or incentive program to reward and encourage local repair businesses. In addition, the City should consider partnering with school districts and/or community colleges to create vocational programs that focus on Repair Arts.⁸⁵

Strategy 5: Resilient Infrastructure and Healthy Ecosystems

The land use chapter of the County's Regional Decarbonization Framework states that the most effective and inexpensive natural climate solution needed to achieve a zero carbon future is to avoid development on natural and working lands that sequester and store carbon.⁸⁶ With that in

⁸² Center for Good Food Purchasing. [The Good Food Purchasing Program](#). (2022)

⁸³ Maastricht School of Management. [Food Security Initiative: Emergency Food Flows](#). (June 18, 2020).

⁸⁴ Lucas, Becca. *CalCAN, California Climate & Agricultural Network*. [An Equitable and Resilient Californian Food System: Protecting our Essential Farmworkers](#). (March 25, 2021).

⁸⁵ Culture of Repair. [The Culture of Repair Project](#). (2020). ZeroWasteSanDiego. [San Diego Fix-It Clinics](#). (2022).

⁸⁶ County of San Diego. [Regional Decarbonization Framework](#), Chapter 5: Natural Climate Solutions and Other Land Use Considerations. (March 16, 2022). Pages 159-201.

mind, CAC supports efforts by the City to maintain sustainable and carbon negative natural and working lands, water systems, and urban forestry.

Strategy 5: Measure 5.1: Sequestration

Measure 5.1 is classified as low for financial viability and technical feasibility, suggesting that the City does not count on the adequate resources to implement sequestration actions. We also noticed that many actions listed under the measure require the development of additional plans.

We urge the City to avoid mistakes from the past and provide details on the scale, scope, estimate costs, project timelines and designate funding to the development of these plans, so the City can achieve its sequestration goals on time.

Strategy 5: Measure 5.2: Tree Canopy

CAC recognizes the City of San Diego for being the only jurisdiction in the region with a 35% urban canopy cover target. However, we are concerned about the City's capacity to achieve this goal given the 2015 CAP failure to plan long-term for the funding and staffing necessary to fully implement the tree canopy target.

The draft CAP Update classifies this measure as "medium" for financial viability, suggesting the city does not have the resources to develop and implement the plans listed under this measure. We recommend the City do a deeper dive on the proposed actions, audit the City's "Free Tree SD" program, and research alternatives to support its urban forestry efforts.⁸⁷

Again, we elevate the concern that one of the proposed actions to create the "Street Tree Master Plan" does not include specific details (scope, scale, costs, and timelines) to meet CEQA's substantial evidence threshold. The City should provide more details on what, when and how it will complete this action to ensure implementation.

Strategy 5: Measure 5.3: Local Water Supply

Rather than listing green infrastructure as a supporting action, we recommend that the City commits to a green infrastructure plan that promotes clean water and stormwater capture. At the neighborhood scale, we ask the City to consider the development of rain gardens and planter boxes, which can beautify streets, enhance air quality, and prevent stormwater pollution from going into the ocean.

We also encourage the city to expand its Rain Barrel Program to make it more accessible to residents across the City, particularly those in communities of concern.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ City of San Diego. [Free Tree SD](#). (2020)

⁸⁸ City of San Diego. Public Utilities Department. [Rain Barrel Guidelines and Application](#). (2019).

Strategy 6: Emerging Climate Action

We appreciate the City’s transparency in identifying residual emissions and cataloging emerging technologies that may help close the 2,511,000 MT CO₂e emissions gap to achieve zero carbon by 2035.

As we stated in previous sections of this letter, while an exploration and inclusion of emerging technologies may be helpful, we hope the City does not prioritize or wait for them in the unlikely event they become feasible. Hydrogen, biomass, carbon capture, and “renewable” gas are dead-end pathways that distract from proven, scalable solutions while only serving to perpetuate the fossil fuel industry.⁸⁹ The City must focus on existing opportunities and proven technologies for its building, electricity, transportation, waste, and water decarbonization actions.

This strategy bucket should be flexible, but we encourage the City to prioritize what we know works (electrification, renewable electricity, mode shift, local food systems, etc.) over moonshot endeavors.

“Renewable Natural Gas,” “Clean Fuels,” Blended Gas, Biogas, and Synthetic Gas

Fossil fuel corporations have popularized gas alternatives such as “renewable natural gas,” methane-hydrogen blended gas, biogas, and synthetic gas to slow and stop proven electrification and decarbonization strategies, and perpetuate the shelf life (and profits) of their harmful gas infrastructure with a range of biologically and synthetically derived hybrid and non-fossil fuel gasses.

The City must not be fooled into investing in these dead end technologies. The potential supply of these gas alternatives is a small fraction of gas demand, with alternatives only being able to replace 13 percent of the existing demand for fossil fuel gas. The high production costs also mean gas alternatives range from four to seventeen times more expensive than methane gas, while providing little environmental, environmental justice, and public health benefits to communities.⁹⁰

Carbon Capture and Storage

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is not a proven technology, and should not be prioritized by the City to close its emissions gap.⁹¹ While the idea of vacuuming carbon out of the atmosphere may seem ideal, no CCS project has ever met its promised targets, even though billions in tax dollars have been spent trying to make the technology work.⁹² Current global CCS projects

⁸⁹ EarthJustice. [Hydrogen No Silver Bullet for Climate Crisis. Focus on Electrification](#). (August 31, 2021).

⁹⁰ EarthJustice and Sierra Club. [Rhetoric vs. Reality: The Myth of “Renewable Natural Gas” for Building Decarbonization](#). (July 14, 2020).

⁹¹ Cleantechica. [Another Carbon Capture & Storage \(CCS\) Project Doesn’t Live Up To Its Targets](#). (September 13, 2021).

⁹² Jacobson, Mark Z. *The Journal of Energy & Environmental Science*. [The health and climate impacts of carbon capture and direct air capture](#). (December 2019); Kubota, Taylor. *Stanford News*. [Stanford study](#)

capture 40 million megatons of carbon annually, while the U.S. emitted 5 billion megatons in 2019 alone.⁹³ We simply do not have the time or local resources to waste waiting for this technology to finally emerge after nearly 100 years of research and development.

Additionally, CCS would perpetuate environmental injustice by continuing to allow for fossil fuel extraction, refinery, and combustion that pollutes the environment and harms frontline, working-class communities of color. The City must not invest our limited local resources on this technology.

Hydrogen, “Clean Hydrogen,” and Hydrogen-based Technologies

Hydrogen technologies provide limited opportunities for decarbonization, and must be carefully deployed to only the hardest to decarbonize industrial sectors and not to decarbonize commercial and residential buildings. Below is a chart of the various types of hydrogen currently on the market:

Color	Process	Impact
Green Hydrogen	Electrolysis, using renewable energy (wind, solar etc.) to split water into its component parts (H2 + O2).	No carbon emissions, ability to “store” surplus electricity from renewable sources.
Pink Hydrogen	Electrolysis using nuclear power instead of renewable energy.	Low carbon emissions, ability to “store” surplus electricity.
Yellow Hydrogen	Electrolysis using solar power.	A new type of hydrogen, with low to no carbon emissions.
Brown Hydrogen	Gasification, using coal/biomass/waste to heat water and break it down. Also known as “town gas”.	Along with the component parts of water, other harmful elements are produced: carbon dioxide (CO2), carbon monoxide (CO), methane (CH4), and ethylene (C2H4).
Grey Hydrogen	Steam Methane Reforming, using methane to heat water and break it down.	As above, produces other harmful elements: CH4 and CO2.

[casts doubt on carbon capture](#). (October 19, 2021); The Juice Media. [Honest Government Ad: Carbon Capture and Storage](#). (September 1, 2021).

⁹³ Resources for the Future. [Carbon Capture and Storage 101](#). (May 6, 2020).

Blue Hydrogen	SMR and carbon capture, use and storage.	Grey hydrogen but with carbon capture so it is seen as a lower carbon option.
Turquoise Hydrogen	Using Molten Metal Pyrolysis, natural gas is passed through a molten metal that releases hydrogen and solid carbon.	Solid carbon can be used for industrial applications, so it is seen as a lower carbon option.

Courtesy: Hydrogen East, Types of hydrogen and technologies⁹⁴

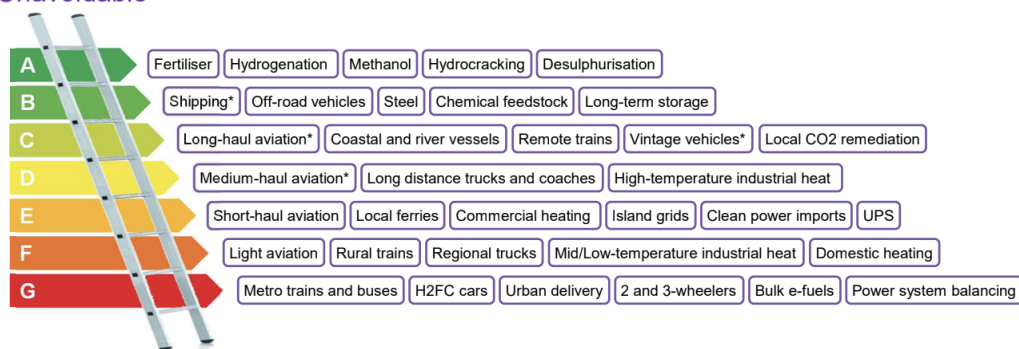
Only green hydrogen should be deployed in heavy industries where traditional renewable energy sources may not be economical, though electrification technologies are evolving rapidly in these sectors as well.⁹⁵ Beware the term “clean hydrogen” as it may include fossil fuel based hydrogen sources.⁹⁶

Also note that blending hydrogen with methane gas to maintain fossil fuel gas infrastructure is infeasible and dangerous. As seen in the hydrogen ladder below, using hydrogen to meet San Diego’s energy needs is largely uncompetitive in nearly all applications. In addition to the technological barriers, hydrogen and hydrogen-blended gas cause existing gas pipelines to experience “hydrogen embrittlement”—a weakening of metal or polyethylene pipes that increase corrosion, leakage, rupture and explosion risks.⁹⁷

Clean Hydrogen Ladder

Liebreich Associates

Unavoidable



Uncompetitive

* Via ammonia or e-fuel rather than H2 gas or liquid

Source: Liebreich Associates (concept credit: Adrian Hiel/Energy Cities)

Courtesy: Michael Liebreich/Liebreich Associates, Clean Hydrogen Ladder, Version 4.1, 2021.

Concept credit: Adrian Hiel, Energy Cities. CC-BY 3.0

⁹⁴ Hydrogen East. [Types of hydrogen and technologies](#). (2022); National Grid. [The Hydrogen Colour Spectrum](#). (2022).

⁹⁵ McKinsey & Company. [Harnessing momentum for electrification in heavy machinery and equipment](#). (April 9, 2019); McKinsey & Company. [Plugging in: What electrification can do for industry](#). (May 28, 2020).

⁹⁶ Phiddian, Ellen. [Beware the difference between ‘clean’ and ‘green’ hydrogen](#). (November 18, 2021).

⁹⁷ St. John. Jeff. Greentech Media. [Green Hydrogen in Natural Gas Pipelines: Decarbonization Solution or Pipe Dream?](#) (November 20, 2020).

Investing in hydrogen, “clean” hydrogen, and hydrogen-blended gas technologies will require significant fossil fuel infrastructure maintenance and rebuild costs, in contrast to efficient and effective electrification strategies. This is why fossil fuel corporations, including SDG&E and Sempra, have elevated these dead-end solutions to maintain their shareholder profits.⁹⁸ The City must not prioritize this technology over electrification.

Engagement, Funding and Implementation Strategies

As part of the CAP Update, the City has a unique opportunity to reset its CAP engagement, funding and implementation strategies. We encourage the City to continue to follow the recommendations outlined in the CAP Performance Audit, research best practices from across the country and abroad, and engage with working-class communities of color, most impacted by the climate crisis, to ensure meaningful and equitable CAP engagement, funding and implementation.

Engagement Strategies

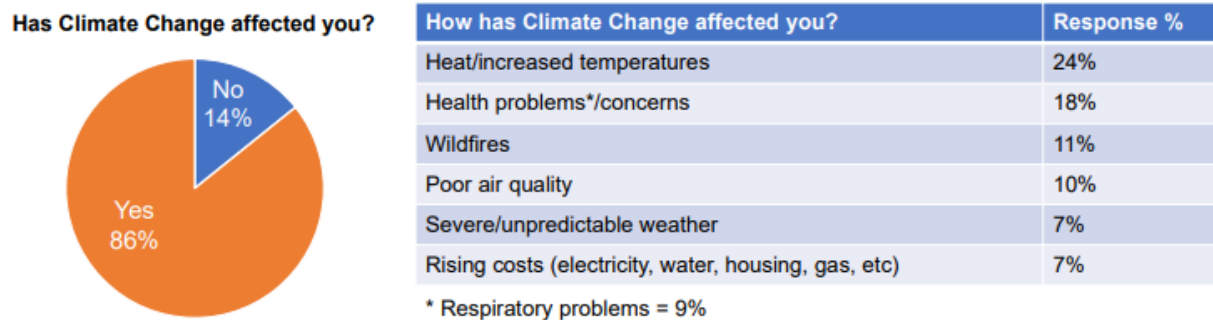
Over the course of 2021, CAC had the privilege of working with the City, the [Institute for Local Government](#), [Greenlining Institute](#), and four place-based organizations (Casa Familiar, Environmental Health Coalition, Mid-City CAN, and San Diego Urban Sustainability Coalition) on initial CAP Update outreach to communities of concern. Through that process, we and our partners collected critical data and information from frontline communities of concern on their ideas and perspectives regarding climate action at the city, and we were compensated for this work.

CAC and our partners community reports can be found in the appendix of the draft CAP Update.⁹⁹ We encourage the City to review and integrate the community input into the final CAP Update, and recognize that while there may be a perception that working-class communities of color are not aware or interested in climate change, our engagement proved the exact opposite, as the data below demonstrates:

⁹⁸ Climate Action Campaign. [Climate Action Campaign Response to SDG&E Greenwashing Report](#). (April 27, 2022).

⁹⁹ City of San Diego. Sustainability & Mobility Department. [Climate Action Plan: Our Climate. Our Future](#), Communities of Concern Outreach Results. (October 27, 2021). Pages 274-288.

Figure 6. “Has climate change affected your quality of life? If so, how?”



393 respondents surveyed by Climate Action Campaign, Environmental Health Coalition, SDUSC, and MidCityCan

Courtesy: Institute for Local Government, et. al., City of San Diego Communities of Concern Outreach Results.

CAC and our partners also identified various opportunities for the City to create a holistic and streamlined approach to better engage and meet communities of concern where they are to better inform the City’s climate planning and implementation strategies. After the project concluded, we sent a letter to the City with our partners outlining recommendations for:

- Operational equity in CAP policies with dedicated implementation funding for working-class communities of concern.
- Including and prioritizing actions and goals identified by communities of concern.
- Improved process through yearly analysis and updates, outreach and education and increased staffing for implementation.¹⁰⁰

We continue to work in coordination with our CAP Update outreach partners and Greenlining Institute to encourage and hold the City accountable to prioritizing communities of concern at the beginning of all planning, projects and programs to ensure greater equity and community support for critical climate mitigation and adaptation policies.

To advance CBO engagement and partnership, we also recommend the City to explore Denver’s Sustainability Advisory Council (SAC) model. Denver’s SAC is a diverse group of 120 community representatives organized into six subcommittees and provides advice and recommendations to the city’s Office of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency (CASR).¹⁰¹ To give some perspective, between April and October 2021, over 40 meetings were held prior to the final draft of Denver’s Climate Protection Fund Five Year-Plan, leading to the city’s adoption of the new zero carbon emissions by 2040 target.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Climate Action Campaign, et. al. [Climate Action Plan 2.0 Update Must Center Equity in Process and Policies](#). (September 29, 2021).

¹⁰¹ City and County of Denver. Office of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency. [Sustainable Advisory Council](#). (2022)

¹⁰² City and County of Denver. Office of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency. [Climate Protection Fund Five Year Plan](#). (February 28, 2022)

By working with stakeholders and compensating under-resourced organizations and stakeholders, the City of San Diego's leadership can evaluate and prioritize recommendations for policy changes and implementation planning in a more structured way. This may be an extension of the temporary CAP Update review ad-hoc committee the City is anticipating to create this year.

Funding Strategies

As federal and state grants become available, the City of San Diego will need to demonstrate existing plans for specific projects and programs, as well as strategies for allocating expected funding. Without these, the City may be unable to qualify for resources needed to implement sustainability and climate initiatives. CAC recommends the City to hire grant writers and to establish working groups to plan for anticipated federal and state funding.

In addition to federal and state funds, the City should consider pursuing additional private and taxpayer-funded climate action money. Below are a few examples of cities taking the lead on these funding initiatives:

- **Boulder:** Since its inception in 2007, the City of Boulder CAP Tax has provided over \$22 million in critical funds for Boulder residents and businesses climate initiatives, generating about \$1.8 million per year for the city's climate work.¹⁰³
- **Denver:** In 2020, the City of Denver approved a climate action sales tax, which is the financial basis of the city's Climate Protection Fund Five Year Plan (CPF). Denver's CPF, is expected to raise up to \$40M per year and it's set to fund high impact projects rooted in sustainability and resilience and aims to spend at least 50% of funds to directly benefit under-resourced and vulnerable communities.¹⁰⁴
- **Ithaca:** The City of Ithaca, NY secured \$100 million in financing from private equity firm Alturus for building electrification, and will seek up to \$250 million more for additional climate action efforts including transitioning the city to electric vehicles.¹⁰⁵

Finally, because early planning and preparation is key to ensuring adequate project funding, we recommend the City consider employing the following best practices provided by the Alliance For a Sustainable Future:¹⁰⁶

- Develop a plan to meet community needs before chasing funding.
- Identify multiple and diverse community benefits that can be achieved via projects.

¹⁰³ City of Boulder. [Founding our Climate Action Plan](#). (2022).

¹⁰⁴ City and County of Denver. Office of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency. [Climate Protection Fund](#). (February 28, 2022)

¹⁰⁵ Rosenbaum, Eric. [CNBC. Ithaca, New York becomes first U.S. city to begin 100% decarbonization of buildings, an urban climate change milestone](#). (November 4, 2021).

¹⁰⁶ Alliance For a Sustainable Future. [Cities Advancing Climate Action: Leveraging Federal Funds for Local Impact A Resource Guide](#). (January 2022).

- Match funding opportunities with identified needs.
- Engage diverse stakeholders early and often.
- Build relationships and identify common goals with funders, community organizations, and stakeholders.
- Think creatively and identify broader benefits and impacts.

A note on the People’s Ordinance:

The City is losing tens of millions of dollars a year and perpetuating inequities by not reforming the People’s Ordinance. This policy forces the City to collect trash, recyclables and other waste for free for single family homes, but not multi-family residents.¹⁰⁷ As the state enacts more requirements to reach laudable and necessary zero waste goals, the City must end this inequitable policy and to fully fund an equitable zero waste system in San Diego. We recommend the City run a ballot measure in 2022 to reform the People’s Ordinance to meet CAP zero waste targets and end inequities between residents.

Implementation Planning Strategies

We are encouraged by the City’s commitment to developing a comprehensive Implementation Plan with associated costs, identified funding resources (secure and potential), project timelines, and other key details. We look forward to seeing the forthcoming Implementation Plan Matrix the City has promised as part of the Update review.

These are critical actions, since a plan is nothing without implementation, and we encourage the City to accelerate its implementation planning efforts to make up for seven years of delay.

To help move forward, CAC encourages the City to consider implementation planning best practices from the cities listed below:

- **City of Denver Climate Protection Fund Five-Year Plan:** The CPF prioritizes efforts on public participation to determine timelines, audiences and scope of implementation.¹⁰⁸
- **Vancouver’s Greenest City Action Plan (GCAP):** Vancouver’s ambitious plan to become “the greenest city in the world” identifies highest priority actions and delegates responsibilities to city agencies within departments with specific expertise. The city also has internal and external committees for implementation actions related to each of the ten plan goals.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ City of San Diego. Office of the Independent Budget Analyst. [Analysis of the Fiscal Impact of the People’s Ordinance](#). (September 7, 2021).

¹⁰⁸ City and County of Denver. Office of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency. [Climate Protection Fund Five Year Plan](#). (2021).

¹⁰⁹ City of Vancouver. Green Vancouver. [Greenest City Action Plan](#). (2020).

- **The City of Houston CAP:** Houston’s CAP includes concrete, measurable targets and actions with identified timeframes, city lead agencies, and key stakeholders.¹¹⁰
- **Oakland Equitable Climate Action Plan (ECAP):** The plan is accompanied by a Racial Equity Impact Assessment and Implementation Guide (REIA) to help City staff maximize equity throughout the ECAP’s 10-year implementation period.¹¹¹
- **City of Flagstaff Carbon Neutrality Plan:** The City’s plan is guided by its Climate Emergency Declaration which highlights a City-wide mobilization effort spanning all sectors of the Flagstaff economy and community.¹¹²

Additionally, the City can model implementation and funding analyses using a tool provided by its own Metropolitan Planning Organization, SANDAG. As CAC elevated with 34 community partners earlier this year, SANDAG developed a CAP Implementation Cost Analysis with the Energy Policy Innovation Center in May 2018 that cities could use to model and build CAP cost calculations.¹¹³ We recommend the City explore this tool soon.

It is imperative the City move quickly in implementation planning before the Update in order to properly budget for FY 2023 and beyond. As the CAP Performance Audit outlines, departments need to develop and integrate CAP work plans and designate leaders and/or leading agencies to begin implementation. Federal and state funding opportunities will also come more easily with existing plans already in place.

Again, we do not believe that the City should pass the Update until the comprehensive implementation plan is completed. Passing the draft Update as is risks the City’s ability to faithfully implement the CAP, and exposes the City to legal risk and losing its CEQA streamlining privileges.

Meeting State and Local GHG Reduction Targets

We support the City’s decision to use a 2019 baseline, and believe there is a way to quantify the City’s progress toward SB 32’s goal of a 40 percent reduction from 1990 levels.¹¹⁴ If we use 2019 as the proxy for 1990 (instead of 2010), we just calculate a 40% reduction from baseline: that comes out to 6,277,200 (60 percent times 10,462,000 MT CO2e). The previous CAP used a 2010 baseline, and since emissions are lower in 2019, the City has a greater chance of meeting its reduction targets. However, even though the SB 32 target is much higher than the City’s CAP target, the City may have a hard time meeting it.

¹¹⁰ City of Houston. [Houston Climate Action Plan](#). (2021).

¹¹¹ City of Oakland. Public Works. [2030 Climate Action Plan ECAP – Racial Equity Impact Assessment + Implementation Guide](#). (September 23, 2020).

¹¹² City of Flagstaff. [The Flagstaff Carbon Neutrality Plan](#). (June 2021).

¹¹³ San Diego Association of Governments and Energy Policy Innovation Center. [Regional Climate Action Planning Framework: Technical Appendix IV. CAP Implementation Cost Analysis](#). (May 2018).

¹¹⁴ California Legislative Information. [California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2016](#). (September 8, 2016).

For example, over half the City's assumed transportation emissions reductions come from state and federal strategies, with about 500,000 MTCO₂e from SANDAG alone. That leaves about 1.5 million MTCO₂e in reductions for the City to achieve.

Maintaining CEQA Guideline Section 15183.5 Compliance

As we have noted throughout the letter, we are concerned that the Update is in danger of being non-compliant with CEQA Guideline Section 15183.5. In order for the City to continue tiering development projects off of the CAP (via the CAP Consistency Checklist or some future version integrated into the city's Municipal Code, as proposed in the Update), the City must demonstrate more than just math. It must show, with specific and detailed evidence, how implementation of the CAP will achieve the promised GHG reduction targets.¹¹⁵ The following measures in particular do not meet that threshold:

- Strategy 1: Measure 1.1: Decarbonize Existing Buildings
- Strategy 2: Measure 2.3: Increase Electric Vehicle Adoption
- Strategy 3: Measure 3.1: Safe and Enjoyable Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists
- Strategy 3: Measure 3.2: Increase Safe, Convenient, and Enjoyable Transit Use
- Strategy 3: Measure 3.5: Climate-Focused Land Use

For these measures and their proposed actions, neither the Update or technical Appendix C demonstrate CEQA compliance, they simply declare GHG targets and reduction potential. That is over 3,500,000 MT CO₂e in proposed reductions by 2035 that lacks evidence.¹¹⁶

For example, "Measure 1.1 Decarbonize Existing Building" includes targets and GHG reduction calculations, placing the City in a position of having eight years to put a comprehensive building electrification program in place, identify and secure financing, and phase out 45 percent of methane gas in all existing buildings. Then five years later the City will have to double that to 90 percent. There is no substantial evidence to support the feasibility of such a measure in the draft CAP or Appendix C, it's just a stated goal with math showcasing the potential.

The lack of specificity, details, and evidence leaves the City vulnerable to litigation.

We will also note the City has already been litigated on its use of the CAP Consistency Checklist, and lost. In *McCann vs. City of San Diego* (70.Cal.App 5th 51, 2021), the City was found to be misusing the CAP checklist for a city infrastructure project.¹¹⁷ This ruling exemplifies the City's need to show its work and keep track of its emissions reductions. If the Update and the checklist (or proposed municipal code update) only presume the City is meeting its targets

¹¹⁵ State of California. Office of Planning and Research. [General Plan—Chapter 8: Climate Change](#). (2022).

¹¹⁶ City of San Diego. [Climate Action Plan: Our Climate, Our Future](#), Appendix C. (October 27, 2021). Pages 21-23.

¹¹⁷ Leagle. [McCann v. City of San Diego](#). (2021). Elmer, Mackenzie. *Voice of San Diego*. [Judge: San Diego Doesn't Know Climate Impact of Infrastructure Projects](#). (October 25, 2021).

without analysis, both the CAP and projects relying on CAP streamlining are vulnerable to further litigation.

If there are any additional questions about the legality or enforceability of the CAP, we recommend the City reviews its own [2016 City Attorney memo](#) that states:

“The CAP targets are legally binding to the extent required by the CEQA mitigation measure for the General Plan. That measure requires the City to regularly monitor, update and implement the City’s [Climate Action Plan] to ensure, at a minimum, compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. CEQA requires that mitigation measures be enforceable.”¹¹⁸

Conclusion

The City of San Diego’s Climate Action Plan Update offers a rare opportunity to shape the contours of climate policy in our region and state, and model a zero carbon future. If the City commits to further refinements, with detailed and specific evidence enshrined in a comprehensive implementation plan, the CAP Update will succeed where the previous iteration did not. However, if the City continues to delay, stall, and break its promises, it will fail to meet its legally-binding targets, compromising its ability to streamline development projects and efforts to stop climate change.

We hope this letter will provide the City with the guidance and perspective it needs to develop a comprehensive implementation plan and pass a gold-standard, CEQA-qualified CAP Update.

Sincerely,



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¹¹⁸ City of San Diego, Office of the City Attorney. [Memorandum MS 59](#). (May 17, 2016).