



*The County of San Diego*

## Planning Commission Hearing Report

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<b>Date:</b>	September 22, 2023	<b>Case/File No.:</b>	PDS2020-GPA-20-004
<b>Place:</b>	County Conference Center 5520 Overland Avenue San Diego, CA 92123	<b>Project:</b>	Climate Action Plan Update
<b>Time:</b>	9:00 a.m.	<b>Location:</b>	Unincorporated Area
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	H-2	<b>General Plan:</b>	Various
<b>Appeal Status:</b>	N/A	<b>Zoning:</b>	Various
<b>Applicant/Owner:</b>	County of San Diego	<b>Community:</b>	All
<b>Environmental:</b>	N/A	<b>APNs:</b>	Various

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### **A. OVERVIEW**

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

On January 13, 2021 (5), the Board approved new policy recommendations to guide the CAP Update. The recommendations direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a comprehensive and legally enforceable CAP that does not rely on the purchase of carbon offsets (i.e., the reduction, removal, or avoidance of GHG emissions that compensate for GHG emissions generated elsewhere) to meet emission reduction targets, uses updated data and modeling, sets clear goals and metrics to ensure environmental justice and equity, is shaped by community input, meets and exceeds Senate Bill 32 GHG emission reductions (40% below 1990 levels by 2030), and establishes actions to meet a goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2035-2045 (in line with Executive Order B-55-18). Since Board direction, Assembly Bill 1279 was signed into law establishing a target to achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2045.

The CAP Update is a mitigation measure for GHG emissions associated with new development anticipated to occur under the County's 2011 General Plan. The CAP's primary objective is to reduce GHG emissions generated from activities within the unincorporated county (community) and emissions generated by



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operating County facilities, including facilities and operations located within incorporated cities (County operations). As part of the inventory process, a new baseline inventory of community and County operations GHG emission sources was prepared, along with projections of GHG emissions through 2050, using, in part, transportation modeling provided by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). New GHG emission reduction targets were identified based upon State legislated reduction targets and Board direction, and a revised set of GHG reduction measures (CAP measures) were identified to mitigate emissions from community and County operations emission sources to meet these targets.

The CAP Update process includes preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (Supplemental EIR) as required by CEQA, which supplements the previous environmental analysis included in the 2011 General Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report (2011 General Plan Program EIR), since it did not consider the impacts of the CAP measures themselves on the environment. CEQA also requires that the Supplemental EIR evaluate alternatives to the CAP Update that would reduce significant impacts from implementing the CAP measures. In addition to alternatives to the CAP Update, the Court ruling requires the Supplemental EIR to analyze smart growth alternatives that are intended to significantly reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) (i.e., the volume of daily trips or the average distance people drive to and from destinations). The smart growth alternatives include actions additional to the CAP measures, in this case focusing on reduction of VMT, to help further reduce GHG emissions.

During a future Planning Commission (Commission) hearing at which the CAP Update will be considered, the Commission will be asked to make a recommendation on the CAP Update and its Supplemental EIR and will have the option to consider recommending a smart growth alternative to the Board. A smart growth alternative may include new programs or process improvements to incentivize residential, commercial, and mixed-use growth within the smart growth boundary area. Some smart growth programs or process improvements would require subsequent implementing actions after adoption of the CAP, which may include additional analysis and environmental review, if the Board adopts the alternative.

Today, staff will present a progress report on the CAP Update and its Supplemental EIR which will be available for public review this fall/winter. This report does not represent a commitment to any particular course of action. The Commission is asked to receive the CAP Update presentation and associated CEQA findings. No other direction or recommendation is requested at this time. Commission comments will be considered with stakeholder input to inform the draft CAP Update and Supplemental EIR.

## **B. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on its analysis, staff recommends that the Planning Commission make the following recommendations to the Board of Supervisors:

1. Find that the proposed actions are exempt from CEQA per Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because the proposed actions do not commit the County to any definitive course of action and there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. Subsequent actions would be reviewed pursuant to CEQA and presented to the Board for consideration prior to implementation.



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2. Receive the presentation for a Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

### **1. 2011 General Plan**

On August 3, 2011, the Board approved a comprehensive General Plan Update (2011 General Plan). The 2011 General Plan Program EIR identified contributions to climate change as a potentially significant environmental impact. The 2011 General Plan made modifications to the County's land use through changes to the future development of the County by locating 80 percent of the future dwelling unit capacity in the western third of the unincorporated areas, within the County Water Authority boundary, and reducing the overall planned capacity by 15 percent.

While the 2011 General Plan focused development within the Village Core areas away from rural areas, the 2011 General Plan Program EIR studied and proposed mitigation for the environmental impacts from future development allowed in the 2011 General Plan. Consequently, 19 separate mitigation measures were adopted to reduce GHG emissions from community and County operations below a level of significance.

One of the 19 measures, designated CC 1.2, called for the preparation of a CAP. CC 1.2 reads:

"Prepare a County Climate Change Action Plan with an update[d] baseline inventory of greenhouse gas emissions from all sources, more detailed greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and deadlines, and comprehensive and enforceable [greenhouse gas] emissions reduction measures that will achieve a 17% reduction in emissions from County operations from 2006 by 2020 and a 9% reduction in community emissions between 2006 and 2020. Once prepared, implementation of this plan will be monitored and progress reported on a regular basis."

CC 1.2 was incorporated into the 2011 General Plan as Goal COS 20 and Policy COS 20.1.

### **2. 2012 Climate Action Plan**

The County prepared and adopted a CAP and related environmental coverage on June 20, 2012. On July 20, 2012, the Sierra Club filed a petition alleging that the County's adoption of the plan violated CEQA because it failed to adequately consider the impacts of the 2012 CAP itself. The Superior Court ruled in favor of Sierra Club, thus invalidating the 2012 CAP. This decision was later affirmed by the Appellate Court (*Sierra Club v. County of San Diego* (2014) 231 Cal.App.4th 115) and the Board rescinded the 2012 CAP on April 8, 2015 (3).

### **3. 2018 Climate Action Plan**

Planning and Development Services, in collaboration with the Departments of Agriculture, Weights and Measures, Environmental Health and Quality, General Services, Human Resources, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works, as well as the Health and Human Services Agency, the Air Pollution Control District, and County Counsel, prepared a new Climate Action Plan (2018 CAP). The 2018 CAP included 26 measures



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that were achievable, enforceable, and measurable to reduce GHG emissions from the community and County operations. On February 14, 2018, the Board adopted the 2018 CAP and 2018 CAP SEIR.

Upon adoption of the 2018 CAP and 2018 CAP SEIR, the Sierra Club filed two petitions challenging them (Case Nos. 2012-101054 and 2018-14081). In a separate action, Golden Door Properties, LLC, also challenged the 2018 CAP (No. 2018-13324). On December 24, 2018, the Superior Court ruled that the 2018 CAP is inconsistent with the 2011 General Plan and that its approval did not comply with CEQA. On the issue of general plan consistency, the Superior Court reasoned that a mitigation measure that would require projects seeking general plan amendments to employ GHG offsets that could involve GHG reductions outside of the County violated the 2011 General Plan policy language requiring GHG reductions within the County. The Superior Court further ordered the County to set aside and vacate the February 14, 2018, approvals of the 2018 CAP, the certification for the 2018 CAP SEIR, and related actions.

The County appealed the Superior Court's decision. On June 12, 2020, the Fourth Appellate Court (Appellate Court) issued its decision. (*Golden Door Properties, LLC v. County of San Diego* (2020) 50 Cal.App.5th 467.) The Appellate Court disagreed with, and overruled, the Superior Court on the issue of General Plan inconsistency. But while the decision affirmed that the CAP Measures contained within the 2018 CAP are compliant with CEQA, the Appellate Court upheld the determination by the Superior Court to invalidate the 2018 CAP based on deficiencies in the 2018 CAP SEIR. Specifically, the Appellate Court affirmed the Superior Court's decision that the 2018 CAP and 2018 CAP SEIR failed to adequately account for potential environmental impacts of general plan amendment projects due to reliance on mitigation measure M-GHG-1, which allowed for use of offset credits. The Appellate Court also held that the 2018 CAP SEIR should have included at least one project alternative focused on substantially reducing VMT, and that the document failed to adequately address the cumulative impacts of probable future projects requiring general plan amendments. On September 30, 2020, the Board voted 5-0 to rescind and vacate all approvals related to the 2018 CAP, including the 2018 CAP SEIR.

#### **4. Climate Action Plan Update**

On January 13, 2021, the Board approved new policy recommendations to guide the preparation of a CAP Update. The recommendations direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. "Develop a Climate Action Plan for the County that is:
  - a. comprehensive and legally enforceable;
  - b. does not rely on the purchase of carbon offsets to meet emission reduction targets,
  - c. uses updated data and modeling;
  - d. sets clear goals and measurable metrics that show how we are ensuring environmental justice and equity;
  - e. is shaped by community input; and
  - f. will meet and exceed Senate Bill 32 GHG emissions reductions of 40% below the 1990 level by 2030 and establish actions to meet a goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2035-2045 (in line with Executive Order B-55-18)."
2. Conduct stakeholder engagement, hold public hearings, and undertake environmental review; and
3. Report back to the Board bi-monthly with progress.



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The CAP Update is a mitigation measure for GHG emissions associated with the geographic setting and planned land use patterns as established by the 2011 General Plan. The County prepared a SEIR to evaluate the impacts of CAP measures on the environment as required by CEQA, which supplements the previous environmental analysis included in the 2011 General Plan Program EIR. In order to reduce emissions generated by activities within the unincorporated area and County operations, the CAP Update process also includes several technical components. The CAP and its SEIR will be available for public review this fall/winter.

The CAP Update includes a 2019 GHG emissions inventory that was developed using the Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) U.S. Community Protocol for Reporting of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (U.S. Community Protocol), which includes methodologies for local governments to measure and report emissions. The inventory identified and quantified GHG emissions from activities within the community and from County operations across nine categories: On-Road Transportation; Off-Road Transportation; Electricity; Natural Gas; Propane; Solid Waste; Agriculture; Water; and Wastewater. The 2019 GHG emissions from within the community and County operations were 2,983,713 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO<sub>2e</sub>). The On-Road Transportation sector was the largest source of emissions, contributing 45% of the total GHG emissions for 2019. Electricity (20%) and Natural Gas (16%) were the next largest emitters, followed by Solid Waste (6%), Agriculture (4%), and Propane (4%). In addition to the GHG emissions inventory, the CAP Update includes an evaluation of carbon storage potential in the unincorporated county. As part of this analysis, existing and future carbon stock in natural and working lands (e.g., shrubland, forest, orchard, row crop, wetland) were estimated to consider actions that increase carbon storage in the CAP Update.

GHG emissions projections estimate changes in emissions over time from anticipated population, housing, and employment growth, as well as the future impact of federal and State regulations, policies, and programs adopted as of 2022 that would reduce GHG emissions from future activities. For 2030, the projected emissions for the community and County operations are 2,397,000 MTCO<sub>2e</sub>; for 2045 they are 1,678,000 MTCO<sub>2e</sub>.

GHG reduction targets are informed by Board direction and State legislation and plans. In 2022, Assembly Bill (AB) 1279 established legislation for the State to achieve net zero GHG emissions as soon as possible, but no later than 2045, and to ensure that statewide anthropogenic GHG emissions (e.g., those arising from human activity such as through the burning of fossil fuels) are reduced to at least 85% below 1990 levels by 2045. In addition, the State released the 2022 Scoping Plan (Scoping Plan) to address the emission limits of AB 1279. The Scoping Plan concluded that additional reductions beyond what are required by Senate Bill 32 are needed to reach AB 1279 targets. By adjusting the State-level GHG reduction targets identified in AB 1279 and the Scoping Plan to the County's 2019 GHG inventory, the CAP Update establishes GHG reduction targets for the community and County operations to reach 43.6% below 2019 levels by 2030 (or 713,844 MTCO<sub>2e</sub> emissions reductions) and 85.4% below 2019 levels by 2045 (or 1,243,815 MTCO<sub>2e</sub> emissions reductions). Additionally, an aspirational goal of net zero emissions by 2045 is established to align with Board direction.



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The CAP Update identifies measures and actions that the County will take to achieve the 2030 and 2045 GHG emission reduction targets through quantified GHG emission reductions and make progress towards the 2045 net zero emissions goal through quantified reductions and additional, unquantified “Path to Net Zero” actions. Staff worked with stakeholders, County departments, and technical experts to develop CAP measures. CAP measures reduce GHG emissions from the community and County operations through three primary ways.

- Avoiding emissions such as substituting renewable energy for non-renewable sources or avoiding the conversion of agricultural land to development.
- Reducing emissions, such as implementing an employee teleworking program, or transitioning to cleaner fuels through electric vehicles or solar heating.
- Removing, sequestering, or storing carbon, such as in tree planting programs or other natural and agricultural lands preservation and management.

Implementation of CAP measures and actions across the built environment and transportation, energy, solid waste, agriculture and conservation, and water and wastewater sectors will achieve the 2030 and 2045 GHG emissions reduction targets and put the County on a path towards reaching the 2045 net zero emissions goal. Though none of the proposed measures in the CAP Update include land use policy changes through proposed Zoning Ordinance updates, community plan updates, or similar, the CAP will be responsive to other ongoing initiatives related to County land use policy changes in future CAP updates. For example, on February 9, 2022 (7) the Board provided direction to develop options for a Sustainable Land Use Framework (Framework) for the unincorporated area, including the identification of sustainable development principles (Sustainability Principles) that could inform land use decisions. The Framework will give staff and the community clear guidance about the Board's policy goals, priorities, and strategic initiatives, allowing the County to more effectively navigate how to balance housing production and sustainability, conservation, and resiliency, while advancing equity in an accelerated way. The development of the Framework will involve collecting data, developing maps, and gathering stakeholder input to understand constraints and opportunities related to land use, amenities, services, and economic development at the community level in order to identify the best and most cost-effective planning tools, program types, and policy approaches to deliver results in the shortest amount of time. This data and stakeholder input will further refine the Sustainability Principles and inform the identification of tailored strategies, funding and investment opportunities, and planning mechanisms (e.g., potential specific plans or an update to the General Plan), that the Board may consider. If the General Plan were to change as an outcome of the Framework, then the GHG emissions associated with the General Plan could change, and these emissions would be addressed and mitigated for in the next update to the CAP.

## **D. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR)**

The CAP Update process includes preparing a SEIR, as required by CEQA. An EIR is used to inform public agency decision makers and the public of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects, and describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project while substantially lessening or avoiding any



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of the significant environmental effects. The SEIR analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed CAP Update and associated actions and augments the previous environmental analysis included in the 2011 General Plan Program EIR, which did not consider the impacts of the CAP measures themselves on the environment. If subsequent activity could result in effects not within the scope of the 2011 General Plan Program EIR, including the potential for new or more severe significant impacts than identified in the 2011 General Plan Program EIR, the County must prepare an EIR. The County will prepare a SEIR to evaluate whether there are new or more severe impacts than those identified in the 2011 General Plan Program EIR.

CEQA also requires that the SEIR evaluate alternatives to the CAP Update that would reduce significant impacts from implementing the CAP measures. Alternatives may include policy changes or other alternatives that can reduce some of the significant impacts from the CAP measures, but that also must meet most of the project objectives and be feasible. In addition to alternatives to the CAP measures, the Court ruling (Court of Appeal for Division One of the Fourth Appellate District (Appellate Court) in *Golden Door Properties, LLC v. County of San Diego* (2020) 50 Cal.App.5th 467) requires the SEIR to analyze smart growth alternatives that are intended to significantly reduce VMT. The smart growth alternative(s) would propose actions additional to the CAP measures, in this case focusing on reduction of VMT, to help further reduce GHG emissions.

### **2. Smart Growth Alternatives**

A SEIR is required for the CAP Update and as part of satisfying the Appellate Court ruling, the SEIR will evaluate "at least one smart growth alternative, which would result in reducing both vehicle miles traveled and GHG emissions...." The Court's stated objective for requiring the County to evaluate a smart growth alternative is to reduce GHG emissions from VMT, beyond that which the CAP Update, as a GHG reduction plan can do. The Court reasoned that additional reductions could be achieved by considering changes to land use and development patterns in the County.

"Smart Growth" covers a range of development and conservation strategies that help protect our health and natural environment and make our communities more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially diverse. The Smart Growth concept focuses land use development in areas close to jobs, services, and public facilities to maximize the use of existing infrastructure, preserve open space and natural resources, and reduce the distance individuals need to travel to meet their needs. Within the County's 2011 General Plan, the concept of Smart Growth is expressed through Villages and Town Centers as the model for compact development, where semi-rural areas surrounding the Village Core reflect the existing pattern of development for most of the unincorporated county. This is reflected through the County's Community Development Model, where the central core is surrounded by areas of lesser intensity including Semi-Rural and Rural Lands. The General Plan Guiding Principles set the rules for development of policies, and include principles that promote sustainability by locating growth near existing and planned infrastructure, services, and jobs in a compact pattern of development; promote environmental stewardship; ensure development is sited to account for physical constraints and natural hazards; support a multi-modal transportation network that support the County's development patterns; maintain environmentally sustainable communities and reduce GHGs; preserve agriculture; and others.



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Following the Notice of Preparation for the CAP Update SEIR in early 2021, staff engaged stakeholders interested in providing input on the smart growth alternatives to be considered in the SEIR. Staff held approximately five smart growth alternative workshops or hearings to solicit input and seek out those interested in providing input. Staff met with representatives of environmental groups; the building and land development industry; economic and regional chambers of commerce; Community Planning and Sponsor Groups; and individuals throughout 2021 and again in 2023. In total, staff held approximately 65 meetings with groups or individuals interested in providing input on smart growth alternatives.

Staff asked stakeholders where they thought smart growth development should occur geographically and how to incentivize or disincentivize growth in those locations. Staff produced maps showing locations of where smart growth could occur in the unincorporated county. These maps were requested by stakeholders and include but are not limited to the following: agricultural lands; SANDAG regional employment centers; SANDAG Sustainable Communities Strategies areas; public service facilities (e.g., schools, retail, hospitals); fire hazard severity zones; VMT efficient areas; SANDAG Mobility Hubs; SANDAG Smart Growth areas; Multiple Species Conservation Program areas; open space; and General Plan Village and Village “support areas.” These maps will inform the smart growth alternative geography analyzed in the SEIR. Staff produced approximately 90 maps based on stakeholder input.

Staff also received input on ways to incentivize growth in the smart growth areas and ways to disincentivize growth outside of smart growth areas. Stakeholders requested the following incentives to encourage growth in these areas: financial incentives; waivers on review; develop actions by-right or create ministerial processes; priority reviews for certain projects; programs to mitigate impacts (e.g., VMT and wildfire); and updates to County ordinances to streamline development. Stakeholders requested the following disincentives to discourage growth outside of these areas: restrictions on General Plan Amendments; fees; and prohibitions on development in hazard areas. Stakeholders provided input on process improvements to make development easier, such as conducting future market, infrastructure, and feasibility studies. Section G below provides a summary of public input on the CAP Update.

The smart growth boundaries (geography) will include an overlay that would indicate the area is subject to incentives to streamline development and, indicate if outside of this overlay, disincentives to discourage development. Some smart growth incentives, disincentives, or process improvements would require subsequent implementing actions after adoption of the CAP Update, should the Board select a smart growth alternative and direct staff to implement, which may include additional analysis and environmental review. During a future Planning Commission hearing at which the CAP Update will be considered, the Commission will be asked to recommend the adoption of the CAP Update and the certification of its SEIR, as well as consider a recommendation for adopting a smart growth alternative.

### **3. CAP Consistency Review Checklist**

To help plan and design projects, and to assist County staff in implementing the CAP and determining the consistency of proposed projects with the CAP during development review, the County will prepare a CAP Consistency Review Checklist (Checklist). This Checklist, in conjunction with the CAP Update, will provide a streamlined review process for proposed discretionary projects that require environmental review pursuant





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to State CEQA Guidelines. For example, the Checklist provides a process and evidence by which subsequent development projects that are consistent with the General Plan would demonstrate consistency with the CAP Update (i.e., they would not hinder attainment of the GHG reduction targets). If subsequent projects are found to be consistent with the CAP Update, then the environmental documents prepared for these projects can rely upon and incorporate by reference the cumulative GHG analysis for the CAP Update as presented in the SEIR.

To show consistency with the CAP Update, an applicant would simply include all relevant and applicable measures required in the Checklist as part of their project design or through conditions of approval. That project would then be assumed to have a less than significant GHG impact, and no further analysis would be required. This saves applicants with General Plan consistent projects time and money and provides a standard process that is easy to understand and predictable.

#### **4. Amendments to the General Plan**

The CAP Update will include an associated amendment to the General Plan to revise Goal Conservation and Open Space (COS)-20: Reduction of community-wide and County operations greenhouse gas emissions; Policy COS-20.1: Climate Change Action Plan; revisions to 2011 General Plan Update Program Environmental Impact Report (2011 General Plan Program EIR) Mitigation Measure (MM) CC-1.2 (Prepare a County Climate Change Action Plan), MM CC-1.7 (County Guidelines for Determining Significance for Climate Change, which includes a threshold of significance for GHG emissions); and MM CC-1.8 (Revise County Guidelines for Determining Significance based on the Climate Change Action Plan).

In addition to amendments to Goal COS-20, Policy COS-20.1, and 2011 General Plan Program EIR MMs CC-1.2, CC-1.7, and CC-1.8, the Supplemental EIR Alternatives chapter will include additional amendments to General Plan goals and policies that may be selected by the Board to further reduce VMT and other impacts considered as part of the 2011 General Plan Program EIR. These potential amendments are included as an additional Smart Growth Alternative for consideration. Amendments to the San Diego County General Plan and revisions to mitigation measures adopted in the 2011 General Plan Program EIR would be required to update the General Plan for new GHG reduction targets (2030 and 2045) and CEQA requirements for plans for reduction of GHG emissions (i.e., CAP Update).

#### **E. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT**

This action is for the Planning Commission to accept the presentation related to the CAP Update. Following public review, the CAP Update and its SEIR will be brought to the Commission for its final recommendation. This progress report and any Commission comments in response do not represent a commitment to any particular course of action. Final binding policy decisions by the Commission and Board must await the completion of the CAP Update and Supplemental EIR process. Acceptance of this presentation is exempt from CEQA per Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because the proposed actions do not commit the County to any definitive course of action and there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. Subsequent actions would be reviewed pursuant to CEQA and presented to the Board for consideration prior to implementation.



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## **F. COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP (CPG)**

The Project area is the unincorporated area and affects all Community Planning and Sponsor Groups.

## **G. PUBLIC INPUT**

To solicit feedback and input from diverse stakeholders on the CAP Update and SEIR, staff conducted robust public engagement and outreach. Staff hosted 18 in-person and virtual workshops on the CAP Update with 664 people in attendance, disseminated information at community-oriented events with a combined total of about 20,000 people in attendance, distributed 1,500 postcard surveys exclusively to unincorporated communities and received 412 online and hardcopy responses, and at the request of various organizations and individuals outside of those listed in the stakeholders above, provided 47 presentations and/or meetings to answer questions about the CAP Update process. The strategy sought to reach residents and members of the unincorporated communities who have not traditionally engaged in the planning process, along with County's diverse stakeholder network, including community members, environmental organizations, business, industry, and development communities. The comprehensive approach to public participation ensures that the CAP Update is shaped by robust community input and that the CAP measures and SEIR alternatives represent diverse interests, demonstrate equity and inclusion, and provide economic and environmental benefits to the unincorporated area.

Development of the CAP Update and its SEIR included three community engagement phases that built on each other to inform development of the CAP Update. The first phase laid the groundwork for the CAP Update and established staff's commitment to an equitable engagement process. The second phase focused on the GHG reduction measures and implementing actions that would be included in the CAP. The third phase compiled stakeholder feedback into the CAP Update. All phases incorporated social media engagement, website updates, and e-newsletter updates in addition to in-person and virtual events and meetings.

In 2021, staff hosted general overview workshops on the CAP Update process and the SEIR to introduce the project and gain an understanding of what community members thought an equitable approach to updating the CAP looked like. In addition, staff hosted workshops that focused on creating vision statements that establish a collective definition of what a net zero emissions future looks like for each of the CAP emissions sectors.

From the end of 2021 into 2022, staff collected input on actions the public would like to see the County take to address climate change through the implementation of CAP measures. This included talking with residents in the unincorporated county's identified Environmental Justice communities (Spring Valley, Sweetwater, North El Cajon, and North Lemon Grove) to ensure these voices were heard from early on as well as multiple workshop series to collect feedback on conceptual measures that could be included in each of the five emissions reduction sectors (built environment & transportation, energy, solid waste, water & wastewater, and agriculture & conservation).

From 2022 through 2023, staff launched a CAP Update survey, held a workshop on co-benefits to gather input on what outcomes, in addition to GHG reductions, stakeholders want to see from CAP implementation,



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and engaged all 26 Community Planning and Sponsor Groups throughout the unincorporated area to obtain input on the CAP Update.

Major themes of the feedback include:

- Built Environment and Transportation
  - Emphasize public transportation and opportunities to improve systems and increase ridership,
  - Ensure equitable access to electric vehicles and charging stations, especially for low-income communities and renters, and
  - Update existing plans to push for more mode shift (e.g., more bicycle and pedestrian friendly road improvements).
- Energy
  - Electrify across all sectors (e.g., transportation, buildings, agriculture),
  - Provide incentives for electric appliance replacements,
  - Increase renewable energy, and
  - Enact measures equitably.
- Solid Waste
  - Incorporate economic development and job creation,
  - Increase access to waste and recycling facilities, clean air, food, and energy helps promote equity,
  - Consider waste to energy,
  - Utilize concepts like circular economy (e.g., glass take-backs at grocery stores), and
  - Provide education about ways to reduce waste and increase recycling, composting, and material reuse.
- Agriculture and Conservation
  - Recognize the potential agriculture and agricultural lands have to address climate change and reduce emissions,
  - Develop a regional carbon farming program,
  - Provide education related to native food, plants, and seasonal eating, and
  - Conserve wildlife habitats and open spaces.
- Water and Wastewater
  - Provide financial incentives for water-efficiency appliances and turf replacement, with a priority for multi-family and low-income residents,
  - Increase recycled water availability, and
  - Encourage native plant landscaping.

The CAP Update, SEIR, and other supplementary materials will be hosted on EngagementHQ, an interactive digital platform, for public review this fall/winter.

- <https://engage.sandiegocounty.gov/cap>



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AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:

  
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