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TO: Supervisor Nora Vargas, Chairwoman
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Supervisor Joel Anderson
Supervisor Nathan Fletcher
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FROM: Dahvia Lynch, Director
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CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATE PROGRESS REPORT

Overview

On January 13, 2021 (5), the County of San Diego (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) approved policy guidelines for the Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update to establish actions to meet a net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction goal by 2035-2045. The CAP Update is a mitigation measure for GHG emissions associated with existing and future development anticipated to occur in the unincorporated area as a result of activities associated with the County's 2011 General Plan. The primary objective of the CAP Update is to reduce GHG emissions generated from current and future activities within the unincorporated area of the county and emissions generated by County facilities and operations through the implementation of CAP measures. Staff's key accomplishments on the CAP Update since the last progress report on June 27, 2022, include continued development of conceptual CAP measures, engagement with stakeholders through a series of measure development workshops and community centered outreach, and coordination with County departments.

Staff have made three presentations to the Board and provided two progress report memoranda since the CAP Update was initiated in late 2020. On July 14, 2021 (2) and October 20, 2021 (3), staff presented the approach to developing CAP measures, engaging diverse stakeholders, prioritizing equity, and preparation of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (Supplemental EIR) for the CAP Update. On August 31, 2022 (6), staff presented an update on the County Facilities Zero Carbon Portfolio Plan

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and received direction to develop two programs and three reports that advance sustainability initiatives for inclusion in the CAP Update and in support of the Regional Decarbonization Framework (RDF). Progress report memoranda submitted in April and June 2022 described CAP Update progress, 2018 CAP measure implementation results, and the relationship between the CAP Update and other related sustainability efforts such as the RDF and the Sustainable Land Use Framework.

This memorandum reports on CAP Update progress, including outreach and engagement, how CAP measure development is being shaped by stakeholders, updates on GHG emissions reduction modeling and schedule, and an overview of what to expect in 2023.

Outreach and Engagement

Stakeholder feedback continues to be fundamental to the development of the CAP Update. In 2022, staff sought input and stakeholder feedback through a total of eight public workshops that included a total of 146 participants, 21 in-person events that reached over 6,500 people, and regular engagement on online platforms and social media. Through these efforts, staff received thousands of comments and are working to incorporate this feedback into the document, as described below.

The eight public workshops were presented over two series to gather a broad range of feedback and reach a diverse audience to better understand stakeholders' perspectives on climate change and potential actions to reduce GHG emissions. The first series of workshops occurred in early 2022 and reached residents and businesses from the County's identified unincorporated area Environmental Justice communities (i.e., Sweetwater, Spring Valley, North Lemon Grove, and North El Cajon), through a series of small group meetings. These meetings offered a forum for community members to discuss concerns and climate change impacts (e.g., increased rainfall and resulting flooding, drought, and evacuation from fire prone areas) experienced in their lives and communities. It was also an opportunity for participants to provide input on specific actions (e.g., access to renewable energy, composting resources, and multi-modal options) that the County could take to address these issues through the CAP Update's five emission reduction sectors that include built environment and transportation, energy, water and wastewater, agriculture and conservation, and solid waste.

The second series of workshops focused on CAP measure development and occurred in summer 2022. These five virtual workshops reached stakeholders from across the region from community, environmental, business, labor, and industry stakeholder groups to gather input on draft strategies and conceptual measures for each emissions reduction sector to gather broad feedback and introduce the concept of co-benefits (e.g., additional health, economic, and environmental benefits) that could be achieved through CAP implementation. Across these workshop series, stakeholders emphasized the importance of education, incentives, and equity as key components of developing an effective CAP

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that not only reduces GHG emissions but also benefits the communities it impacts. Staff also received feedback on specific actions the County could take to reduce emissions while also improving quality of life in unincorporated communities by increasing access to affordable clean technologies (e.g. electric vehicle charging infrastructure) through incentive programs.

In addition to workshops, staff participated in in-person events hosted by community groups and organizations to meet people that may not have otherwise attended a CAP-focused gathering, facilitated alternative online engagement (e.g., social media and virtual newsletters), and hosted focused conversations with stakeholders. These methods helped identify additional stakeholders that had not previously been engaged in the CAP Update and established an understanding of what the CAP Update is and the potential it has to benefit communities. Examples of in-person events include speaking forums and outreach opportunities at Earth Day fairs, County Libraries and Parks, Movies in the Park, the San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) Electric Vehicle Adaptive Ride and Drive event (an all-inclusive event for residents with differing access and functional needs to test drive electric vehicles), and the County's *Live Well* Advance conference, which brought together over 2,000 representatives from community-based organizations, schools, etc. to advance the shared vision of a healthy, safe, and thriving San Diego region.

Staff also presented at focused meetings; for example, with community groups that serve farmworkers and Limited English Proficient populations, to better understand climate change issues they are faced with, gather their perspectives on what should be included in the CAP Update, and provide examples for opportunities for the public to continue to be engaged in the process, such as at future workshops and events. Staff also continued to engage stakeholders through regular emails and newsletters, updates on the project website, and on social media (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and NextDoor).

In early 2023, staff will embark on new ways to practice community-centered outreach to meet people where they are and reach new audiences. Efforts will focus on engaging with populations that are expected to be most impacted by climate change, such as young people, older adults, underserved communities, and communities of color, among others, and those stakeholders that have not already been engaged through the CAP Update outreach process. These efforts will use planned outreach events, surveys, and partnerships across County departments and with other agencies and organizations to develop a well-rounded perspective that is informed by community values and reflects which CAP measures are important to them. This includes an online version of the survey which will be available in all eight County-identified threshold languages as well as additional translation and interpretation support when requested or when there is a demonstrated need. The goal is to produce a community-informed CAP Update that reduces GHG emissions while also demonstrating progress on additional co-benefits (e.g., green job creation, community health and air quality improvements) and equity that are important to stakeholders.

Update on Development of Conceptual CAP Measures

Throughout 2022, staff developed conceptual measures and actions that align with State GHG emission goals to reduce carbon emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and to be net zero emissions by 2045 and the Board's net-zero GHG emissions goal for 2035-2045. CAP measures reduce GHG emissions from County operations and within the unincorporated area 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.

In addition to emissions data and modeling considerations, measure development is a compilation of input from external stakeholders and County departments. As described above, staff collected stakeholder feedback on conceptual vision statements, strategies, measures, and actions throughout 2022. In addition, staff continued to meet with several County departments that implement GHG emissions reduction measures in County operations and the unincorporated community including the Departments of General Services, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Agriculture Weights and Measures, County Library and the Health and Human Services Agency, among others, to refine conceptual measures to maximize GHG emissions reductions, discuss implementation options, and keep colleagues apprised and engaged with the CAP Update process. Following rounds of conversations with departments, staff are compiling metrics to better understand the extent to which measures and actions can be advanced to maximize GHG reductions while remaining fiscally responsible. This information will also be used to understand what steps it will take to operationalize, or implement, CAP measures, including the mechanism (e.g. new policy, incentive, or program development), timeline, and costs associated with CAP implementation.

Ultimately, this detailed analysis of conceptual CAP measures will allow staff to build an implementation plan for the CAP Update that would determine resourcing (e.g. cost, timeline, staffing), identify funding opportunities, identify metrics necessary to track and monitor GHG emissions reductions, and demonstrate alignment with other County priorities such as the Regional Decarbonization Framework and Departmental Sustainability Plans.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, Projections, Targets, and Timing

Progress has been made on the preparation of an updated GHG emissions inventory of activities (e.g., transportation, electricity and natural gas use, agricultural operations, water and wastewater treatment) in the unincorporated area and from County operations in 2019. This inventory serves as the foundation from which future GHG emissions will

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be projected and GHG emissions reduction targets set (i.e. 2030 and 2045). To date, staff have acquired the 2019 baseline GHG emissions inventory data in the following sectors: electricity/natural gas, waste, water/wastewater, offroad transportation (landscaping, construction equipment, etc.), agriculture, and carbon storage by landcover and soil type. Inventory data for carbon storage and transportation emissions are still under development, as described below.

According to the State's Scoping Plan analysis, carbon removal will be a critical component of reaching net zero goals and making up for any emissions that cannot be avoided or reduced. As a result, the CAP Update will include a new inventory that shows carbon capture and storage rates in vegetation and soil to support this work. This storage inventory is under development and will evaluate how carbon sequestration values vary across land cover and soil types and will help staff to evaluate where there are opportunities to increase sequestration through improved land management and agricultural practices, habitat restoration, and tree planting efforts.

Staff are currently focused on acquiring transportation emissions data for the unincorporated area and completing the 2019 baseline GHG inventory, GHG emissions projections through 2050, and setting GHG emissions reduction targets in accordance with State laws and Board direction to achieve net zero emissions between 2035-2045. Completion of the GHG inventory is critical path to the continued development of the CAP Update. Once the GHG inventory is complete, staff can move forward from conceptual CAP measures that outline steps the County can take to reduce emissions, to quantified CAP measures that show how effective the measures are at reducing emissions from the GHG emissions inventory and allow for the development of a Draft CAP Update.

Transportation emissions are estimated using the San Diego Association of Government's (SANDAG) transportation demand model used for the 2021 Regional Plan. Staff began coordinating with SANDAG on transportation emissions data access in May 2021. As stated in the April 2022 memorandum to the Board, staff expected to gain access to the SANDAG model beginning in June 2022, with the final receipt of transportation emissions data in September 2022. In September 2022, the County received a letter from SANDAG stating that their transportation demand modeling services would not be available until late 2023 due to updates to the Regional Plan that were directed by the SANDAG Board of Directors in 2022. Completion of the 2019 baseline GHG emissions inventory relies on the receipt of updated transportation emissions data from SANDAG.

As a result of this most recent delay in receiving transportation emissions data from SANDAG, staff are moving forward with using regional vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) data that SANDAG released during the public review period of the Regional Plan in Summer 2021. These comprehensive VMT outputs would be scaled to estimate the unincorporated area's share of VMT and converted to transportation-related GHG emissions. The resulting dataset would reflect expert judgment and would be reasonably close to the work product the County would have received from SANDAG's transportation demand modeling services. This approach also aligns with stakeholder requests to use

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the most updated dataset available and includes SANDAG Series 14 data. Moving forward with this dataset would allow the County to prepare a draft CAP Update document for public review by Fall 2023. If the County were to wait for SANDAG to provide transportation demand modeling services, which will not be available until late 2023, this would cause a delay of at least a year in CAP Update development.

Upcoming Project Activities at a Glance

In 2023 staff will continue building on progress made to develop the CAP Update. Staff anticipate completion of the GHG inventory, carbon storage inventory, projections, and targets, which will be provided in a memorandum to the Board within the first half of 2023. Additionally, staff will continue to engage stakeholders through various outreach events and venues to further refine CAP measures, as described above. These efforts will result in the preparation of a Draft CAP and CAP Supplemental EIR which will be available for public review in the latter half of 2023.

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

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

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

Respectfully,



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