



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## LAND USE AGENDA ITEM

### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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First District

JOEL ANDERSON  
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER  
Third District

NATHAN FLETCHER  
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND  
Fifth District

**DATE:** July 14, 2021

**02**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

### **SUBJECT**

**CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATE PROGRESS REPORT (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

### **OVERVIEW**

On January 13, 2021 (5), the County of San Diego (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) approved new policy recommendations to guide the Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update. The recommendations direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a comprehensive and legally enforceable CAP that meets and exceeds the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions target required by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 as amended by Senate Bill 32 in 2016 (40% below 1990 levels by 2030) and establishes a goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2035-2045. This goal is in line with both Executive Order B-55-18, which has a goal to make the state of California carbon neutral as soon as possible and no later than 2045, and Senate Bill 100 (2018) which requires utilities to provide customers with 100% carbon-free energy by the same date. In addition, the Board directed that the CAP uses updated data and modeling, 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 the emission reduction targets, be shaped by community input, and set clear goals and metrics to ensure environmental justice and equity.

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 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 will be prepared, along with projections of GHG emissions through 2050, using, in part, updated transportation modeling provided by the San Diego Association of Governments, or SANDAG. New GHG emission reduction targets will be identified based upon State legislated reduction targets and Board direction which establishes a goal of net zero emissions by 2035-2045. As part of the CAP Update, the County will prepare a revised set of GHG reduction measures (CAP measures) to mitigate emissions from community and County operations emission sources to meet the new GHG emission reduction targets.

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The CAP Update process also includes preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (Supplemental EIR) as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Supplemental EIR supplements the previous environmental analysis included in the 2011 General Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR), which 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. Alternatives may include policy changes, various combinations of CAP measures that achieve the GHG emissions targets, and in this case, consideration of smart growth alternatives that are intended to significantly reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as required by direction from the 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. 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. During the Board hearing at which the CAP Update is considered, the Board will be asked to adopt the CAP Update, certify the Supplemental EIR, and will have the option to consider adopting a smart growth alternative. 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.

To solicit feedback and input from diverse stakeholders on the CAP Update and Supplemental EIR, staff are implementing a robust public engagement and participation strategy. The strategy seeks to reach residents and members of the unincorporated communities who have not traditionally engaged in the planning process, along with the diverse and traditionally engaged members of the County's vast stakeholder network, including community members, environmental organizations, business, industry, and development communities. The comprehensive approach to public participation outlined in the strategy will ensure that the CAP update is shaped by robust community input. It will also ensure that the CAP measures and Supplemental EIR alternatives represent diverse interests, demonstrate equity and inclusion, and provide economic and environmental benefits for all.

Today, staff will present a progress report on the CAP Update and provide an opportunity for the Board to ask questions and comment on the recommended general approaches to developing new CAP measures for inclusion in the CAP Update and update smart growth alternatives for inclusion in the Supplemental EIR, and the approach to public outreach and engagement, with a focus on equity. As the project and environmental review are still in development and further updates will be brought to the Board prior to its final decision on the CAP Update and Supplemental EIR, this progress report and any Board comments in response do not represent a commitment to any particular course of action. Final binding policy decisions by the Board must await the completion of the CAP Update and Supplemental EIR process.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

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

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of action and have no potential to result in either a direct physical change to the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change to the environment. Subsequent actions would be reviewed pursuant to CEQA and presented to the Board for consideration prior to implementation.

2. Receive the presentation for a Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update Progress Report, and comment on the approach to developing new CAP measures for inclusion in the CAP Update, smart growth alternatives for inclusion in the Supplemental EIR, and the approach to engage a diverse public and prioritize equity.

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update prioritizes environmental justice and equity as directed by the Board of Supervisors on January 13, 2021 (5). The County of San Diego will engage diverse stakeholders and community interests through robust community engagement centered on equity as a lens to view the CAP Update. A series of workshops and focused discussions will be held throughout the summer and fall of 2021 to identify topics related to climate and environment that impact the most vulnerable communities within the unincorporated county in a process that is transparent, fair, and inclusive. Community input will inform the development of CAP measures and shape the policies and programs to reduce the disproportionate impacts faced by these communities and improve complementary benefits (e.g., improved air quality, positive health outcomes, increased economic opportunities, resiliency to the effects of climate change).

**FISCAL IMPACT**

N/A

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

There is no business impact associated with receiving the presentation and providing direction on the Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update progress report. Staff would return to the Board with future actions related to the CAP Update that could have a business impact for further consideration and direction.

**ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update will be shaped by robust community input solicited from diverse stakeholders throughout the unincorporated county. County staff have actively sought, and will continue to actively seek, to engage and solicit feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders, including Community Planning and Sponsor Groups, throughout the project timeline.

**BACKGROUND**

On August 3, 2011 (1), the County of San Diego (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a comprehensive General Plan Update. The Final Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) prepared in support of the General Plan Update identified contributions to climate change as a potentially significant environmental impact. The General Plan Update 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 to the western third of the unincorporated areas, within the County Water Authority boundary, and reducing the overall land use capacity by 15 percent.

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While the General Plan Update focused development within the village core areas away from rural areas, the Program EIR still studied and proposed mitigation for the environmental impacts from future development allowed in the General Plan Update. Consequently, 19 separate mitigation measures were adopted to reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of County operations and from activities within the unincorporated county to below a level of significance.

One of the 19 measures, designated CC 1.2, called for the preparation of a Climate Action Plan (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 General Plan Update as Goal COS 20 and Policy COS 20.1.

The County prepared and adopted a CAP and related environmental coverage on June 20, 2012 (4). On July 20, 2012, the Sierra Club filed a petition alleging that the County’s adoption of the plan violated the California Environmental Quality Act (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).

Planning & Development Services (PDS), in collaboration with the Departments of Agriculture, Weights and Measures, Environmental Health, (now Environmental Health 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 that were achievable, enforceable, and measurable to reduce GHG emissions from County operations and from activities within the unincorporated county. On February 14, 2018 (1), the Board adopted the 2018 CAP and Supplemental EIR (2018 SEIR).

Upon adoption of the 2018 CAP and 2018 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 County’s 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 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 plan, the certification for the 2018 SEIR, and related actions.

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The County appealed the Superior Court’s decision. On June 12, 2020, the Fourth 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 GHG reduction measures (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 SEIR. Specifically, the Appellate Court affirmed the Superior Court’s decision that the 2018 CAP and 2018 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 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 (4), the Board voted 5-0 to rescind and vacate all approvals related to the 2018 CAP, including the 2018 SEIR.

On January 13, 2021 (5), 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.

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 relationship between the 2011 General Plan and CAP Update is represented graphically in Attachment A. As depicted, the 2011 General Plan required environmental analysis which occurred within the Program EIR. As part of the mitigation included in the Program EIR, the County is required to prepare a CAP Update which also requires a Supplemental EIR, and consideration of project alternatives, including those ordered by the Appellate Court. The document will supplement 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.

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The primary objective of the CAP Update is to reduce GHG emissions generated from activities within the unincorporated county (community) and emissions generated by operating County facilities, including facilities and operations located within incorporated cities (County operations). As part of the CAP Update, both County operations and community GHG emissions inventories are being updated. For the County operations inventory, internal data is being gathered, verified, and sorted in order to identify GHG emissions related to activities conducted in the course of County operations such as water and energy use, and fuel consumption. For community GHG emissions, the CAP Update must quantify GHG emissions that are anticipated from new development in the unincorporated area for the baseline year, and then project an estimate of emissions through 2050. Community emissions inventories and projections are linked to growth forecasts for the coming decades and largely depend upon population and housing forecasts. The identification of how many new residential units will be needed to satisfy demand in future years is based on a number of factors including population and employment projections provided by SANDAG, existing capacity for new development in the 2011 General Plan, Regional Housing Needs Assessment allocations, and market and economic considerations. The amount of new development projected through 2050 will form the basis for the new GHG emissions inventory of community emissions sources including population, vehicle miles traveled per person, energy and water use per person, and waste generation per person, among other factors. Community data is being gathered from various entities including water districts, San Diego Gas & Electric, and CalRecycle.

The updated GHG emissions inventory and projections will utilize the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) updated transportation model that results from adoption of the San Diego Forward: The 2021 Regional Plan (Regional Plan) to estimate GHG emissions associated with transportation-related (vehicle miles traveled for passenger vehicles) emissions. Adoption of the Regional Plan is anticipated to occur by the end of 2021. Adoption of the Regional Plan by the SANDAG Board of Directors provides an opportunity for the County to align its CAP Update with the new regional growth forecast, regional transportation network, and travel demand assumptions considered in the plan, similar to how other jurisdictions in the region plan to (e.g., the City of San Diego). SANDAG regularly updates regional growth forecasts to project future population and housing in the San Diego region. SANDAG has advised the County that the currently available Series 13 forecast, which was adopted in 2013 and uses growth forecasts from 2010-2012 to estimate regional growth through 2050, will be retired permanently in November 2021 as part of the adoption of the Regional Plan.

After completion of the community and County operations inventories and projections, new GHG emission reduction targets will also be identified based upon State legislated reduction targets and Board direction to establish actions to meet a goal of net zero emissions between 2035-2045. As part of the CAP Update, the County will prepare a revised set of CAP measures to mitigate emissions from community and County operations emission sources to meet the new GHG emission reduction targets.

A description of each of the primary components is included below.

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**Approach to the Development of GHG Reduction Measures (CAP Measures)**

Developing a robust set of CAP measures to mitigate emissions from community and County operations emission sources is at the core of the development of the CAP Update. CAP measures are the series of programs, policies, and initiatives that the County will implement to achieve its climate action goals and meet identified GHG emissions reduction targets.

To ensure that CAP measures will result in real, permanent, and quantifiable reductions in GHG emissions, performance standards must be defined and supportive evidence of reductions projected through 2050. The Appellate Court found the 2018 CAP measures to be CEQA compliant, and the County has continued to implement these measures since the adoption of the 2018 CAP on February 14, 2018. Implementation of the 2018 CAP measures resulted in approximately 160,216 metric tons of GHG emissions reductions in 2020, exceeding the 2020 target of 132,205 metric tons of GHG emissions reductions by 21%. 2018 CAP measures will be considered for inclusion in the CAP Update but may be modified following an evaluation of past and anticipated future performance.

To establish actions to seek to meet a goal of net zero emissions by 2035-2045, staff anticipate the need to develop additional new CAP measures. As part of this process, consideration of new CAP measures will include evaluation of the following: availability of reliable data; evidence that reductions are additional (that is, above and beyond those already required by existing regulations) and not compelled by any other entity or action (e.g., not attributed to existing regulations or other GHG mitigation requirement); and the ability of the County to enforce and monitor the program, policy, or initiative over time.

The process for developing new CAP measures will begin with preparing a vision statement for each of the following GHG emissions sectors included in the County's GHG emissions inventory and consistent with sectors identified in the 2018 CAP: built environment and transportation, energy, solid waste, water and wastewater, and conservation and agriculture. The vision statement will define what an equitable net zero emissions future would look like for each sector.

Following the development of the vision statement, strategies to achieve net zero emissions will be defined by analyzing the activities that result in GHG emissions within the sector. Strategies define high-level goals and serve to focus actions within a sector. An example for the Solid Waste sector could include a vision that promotes technological advances, job training, and public education to eliminate the need for landfills through reduced consumption, reuse and sharing of materials, and 100% waste diversion. This vision could be supported by strategies that redesign materials to reduce consumption and waste, strengthen edible food recovery, reuse and repair existing materials, and reduce emissions from waste streams through recycling, composting, and landfill emissions capture.

Lastly, CAP measures that can result in quantified GHG emissions reductions will be developed. CAP measures will be explored by examining GHG producing activities within each sector and evaluating existing legislation and policies. GHG producing activities that are not covered through existing regulations will be considered as areas of potential new CAP measures. The development of CAP measures will be informed by community input. The process will focus on actions that

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improve environmental justice and equity outcomes and result in complementary benefits such as clean air and water and improved public health.

Finally, these strategies could be put into action through CAP measures that quantify GHG emission reductions from the implementation of County programs, policies, and initiatives beyond what is required by existing state and federal legislation.

**Approach to the Development of Smart Growth Alternatives**

Adoption of the CAP Update is considered a discretionary action by the Board and therefore it will have to comply with CEQA requirements. A Supplemental EIR is required for the CAP Update and as part of satisfying the Appellate Court ruling, the Supplemental EIR 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 vehicle miles traveled (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.

A smart growth alternative may include new programs or process improvements that would incentivize residential, commercial and mixed-use growth within the smart growth boundary area. The development of smart growth alternatives requires the identification of areas within the unincorporated area that could be considered “smart” places for new development for reasons including, but not limited to, compact, efficient, and environmentally friendly design; proximity to job centers, services, and amenities; and/or presence of mobility infrastructure. The practical effects of evaluating a smart growth alternative as part of the CAP Update project are that the Board can consider the following: where it would like to incentivize growth, if at all; which programs it may want to develop to incentivize growth; and how to better understand the relationship between location of future development and the alignment of policy considerations related to climate goals, housing production goals, SB 743 implementation (requiring potential transportation impacts under CEQA to be analyzed using VMT rather than level of service), wildfire risk, and other long-term planning considerations.

Staff is actively facilitating conversations with stakeholders about where smart growth should occur and what type of incentives or dis-incentives should be adopted and will continue to workshop ideas throughout the fall with all interested stakeholders. The team is developing maps that illustrate proposed areas for smart growth, over which zoning overlays could be placed. An overlay is a “new zone” or layer that could be added on top of existing zoning. One potential purpose of developing a smart growth zoning overlay could be to incentivize VMT efficient growth by identifying potential smart growth areas and designating the underlying properties as being eligible for future development incentives such as fee waivers, application streamlining, and other process improvements, as may be directed by the Board upon adoption of an alternative and any required subsequent implementing actions. Another type of overlay zone could disincentivize development by imposing GHG, VMT, or wildfire mitigation requirements that, by adding costs to new development, might make future growth in affected areas less financially viable or feasible. Within the overlay zone, other smart growth alternatives could propose General Plan changes to incorporate policies to further regulate growth in areas of the County that may have greater GHG impacts. A smart growth alternative could also propose reductions in residential density, known



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as “downplanning,” if directed by the Board. If adopted, this alternative would require subsequent implementing action through amendments to the General Plan land use map and Zoning Ordinance and would require additional analysis and environmental review subsequent to the CAP hearings.

One smart growth alternative that staff is considering for inclusion in the Supplemental EIR would align with the SANDAG Regional Plan, which encourages the County to focus future development in the unincorporated area around a newly envisioned transportation system in close proximity to mobility hubs and along multi-modal transportation corridors. As indicated by the current draft Regional Plan, the growth forecast for the unincorporated area supports approximately 7,400 dwelling units through 2050. If adopted, this alternative would require subsequent implementing action through amendments to the General Plan land use map and Zoning Ordinance and would require additional analysis and environmental review subsequent to the CAP hearings.

During the CAP Update hearings, the Board must adopt the CAP Update and certify the Supplemental EIR. Adoption of a smart growth alternative is optional. If the Board chose to move forward with the adoption of a smart growth alternative, certain actions would be necessary. First, the Board would either select a smart growth boundary from those options presented or propose a new smart growth boundary from those areas identified by stakeholders and studied in the Supplemental EIR. As part of the adoption of a smart growth boundary, the Board would be asked to direct staff to prepare a Zoning Overlay Ordinance which would place a smart growth zoning designation on properties within the selected smart growth areas. The Board would also have the option of directing staff to include overlays intended to disincentivize growth in other areas. This process would take approximately 9-12 months to complete and bring forward to the Board for adoption unless a full EIR was necessary, which could add several additional months to this time frame. Second, the Board has the option to adopt policy changes to the 2011 General Plan that could incentivize or disincentivize development in areas desired by the Board. Policies that were studied within the Supplemental EIR could be adopted at the CAP hearings, while new policies or revised policies may require additional analysis and environmental review. The Board would also have the option to direct staff to prepare incentive programs to facilitate new development within the smart growth boundary (e.g. internal process improvements, subsidies, or fee waivers and or density changes, objective design standards, streamlining or ministerial approvals). These programs would range from 12 months to up to three years to complete depending upon the extent of changes and environmental review required. Lastly, the Board could also direct staff to evaluate land use changes such as density increases or decreases within or outside of the smart growth area, as part of the consideration of the smart growth program. Because this alternative could include General Plan land use map and Zoning Ordinance changes and further environmental review, this process could require four years to prepare depending upon the extent of the changes and size of the area considered.

The smart growth alternative options are being developed through extensive public outreach and participation, and County staff anticipates including more than one smart growth alternative in the Supplemental EIR for the Board’s consideration. County staff anticipates returning to the Board with additional information related to the smart growth alternatives process later in 2021 after additional consultation with stakeholders. County staff and consultants began outreach on developing smart growth alternatives with the December 10, 2020, release of the Notice of Preparation (NOP). The County held an NOP Scoping Meeting on January 28, 2021 and invited

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the public to provide input on the CEQA scope, including the content of a smart growth alternative. The County held a CAP Update public workshop on April 21, 2021 and invited the public to engage directly with staff to prepare a smart growth alternative. The County has also met with community members, industry, and environmental groups to provide input on what they think a smart growth alternative should include. The County will continue meeting with smaller, focused groups from the community, industry, and organizations to receive input. The County expects to hear ideas on areas that should be considered smart growth (e.g., General Plan Village areas with higher intensity and a wide range of land uses planned, VMT-efficient areas that are close to employment and service centers, mobility hubs that do or will include existing or planned future transit facilities, or other areas) based on the following: their characteristics of reducing GHG emissions compared to developing outside of these areas, how to incentivize development in smart growth areas, how to disincentivize development outside these areas, policies to guide development, and process improvements to the development process.

**Public Outreach and Participation Strategy**

The CAP Update will be shaped by robust community input solicited from diverse stakeholders throughout the unincorporated county. County staff have actively sought, and will continue to actively seek, to engage and solicit feedback from diverse stakeholders, including community-based organizations, advocacy groups, business and industry organizations, professional organizations, agency partners, non-profits, and community residents.

On December 10, 2020, as noted above, the County issued a public NOP to inform the public of the preparation of the CAP Update and Supplemental EIR and to seek input from the public and agencies on the potential environmental impacts of the CAP Update, ways to mitigate those impacts, and alternatives that may lessen those impacts. Through the NOP scoping period, the County also sought input on potential CAP measures to be included in the CAP Update. Comments on this NOP document were accepted for 57 days following the issuance of the first notice, with the comment period closing on February 4, 2021. The County received 76 written comments from a variety of businesses, environmental agencies and groups, tribal entities, community planning and sponsor groups, and individual residents and stakeholders throughout the region. Staff is considering these written comments as it develops the Supplemental EIR, CAP measures, and related technical appendices. Comment themes included transportation and land use, energy use and utilities, biological resources, GHG reductions through carbon sequestration (i.e., the process of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through natural processes like photosynthesis), wildfire risk, tribal cultural resources, environmental justice, GHG baseline and projections, CEQA mitigation, CAP measures, general plan amendments, and complementary benefits such as clean air and water and improved public health.

Staff have conducted two large-format virtual public workshops and have conducted multiple consultations with stakeholder groups in diverse settings. The virtual NOP Scoping Meeting took place on January 28, 2021, and drew 165 attendees from the public, regional agencies, and non-profits. On April 21, 2021, a second virtual workshop drew 99 attendees and provided an additional opportunity to cover high-level objectives for the CAP Update and to introduce project components. Feedback was collected using an interactive polling format. The County hosted a virtual public workshop on smart growth alternatives on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

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Staff is developing a series of additional large-format workshops related to specific topics to be held throughout the summer and fall of 2021. Information on the timeline of key events throughout the project is summarized in Attachment B. Future topics for discussion will include the development of smart growth alternatives, sector-focused discussions related to the development of CAP measures, equity-focused discussions to identify priority issues for underserved communities in the unincorporated county, and others.

To ensure equity is centered throughout the CAP Update, staff is building upon and using existing County initiatives and tools to understand better how to reach underserved communities and stakeholders who have not traditionally participated in the planning process. These initiatives and tools include the County's Strategic Plan, Health and Human Services Agency's (HHSA) 2018 Demographic Profiles, the draft Environmental Justice (EJ) Element of the County's General Plan, which identifies EJ communities in the unincorporated county, the Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Report, which identifies the unincorporated county's exposure to climate change effects, and Community Analyst Tools such as Esri's 2020 Demographic Profiles, which provides geographic context for demographic data from the unincorporated county.

Additionally, staff is utilizing the framework recommended in the California Adaptation Planning Guide prepared by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. This framework identifies three ways to incorporate equity into the planning process: procedural, structural, and distributional. Procedural equity refers to the creation of processes that are transparent, fair, and inclusive. Structural equity refers to assessing underlying structural and institutional systems at the root of social and racial inequities by working with communities to anticipate and prevent future unintended consequences. Distributional equity refers to prioritizing resources to communities that experience the greatest inequities and have the most unmet needs. This inclusive strategy provides a framework for ensuring that equity is focused throughout the CAP Update process and provides multiple opportunities to hear from communities about how climate-related issues affect the county's most vulnerable communities.

Staff will be using various platforms to engage a diverse stakeholder base, focusing on reaching the unincorporated county's underserved communities and those stakeholders who have not traditionally participated in the planning process. Planned engagement will include the use of virtual large format public workshops, project website updates, social media campaigns, pop-up outreach events, multi-platform surveys, and in-person events as feasible. Focused discussions that include smaller group dynamics include stakeholder interviews, presentations to the community, business, special interest groups, etc. Staff is also developing new methods to reach broader audiences, such as language accessible materials and interactive content, including videos and polling questions. Recognizing that some residents may not be willing and/or able to access digital materials, staff will incorporate in-person engagement strategies.

**ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT**

This action is for the Board to accept the presentation related to the Climate Action Plan Update. As the project and environmental review are still in development and further updates will be brought to the Board prior to its final decision on the CAP Update and Supplemental EIR, this progress report and any Board comments in response do not represent a commitment to any particular course of action. Final binding policy decisions by the Board must await the completion

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of the CAP Update and Supplemental EIR process. Therefore, the action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a “project” as defined in the CEQA Guidelines section 15378. No environmental determination is required for this action.

**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Today’s actions support the County of San Diego’s 2021-2026 Strategic Plan of Building Better Health, Living Safely, Operational Excellence, and Sustainable Environments/Thriving by advancing these priorities through the development of the Climate Action Plan Update.

Respectfully submitted,



SARAH E. AGHASSI  
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

ATTACHMENT A: General Plan Summary of Actions

ATTACHMENT B: Timeline of CAP Update Key Events

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**AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**

**REQUIRES FOUR VOTES:**       Yes     No

**WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED**

Yes     No

**PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:**

January 13, 2021 (5), Framework for our Future: Actions to Achieve Bold Climate Action at the County of San Diego; January 27, 2021 (7), Framework for our Future: Establishing a Climate Advisory Committee to Coordinate and Strengthen County Climate Action; September 30, 2020 (4), Resolution Rescinding and Vacating Adoption of the Final Climate Action Plan.

**BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:**

N/A

**BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:**

N/A

**MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:**

N/A

**ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):**

N/A

**ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:** Planning & Development Services

**OTHER CONCURRENCE(S):**      N/A

**CONTACT PERSON(S):**

Kathleen A. Flannery

Rami Talleh

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

(858) 694-2962

(858) 495-5475

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

Kathleen.Flannery@sdcounty.ca.gov

Rami.Talleh@sdcounty.ca.gov

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E-mail

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail