



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY MANAGER: OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

File #: 21-073

Board Meeting Date: 1/26/2021

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Carolyn Bloede, Director, Office of Sustainability
Subject: County of San Mateo 2020 Government Operations Climate Action Plan: Pathway to Carbon Neutrality

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution approving the County of San Mateo 2020 Government Operations Climate Action Plan: Pathway to Carbon Neutrality.

BACKGROUND:

County staff have prepared an update to the Government Operations Climate Action Plan (GOCAP) that was first adopted in 2012 (Resolution No. 072149). The 2020 GOCAP outlines a comprehensive strategy for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from County operations to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035. Carbon neutrality requires reducing GHGs in government operations by 100% from the 2005 baseline, which was the first year the County completed a GHG emissions inventory. Since the adoption of the 2012 GOCAP, the State has adopted two landmark policies calling for accelerated climate action including Senate Bill 32 in 2017, which established a statewide GHG emissions reduction target of 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. In 2019, the State passed Executive Order B-55-18 to achieve carbon neutrality statewide before 2045.

In 2019, the County declared a Climate Emergency (Resolution No. 076887) to address the harmful impacts of climate change that the County is experiencing, including rising temperatures, heatwaves, wildfires and hazardous air quality, extreme storms, sea level rise, and coastal erosion. These climate impacts are most acutely felt by children, older adults, those with pre-existing physical and mental conditions, communities of color, and residents with unstable economic or housing situations. To protect County residents, especially those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, the County strives to demonstrate leadership to accelerate climate action by achieving carbon neutrality in its own operations.

DISCUSSION:

The GOCAP charts a pathway for the County to reduce emissions from government operations by 80% below 2005 levels by 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality, a 100% reduction from 2005 levels,

by 2035. The primary sources of GHG emissions generated by government operations are from the combustion of natural gas in buildings and facilities (44.5%) and the use of gasoline in vehicles from employee commutes (41.8%) and from County vehicle fleet (12.7%). The GOCAP focuses on the following key emission reduction strategies:

- Electrify County buildings - Replace natural gas-powered equipment in buildings to electric equipment powered by 100% renewable electricity, upon burn out or end of life.
- Reduce employee commute emissions - Provide commute incentives and alternatives to single occupant gas vehicles including teleworking, public transit, electric vehicles, walking, biking, and carpooling.
- Purchase zero-emission fleet vehicles - Transition gas powered vehicles for zero-emission models including electric and fuel-cell vehicles.

Key strategies of the 2020 GOCAP with associated emissions reduction:

GOCAP's Key Strategies	2035 GHG Reductions (MTCO ₂ e)*	Percent GHG Reduction from 2005 Baseline
100% Electrification of County Buildings	15,921	38%
95% Reduction of Employee Commute Emissions	14,942	36%
100% Electrification of County Fleet Vehicles	4,560	11%
Total Reduction from Key Strategies	35,423	85%

*Metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e) quantifies the global warming potential of all GHGs with one standard unit.

The above strategies would result in an 85% reduction in 2005 emissions by 2035. The GOCAP provides additional necessary actions to further reduce the remaining 15% of emissions, including increasing water efficiency and reducing waste. Any remaining emissions that are not mitigated through these strategies can be captured through carbon sequestration, which is the capture and storage of carbon in natural sinks such as soil, trees, and land.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Many of the GOCAP actions will be low, no-cost, or will result in cost-savings however implementation of the GOCAP will require a financial investment by the County. Specific funding needs for the key strategies will be determined as part of the implementation process and will be requested through the FY 2021-23 Recommended Budget process.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. 2020 Government Operations Climate Action Plan: Pathway to Carbon Neutrality
- B. Supplemental Findings and 2017 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory