



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY MANAGER: OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

File #: 22-785

Board Meeting Date: 10/18/2022

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Carolyn Bloede, Director, Office of Sustainability

Subject: Adoption of the 2022 Draft Community Climate Action Plan, the 2022 Draft San Mateo County General Plan Climate Element, and the Final Initial Study - Negative Declaration

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to:

- A) Adopt a resolution adopting the 2022 Draft San Mateo County General Plan Climate Element and adopting the 2022 Draft Community Climate Action Plan; and
- B) Adopt a resolution adopting the Final Initial Study - Negative Declaration for both the 2022 Draft San Mateo County General Plan Climate Element and the 2022 Draft Community Climate Action Plan.

BACKGROUND:

Climate change is already affecting San Mateo County. Impacts such as more frequent heat waves, wildfire, drought, and flooding are felt most acutely by our communities' most vulnerable members including children, older adults, and historically underserved neighborhoods. The Board of Supervisors has demonstrated ongoing leadership in tackling these critical impacts on unincorporated communities.

In June 2013, the Board amended the San Mateo County General Plan for the County's unincorporated areas by adding Chapter 17, the 2013 Energy and Climate Change Element, which provides a high-level framework for reducing emissions (Resolution No. 072557). The Board also adopted the 2013 Energy Efficiency Climate Action Plan, which provides more detailed information about reducing emissions in unincorporated San Mateo County, and the certified the Environmental Impact Report (Resolution Nos. 072558 and 072556). The 2013 Energy Efficiency Climate Action Plan established a greenhouse emissions reduction goal that was consistent with California State Assembly Bill 32, passed in 2018, to achieve 1990 emissions levels by 2020. The County reached this goal in 2017 as a result of establishing Peninsula Clean Energy and implementing other

leadership actions.

In June 2017, the Board adopted Resolution No. 20170627 affirming the Paris Climate Accords, committing to the greenhouse gas emissions reductions necessary to slow global climate change. In September 2019, the Board adopted Resolution No. 20190917 declaring a climate emergency in San Mateo County that demanded accelerated and regionally coordinated climate action.

In addition to these County policies, the State of California has established a framework for local jurisdictions to advance local emissions reduction efforts. In 2016, California State Senate Bill 32 established a goal to reduce statewide emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030, and in 2018 Executive Order 55-18 established a statewide policy to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. These changes to state law, coupled with a significant evolution in climate action strategies, have created the need to update the County's policy framework for climate action in the unincorporated areas.

DISCUSSION:

In 2022, the Office of Sustainability and the Planning and Building Department completed updates to both the 2013 Energy and Climate Change Element and the 2013 Energy Efficiency Climate Action Plan to bring County policy into compliance with State law and to provide a strategic roadmap to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in unincorporated San Mateo County.

Figure 1 below depicts the current 2013 policy framework for climate action in the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County, the updates being brought forward for adoption as part of the 2022 policy, and the structure of the Resolutions included in this Board action. The existing policy framework includes the 2013 Energy and Climate Change Element of the San Mateo County General Plan, the 2013 Energy Efficiency Climate Action Plan which stands alone from the San Mateo County General Plan, and the 2013 Environmental Impact Report. The recommendation before the Board includes updating this framework by adopting the 2022 Draft San Mateo County General Plan Climate Element, which is a component of the County's General Plan, the 2022 Draft Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) which sits outside the general plan, and the 2022 Initial Study - Negative Declaration.

Figure 1. 2013 and 2022 San Mateo County Climate Action Policy Framework



The 2022 Draft San Mateo County General Plan Climate Element and the CCAP are founded on the best available science and propose innovative actions to address climate change. Adopting the 2022 Draft San Mateo County General Plan Climate Element and the CCAP will establish emission reduction targets of 45% below 1990 levels by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2040, which are more

aggressive than current State policy, through climate action strategies in the following areas:

- Transportation: shifting to electric powered vehicles, public transit, walking, and biking, leading to cleaner air and healthier communities.
- Building Energy: reducing energy use and transitioning to renewable energy sources, leading to reduced utility bills, cleaner indoor air quality, improved resilience to heat waves, and improved public health outcomes.
- Waste Reduction: reducing waste generation, leading to resource conservation and extending the life of costly landfills.
- Working Lands and Carbon Sequestration: sequestering carbon and enabling climate beneficial agricultural practices, leading to a more resilient and vibrant local food system.

The 2022 Draft San Mateo County General Plan Climate Element and the CCAP are distinguished from many other local climate action plans in that these are certified under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines. A certified climate plan and element must demonstrate substantial evidence that links proposed actions to specific emissions reduction contributions per action. In meeting this higher standard, the CCAP sets forth goals with a clear and validated policy pathway for reaching those goals contrasted with climate plans that set emissions targets and actions based solely on policy direction. The CCAP and 2022 Draft General Plan Climate Element underwent a CEQA review and it was determined that it will not have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report. In June, 2022, both the 2022 Draft San Mateo County General Plan Climate Element and the CCAP were recommended for adoption by the San Mateo County Planning Commission. In addition to adopting the 2022 Draft San Mateo County General Plan Climate Element and the CCAP, the final step in certifying the updated 2022 climate policies is to adopt the CEQA Final Initial Study - Negative Declaration. .

Because the County recognizes that climate change threatens our residents who are already experiencing disproportionate environmental, economic, and social hardships, County staff prioritized racial equity throughout the planning process through inclusive community engagement, targeted stakeholder consultation, and an iterative evaluation of the equity implications of each proposed action. Meeting the CCAP's goals will benefit all San Mateo County communities through improved public health, resilience to power shutoffs, reduced energy and transportation costs, improved access to livable wage career opportunities, and a vibrant agricultural community.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with adopting the resolution to adopt the Final Initial Study - Negative Declaration, the 2022 Draft General Plan Climate Element, and the 2022 Draft Community Climate Action Plan. Implementation of the CCAP will require financial investments; staff will determine specific funding needs for the key strategies as part of the implementation process.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. 2022 Draft San Mateo County General Plan Climate Element
- B. 2022 Draft Community Climate Action Plan
- C. 2022 Draft Community Climate Action Plan Executive Summary
- D. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Technical Appendix
- E. Final Initial Study - Negative Declaration
- F. Resolution Adopting the Negative Declaration for both the 2022 Draft San Mateo County General Plan Climate Element and the 2022 Draft Community Climate Action Plan
- G. Resolution Adopting the 2022 Draft San Mateo County General Plan Climate Element, and

Adopting the 2022 Draft Community Climate Action Plan