



SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

September 30, 2020

2020 Sustainability and Climate Action Plan: Palo Alto's Efforts to Act on Climate Change Webinar

54 attendees, 88 registered

Questions and Answers

1. Will the plan show clearly which goals are for the entire community and which are for the City administration itself?
 - A. Yes, the 2020 S/CAP Key Actions are very specific as to whether they apply to the entire community or just to Palo Alto municipal operations.

2. When will the AECOM report come out and can a preliminary report be provided sooner?
 - A. The AECOM Impact Analysis will be completed by the end of 2020. We anticipate that the report will be ready for public review in January / February 2021.

3. Will the negative costs of inaction on climate change (or, business as usual projections) be factored into the report?
 - A. Yes, we are including a business as usual forecast in the 2020 S/CAP. However, to clarify, the business as usual forecast includes all City Plans that have already been approved by Council and are being implemented, regardless of the approval of the 2020 S/CAP, as well as State-wide mandates and requirements. The business as usual forecast doesn't mean that we are not going to take any action at all. It will forecast what our projected GHG emissions reductions will be if we don't take any additional actions other than what's already been approved or mandated.

4. I am glad to hear that the co-benefits of sustainability actions are being factored into the cost/benefit analysis.
 - A. Co-benefits are an important part of the Impact Analysis and will assist us in prioritizing the Key Actions to move forward in the final 2020 S/CAP.

5. Do carbon offsets count towards the reduction of our 80 x 30 goal?
 - A. The City is currently using carbon offsets as a bridging strategy in advance of meeting the 80 x 30 goal. We will be introducing a list of key actions in the 2020 S/CAP update to achieve 80 x 30 without offsets.

6. Are the Carbon Fund and Carbon Savings Account concepts fundamentally different from the current Carbon Offsets the city utilizes? In other words, for those who oppose the current use of current carbon offsets, is there a reason why the fund and savings account options may be more palatable?
 - A. Yes, the Carbon Fund and Carbon Savings Account concepts are fundamentally different from the current Carbon Neutral Gas Plan offsets. As a bridging strategy, carbon offsets are currently being purchased in an amount equal to the GHG emissions caused by natural gas use within the City. The carbon offsets are directly correlated to natural gas consumption. Neither the Carbon Fund nor the Carbon Savings Account concepts are directly tied to natural gas consumption. In addition, carbon offsets can be purchased from projects outside of Palo Alto, whereas the Carbon Fund or the Carbon Savings Account concepts would be for projects within Palo Alto. The Carbon Fund could be used to invest in a wide range of local projects to reduce GHGs. For example, the San Francisco Carbon Fund invests solely in local projects that reduce GHG close to where they were created – rather than large scale offset projects across the globe. And a Carbon Savings Account could be funded through a fee that increases each year to help residents pay for improvements that reduce GHGs at their own property.

7. Do you have a recommended method to measure our own individual carbon footprint/GHG impact?
 - A. We don't have one recommended method to measure individual carbon footprint / GHG impact as there are many great options. For example, the City partners with Cool Block, which engages a team of neighbors living on a block (or in an apartment building) to tackle climate change and calculate their own carbon footprints. The US EPA also has a carbon footprint calculator.

8. How will we transition off of natural gas? Is that the goal? What are the first steps?
 - A. As part of the 2020 S/CAP analysis, we will consider different options to achieve the City's 80 x 30 goal, including the electrification of buildings, and the cost of the options. The answer to whether the City plans to transition off of natural gas depends on ongoing analysis on GHG emissions and costs for different packages of key actions; the analysis results will be available in January / February 2021.

9. When will you discuss the natural gas reduction strategy? Is it excluded from the Nov 18th meeting on getting to 80 x 30?
 - A. The November 18th webinar is focused on Transportation. We will first discuss a possible natural gas reduction strategy at an upcoming Utilities Advisory Commission Meeting.

10. How would I assess the GHG emissions from the Palo Alto airport? Does the measurement assess the planes fuel usage while they overfly Palo Alto?
- A. This is the first year that we are including GHG emissions from the Palo Alto Airport. We are following the GPC protocol, which requires that we include emissions from the direct combustion of fuel within the city boundary for all aviation trips that depart and land from or at Palo Alto Airport (e.g., local helicopter, light aircraft, sightseeing and training flights); any grid-supplied energy consumed by aircraft charging at airports; and emissions from departing flights that are attributable to the city.
11. Do you know the percentage VMT from private, commercial, and public transport in Palo Alto?
- A. We are currently working on a VMT study. We are studying private and commercial VMT to refine our transportation related GHG emissions estimates and will share numbers with the S/CAP itself, early next year.
12. Is the sponsoring of affordable housing being explored as one way to affect VMT by residents? Part of the high VMT is because of the creation of super commuters, especially in front line workers with lower salaries, due to the lack of affordable housing.
- A. One of our proposed goals for Mobility is to “Reduce transportation related GHG emissions 80%, from approximately 300,000 MT CO₂e to 60,000 MT CO₂e by 2030 by utilizing development regulations and standards to continue creating a housing density and land use mix that supports transit and non-SOV (Single Occupancy Vehicle) transportation modes. We also have several proposed Key Actions that address this, including:
- Adopt TDM Ordinance per Comp Plan Policy and include GHG emission targets for TDM plans, EV infrastructure targets, telework requirements, and mitigations/remediations allowing parking maximums and unbundled parking. Require new employment projects to add housing and retail to reduce their VMT.
 - Identify new transit-supportive land use corridors for new housing and local-serving retail.
 - Accommodate new housing and employment growth in areas walkable to retail and Caltrain or corridors that meet requirements for VTA-provided transit via zoning standards, consistent with state law.
13. Do you think that development of viable public transit system should be one of the highest priorities to reduce the VMT and emissions from SOV?
- A. Yes, improving the public transit system should be a priority for the entire region as the existing fractured and limited Bay Area transit system makes it difficult to live without a car. Our Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element recognizes the importance of enhancing transit and contains several policies regarding working with transit providers and others to improve the transit system.

14. Do you know how many people live and work in Palo Alto versus the number of people who live elsewhere and commute to Palo Alto? Very, very few of my neighbors actually work in Palo Alto. The vast majority work in Menlo Park or Mountain View.

A. Yes. Here is the Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (Primary Jobs) Census Data

2017 Employment Counts	Count	Share
Employed in Palo Alto	96,402	100.0%
Employed in Palo Alto but Living Outside	89,431	92.8%
Employed and Living in Palo Alto	6,971	7.2%

2017 Employment Counts – Palo Alto Residents Only	Count	Share
Living in Palo Alto (Employed Population Only)	28,372	100.0%
Living in Palo Alto but Employed Outside	21,401	75.4%
Living and Employed in Palo Alto	6,971	24.6%

Source: <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

15. Do you expect these numbers (working / living in PA) to change due to work from home flexibility? are you monitoring traffic in and out of PA?

A. At this point it's too soon to tell what the long-term impacts of the pandemic will be and how that will affect working from home policies. We recognize that telework has many benefits and are looking into incorporating this into city programs and policies. We do not actively monitor traffic in and out of Palo Alto, but we do routinely conduct traffic counts and other data collection. We are conducting limited traffic counts in order to understand how pandemic traffic volumes differ from normal periods.

16. Consider enhanced data reporting as you have time - Per household (Structure - SFH, MDU, Commercial) and per Capita resident, per capita inbound work force. The Per-Capita, and Per-Worker-Capita helps to illustrate the progress in the face of increasing population, increasing workers, increasing economic productivity / economy.

A. Thank you for your suggestion.

17. Is there any basic estimate for the GHG per housing unit created in Palo Alto? If the City increases the housing to address jobs housing imbalance, I am trying to understand the climate impact of bringing new housing to Palo Alto, and its impact on our S/CAP carbon calculation. There will be direct emissions as mentioned by utilities, but there are other regional impacts from transportation that are reduced.

A. Thank you for the question. For easy reference, a discussion of the greenhouse gas emissions modeling results for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Scenarios can be found online

in the Supplement to the Draft EIR here:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/63455>, as well as in the associated Appendix C: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Modeling here:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/63456> and the Final EIR here:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/63457>. Note that this modeling looked at the emissions from residential, transportation, and other sectors. The results by service population might be of interest. The adopted 2030 Comprehensive Plan did anticipate residential and commercial growth to the year 2030, with overall emissions reductions to meet State and regional targets. As part of AECOM's analysis, they will be reviewing the 2030 Comprehensive Plan to better understand the climate impact of new housing.

18. Inexpensive, high speed, high reliability internet, preferably using fiber, including low income / rural neighborhoods is another key tool to reduce GHG by enabling more telework, telemedicine, and tele-education (where appropriate for primary schools, college and continuing education). Major players - Comcast, ATT are not addressing the issues in terms of access, lowering cost and adequate UPLOAD bandwidth. See Chattanooga Tennessee. Tennessee Broadband: 1000 Mbps (1Gig) Download and 1000 Mbps (1Gig) Upload fiber for \$68/month.

A. Yes, City of Palo Alto Utilities operates a commercial fiber optics service. Progress on Fiber to the Home is recognized as a potential path to reducing GHG through telework and other related practices.

19. Has the City considered adding greywater system as a requirement for new homes? Or a cistern/water collection system of some size?

A. Our current plumbing ordinance requires adding swivels to washing machines. We anticipate changes in the stormwater ordinance in 2022 that promote re-use of stormwater.

20. What water savings are available from stormwater green infrastructure?

A. We don't know yet what impact green stormwater can have on potable water demands but we are looking at that.

21. Will there be a more detailed webinar to go deeper into the water conservation topic?

A. We will be discussing water conservation in the future, but not during this fall's 2020 S/CAP webinar series. The City's One Water planning effort will include a holistic strategy for water supply including transitional supplies, water reuse, green stormwater, and conservation. A public process separate from the S/CAP will happen.

22. As we consider the GHG reductions associated with zero waste, the City should consider a calculation for waste materials that go overseas. I do not think this is done - perhaps limited to impact in the US.

A. We are trying to calculate this.

23. I know that you've accounted for food waste in your calculation, but what about food consumption? That is, the carbon footprint of food? Has the City considered not serving meat or at least processed meats at their functions/events/meetings? Creating an educational program about the varying the carbon footprints of different foods? Beans versus red meat?
- A. Food consumption is considered an “Other Scope 3” emission and is not required to be reported on. The GPC protocol focuses on a sector-based approach based on emissions sources. Food consumption is included in consumption-based accounting, which focuses on the consumption of all goods and services by residents of a city, and GHG emissions are reported by consumption category rather than the emission source categories set out in the GPC. The consumption-based approach allocates GHG emissions to the final consumers of goods and services, rather than to the original producers of those GHG emissions. Palo Alto does not currently employ consumption-based accounting, but has looked into it. To our knowledge, Oakland is the only Bay Area city that utilizes consumption-based accounting. Currently the City does not allow single-use plastic water bottles at any City event. We have discussed expanding that to include other restrictions, but that is not currently an item that is included in the 2020 S/CAP.
24. Today, the first International Summit on Biodiversity convened under the theme “Urgent Action on Biodiversity for sustainable development” - what actions will Palo Alto take that are specific to preserving biodiversity?
- A. One of the proposed goals for Natural Environment is to “Restore and enhance resilience and biodiversity of our natural environment”. We have a proposed Key Action to “Evaluate and modify plant palette selection in project plans to maximize biodiversity and soil health to adapt to the changing climate, and incorporate buffers for existing natural ecosystems”
25. Who is developing the Biodiversity metrics for the city?
- A. We have working groups for each of the seven areas of the 2020 S/CAP. The Natural Environment working group is working on that metric.
26. Given the previous S/CAP leading to not a significant drop of GHG reduction, is it possible to draft an ordinance to automatically implement more “difficult”/high-impact items depending on progress?
- A. Pending the results of the impact analysis, we anticipate coming up with several different scenarios with different packages of Key Actions and strategies along the Spectrum of Tools for Achieving Climate Goals. An ordinance is definitely a potential strategy.
27. Is Palo Alto considering any partnerships/collaborations with surrounding cities?
- A. Yes, we currently partner with several agencies in each of the seven 2020 S/CAP Areas. These include, but are not limited to: CALeVIP, GreenWaste, Valley Water, and the Santa Clara County Office of Sustainability. We also collaborate with other cities through groups such as ICLEI, the Urban Sustainability Director’s Network, Climate Mayors, Green Cities California, the Public Sector Climate Task Force, Joint Venture Silicon Valley, Silicon Valley Green Team Network, and RICAPs.

28. How can we find out more about the working groups who are involved in this S/CAP update?
- A. Each of the seven areas of the S/CAP are led by internal staff working groups. Each working group has co-leads who manage efforts in their respective areas and also provide strategic guidance on the overall 2020 S/CAP.
29. How will the Natural Environment working group be formed? Will it include a mix of mix of staff, experts, and community members?
- A. Currently the Natural Environment working group and the other six working groups include only Palo Alto staff.
30. Kudos for mentioning the 2018 IPCC Special Report on 1.5C. Hopefully other localities will follow your lead.
- A. Thank you, it is a very important report.
31. I think that the approach to public education needs to be much more comprehensive than doing webinars like this. This program is useful, and it's a "necessary but not sufficient" type of public education. To engage the citizen effectively, a public education program needs to be created that would include multi-media approaches, a logo that reminds people of the efforts on EVERY communication from the city. We should also do a "thermometer" that shows the annual improvement on our achievement of goals. It could be a big drop-down banner from the City Hall — and placed on every one of the communications that comes from the city. By engaging more people in this educational effort, you could get more buy-in — and thus support — from residents.
- A. Yes, we've had to pivot on our outreach strategy because of the pandemic. We are trying to be creative, keeping in mind pandemic restrictions and funding limitations.
32. I agree, better outreach is needed and a proactive approach like cheerleading is needed.
33. I strongly suggest that you do more outreach to more diverse opinions, so you don't only get the same voices/and opinions
- A. Thank you for the suggestion. The City is committed to eliciting input from a wide range of community interests.
34. The electrification expo last year was terrific — too bad the pandemic has curtailed such events for the time being!
- A. We're glad you enjoyed the electrification expo. We are currently reviewing proposals for being able to offer virtual events/expo's like this in the near future.
35. Is there a link to the Electrification Expo materials - Slides / webinars / Technologies etc.
- A. Unfortunately, the website that had all of the materials from the Expo is no longer functional. We are currently working on adding videos and materials from the Expo to our electrification website: <http://cityofpaloalto.org/electrification>. In the meantime, select

recordings from the 2019 Bay Area Home Electrification Expo can be found at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAX1aS_byjMdJ_v-NK4PoG3wXEV_7Tmdf.

Poll results

