

# SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN: Guiding Principles, Design Principles, and Design Criteria<sup>1</sup>

On November 28, 2016, Council approved these guiding principles, design principles and decision criteria to assist Staff in developing and refining near term strategies that support the City’s long-term vision and goals. Fully anticipating that many things will change on the path to 2030, Council expects that Staff and Council will apply these Principles and Criteria in designing and selecting specific programs and policies to pursue, and in allocating public resources to support them.

The Vision Statement for the 1998 Comprehensive Plan Governance Element declares that:

“Palo Alto will maintain a positive civic image and be a leader in the regional, state, and national policy discussions affecting the community. The City will work with neighboring communities to address common concerns and pursue common interests. The public will be actively and effectively involved in City affairs, both at the Citywide and neighborhood levels.”

S/CAP builds on that vision with these principles as a basis for effective and sustainable decision-making:

<p><b>Guiding Principles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider “sustainability” in its broadest dimensions, including quality of life, the natural environment and resilience, not just climate change and GHG emissions reductions.</li> <li>• Address the sustainability issues most important to the community and select most cost-effective programs and policies—recognizing that this will entail moral and political, as well as economic, decision factors.</li> <li>• Seek to improve quality of life as well as environmental quality, economic health and social equity.</li> <li>• Foster a prosperous, robust and inclusive economy.</li> <li>• Build resilience—both physical and cultural—throughout the community.</li> <li>• Include diverse perspectives from all community stakeholders, residents, and businesses.</li> <li>• Recognize Palo Alto’s role as a leader and linkages with regional, national and global community.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Design Principles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on what’s feasible—recognizing that technology and costs are shifting rapidly.</li> <li>• Prioritize actions that are in the City’s control – recognizing that we can urge others to join us, but leading by example is most effective</li> <li>• Be specific about the actions and costs to achieve near-term goals, while accepting that longer-term goals can be more aspirational</li> <li>• Use ambient resources: Maximize the efficient capture and use of the energy and water that fall on Palo Alto.</li> <li>• Full cost accounting: Use total (life cycle) cost of ownership and consideration of externalities to guide financial decisions, while focusing on emission reductions that achievable at a point in time (i.e. not on life cycle emissions).</li> <li>• Align incentives: Ensure that subsidies, if any, and other investment of public resources encourage what we want and discourage what we don’t want.</li> <li>• Flexible platforms: Take practical near-term steps that expand rather than restrict capacity for future actions and pivots.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Decision Criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouse gas impact</li> <li>• Quality of life impact</li> <li>• Mitigation cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return on investment (ROI)</li> <li>• Ecosystem health</li> <li>• Resilience</li> <li>• Impact on future generations</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> From the S/CAP Framework, adopted by Council Nov 2016