SUBJECT: Final Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

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SUMMARY

This agenda item introduces the final Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, which prioritizes actions that support low-carbon transportation choices, reduce the use of natural gas in the built environment, discourage carbon-intensive consumption habits, and promote climate adaptation and resilience in order to reach the City of Albany’s long-term climate action goals.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council adopt Resolution 2019-XX adopting the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and authorizing staff to begin implementation.

CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council adopt the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan under the condition that the interim target is changed from 60% reductions by 2035 to 70% reductions by 2030.

BACKGROUND

Through the Albany City Council’s Strategic Vision, the City is committed to fostering a healthy and sustainable urban village by advancing actions that promote climate stability. In 2007, the Council formed a Sustainability Committee (now Climate Action Committee) to advise on greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies. In 2010, the Council adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP), which outlined a course of action for the City to reduce emissions 25% by 2020. Strategies focused on six sectors: building energy strategies, transportation and land use, waste reduction, green infrastructure, water conservation, and food and agriculture. Through energy and water use improvements, waste reduction efforts, a focus on active transportation, and a new carbon-free default electricity supply from EBCE, the City has successfully decreased community-wide emissions by 33%—exceeding the 2020 goal. The City of Albany General Plan commits the City to 60% greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2035, and on October 16, 2019 the City Council agreed by consensus to adopt a 2045 carbon neutrality goal.
In March 2018, Council approved issuance of an RFP for consulting services for the development of a new Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP), which will guide the City towards its emissions reduction goals. Through a competitive bid process, the City selected Cascadia Consulting Group in June of 2018 to develop the new Plan. The interview process included members of the Climate Action Committee.

The Council held a study session to discuss the draft Climate Action and Adaptation Plan on September 16, 2019 and continued the item to the October 7 meeting for further discussion. At the meeting, members of the public commented on all-electric new construction reach codes, recommended updating the carbon neutrality target year, suggested wording changes, and proposed including additional actions to support solar and electric vehicle adoption.

On October 7, 2019 the City Council provided feedback to staff on the draft Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. This included changing the carbon neutrality target from 2050 to 2045, as well as adding in measures and refining language.

**DISCUSSION**

The attached 2019 Climate Action & Adaptation Plan was developed after an extensive community engagement process, which included two community surveys, a public workshop, four stakeholder focus group meetings, meetings with and presentations to Albany community groups, City staff interviews, and presentations to City commissions and committees. The City’s Climate Action Committee identified, assessed, and formalized the goals and strategies of the throughout the process.

Major themes that emerged from the community engagement process include promoting active transportation, electrifying buildings and vehicles, and encouraging smarter consumption. The public also requested that the City prioritize actions that maximize trees and green space and benefit public health. These themes guided development of the objectives and strategies that make up the Plan.

On November 20, 2019 the Climate Action Committee reviewed the final CAAP (Attachment 1) during their regular meeting. The Committee provided feedback on the Plan to staff, and discussed making a recommendation to Council to change the interim emissions reduction target from 60% by 2035 to 70% by 2030. The Committee recommended that Council adopt the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan with the Climate Action Committee’s recommended interim target change.

**Final Plan**

The final Climate Action and Adaptation Plan lays out a prioritized, strategic, and phased approach to reducing emissions within Albany and achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. The Plan has four sections that focus on reducing emissions and adapting to a changing climate:

1. **Advance active, shared, and electric transportation:** This section includes actions to incentivize the use of carpooling, transit use, and bike- and walk-friendly urban street design, as well as actions that aim to increase use of zero emission vehicles. Together, these
actions provide lower-carbon options for those who still need to drive, reduce key barriers to taking transit, and create safe, ample opportunities for low-carbon transportation for all ages and abilities.

2. **Electrify new and existing buildings:** With 100% carbon-free and renewable electricity sources from East Bay Community Energy (EBCE)’s services and programs, the City plans to prioritize transitioning Albany residents and businesses from using fossil fuels, to using clean electricity. This includes taking actions that incentivize or require a shift from natural gas infrastructure to all-electric infrastructure in both existing and new buildings, as well as actions that promote energy conservation and efficiency. Prioritizing electrification will address the City’s second-highest emissions source.

3. **Facilitate a carbon-free economy:** Although consumption-based emissions are not factored into the City’s communitywide emissions inventory, it is important to consider embodied carbon of goods consumed and disposed of by the Albany community. The embodied carbon of the goods and services that are consumed by Albany community members and visitors—such as clothing, furniture, meat and dairy, and air travel—represent a considerable source of greenhouse gas emissions, whether or not the goods and services are originally produced in Albany. The actions in this section take advantage of existing programs in the City and regionally, such as those provided by StopWaste, and recognize the crucial role of education, outreach, and community sharing in achieving collective behavior change.

4. **Accelerate resilience:** This section prioritizes approaches for expanding and improving natural systems throughout the City to promote resilience and carbon storage, such as through climate adaptive landscape management, compost, and mulching. Incentives, mandates, and outreach and education are necessary to ensure green infrastructure improvements for new and existing buildings. To prepare for more extreme weather and other climate impacts, the City plans to implement strategies for coastal resilience, restore streams so they can hold more water, implement vegetation and fuel management in wildfire-prone areas, increase the capacity of community cooling centers, and further strengthen emergency management capabilities. This multi-pronged approach to climate adaptation will ensure Albany is more prepared and resilient.

The Plan prioritizes actions that not only significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but are feasible, cost-effective, and demonstrate Albany’s innovation and leadership in climate action. In addition to assessing the emissions reduction impact, cost, and timeframe of each action, staff and consultants assessed co-benefits including public health, equity, resilience, feasibility, and leadership potential. To implement the Plan, staff will leverage resources, regional partnerships, and existing programs. Successful implementation will be measured by implementation status of these actions, through key performance indicators, and a greenhouse gas inventory to be updated every 3-5 years.

Council and public feedback from the October 7, 2019 Council meeting was incorporated by staff and consultants and is reflected in the final Plan. This includes added language regarding youth engagement and leadership, language regarding accessibility for all ages and abilities, additional measures to encourage private solar installation and opt-ups to EBCE’s Renewable 100 electricity service, emphasizing partnerships with AUSD and the Safe Routes to School Program, and additional information about oncoming climate hazards such as food scarcity and
disease. In addition, the Plan was reformatted, photos were added, and graphics were added and refined.

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Targets**

At their meeting on July 17, 2019, the Committee discussed revising greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets to exceed State goals. At the October 7 City Council meeting, the Council agreed by consensus to change the carbon neutrality target date to 2045 to align with the State of California target. On November 20, 2019 the Climate Action Committee discussed making a recommendation to Council to change the interim emissions reduction target from 60% by 2035 to 70% by 2030 in order to convey the urgency of reducing emissions in the near-term. The Committee recommended that Council adopt the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan with the Climate Action Committee’s recommended interim target change.

The following table outlines current greenhouse gas emissions targets of relevant agencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albany General Plan</td>
<td>2035</td>
<td>60% below 2004 levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>Carbon neutral (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate Action Committee Proposal from</td>
<td>2030</td>
<td>70% below 2004 levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 20, 2019 CAC meeting</td>
<td>2045</td>
<td>Carbon neutral (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of California</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>80% below 1990 levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2045</td>
<td>Carbon neutrality (uncodified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2030</td>
<td>40% below 1990 levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Berkeley</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>80% below 2000 levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Fremont</td>
<td>2045</td>
<td>Carbon neutrality (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Piedmont</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>80% below 2005 levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of El Cerrito</td>
<td>2035</td>
<td>30% below 2005 levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Emeryville</td>
<td>2030</td>
<td>40% below 2004 levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>80% below 2004 levels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT**

*Environmental Quality*

The actions laid out in the updated Climate Action and Adaptation Plan will help bring the City of Albany closer its emissions reduction targets and other sustainability goals. The Plan focuses on enhancing environmental quality through actions that improve air quality, restore creeks, conserve water, reduce waste, and increase natural systems and habitat throughout the City. Increasing green infrastructure (such as trees) sequesters carbon from the atmosphere while also providing shade, urban beautification, and wildlife habitat.
Public Health & Community Resilience
Specific actions in the Plan have co-benefits, such as the potential to improve public health and create a more resilient community. Reducing reliance on fossil fuels for transportation enhances public health by reducing localized air pollution from internal combustion engines, while active transportation promotes healthy lifestyles while reducing costs. Reducing reliance on fossil fuels for energy and transportation brings economic resilience benefits, as consumers are no longer subject to price fluctuations in natural gas and petroleum markets. Renewable energy with storage enhances grid resilience as well. Reducing natural gas use in homes, schools, and workplaces can improve indoor air quality, earthquake and fire safety, and reduce the City’s overall hazard potential.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Many of the actions in this Plan have associated costs that are intended to be supported by regional partnerships, through PG&E and East Bay Clean Energy (EBCE) ratepayer funds, as well as grant funding.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT REQUIREMENTS

Staff has determined that this project is categorically exempt from environmental review under CEQA guidelines under section 15307, “Actions by regulatory agencies for protection of natural resources,” and the general rule at section 15061(b)3 because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposal may have a significant effect on the environment. Staff will prepare a categorical exemption provided under CEQA Guidelines upon adoption of the Plan.

NEXT STEPS

Once formally adopted by the City Council, staff will begin implementing actions in the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

Attachments
1. Resolution No. 2019-97
2. Final Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
3. Public Comments Received as of 2019-11-26