



San Mateo, Santa Clara and San Benito Counties

August 18, 2020  
City of San Carlos  
600 Elm Street  
San Carlos, CA 94070

**Via email to: Adam Lokar, Management Analyst**  
**RE: San Carlos Climate Action Plan**

We live in a climate crisis which threatens the survival of organized human life on Earth. Meanwhile, the federal government is weakening environmental regulations and accelerating the construction of fossil fuel projects. However, strong climate policies from Bay Area cities are already influencing state level policy. Time is running out, and our best opportunity for climate action is for cities to lead the way with strong local policies.

According to a 2018 study by San Mateo County,<sup>1</sup> San Carlos is projected to lose property valued at \$885 million due to inundation by the Bay from just 3 feet of sea level rise, a level that scientists believe we may see as early as 2070.<sup>2</sup> That translates into 14% of San Carlos' land area and 11% of the total assessed value of the City's real estate.

The only certain way to mitigate climate change and delay and minimize sea level rise is to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). To this end, we recommend that San Carlos set GHG reduction goals well beyond the current state targets and focus its Climate Action Plan (CAP) on feasible mitigation policies that are, as advised by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), "rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented." In addition, San Carlos must strengthen itself against climate impacts<sup>3</sup> by preparing a Vulnerability and Adaptation Plan for sea level rise, extreme heat and wildfires.

In order to support your development of a strong CAP, we invite you to complete the attached **Climate Action Plan Assessment Form**, which lists the elements of a CAP that we consider most critical. We recommend that San Carlos streamline its CAP to focus on the measures that will achieve the largest

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<sup>1</sup> County of San Mateo Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment, March 2018, p. 154, [https://seachangesmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018-03-12\\_SLR\\_VA\\_Report\\_2.2018\\_WEB\\_FINAL.pdf](https://seachangesmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018-03-12_SLR_VA_Report_2.2018_WEB_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Rising Seas in California, An Update on Sea Level Rise Science, April 2017, p. 31, <http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/docs/rising-seas-in-california-an-update-on-sea-level-rise-science.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> An example action plan: <https://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/2020-2025-strategic-plan/OPC-2020-2025-Strategic-Plan-FINAL-20200228.pdf>

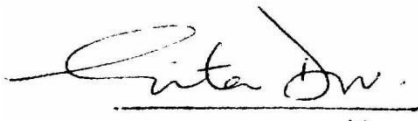
reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and also consider adopting an abbreviated format,<sup>4</sup> so that the document is more accessible to all readers, including decision makers and members of the public. We strongly encourage you to create a clear plan for tracking the actions in your CAP, measuring progress publicly at least quarterly.

We appreciate the opportunity to present San Carlos with recommendations for climate action and are available for any further clarification. We look forward to working with San Carlos to create the strongest Climate Action Plan possible.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gladwyn d'Souza, Co-Chair, Conservation Committee, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club



Gita Dev, Co-Chair, Sustainable Land Use Committee, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club

Kristel Wickham, Climate Action Leadership Team, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club

Cc James Eggers, Executive Director, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club

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<sup>4</sup> For an example of an abbreviated Climate Action Plan, see City of Menlo Park 2030 Climate Action Plan, July 2020, <https://menlopark.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/11486>

## Climate Action Plan Assessment Form

Please complete the form below for your City's proposed Climate Action Plan and send it to the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter's Climate Action Leadership Team at [dashiell.leeds@sierraclub.org](mailto:dashiell.leeds@sierraclub.org).

Action #	Description	Included in CAP?	Comments
1	<b>Adopt a bold goal</b> to reduce community-wide GHGs by at least [80%] by 2030, given that scientific findings now show California's goal of a 40% reduction is no longer sufficient to address the severity of the crisis. <sup>5</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	<b>Specify all resources</b> required to implement each action in the plan, including dollar amounts, staff hours and task owners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	<b>Identify approximately 10 easy-to-track metrics</b> to help Council members and the public gauge success of the plan and define a reporting frequency for those metrics.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	<b>New buildings:</b> plan to immediately stop the expansion of natural gas infrastructure, which can be accomplished by enacting a strong "San Mateo County-style" All Electric Reach Code requiring all new buildings to be 100% electric.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	<b>Existing buildings: create a plan to reduce 80% of GHG emissions from existing buildings by 2030</b> , which can be accomplished with a "Burnout Ordinance" paired with rebates that together aim to phase out the burning of natural gas in existing buildings, as was recently proposed in Menlo Park's CAP. <sup>6</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	<b>Create a plan for reducing vehicle miles traveled by 25%</b> , which can be accomplished by a) rezoning to encourage higher density near transit and b) creating a Green Streets network <sup>7</sup> that makes the City easier and safer to navigate without a car. <sup>8</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	<b>Create a plan for increasing access to electric vehicle (EV) charging</b> , especially for those living in multi-family housing and where charging can be done during the day, when clean solar energy is abundant on California's electric grid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	<b>Create a plan to replace 100% of the City's municipal assets that currently use fossil fuels</b> with efficient electric alternatives, including but not limited to: Gas pool heating equipment, gas and diesel municipal fleet vehicles, gas furnaces, gas water heaters and gas-powered landscaping equipment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	<b>Create a climate adaptation plan</b> focused on protecting areas of the community vulnerable to wildfires, extreme heat events, flooding and sea level rise, as forecasted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and County agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	<b>Create a citizen's advisory commission</b> to support the development and implementation of a CAP, and then to monitor staff progress on the CAP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<sup>5</sup> Palo Alto has adopted a goal of 80% GHG reduction by 2030 and Menlo Park has adopted a goal of 90% GHG reduction by 2030.

<sup>6</sup> City of Menlo Park 2030 Climate Action Plan, July 2020, <https://www.menlopark.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/11486>

<sup>7</sup> Sierra Club Guidelines for a Green Streets Network: <https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/scce-authors/u4142/Sierra%20Club%20Loma%20Prieta%20Open%20Streets%205-1-20.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> For an example of a City that has implemented Green Streets, see Oakland's Slow Streets Program, <https://www.oaklandca.gov/projects/oakland-slow-streets>