

The Alameda County Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP, simply pronounced “kap”) is currently in public draft form. At this point in the process it is a collection of policy measure suggestions designed to help Alameda County reduce its emissions of “greenhouse gases”, or GHGs, back to the level at which they were in the year 1990, as required by State Laws AB 32 and SB 375. This is roughly a 15% decrease from 2005 levels, the base year for GHG emissions used in the CAP. Using a wide range of probable policy tools in six major categories – Land Use, Transportation, Energy Conservation, Green Infrastructure, Water Conservation and Waste Reduction – staff believes that the County can achieve this reduction.

The majority of the measures in every category will be relatively painless for the general public, commercial and industrial concerns. Measures such as improved pedestrian and bicycle access/facilities, better transit access, better water conservation and waste recycling methods, tree planting programs, agricultural parks, and streamlining/incentives for green building techniques and alternative energy installation are likely to be popular and acceptable to most people. Moreover, most of the efforts in the CCAP will be County staff-driven and geared toward finding money to help fund the many various measures; the average citizen or business owner will find that these measures have either modest or negligible effects on everyday life or bank accounts.

There are, however, a modest number of proposed measures and policy concepts that would have substantial effects on neighborhoods, homeowners, business owners and citizens. Some would affect neighborhood character and density, and some would affect people in a financial way. Some of these measures would be among the more valuable measures in terms of GHG reduction potential. Liz listed and described most of them in her earlier e-mail. To reiterate, here are some of the measures with the most potential to physically affect neighborhoods and economically affect individuals and families:

CCAP Page 28 - **Measure T-14, Commercial Parking Fee – “The County will work with business associations and other stakeholders to develop a per-hour fee for public parking in commercial districts.”** This would result in the placement of parking meters (at perhaps \$0.75 to \$1.50 per hour) in parking lots and along streets in specific commercial areas. Adjacent neighborhoods would likely need parking-restricted areas so as to not attract people attempting to avoid paying the parking fee. As Liz mentioned, the public was unexpectedly positive about this in our public meetings, as long as the funds were earmarked for GHG improvements in the source community. It is hard to predict what response the business community will have overall to this idea; they would probably want some assurance that our application of fees would not put them at a competitive disadvantage with nearby business districts. Thus, we may need to sort this out with Hayward, San Leandro, possibly Dublin/Pleasanton.

Page 33 – **Measure L-1 Smart Growth – “Direct future residential development to areas of the Unincorporated County that will generate lower levels of vehicle related GHG emissions” To this end, “The County will develop and implement a Low-Carbon Development Program that will require residential projects developed following the institution of this program to achieve an annual per household vehicle emissions target or pay a development impact fee if they exceed the target.”** The funding from the fees would invest in GHG emission mitigation projects. The development impact fee rate will be proportionate to the cost of an equivalent emissions reduction through mitigation projects. Mitigation projects shall occur within the Unincorporated areas of Alameda County, and demonstrate that the fee and project scope are reasonably related (nexus).

The actual size and proportion of the fees are as yet unknown; but they could be substantial, and would contribute to the cost of new units in the rural or even non-core areas. Staff feels that this is a very progressive policy and a strong GHG reducer, but the potential for controversy is also fairly obvious.

**Page 34 – Measure L-2 Transit-oriented development – Facilitate the establishment of mixed-use, pedestrian and transit-oriented development near major transit stations or transit corridors.** It would boost development density – in some cases significantly - within ½ mile of CV BART, Bayfair BART, and Hayward Amtrak stations. The target is 800 new higher-density units in these selected transit hub areas by the year 2020. Currently, Staff’s experience with the 2010 Eden and Castro Valley Plans and the Housing Element update suggest that opposition to increased density, even in carefully selected locations near major transit hubs, is fairly strong. In some cases, citizens are not familiar with increased density (and thus avoidance of sprawl) as a “green” concept, and neighbors would rather see as much neighborhood land as possible used for parks and/or community gardens. This is a difficult conceptual barrier to hurdle.

In actuality, a bigger practical hurdle to implementation itself is probably whether a developer would even step forward to build this kind of development. Staff has not seen a great rise – yet – in the popularity of this concept in the construction community.

**Page 35 – Measure L-3 – Reduce restrictions on second units in single-family residential districts near transit stations, major bus route corridors, neighborhood commercial centers, and central business districts.** In areas where individual yards and parcels could accommodate them, additional second units would be permitted in some spaces where they are currently not allowed by the Zoning Ordinance. Second units increase the vitality of nearby commercial centers by allowing more residents to live within a walkable distance to transit and neighborhood serving businesses, thereby reducing need for vehicle trips. They also provide property owners with the potential for rental income, which can improve home affordability. However, there is a perception that second units also contribute to blight or the attraction of unwanted neighbors (for lack of a better term). Careful amendment to the Zoning Ordinance and strict adherence to design guidelines would be obligatory.

**Page 36, 37 – Measure L-4 – Increase the diversity of uses in neighborhood-serving commercial centers. This measure includes a map of areas to be considered for new neighborhood commercial areas, such as neighborhoods in the CV hills.** Neighborhood commercial and mixed-use zones are seen as a way to reduce vehicle trips in favor of walking or cycling trips for basic commodities and services. Staff believes that a well-designed development or redevelopment of this kind could thrive and help to minimize vehicle miles traveled in neighborhood areas. Like most other changes that might be proposed in a neighborhood, the establishment of new locally-serving commercial and associated higher-density housing could be controversial. Application of thoughtful development and design guidelines would be key, but first people must be able to get used to the idea of new and renovated commercial establishments, even low-traffic-volume businesses, in their immediate midst.

**Page 38 – Measure L-5 – Improve the vitality of mixed-use neighborhood-serving commercial centers. – This would significantly increase densities and would double FARs in neighborhood commercial areas.** It would work side by side with L-4 above. Again, it would increase density and probably building height locally near neighborhood commercial centers, and thus be at cross-purposes with neighbors who strongly favor lower density.

Page 46 – **Measure E-4 – Point of Sale Residential Energy Conservation Ordinance (RECO)**. The RECO would require building owners (landlords and homeowners) to implement specific energy and water efficiency measures on their properties at time of sale to achieve a 35 percent efficiency improvement. The entry-level package would include duct sealing, attic insulation, programmable thermostats, water heater insulation, hot water pipe insulation, and draft elimination. The ordinance will also require a 20 percent improvement in the water efficiency of plumbing fixtures and fixture-fittings. **Owners would get credit for improvements that have already been done (true?).**

The total cost of such improvements would be approximately \$7,500 to \$10,000 dollars for the average single-family home (as of 2009). The RECO will contain a cost ceiling of 3 percent of the sale price or assessed value, not to exceed \$30,000. Staff perceives that this program could be controversial, although it is quite significant in terms of GHG reduction.

Page 51 – **Measure E-9 – Point of Sale Commercial Energy Conservation Ordinance (CECO)** – This would be similar to E-4 above, except it would apply to commercial property and have higher absolute dollar-value limits. In this case, the average cost for efficiency upgrades is estimated to be between \$1.00 and \$3.00 per square foot. The CECO would contain a cost ceiling of 2 percent of the sale price or assessed value, not to exceed \$100,000.

Page 52 - **E-10: Require all new construction to achieve California Green Building Code Tier II Energy Efficiency Standards (Section 503.1.2)** – This measure requires that new construction must exceed 2007 California Energy Code requirements by a factor of 30 percent over 2007 Title-24 requirements. This represents a significant increase in cost of construction over existing requirements. This could be controversial among developers and contractors, even if the State of California is generally headed in this direction. The total GHG reduction potential, even when applied to new construction only, is fairly high.

Page 55 - **E-13: Require new commercial parking lots with over 20 spaces to mitigate heat gain through the use of shade trees, solar arrays, or cool pavement.** This is a supporting measure only, hard to evaluate numerically, but one which would help to diminish cooling costs at adjacent businesses and residences. The costs would be high initially, but by one means or another would be partly recoverable due to lower cooling costs and/or replacement of grid energy by onsite renewable energy. As with E-10, this would be most controversial among developers of new projects.

Page 57 – **Measure E-15 – Solar Empowerment Districts** – This is not controversial and would not require specific actions by owners. The problem is one of scale; the target of the program is 1,000,000 square feet (23 acres) of photovoltaic panels on commercial and industrial buildings by 2015, and 2,000,000 (43 acres) by 2020. Staff is uncertain whether enough rooftop / disturbed area space would be available for this program assuming it enjoyed substantial popularity. Ideally, there would be a way to expand this program to include residential rooftops as well, but economic viability may be limited during the term of this CCAP.