



ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

AGENDA ITEM No. _____
February 4, 2014

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January 15, 2014

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
Alameda County Administration Building
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Board Members:

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ALAMEDA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN,
COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ELEMENT**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Adopt the Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND) that was prepared for the proposed amendment to the Alameda County General Plan, Community Climate Action Plan Element, by means of the Resolution provided; and
2. Adopt the Alameda County Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) as an Element of the Alameda County General Plan, by means of the Resolution provided.

BACKGROUND:

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors provisionally adopted the Community Climate Action Plan in June 2011 in response to concerns about the causes and effects of climate change, and after two years of intensive public review and input, including a recommendation from the Planning Commission. In earlier years, the Board had unanimously adopted the Climate Protection Leadership Resolution (R-2006-04) and the Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Declaration (R-2007-336), which directed staff to inventory the county's greenhouse gas emissions, to work across agencies to develop a plan for reducing those emissions, and to set a goal of reducing emissions by 80 percent by the year 2050. Alameda County's Strategic Vision was also adopted by the Board of Supervisors in November 2008 to provide a multi-year, comprehensive road map that establishes Alameda County as one of the best counties in which to live, work, and do business. The County recognized that in order to achieve such a vision, climate action must be at the forefront.

The CCAP outlines a course of action to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated within the unincorporated areas of Alameda County. Successful implementation of the CCAP will reduce GHG emissions to 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 and set the County on a path toward reducing emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, as required by State Law AB 32.

SUMMARY/ANALYSIS:

Need for amendment of the General Plan with the CCAP as a General Plan Element: Staff believes that inclusion of the CCAP as an Element of the General Plan is the best way to establish the CCAP as a bona fide policy document, and to accomplish its goals. General Plan Element

status provides the CCAP with the strength to be applied as needed, and at appropriate levels for any situation it could address.

In 2009 and 2010, conversations between County Staff and the State Attorney General's office resulted in requirements by the Attorney General that the County include climate action policies in General Plan documents pursuant to State Law AB 32. Amending the General Plan by adding the CCAP as an element would fulfill this requirement of the State Attorney General.

General Plan Consistency: State law requires General Plan elements to be internally consistent. This should be straightforward for the CCAP Element, as the CCAP was constructed to use existing General Plan policies and County Ordinances as tools to reduce GHG emissions as much as possible, and to build on that existing framework with additional actions that further the goals of the existing plans.

Progress on Climate Action consistent with the CCAP: Although the CCAP has not been formally adopted yet, the County has pursued many actions that are consistent with the concept of GHG reduction and the CCAP. These include actions in the areas of Transportation, Alternative Energy, Water Conservation, Waste Recycling and Green Infrastructure. Adoption of the CCAP into the General Plan would permit the actions outlined in the CCAP to be more fully and expeditiously implemented.

- **Transportation:** The CCAP has several measures designed to improve alternative transportation opportunities and facilities. The Public Works Agency has begun planning improvements for bike and pedestrian ways, and for example, plans to significantly upgrade the Grant Avenue corridor for nonmotorized transportation beginning in September 2013. Certain private development projects are being required to install bike racks and special parking restrictions, as well as explore ways to encourage the use of public transit.
- **Alternative Energy:** The CCAP has several measures designed to increase the use of alternative energy. On certain private projects, solar photovoltaic cells are being included as conditions of approval. The Neighborhood Preservation and Sustainability Department of CDA has programs for weatherproofing and making residential units more energy efficient. For some time now, NP&S has been assisting with grants for improvements in energy efficiency, also a key aspect of the CCAP measures. Certain new private development projects are being encouraged to incorporate alternative energy.
- **Water Conservation:** The CCAP has several measures devoted to water conservation in new development and landscaping; conservation of water reduces the need for water treatment, a process that uses a great deal of energy, and thus reduces the carbon footprint for new and replacement landscaping and commercial / industrial processes. The County has adopted a Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO) already to this end. To minimize the inefficient use of water in new and rehabilitated landscapes, this ordinance prescribes the use of drought tolerant and low water use plants for the largest landscaped areas, with high water use plants designated for accent areas. Turf is minimized, with the exception of sport fields and other uses that require turf for their use. Landscape development packages that are compliant with WELO include irrigation plans and hydrozone scheduling that group plants with similar water needs.
- **Waste Reduction and Recycling:** The CCAP has a variety of measures related to reduction of waste and enhanced recycling. County Staff continues to work to bring recycling to underserved unincorporated areas, to support food waste capture, and to encourage composting of all organic wastes as the landfills and private companies bring proposals to the County.

- Green Infrastructure: Efforts toward green infrastructure are nascent, but the Grant Avenue improvement project mentioned above, for example, includes substantial planting of climate-appropriate trees and vegetation. Staff hopes for many more similar opportunities in the future.

DRAFT INITIAL STUDY/NEGATIVE DECLARATION (IS/ND)

CEQA requires that an Initial Study be performed when there is a project that may cause a direct or indirect change in the environment. The Draft CCAP served as project description for the purposes of CEQA analysis and Board approval. Since the time of Board approval of that document, no changes have been made, and the CEQA analysis, the Negative Declaration, was conducted based on that final draft. County Staff has concluded that there will be no significant environmental impacts from adopting the CCAP as a General Plan element.

The CCAP Initial Study (IS)/Negative Declaration (ND) was released on June 1, 2013. The comment period for the Initial Study was from June 1, 2013 through July 1, 2013. As of today, no comments on the Negative Declaration have been received by staff.

REVIEW - PLANNING COMMISSION:

On July 15, 2013, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on the recommendation to adopt the negative declaration for the CCAP and move it to the Board for adoption as a General Plan Element. With no public comments forthcoming, the Planning Commission approved both recommendations by a vote of 6-0, with one excused.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the Board:

1. Adopt the Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND) that was prepared for the proposed amendment to the Alameda County General Plan, Community Climate Action Plan Element, by means of the Resolution provided; and
2. Adopt the Alameda County Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) as an Element of the Alameda County General Plan, by means of the Resolution provided.

Very truly yours,

Chris Bazar, Director
Community Development Agency

Attachments:

Two (2) Planning Commission Resolutions

Community Climate Action Plan (may also be seen at

http://www.co.alameda.ca.us/cda/planning/landuseprojects/documents/110603_Alameda_CCAP.pdf)

Initial Study (May also be seen at

<http://www.co.alameda.ca.us/cda/planning/landuseprojects/documents/CEQA-CCAP-Negative-Declaration-6-2013.pdf>)