AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: March 8, 2022

Subject: Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

Prepared by: Ben Fordham, Ecoshift environmental consultant
Reviewed by: Laura Simpson, Interim Planning Director
Approved by: Gabriel Engeland, City Manager

Attachment:
1. Draft Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
2. Appendices
3. CEQA Initial Study

Initiated by:
Environmental Commission Subcommittee and Staff

Previous Council Consideration:
December 2013- CAP Adoption

Fiscal Impact:
See Appendix D

Environmental Review:

The adoption of the Climate Action and Adaptability Plan (the "CAAP") is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption) and 15308 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for the Protection of the Environment), in that the CAAP is a proposed series of policies and actions intended to address global warming, and it can be seen with certainty that those policies and actions will not have a significant environmental effect. On the contrary, the purpose of the CAAP is to protect the environment. Additionally, based upon an Initial Study prepared in connection with the CAAP, none of the circumstances in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies.

Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:
- Does the City Council wish to approve the draft Climate Action and Adaptation Plan?

Summary:
- The City of Los Altos' first Climate Action Plan was adopted in 2013 and set targets for GHG emission reductions by 2020

Reviewed By:

City Manager	City Attorney	Finance Director
GE	JH	JF

Subject: Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

- Update to the 2013 CAP is a priority for City Council and the Environmental Commission
- In January 2021, Staff and the Environmental Commission Subcommittee began work to update the 2013 CAP, now the 2022 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) with the consultant
- City Council provided feedback on the targets and actions proposed in the CAAP during the Study Session on November 4, 2021
- The CAAP 2022 proposes an overall target of Carbon Neutrality by 2035

Subject: Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

Purpose

To have City Council approve the draft Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and Initial Study.

Background

It is unquestionable that CO2 levels are rising, and our earth is heating up. This is causing major changes in our weather patterns, leading to more extreme conditions and causing destruction that is becoming more frequent and intense. Los Altos is facing extreme drought, more frequent heatwaves, poor air quality and effects of wildfires. Los Altos is not insulated but part of a larger region and, if it is to maintain a healthy quality of life, urgent action is needed.

According to the most recent report from the IPCC, Earth has warmed 1.09℃ since 1850 and we're on track to exceed 1.5℃ as early as 2025. Global surface temperature has increased faster since 1970 than any other 50-year period in the last 2,000 years. Today, CO2 concentrations are higher than at any time in the last 2 million years. Many changes such as glacier and artic sea ice melt leading to sea-level rise are now virtually irreversible. On a global level, solutions and action are crucial but local action is even more important in the face of global uncertainties. Los Altos must pursue the most effective solutions in order to reduce the negative impact. Los Altos has done a good job taking action to mitigate emissions produced locally but can and should do more. Because we are already facing the impact of climate change, this new plan includes a section on climate adaptation in order to prepare the City for the future impacts of climate change.

Rapid, aggressive action can make a difference. According to the IPCC "Strong and sustained reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gases could quickly make air quality better, and in 20 to 30 years global temperatures could stabilize."

Los Altos can meet this challenge and achieve carbon neutrality within the next 15 years. The actions developed for the CAAP will allow the City to significantly reduce GHG emissions by 2030 and will propel Los Altos toward carbon neutrality in the years that follow.

CAP 2013

In 2013 the City of Los Altos adopted the Climate Action Plan in accordance with State Assembly Bill 32 that required public agencies in California to implement measures to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to year 1990 levels by 2020. Cities were required to adopt a plan to address carbon emissions and establish an implementation plan for programs and facilities. A Climate Action Plan (CAP) is the policy document that provides the framework to achieve those goals. After the adoption of the 2013 CAP, two annual report updates were completed in 2015 and 2016.

The 2013 CAP set a target of reducing the community's GHG by at least 15% by 2020. The GHG emission reduction measures were grouped into five focus areas:

Subject: Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

Focus Area	Potential Emissions Reductionsby 2020 ($MTCO_2e$)	Focus Area Percentage ofTotal Reductions
1. Transportation	-7,760	50%
2. Energy	-5,740	37%
3. Resource Conservation	-1,310	8%
4. Green Community	-20	<1%
5. Municipal Operations	-810	5%
Total	**-15,640**	**100 %**

The City was successful in achieving and exceeding the target set by the 2013 CAP and reduced emissions by 35% between 2005 and 2018. A large percentage of emission reductions came from joining Silicon Valley Clean Energy, but many other actions were also taken that combined to create a 35% reduction in emissions. Approximately 2,500 metric tons of CO_2 were reduced through construction of new bike and pedestrian lanes, and approximately 2,400 metric tons were reduced through energy efficiencies. This shows the City is capable of reducing its emissions in a meaningful way.

CAAP 2022

The City Council and Environmental Commission prioritized the Climate Crisis and agreed that this is a priority for both the Council and the Commission. The City set aside a budget of $75,000 to contract with a consultant to update the 2013 CAP. After release of the RFP in Fall of 2020, the City contracted with EcoShift Consulting in December 2020 and in January 2021 key stakeholders were identified to develop the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) and lead staff began working on the project.

Lead Team

The Environmental Commission CAAP sub-committee members include Bruno Delagneau, Raashina Humayun and Don Weiden. The City Staff Leads and stakeholder groups are key to the development of the CAAP and will be instrumental to implement the future adopted plan.

CAAP City Staff Leads

- Chief Building Official
- Community Development Director and Planning Commission Liaison
- Economic Development Coordinator
- City Manager
- Human Resources Analyst
- Emergency Preparation Coordinator

- Municipal Services Director
- Transportation Services Manager
- Public Information Officer
- Recreation & Community Svc. Director and Parks & Rec. Commission Liaison
- Deputy City Manager
- Management Analyst Fellow
- Senior Commission Liaison
- Police Operations Captain
- Planning Services Manager and Planning Commission Liaison
- Traffic Patterns and Complete Streets Commission Liaison
- Engineering Services Director
- Human Resources Manager
- Youth Commission Liaison

CAAP Stakeholder Groups

- Los Altos Property Owners Downtown
- Los Altos Village Association (LAVA)
- Los Altos Chamber of Commerce
- GreenTown Los Altos
- Los Altos Youth Climate Action Team (LAYCAT)
- Los Altos High School Green Team
- Los Altos History Museum
- LAUSD Outdoor Educator
- Orchard Commons Committee
- BATS Block Action Team
- Grass Roots Ecology
- Los Altos Rotary Club
- Parks & Recreation Commission
- Youth Commission
- Complete Streets Commission
- Senior Commission

Outreach & Engagement

Given the modest budget, we worked with the Consultant to identify areas to conduct outreach and engagement within the budget and without increasing costs to the City. We were able to develop an outreach and engagement plan that included:

- Public Community Workshop (Business & General)
    - June 28, 2021
    - 63 registered
    - Part A- Business, Part B- General Community
    - Attendees provided feedback through live discussion, chat, and by email
    - Session recorded for those unable to attend (CAAP webpage)
- Two Public Surveys (results of surveys: www.losaltosca.gov/caap)

- Developed by Environmental Commission Subcommittee and staff
- Farmer's Market tabling: Staff, Commission, Green Team/LAYCAT Volunteers
- Business Flyers
- Various social media, City Manager's Weekly Updates, Town Crier

- Three Stakeholder Focus Groups
- CAAP Webpage and dedicated email for updates and feedback
- Environmental Commission Monthly Updates

Study Session

On November 4, 2021, the City Council received a report on the targets and actions proposed in the CAAP. City Council provided feedback and inquired about the details of the CAAP. The consultant, Environmental Commission Subcommittee and staff reviewed the feedback and prepared the following responses.

	Question/Comment:	Proposed Resolution:
1	Need to clarify why we use 2005 instead of 1990.	Action: Explanation added in the CAAP
2	How are GHG emissions calculated? Need to reference and explain the methodology in the plan.	Action: Created tables describing data sources and calculation methods
3	More details on the Carbon Emission Permit. Need to clarify the objectives, how the funds are going to be used and also give a couple options or ideas how this could be implemented. Accounting for low-income or seniors on fixed income is key to the acceptance of the plan.	There are a few options to this action: Yearly fee can be based on Gas consumption (if we can have easy access to data) with no payment for tier 1, a $50 fee for tier 2, $100 for 3 and $200 for 4 for example. Or it could be done based on house square footage: $50 for <2,000, $100 for 2,000 to 4000, $200 for >4,000. For people renting, fee would be paid by owner (renters can't make structural changes). Exemption for people making less than the low-income average for Santa Clara County: https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-funding/income-limits/state-and-federal-income-limits/docs/income-limits-2020.pdf

		The idea could include an opt out if homeowner is >65 or low income but then the home must be converted to all electric 1) upon remodeling 2) upon sale, transfer or death of owners 3) upon securing financial assistance for conversion (city or consultant to assist in process). Action: Updated Actions List description
4	Need to clarify the goal of 10% of population in multi-housing. What does it mean? What is the % today? How does it compare to the required increase in low income and multi-family housing for Los Altos? The state mandate will have 18% of Los Altos residents in low income and multi-family housing according to council. High-density housing doesn't necessarily lead to GHG reductions? TOD better?	4,500 people/square mile High density is classified as 10k+/square mile (CAPA) Based on 2023-2031 RHNA, Los Altos needs to add 1,958 housing units (789 low income or very low income units) which would represent about 12% (18% at 3/unit) of the population based on a low assumption of 2 people per unit. 429 units are currently planned or in construction: https://abag.ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2021-07/2023-2031_RHNA_Appeal_City_of_Los_Altos.pdf There are currently about 11,057 (11,418 according to Civicdashboard) housing units in Los Altos.
5	10 minute walk from transit is a good goal, but a state objective of 15 minute walk was mentioned. Need to clarify and address this in the plan.	15-minute city legislation was vetoed by the governor. But the concept of a 15-minute city is different from our core action. They are not mutually exclusive. Core of action is 10-minute walk from transit (EV shuttle, escooter/ebike, VTA) Action: Updated to include in walkable/bikeable city action; actions not mutually exclusive
6	Is the goal of 100% electrical housing reasonable considering that there are challenges meeting demand today. Are we going to limit the sizes of houses?	The electrical grid of tomorrow will be different from the grid of today and will be designed to accommodate electrification. The goal of increasing energy efficiency by 20% along with strengthening solar panels requirements in new homes and remodels (150 per year expected) should go a long way to alleviate increased demand. Current % of units with electric heating is

		12% according to Census data. Action: SVCE and Peninsula Clean Energy FAQ link contains information and responses to many of the questions about grid adequacy https://www.peninsulacleanenergy.com/power-faq/
7	Need to explain what carbon neutral means.	Action: Added definition in the CAAP
8	Can we accomplish these goals with the limited budget and staff?	Current FTE needs = ~4-5 FTE for mitigation actions Action: Schedule/prioritization will be key
9	Incentives were deemed to be key. Identify areas where we can incentivize the proposed electrification switch and where the money will come from.	Action: Funding Sources and links are provided for each action in the All Actions List in the CAAP
10	There were some questions about recycling efficiency and the additional footprint of electrification such as solar panels. Clarification is needed specifically with regards to the 95% diversion rate goal (as we know some diverted materials will make their way back to the landfill).	Including EPA info on solar panel recycling: https://www.epa.gov/hw/solar-panel-recycling Per MTWS: This type of waste is Special and/or Hazardous and not currently allowed in the landfill, therefore waste diversion rates should not be affected Action: Ensure the City is informed on PV/battery end-of-life; industries are controlled by state
11	We need to consider the Covid impact when we lay out a schedule and implementation timeline. (Specific to businesses)	Action: Delay business-related actions by 1 year. To be done on a case per case basis but most key actions may not be active before 2023
12	What can the plan do to help residents become greener? Can we lay out specific things that can be done? Can we offer a couple "package" options?	Build a webpage about electrification incentives. Education around consumer choices, waste and recycling, using alternative mode of transportation etc. Action: Added a "What Can I Do" section in the CAAP

13	Need to have a priority order and specific actions that the city can/should take to keep things moving. Where do we need ordinances, incentives, rethink the permit system etc.	Action: Prioritization ranking added to the CAAP
14	Monitoring will be key, and we should lay it out in details in the plan. How often do we do it?	Action: Addressed in the CAAP
15	Valley Water is responsible for flood control, so what is the City's role? How will the City support Valley Waters actions?	Action: The City will coordinate with Valley Water
16	Concerns about the targets and wanting to be successful in achieving them.	Action: Added a chart in CAAP
17	Recommends having a Priority Order explained or detailed in the CAAP.	Action: Added prioritization ranking to the actions
18	Annual updates and accessing the progress is necessary. Plan should include a timeline with different check-in points.	Action: Implementation is addressed in the plan with the timeline
19	What were the lessons learned from the 2013 CAP? What actions had the greatest impact?	Action: Added table with most impactful 2013 actions added to CAAP
20	Nothing for fire risk?	Action: Action List updated

Discussion/Analysis

The proposed targets in this CAAP aim to achieve an 85% reduction in GHG emissions from 2005 levels by 2030 and achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2035. These are bold but achievable objectives. The implementation of all proposed CAAP strategies and actions by each sector will allow us to meet these

objectives. Note that Transportation and Energy are the two largest sectors in which the greatest reductions are needed and must be obtained.

Sectors for Action
The CAAP divides reduction strategies into the follow sectors:

- Transportation
- Energy
- Resource Conservation
- Green Community
- Municipal Operations

Transportation
Reducing GHG emissions from vehicle trips can be accomplished by providing safe and convenient alternatives to driving gas powered single-occupant vehicles and by ensuring that infrastructure is in place to support more efficient travel patterns. The strategies and actions identified in this focus area will reduce vehicle trips by increasing the number of bicycle, walking, ebike, escooter, or shared transit trips that residents and visitors make. Implementing the 2021 Complete Streets Master Plan, improving access and convenience of transit, and increasing the diversity of shared transportation options are key elements. While some vehicle trips will remain necessary because of distance, timing, sequence, or other factors, Los Altos should support efforts by residents and visitors to use efficient means of transportation by developing an infrastructure network that supports electric vehicles (EVs).

Energy
Los Altos is comprised of mostly residential buildings, therefore community and energy use reduction and use of renewable energy is especially important to reduce GHG emissions in this sector. Joining Silicon Valley Clean Energy in 2017 greatly reduced emissions from the energy sector, GHG emissions from non-SVCE customers and from the burning of methane gas in buildings remains a major problem. The strategies in this area address opportunities for residents and businesses to switch from non-renewable energy sources to renewable ones, accelerate electrification of buildings, conserve energy, and maximize energy efficiency.

Resource Conservation
While waste disposal and water use, are all essential activities in the community, consuming and/or disposing of such resources generates community wide GHG emissions. The effects of these activities can be reduced by diverting more waste from the landfill, using and conserving water efficiently, and promoting sustainable consumption patterns. Implementing SB 1383 requirements to divert organic waste from landfills will assist the City with increasing diversion rates.

Green Community
Many projects in Los Altos contribute to an improved quality of life by providing economic, social, and environmental benefits for the community. These projects also indirectly reduce GHG emissions. While the measures and actions in this focus area identify only minor direct emissions reductions, they support the reduced energy or fuel consumption goals underlying numerous other CAAP strategies.

Municipal Operations
While City activities represent a small part of overall emissions in the community, the Municipal Operations focus area is the City's opportunity to lead by example. Emissions reduction measures will also reduce the cost of City operations by decreasing energy, fuel, and other material consumption at City facilities.

Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation
Senate Bill 379 requires local jurisdictions to address climate adaptation and resiliency strategies. The Vulnerability Assessment is the first step in Los Altos' effort in planning for and adapting to climate change, outlined in Los Altos' Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP). The climate vulnerability assessment identifies the risks that climate change poses and describes the changing frequency and intensity of climate hazards, and relies on resources provided by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) including Cal-Adapt and the California Adaptation Planning Guide. The Vulnerability Assessment is an appendix to the CAAP.

Santa Clara County Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan
The Santa Clara County Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan is the county-wide hazard mitigation plan. The plan describes that the number and length of heat waves is expected to increase, how the timing and form of precipitation is expected to change stream flow,river flooding, and wildfire risk.

Los Altos Hazard Mitigation Plan Annex
The Los Altos Hazard Mitigation Plan Annex is an addition to the Santa Clara County Hazard Mitigation Plan, specific to Los Altos. The Los Altos Hazard Mitigation Plan Annex ranks natural hazards based on their probability and their impact. According to the Plan Annex, the hazards with the highest risk score (in order) is earthquake (48), severe weather (33), flood (18), drought (9), dam and levee failure (6), wildfire (3) and landslide (3).

Los Altos
The CAAP Task Force including Lead City staff and members of the Environmental Commission Subcommittee for the CAAP, guided the development. They understand the many aspects of Los Altos operations, planning, and environmental management.

The following climate-related events are identified as the primary hazards and frame the vulnerability assessment:

1. Temperature, Extreme Heat & Drought
2. Precipitation & Flooding
3. Wildfires & Air pollution

The Task group identified climate hazards of most concern in the future. Concerns were ranked (high, medium, low) for primary and secondary climate hazards. Primary climate hazards are phenomena that are climate variables. Temperature and precipitation define climate. Secondary climate hazards are hazards resulting from changes in primary climate hazards and how it relates to community sectors such as the natural environment, economy, and public.

The **primary** climate hazards identified in order of most concern was temperature increase, precipitation changes, and sea level rise. The **secondary** climate hazards identified in order of most concern was drought, extreme heat, wildfires, air pollution, flooding, and landslides.

Impacts on Los Altos' Assets/Community Sectors

The CAAP Task Force assisted with identifying the natural and built assets, facilities, and what sectors of the economy were most important to Los Altos' quality of life.

Natural Environment

The most important Los Altos' quality of life benefits (results receiving 40% or more) in order of importance are:

1. Managed landscapes (yards, parks, street trees)
2. Air and air quality
3. Natural habitat (soil, plants, wildlife)
4. Creeks, rivers, and other water bodies

Built Environment

The most important to Los Altos' quality of life benefit for the built environment (results receiving 40% or more) in order of importance:

1. Housing
2. Schools
3. Transportation (roads, sidewalks, buses, trains, parking spots & bike racks)
4. Utilities (power, drinking water, stormwater & sewer, natural gas, phone, internet)

Vulnerable Populations

As part of the Vulnerability Assessment, it is important to identify the vulnerable populations that are most at risks to climate hazards.

The vulnerable populations identified (in order of importance) include:

1. Elderly
2. People with chronic or pre-existing medical conditions
3. People with disabilities
4. Children
5. Indigenous and or people of color
6. People experiencing homelessness

Vulnerable populations often do not have access to the resources needed to mitigate health and safety impacts and may lack or have limited mobility. People with limited mobility and functionality during evacuation, flooding, and other events are at risk. People with chronic or pre-existing medical conditions, elderly and children are more at risk to develop health issues which could be exacerbated by poor air quality and extreme heat days. As experienced more recently with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is increasingly important to identify the vulnerable populations in the City and ensure that adaptation measures include resources to assist them during these events.

Recommendation

Staff is requesting that the City Council approve the draft Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and Initial prepared for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for environmental review compliance.