



Community Development Department
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For Meeting of: February 17, 2026

☐ Consent Item; ☒ Public Hearing Item

To: City Council

From: Kevin Caldwell, Community Development Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "K Caldwell", written over the name Kevin Caldwell.

Through: Kyle Knopp, City Manager

Date: February 11, 2026

Subject: Adoption of the Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP)

Recommendation:

That the City Council:

1. Adopt the Humboldt County RCAP as the City of Rio Dell's Climate Action Plan and make CEQA findings as a Responsible Agency.

Background:

In 2019, Rio Dell joined the County and the other incorporated cities in signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing to develop a shared RCAP to reduce GHG emissions on a coordinated, countywide basis. The group worked in coordination with regional agencies such as the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG), Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA), Humboldt Transit Authority, and Humboldt Waste Management Authority. The RCAP establishes a framework to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and align with California's statewide climate goals.

Early work on the RCAP produced a public review draft released in 2022; however, that version was not advanced because it required substantial revisions to function as an

effective, realistic countywide implementation plan. The group subsequently revised the approach and hired Rincon Consultants, Inc. to substantially rewrite the RCAP and to prepare the environmental review required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Public outreach and regional participation occurred over several years and included both early public input and formal CEQA review.

In May 2024, the County asked residents and stakeholders to share priorities through a countywide survey. The County then released the 2024 Draft RCAP on August 14, 2024 and initiated CEQA scoping through a Notice of Preparation, including public notices and opportunities for written and oral input. The Draft EIR was circulated for public review in early 2025, and the document set was finalized later that year.

The Final RCAP was adopted by the County in December 2025 largely carried forward the August 2024 Draft RCAP, with refinements made in response to public and agency comments, including clarification of certain definitions such as the distinction between urban and rural areas. At the same meeting, the Board also certified the Final EIR and adopted CEQA GHG thresholds of significance.

Discussion:

The RCAP is designed to reduce countywide GHG emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030, consistent with Senate Bill (SB) 32, and to make substantial progress toward carbon neutrality by 2045, consistent with Assembly Bill (AB) 1279. The RCAP is meant to function as a “playbook” that local agencies can use to prioritize actions, coordinate projects, and track progress over time, recognizing that implementation will be phased and dependent on available capacity and funding.

The RCAP is grounded in a 2022 countywide GHG emissions inventory that covers both incorporated and unincorporated Humboldt County. **Total 2022 emissions are estimated at approximately 1.53 million metric tons of carbon dioxide** equivalent (MT CO₂e), with the inventory focused on the sectors where local government has the largest influence, including building energy, transportation, solid waste, and water/wastewater. As shown in Figure 1, transportation and natural gas usage in buildings are the largest contributors of GHG emissions.

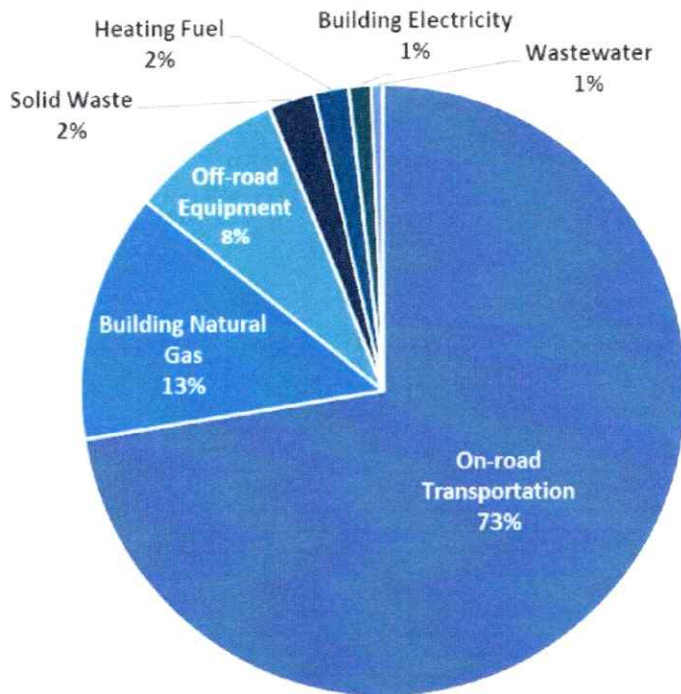


Figure 1: Humboldt GHG Emissions for 2022

Strategies, Measures, and Quantification

The RCAP organizes its emissions-reduction approach under eleven overarching strategies, including a “cornerstone” strategy focused on regional coordination. Table 1 summarizes the suite of general strategies by sector.

Sector	Strategy
Cornerstone (C)	1. Develop a regional climate coalition
Building Energy (BE)	2. Increase carbon-free electricity
	3. Decarbonize existing construction
	4. Decarbonize new construction
Transportation (T)	5. Shift driving to walking and biking
	6. Shift driving to public transit or car-share
	7. Shift land use to reduce vehicle miles traveled
Solid Waste (SW)	9. Reduce organic waste
Water & Wastewater (WW)	10. Conserve water and reduce wastewater emissions
Carbon Sequestration (CS)	11. Increase carbon sequestration

Table 1: Sector Based Strategies to Reduce GHGs

Measures are also tailored by geography, recognizing varied approaches for urban vs. rural areas, and highlighting the differences in development patterns, infrastructure access, and implementation feasibility. Urban areas, including Rio Dell, generally focus on infill development, walkable neighborhood design, better bike and transit access, and building energy upgrades, while rural measures place more emphasis on resource protection, land management, and strategies that fit dispersed development patterns.

Finally, the RCAP includes “lead by example” measures that local governments can implement through their own operations, such as improving City-owned buildings and other facilities and transitioning vehicle fleets over time. These actions do not directly result in large quantified emissions reductions, but they demonstrate best practices and help align City operations with the broader countywide strategy.

The current suite of RCAP implementation measures is provided in Table 2.

Measure ID	Measure/Strategy	Key Actions
C-1	Regional Climate Committee	Establish a Regional Climate Committee with representatives from cities, county, transit, waste, and energy authorities. Develop funding and coordination structure; hire Climate Program Manager; annual progress reporting.
Building Energy		
BE-1	Renewable & Carbon-Free Electricity	Source 90% of grid electricity from renewable and carbon-free sources by 2030; support RCEA's RePower Humboldt goals.
BE-2	Microgrids and Energy Storage	Increase deployment of microgrids and battery storage to support grid capacity and electrification of buildings and transportation.
BE-4	Reduce Residential Gas Consumption	Retrofit existing homes to reduce natural gas use (urban areas) by 4% by 2030 and by 74% by 2045.
BE-5	Renewable & Carbon-Free Electricity	Decarbonize 95% of new residential building construction by 2027.

BE--6	Renewable & Carbon-Free Electricity	Decarbonize 95% of new nonresidential building construction by 2027.
BE-7	Renewable & Carbon-Free Electricity	Decarbonize 30% municipal buildings and facilities by 2030.
BE-8	Renewable & Carbon-Free Electricity	Advocate for Offshore Wind developers to fund transmission infrastructure and work with PG&E, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), and other related agencies to build electrical transmission infrastructure to supply Humboldt with energy produced by the future offshore wind projects which will increase regional supply and resilience.
Transportation		
T-1	Transportation System Efficiency	Expand public transit, incentivize ride-sharing and vanpools, and reduce VMT (vehicle miles traveled).
T-2	Active Transportation & Land Use	Increase walking and bicycling infrastructure; support infill and mixed-use development near transit, reducing automobile dependence.
T-3	EV Infrastructure Expansion	Install electric vehicle charging stations regionwide; support EV adoption among residents and fleets.
T-4	EV Infrastructure Expansion	Electrify or decarbonize municipal and regional transit fleets.
T-5	Transportation Efficiency	Require commercial and industrial employers with 25 employees or more to develop a Supportive Transportation Demand Management plan.
T-6	Transportation Efficiency	Decarbonize 15% of passenger vehicle miles traveled by 2030 and 100% by 2045 through increased adoption of low and zero-emission vehicles and development of a regional electric vehicle charging and hydrogen fueling network.

T-7	Transportation Efficiency	Increase commercial zero-emission vehicle use and adoption to 10% by 2030 and 100% by 2045 through a regional charging network and development of hydrogen hubs.
T-8	Transportation Efficiency	Electrify or otherwise decarbonize 12% of applicable small off-road engines (SORE) off-road equipment by 2030 and 100% by 2045 and replace fossil diesel consumption with renewable diesel in 55% of applicable large diesel in alignment with EO N-79-20 by 2030.
T-9	Transportation Efficiency	Establish Humboldt as a pilot program for the decarbonization of the transportation sector to help drive state and philanthropic investment throughout Humboldt.
T-10	Transportation Efficiency - Jobs	Work with the state and biofuel industry to establish a biofuel network within Humboldt thereby funding new green industry and job growth to support the decarbonization of the transportation sector.
T-11	Transportation Efficiency - Jobs	Work with the state and biofuel industry to establish a biofuel network within Humboldt thereby funding new green industry and job growth to support the decarbonization of the transportation sector.
Solid Waste		
SW-1	Organic Waste Reduction	Establish a local waste separation facility and organics management (SB 1383 Compliance) to be able to reduce waste sent to landfills by 75% by 2030. Reduce GHG emissions by limiting truck trips required to ship waste out of the county and import compost from out of the county.
SW-2	Solid Waste Diversion & Recycling	Expand recycling programs and reduce solid waste generation.
Wastewater & Water		
VW-1	Wastewater Efficiency	Expand regional opportunities for implementation of wastewater decarbonization technologies such as anaerobic digesters to reduce GHG and produce renewable fuel sources.

WW-2	Water Conservation	Reduce per capita potable water consumption by 15% by 2030.
Carbon Sequestration		
CS-1	Carbon Sequestration & Green Infrastructure	Research and implement feasible carbon sequestration technology opportunities to support growth and expansion of green jobs industry within the region.
CS-2	Carbon Sequestration	Offset fossil-based emissions and increase carbon sequestration in the community by achieving SB 1383 procurement requirements (0.08 tons recovered organic waste per person) by 2030.
CS-3	Carbon Sequestration	Develop a County-wide Natural and Working Lands Inventory baseline by 2027 and increase urban tree canopy, preserve natural lands, and support soil carbon storage projects.

Table 2: RCAP Implementation Measures

Implementation of the RCAP's full suite of measures is estimated to reduce emissions by approximately **219,446 MT CO₂e** by 2030 and **1,228,128 MT CO₂e** by 2045. The biggest reductions are expected to come from the same sectors that are currently the largest emitters, primarily transportation, followed by key actions in energy and waste. The RCAP's central takeaway suggests that the largest reductions will depend on cleaner vehicles and fuels, better transit options, and major improvements to waste handling and organics management, with support from policies and partnerships to realize those outcomes.

The RCAP is intended to function as a long-term, programmatic plan that will be implemented through ongoing monitoring and periodic updates to support California's SB 32 GHG reduction goals and demonstrate substantial progress toward the State's AB 1279 carbon-neutrality goal. Just as important, it provides a shared countywide framework that helps the County and cities work from the same playbook to align priorities, coordinate implementation, and create a practical structure for follow-through over time.

Regional Climate Committee and Program Manager

Regional partners are currently developing a shared Climate Program Manager position and a Regional Climate Committee to support RCAP implementation. The Manager and Committee are expected to be housed at either HCAOG or RCEA, with the incorporated cities and Humboldt County contributing a proportional share of the Manager's salary through a regional MOU. Other regional partners (such as tribes and regional government agencies) would voluntarily participate through the Committee or other formal consultation process rather than as signatories to the MOU.

The RCAP identifies the Regional Climate Committee as a core implementation measure, and specifies that the Committee should include representatives from each local jurisdiction and key regional agencies, including HTA, HCAOG, HWMA, and RCEA. The Committee would be comprised of staff members from the participating organizations who have relevant technical expertise and would participate as part of their existing job responsibilities. Committee members would be expected to meet regularly to develop shared tools, coordinate implementation across jurisdictions, and support progress tracking and reporting.

In support of the Committee's work, the RCAP envisions a Climate Program Manager as a senior professional dedicated staff position at HCAOG or RCEA. The Manager would convene and support the Committee, coordinate assigned work items, and prepare annual progress reports. Oversight and decision-making authority for the Manager and Committee would reside with the governing board of the host agency (RCEA or HCAOG), or a subcommittee thereof, consistent with the host agency's governance structure.

This structure is intended to build on existing regional coordination to avoid redundancy and make the best use of limited capacity. For example, the RCAP's transportation strategies align with HCAOG's adopted VROOM (2022–2042) RTP, and the RCAP's electrification strategies align with RCEA's RePower Humboldt energy action plan, both of which the City already participates in through existing regional boards and coordination bodies.

Both HCAOG and RCEA discussed the concept with their boards in January and are working through remaining details related to hosting, governance, and funding. Similarly, staff will continue participating in the ongoing regional discussions and will

return to City Council with a specific recommendation once the HCAOG or RCEA Board has decided to serve as the host agency and established the associated program framework, including the proposed cost share, scope of work, and oversight structure.

CEQA

The Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan was analyzed under CEQA through a **program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR)** prepared and certified by Humboldt County.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15096 and 15168, the City of Rio Dell may rely on the County-certified Final EIR for adoption of the RCAP. No additional environmental review is required for this action.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Resolution No. 1660-2026

RESOLUTION NO. 1660-2026



RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RIO DELL ADOPTING THE HUMBOLDT COUNTY REGIONAL CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (RCAP)

WHEREAS, the **Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP)** effort formally began several years ago, with early climate planning discussions and workshops involving local governments as far back as **2019**; and

WHEREAS, the **Humboldt County Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP)** is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional framework adopted by **Humboldt County and its seven incorporated cities** to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and support California's long-term climate goals. Developed in collaboration with regional agencies and community partners, the RCAP establishes a coordinated strategy to address climate change across land use, transportation, energy, waste, natural systems, and public services; and

WHEREAS, The RCAP is intended to:

- Reduce **community-wide GHG emissions** in alignment with **state mandates**;
- Serve as a **qualified GHG reduction strategy under CEQA**;
- Provide **clear implementation actions** for local jurisdictions; and
- Support long-term **climate mitigation and regional coordination**; and

WHEREAS, the plan aligns with **SB 32**, which requires a **40 percent reduction below 1990 GHG levels by 2030**, and **AB 1279**, which establishes a goal of **carbon neutrality by 2045**; and

WHEREAS, the RCAP identifies **30 coordinated measures** across key sectors:

- **Energy and Buildings:** Increase renewable energy use, improve energy efficiency, and support building electrification.
- **Transportation:** Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), expand transit, active transportation, and accelerate adoption of zero-emission vehicles.
- **Waste and Materials:** Reduce landfill methane through organic waste diversion, recycling, and waste reduction.
- **Water and Wastewater:** Improve energy efficiency and conservation in water systems.
- **Carbon Sequestration and Natural Lands:** Enhance forest management, protect wetlands, and increase carbon storage in soils.
- **Refrigerants and Fugitive Emissions:** Reduce emissions from high-global-warming-potential refrigerants and equipment; and

WHEREAS, together, these measures are designed to achieve the region's 2030 and 2045 climate targets while reflecting Humboldt County's rural context and natural resource base; and

WHEREAS the draft RCAP was published for public review in **August 2024**, and preparations such as the environmental review process started with a **Notice of Preparation in late August 2024**; and

WHEREAS the collaboration among the **County of Humboldt and its seven incorporated cities** has continued through the draft and environmental review phases and led to the Board of Supervisors' approval of the final plan in **December 2025**

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Rio Dell finds:

1. **The proposed adoption of the Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP) is deemed to be in the public interest.**

2. The proposed adoption of the Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP) is consistent and compatible with the General Plan and any implementation programs that may be affected.

3. The proposed adoption of the Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP) has been processed in accordance with the applicable provisions of the California Government Code and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

PASSED and ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Rio Dell on February 17, 2026 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Mayor Garnes

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

City of Rio Dell

ATTEST:

I, Karen Dunham, City Clerk for the City of Rio Dell, State of California, hereby certify the above and foregoing to be a full, true and correct copy of Resolution No. 1660-2026 adopted by the City Council of the City of Rio Dell on February 17, 2026.

Kyle Knopp, Acting City Clerk, City of Rio Dell