



Item No. 15

Town of Atherton

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – REGULAR AGENDA

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RACHAEL LONDER, MANAGEMENT ANALYST II

DATE: JUNE 21, 2023

SUBJECT: PROVIDE DIRECTION ON OR ADOPT THE 2023 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council Provide Direction on or Adopt the 2023 Climate Action Plan Update.

BACKGROUND

In 2016, Atherton adopted its first-ever Climate Action Plan (CAP) setting a target to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from energy and water, transportation, and waste by 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 and 49 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. The 2016 Plan includes 25 actions to take to support the town in reaching the targets aligned with the State's requirements established by AB 32 (Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006) and SB 32 (California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2016) which respectively aimed to reduce the State's GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. In 2017, the Council prioritized 16 of the 25 CAP actions acknowledging that the CAP would need to be updated to reach the 2030 targets.

On November 3, 2021, during the City Council's Study Session, staff shared a five-year update on the Climate Action Plan highlighting actions that helped the Town reduce emissions by 20.4 percent exceeding its first target of a 15 percent reduction by 2020. Staff recommended updating the Climate Action Plan to refine and add measures that would support the Town in achieving the second target of a 49 percent reduction below 2005 levels by 2030 and to align with the State's updated goals of achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 (Executive Order B-55-18). With direction from Council, staff began working with the County of San Mateo's Office of Sustainability in 2022 to quantify the Town's progress towards GHG reduction targets and to update the GHG targets for 2030 and 2045 to stay consistent with state regulations.

ANALYSIS

The 2023 Climate Action Plan Update is structured to provide an overview of climate change and its impact on Atherton, legislation associated with a CAP, Atherton's current emission trends, and

specific program and policy strategies. The 2023 CAP (Attachment 1) is informed by the most recent climate change science, the Town's 2019 GHG inventory, and an evaluation of the priorities in the 2016 CAP. The 2019 GHG inventory shows that the Town of Atherton has reduced GHG emissions 28.8% below the 2005 baseline exceeding the first goal set by the 2016 CAP. The community's emissions are roughly 7.7 MTCO₂e per-capita. Adopting the 2023 CAP Update provides a pathway for meeting the Town's 2030 goal and establishes a longer range GHG emission reduction targets. The goals that the 2023 CAP Update aims to achieve are as follows:

- 2030: Reduce emissions to 49 percent below 2005 baseline or 4.9 MTCO₂e per-capita
- 2045: Reduce emissions to 100 percent below 2005 baseline or 0 MTCO₂e per-capita

The 2023 CAP Update includes emerging issues and best practices to capture a comprehensive and innovative suite of GHG reduction measures. The CAP aims to achieve 13 objectives by taking 61 strategies, including both priority strategies from the 2016 Plan and new strategies that reflect new technologies, updated state targets, and community centered approaches. The strategies address each of the following sectors:

- Building Energy: Utilizing technological advances to support building electrification, renewable energy, and energy storage in the community and in Town operations.
- Transportation: Shifting to electric powered vehicles and zero-emission off-road equipment and increased community adoption of public transit, walking, and biking.
- Waste and Materials Management: Eliminating single-use plastics, developing a curbside organics collection program and compost to eliminate organic waste, and promote reducing, reusing and recycling.
- Carbon Sequestration and Water Use: Sequestering carbon through tree planting and compost application.

Implementing the strategies in the CAP will take the effort of all Town employees and the community. The CAP outlines implementation strategies for putting the strategies into action, including the role of the Environmental Programs Committee which will continue to serve in a policy advisory and community engagement capacity.

The Plan presented today may be further revised based on feedback from the Council or may be adopted. Adopting the CAP includes authorizing submittal of a CEQA Notice of Exemption to the State's Office of Planning and Research (Attachment 3) which was also filed for the 2016 CAP.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of the 2023 CAP will have a budgetary impact on the Town that is uncertain at this time. A portion of the implementation will be covered by the Sustainability Program operating budget within the City Manager's Office. Specific funding needs for each recommended action will be determined as part of the implementation process and will be requested as part of the approval process for each proposed action.

GOAL ALIGNMENT

This Report and its contents are in alignment with the following Council Policy Goals:

- Goal Area F – Be Forward-Thinking, Well-Managed, and Well-Planned

- Goal Area E – Strengthen Community Engagement and Transparency

POLICY FOCUS

The 2016 Climate Action Plan set a policy precedent for aligning with the State's emissions reductions requirements. In 2016, the Council acknowledged that an update would be needed after the 2020 goals were achieved to meet the State mandated 49% reduction by 2030. This 2023 update provides a clear policy pathway to achieve the 2030 goals and further aligns with the State's Executive Order B-55-18 which aims to achieve carbon neutrality across all jurisdictions in California. Adoption of the 2023 Climate Action Plan establishes a new policy framework to reduce emissions to create a carbon neutral future for Atherton thus future policies will be presented to Council as a part of the Climate Action Plan's implementation.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in print and electronically. Information about the project is also disseminated via the Town's electronic News Flash and Atherton Online. There are approximately 1,200 subscribers to the Town's electronic News Flash publications. Subscribers include residents as well as stakeholders –to include, but be not limited to, media outlets, school districts, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, service providers (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE FEEDBACK/REFERRAL

Environmental Programs Committee (meets every other month)

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2023 Climate Action Plan Update: Pathway to Carbon Neutrality
2. Technical Appendix: Supplementary Findings and 2019 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory
3. CEQA Notice of Exemption