



North County Group  
Sierra Club San Diego  
P.O. Box 2141  
Escondido, CA 92033

December 4, 2020

Mayor Jones and Council Members  
City of San Marcos  
**Via Email**

**RE: Sierra Club NCG comments on San Marcos draft Climate Action Plan Update**

Dear Planning Commission:

The North County Group (NCG) of the Sierra Club represents over 270 members in San Marcos and over 2,600 in North County. The Climate Action Plans are critically important if we are to address and arrest the worst aspects of the climate crisis. We have reviewed the San Marcos Draft Climate Action Plan (CAP) and have the following comments and recommendations.

NCG **strongly** supports the deployment of an intra-city electric shuttle which will assist significantly with VMT reduction. This is an effective measure for concretely reducing VMT in the city.

However, there are serious deficiencies in the CAP, especially around social equity and aggressive GHG reduction actions. We urge the Council to direct staff to update and address many of these issues and bring back to Council at a later date

**Deficiencies of the draft San Marcos Climate Action Plan Update (CAP)**

As it is drafted, the Draft CAP should be significantly amended prior to consideration by the Council. Some of our concerns are as follows:

1. CAP fails to include social equity in the implementation of the CAP and should designate priority investment areas for early action to address existing inequities and disproportionate pollution burdens. We encourage the city to examine the approach Escondido has taken to incorporate social equity into both emission reduction and adaptation actions. Their proposed focus on priority investment neighborhoods would be relevant in San Marcos as well.
2. CAP should set a goal of 100% clean, renewable energy as part of the CCE effort.
3. CAP should require conversion of the city fleet to ZEV by 2030.
4. CAP does not include any actions to improve energy efficiency of existing residential and commercial buildings. Given the high energy embedded in our water supply, water conservation should be included in this effort. A building energy and water conservation retrofit program should be committed to and a goal set for 2 metric tons of reduction per home.

5. CAP should align with the state target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.
6. CAP should set a goal of 90% solid waste diversion by 2030. CAP should propose a phased ban on single-use plastics as a part of achieving this goal. CAP should require separation of organic waste and implement a compost program like San Francisco's Recology.
7. The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan should include existing development as well as new development. Transportation mode share targets should include existing development as well as new development and cover walk, bike, transit.
8. Support free Youth transportation passes to help young people gain mobility and to develop habits of transit use.
9. The CAP should require policies to fully electrify all new development, promote decentralization deployment of PV, develop a policy on micro-grids and other pilot projects that reduce fossil fuel use and provide increased energy security.
10. Cap should require that new building construction be 100% electric by 2023 and that 20% of existing buildings be retrofitted by 2035. Jobs created should be family supporting and preference given to low-income workers. City should work with employers and local schools to ensure workers have required skills.
11. As 39% of San Marcos residents are renters, the CAP should develop a plan to provide renters a path to 100% clean energy. These should be provided at no upfront cost to tenants and could be incentivized with funds from the CCE. Further, when electricity is sold to the grid, tenant power bills should be reduced and/or income should be shared with tenants.
12. All residents should have access to broadband for work, school and to manage energy efficiency in their homes.
13. The tree planting goals are far too modest. The CAP should set a goal for tree cover of, at least 35%, for GHG reduction and co-benefits. Further, CAP should commit to an urban forestry initiative and require all shade trees planted to be native or non-invasive.
14. CAP should identify locations for several community gardens which will reduce GHG associated with transportation of food and have a co-benefit of improving food security.
15. Measures that maintain carbon sequestration capacity of native habitat should be included.
16. Completion of a subarea plan under the MHCP to ensure protection should be done.
17. A commitment to creating and supporting green jobs should be included in the CAP. The city has received several comments offering excellent options.

## **Process and Implementation**

- The CAP does not include any adaptation measures or equity actions. It seems to refer to the General Plan update for these. However, these should be included in the Climate Action Plan as they related either to GHG reduction or adapting to the climate change impacts. Otherwise, it cannot be known whether the draft CAP is adequate or not.
- The draft CAP does not include community or citizen oversight. We strongly recommend that the city establish a Climate Commission or other community involvement board to work with staff, residents, and officials to help guide and implement the plan. Our San Marcos members would be interested in serving on such a committee.

- All CAP goals should be monitored, measured, reported on publicly and adjusted as needed, at least annually.
- Actions in the CAP should be measurable and enforceable.

### **Climate Action is Critical.**

**Now is not the time to do the minimum.** The state's 2018 CA 4<sup>th</sup> Climate Change Assessment: San Diego Regional Report<sup>1</sup> found that San Diego County will be increasingly affected by climate change in future decades and will be confronted with, among others, increasingly warmer average temperatures, more frequent and likely more intense heat waves, more intense droughts, occasionally increased heavy rainfall events and floods, continuing Santa Ana winds and wildfire threats. It is imperative that the CAPs outline and commit to comprehensive action to mobilize against this threat.

Sierra Club North County Group recently adopted [a resolution declaring a climate emergency](#). We urge the city to do the same. A visionary, far-reaching, and effective Climate Action Plan will serve the city and the future well. Please contact us with any questions or for more information at [conservation@sierraclubncg.org](mailto:conservation@sierraclubncg.org).

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,



*Laura Hunter*  
Chair, NCG Conservation Committee

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-07/Reg%20Report-%20SUM-CCCA4-2018-009%20SanDiego.pdf>