

DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING
COMMISSION OFFICE
(213) 978-1300

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

SAMANTHA MILLMAN
PRESIDENT

VAHID KHORSAND
VICE-PRESIDENT

DAVID H. J. AMBROZ
CAROLINE CHOE
KAREN MACK

MARC MITCHELL
VERONICA PADILLA-CAMPOS
DANA M. PERLMAN
VACANT

CITY OF LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA



ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICES
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801
(213) 978-1271

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
DIRECTOR

KEVIN J. KELLER, AICP
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SHANA M.M. BONSTIN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TRICIA KEANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

ARTHI L. VARMA, AICP
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

LISA M. WEBBER, AICP
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

March 14, 2019

The Honorable City Council
City of Los Angeles
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Honorable Members:

REPORT BACK REGARDING CLIMATE ACTION PLAN; CF 18-0600-S54

The Budget and Finance Committee requested a report back at its April 2018 budget hearing regarding the potential of preparing a Climate Action Plan and this report is presented here in anticipation of the Energy, Climate Change, and Environmental Justice Committee meeting on March 19, 2019.

Background

Climate change is considered a major global challenge for the 21st century and is requiring communities to adapt to the potential consequence of a changing environment. Driven primarily by greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from human activities, the global climate is changing as evidenced by higher air and ocean temperatures, reduction in the extent of sea ice, and rising sea levels. These changes in the global climate also have local impacts, such as heat waves, drought, and wildfire.

In 2006, California became the first State to adopt a GHG reduction target and has amended it over time to include more specific interim target reductions. California's overall target establishes statewide GHG emission reduction target goals of 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 to achieve long-term climate stabilization. In addition to these state mandates, the City of Los Angeles has adopted even more ambitious targets for reducing its own GHG emissions.

Department of City Planning's Climate Change Work

The City is currently undertaking a comprehensive update to the General Plan. The General Plan Update, proposed for the FY 2019-20 budget, will lay the foundation for climate change goals by including sustainability and resilience as guiding principles of the General Plan. The General Plan Update will also be anchored by sustainability goals which will affect policies throughout the various General Plan Elements including Urban Form, Open Space, and Economy. The General Plan update process will consider opportunities to incorporate climate adaptation, hazard mitigation and recovery as well as efforts increase equity to respond to the most vulnerable communities.

The Department is also engaged in several other efforts that reduce the impact of climate change through citywide code amendments and neighborhood plans. Shifting the City's transportation metric from Level of Service (LOS), which measures auto delay, to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), per State law is one such effort currently underway. Utilizing VMT will promote development near transit and encourage other modes of travel such as biking and walking. The City is also working on several Transit Neighborhood Plans along the Expo, Purple and Orange lines which facilitate the location of housing and jobs near transit infrastructure. Several of the City's latest Community Plan Updates include tools to promote equitable transit development that enables communities to live closer to jobs and services. In addition, several of the City's recent housing programs such as the Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) program and the Permanent Supportive Housing ordinance promote the creation of new affordable housing opportunities near transit, further reducing auto trips and GHG emissions. The Department has issued a separate report on Climate Change Efforts as part of Council File CF 18-06000-S55.

While the City has not yet prepared a formal citywide vulnerability risk assessment, there have been several efforts to date to address this issue. The Department is preparing an update to its Local Coastal Program which addresses sea level rise in the Venice community. In addition, the City adopted an Earthquake Hazard Reduction ordinance which requires mandatory retrofit of pre-1978 wood-frame soft-story buildings and non-ductile concrete buildings.

Climate Action Plan

Preparation of a Climate Action Plan (CAP) would be another important tool to implement the policies identified in the General Plan Update and to meet the City's ambitious GHG reduction goals. A CAP would increase the effectiveness and efficiency of GHG reduction efforts, both currently underway and planned, and ultimately reduce the City's carbon footprint.

The purpose of the CAP is to analyze GHG emissions at a programmatic-level, outline a strategy to reduce and mitigate municipal and community-wide GHG emissions, demonstrate Los Angeles' commitment to exceeding state-wide emissions reduction targets, and serve as a qualified GHG reduction plan consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15183.5.

The Climate Action Plan should also include a climate vulnerability assessment and identify strategies to increase resiliency and reduce impacts to targeted communities. The CAP identifies specific strategies and implementation agencies to ensure that reduction targets can be appropriately met. CAPs also provide requirements for new development to conform to GHG reduction strategies, where appropriate, and promote more sustainable development citywide.

Climate Action Plan Status

The Mayor's Office has undertaken most of the components of a Climate Action Plan (CAP) consistent with the C40 Paris Agreement Planning Action Framework. This effort represents a major comprehensive approach to evaluating and addressing the city's Climate Change impacts. The preparation of the CAP marks the commitment of the City by allocating significant resources to the development of the CAP. Consultants were retained through combination funding, grants and pro bono work to complete the CAP. The CAP is scheduled to be released by the Mayor's Office in April 2019.

While a substantial accomplishment, the Mayor's Office CAP is not anticipated to meet all the criteria to be considered a qualified CAP per the State of California. A qualified CAP requires a risk assessment be conducted including identification of reduction measures, adoption of the CAP through a public process, environmental review and monitoring of long term CAP targets. A

qualified CAP that meets all of the CEQA components can then be used to streamline development project review.

Resources

Climate Action Plans (CAPs) are long-range plans that require significant technical resources and ongoing staffing commitments. Consultants would be necessary to prepare the technical analysis required for risk assessment and environmental review documents, building upon work that has already been prepared by the Mayor's Office. A key component of preparing a CAP is inter-departmental coordination. Many of the GHG reduction strategies are implementation programs of other Departments such as LADOT, Public Works, and LADWP among others. It is critical that resources are dedicated towards coordinating with these various Departments and their respective Bureaus towards common priorities and goals as it relates to climate change.

Additional funding would be necessary to oversee the remainder of the work to complete the risk assessment, environmental analysis, adoption, and provide ongoing implementation and monitoring as part of citywide development review. It is anticipated that two full time dedicated staff at the City Planner and Associate Planner levels would be necessary to implement this program on an ongoing basis. A part time Senior Planner would also be required in order to facilitate inter-departmental collaboration and oversee the work of the team. In addition, after adoption of the qualified CAP ongoing staffing would be required for maintenance and reporting obligations as state law requires that CAPs establish a mechanism to monitor progress and amend if necessary.

In small cities, CAPs can take several hundred thousand dollars to prepare, multiple staff members, and several years to draft and adopt. For instance, the City of Pasadena recently adopted a Climate Action Plan that required \$250,000, two dedicated staff members, and three years to prepare and adopt; while the City of Santa Monica spent \$260,000 not including the environmental clearance. LA County prepared their CAP as part of their General Plan update, so cost was not specified for the CAP alone. The City of Long Beach is currently preparing a Climate Action Plan for \$400,000. Given the size and range of the City of Los Angeles, the contractual services budget required to complete a qualified CAP is estimated to be in the range of \$800,000, plus additional city planning staff costs.

Please contact Conni Pallini-Tipton at (213) 978-1179 with any questions regarding this report.

Sincerely,

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning



KEVIN J. KELLER, AICP
Executive Officer

VPB:KJK:AV:cpt

cc: Richard H. Llewellyn, Jr., City Administrative Officer
Claudia Aguilar, Senior Administrative Analyst II

