

City of San Luis Obispo

Climate Action Plan





Climate Action Plan

Adopted by Resolution No. 10388 (2012 Series)

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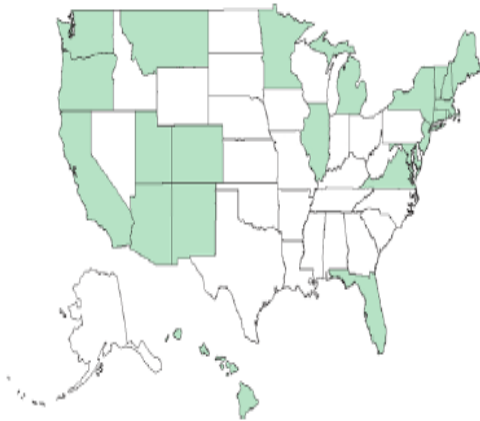
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Executive Summary

The global challenge of climate change requires action at all levels of government. A wide range of policies have been adopted at the state and regional levels to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, such as developing clean energy resources and promoting energy-efficient buildings and vehicles.

States with Adopted GHG Emission Reduction Targets



State(s)	Adopted Emission Reduction Target
VT	25% below 1990 levels by 2012
CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, OR, RI	10% below 1990 levels by 2020
CA, HI, NJ, MT, IL, WA	1990 levels by 2020
FL	1990 levels by 2025
NM	10% below 2000 levels by 2020
AZ	2000 levels by 2020
CO, MI, MN	15-20% below 2005 levels by 2015-25
UT	2005 levels by 2020
MD	25% below 2006 levels by 2020
VA	30% below BAU by 2025

California is among the nation's leaders in GHG emission reduction initiatives, including: an aggressive renewable energy portfolio standard, public benefit funds for renewables and efficiency, alternative fuel policies, new vehicle standards, and a statewide emission reduction target. The State's Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) establish a goal of reducing statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020.

Local governments are well positioned to develop and implement locally effective strategies to address the consequences of climate change and mitigate GHG emissions. In 2008, the City of San Luis Obispo committed to address climate change and joined ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability's Cities for Climate Protection campaign. Since that time, the City has completed the first step of the five milestone climate protection process: conduct a baseline emissions inventory. This Climate Action Plan (CAP) marks completion of the second and third milestones: adopting a GHG emissions reduction target and developing a plan to achieve that target. The adopted target is a reduction of communitywide emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, consistent with AB 32. The fourth and fifth milestones are implementation and monitoring.

Climate Action Plan Development

The process of drafting a CAP included a series of steps accomplished from 2010 thru 2012: research, outreach, local policy audit, and strategy review. Research included review of climate science, climate planning guidance documents, climate policy enacted in other jurisdictions, and existing local policies and programs already serving to reduce GHG emissions. In addition, an

extensive public outreach effort was begun that continued throughout the process. Outreach was conducted through farmers' market booths, community group meetings, a website (SLOCOOL.org) and Facebook page, digital surveys, feedback boards at local grocery stores, and a visit to a local elementary school. Early in the plan development process, the goal of public outreach was to raise public awareness of climate planning and to hear from community members about their hopes and fears for the future of San Luis Obispo.

The research phase of plan development was concluded with development of a policy audit. This audit served as a basis for emissions reduction strategy development. During strategy development, outreach efforts shifted focus with the intent of gauging the level of support for potential measures. Feedback was solicited from the community, City staff, and multiple local groups, and used to refine strategies in the plan. A complete list of public outreach events is included in the Appendix. Strategies that act directly on emissions sources were quantified to demonstrate the projected effectiveness of the CAP.

GHG Reduction Strategies

Community strategies for climate change adaptation and reduction of GHG emissions are divided into six chapters: **Buildings**, **Renewable Energy**, **Transportation & Land Use**, **Water**, **Solid Waste**, and **Parks & Open Space**. Strategies that will help reduce GHG emissions associated with City **Government Operations** have been separated into their own chapter.



Buildings addresses emissions associated with the heating, cooling, and operating of structures. This includes electricity and natural gas consumption in residential and commercial buildings, as well as the energy needed to run industrial processes. *The goal is to make buildings more energy efficient.* In the GHG Emissions Inventory, buildings account for 43% of total GHG emissions, largely due to aging inefficient structures. Over 80% of the City's housing stock is more than 20 years old. New construction is already subject to stringent State efficiency standards, so significant emission reductions will be achieved through energy efficiency improvements to older building stock.



The **Renewable Energy** chapter focuses on local energy production from renewable sources that produces no or minimal GHG emissions. *The goal is clean and renewable energy sources.* One of the barriers to renewable energy installations is high upfront costs. Several strategies seek to ease the initial financial burden through the use of incentives, including: federal, state and local financing, reduced permit fees, and streamlining of development review processes.



Transportation & Land Use addresses the largest contributor to community emissions: vehicles. *The goal is to improve transportation options.* This chapter encourages use of a variety of transportation modes and cleaner vehicles. It also outlines long-term changes to land use

patterns to reduce trip lengths and encourage safe, attractive environments where people will want to walk or bike.



Water used by the community must be pumped, treated, and delivered. Each of these steps uses energy, which creates GHG emissions. *The goal is to reduce and reuse consumed water.* Community-wide strategies focus on voluntary programs to reduce water use in existing buildings, require new buildings to reduce anticipated water use, and encourage use of reclaimed water when possible.



Solid Waste deposited in a landfill emits methane, which is 21 times more powerful in trapping GHGs than carbon dioxide. *The goal is to prevent, reduce, reuse and recycle waste.* The chapter focuses on increasing the rate at which waste is diverted from the Cold Canyon Landfill through recycling and other programs. Strategies include consideration of an adjusted volume-based rate system, improved recycling and composting options, and researching other waste reduction programs such as a food packaging ordinance or waste audits.



While the maintenance of **Parks & Open Space** areas generates GHG emissions, these areas also have the potential to directly reduce emissions through carbon sequestration; trees, plants and soils absorbing carbon. *The goal is to maintain natural areas, plant additional trees and acquire more open space.* Strategies in this chapter cover energy-efficient maintenance, water conservation, tree planting, community gardens and open space preservation.

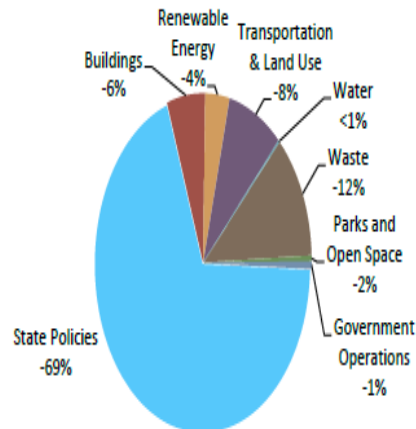


Government Operations identifies GHG reduction strategies for City facilities, fleets, infrastructure and employees. *The goal is to reduce GHGs from government operations to 1990 emissions levels.* This is the same level of GHG reductions as the community target. Strategies focus on facilities, streetlights and traffic signals, water and wastewater infrastructure, the vehicle fleet, employee commuting, and employee business travel.

GHG Reduction Summary

This CAP is a policy document, adopted by Resolution, that provides a road map to achieve the City's GHG reduction goals. It needs to be dynamic, with continual updates that address changes in technologies and the natural environment. When combined with State policies, the local GHG reduction strategies presented in this CAP can achieve the target of 1990 emissions levels by 2020; a 22% reduction from projected business-as-usual (15% below the 2005 emissions baseline).

2020 GHG Reductions by Topic Contribution



The majority of local emissions reductions come from transportation, waste and buildings strategies. Collectively, local strategies included in this CAP will address 31% of the emissions reduction required to achieve the 2020 target. State policies to reduce GHG emissions, such as vehicle fuel efficiency standards, renewable portfolio standards, and building energy efficiency and CALGreen construction standards, will result in emissions reductions in the community that make up the remaining 69% required to reach the target.

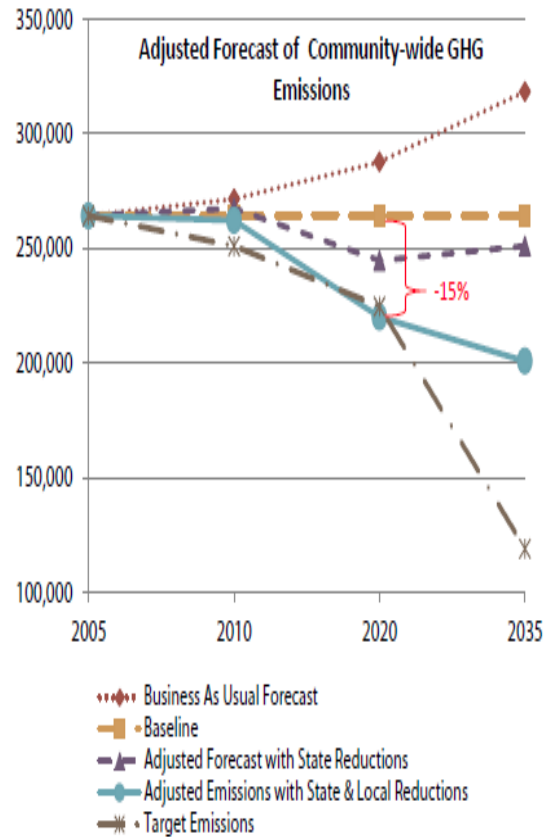
Conclusion

The adjusted GHG emissions forecast shows that implementation of all strategies in this plan can achieve a 15% reduction from baseline levels by 2020, which will meet required AB 32 State reduction goals.

For consistency with County and regional planning efforts, a second reduction forecast year of 2035 is included. The target emissions curve slopes dramatically downward after 2020 in response to the Governor’s executive order (S-3-05) to reach a reduction in statewide emissions of 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. This is a laudable yet challenging goal, which will likely require significant technological innovation. Nevertheless, the path to the closer target in 2020 is a measurable reality. The appendix provides further detail on the calculations and assumptions used to document that path.

Public Outreach and Education

The majority of the GHG reduction strategies in the CAP are based on voluntary behavior from the community. The most vital step towards achieving the reduction target is public outreach and



education. A well informed community is empowered to make alternative decisions, or in many cases, to continue environmentally sound practices already taking place in SLO. The City will work with the County, State and other regional organizations to develop a comprehensive education program targeting energy-efficiency, renewables, alternative transportation, and other CAP communitywide objectives. A specific *Public Outreach and Education* strategy section is included at the end of each chapter.

“A well informed community is empowered to make alternative decisions, or in many cases, to continue environmentally sound practices already taking places in SLO.” This quote speaks to many things... but, REALTORS® are especially important components to the plan, as they are so visible in the community. Their websites are visited by many, they’re on the phone, they knock on doors, they meet many people. Their exponential opportunity to inform the masses is enormous.

Please post the Climate Action Plan for San Luis Obispo on your web page, and inform your customers and clients about San Luis Obispo’s efforts to make our city a healthier, more vibrant, and more efficient and energy wise city in which to live. We can all do it...but, we all need to do our share.

Thank you,

San Luis Obispo Association of REALTORS®, Inc.

For the San Luis Obispo Climate Action Plan in its entirety, please go to: www.SLOCOOL.org.