

CASE NUMBER: PHG 18-0009
APPLICANT: City of Escondido
LOCATION: Citywide
TYPE OF PROJECT: Climate Action Plan Update

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Climate Action Plans (CAPs) are comprehensive roadmaps that outline the specific activities that a city or county will undertake to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. CAPs build upon the information gathered by GHG emission inventories and generally focus on those activities that can achieve the reductions in the most cost effective manner. The City of Escondido Council adopted a CAP in 2013. Although the City of Escondido was one of the first group of cities to prepare and adopt a CAP in the San Diego region, a lot has changed since then – and the City’s CAP needs to be amended. The adoption and implementation of a CAP update would reinforce and build upon General Plan policies and programs related to energy use, transportation, land use, water, solid waste, and more. The anticipated CAP update work program and its adoption would also implement an "action item" from the City Council Action Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Receive report and presentation. No action is required at this time except to provide direction to staff as appropriate.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF ISSUES: In 2013, the City of Escondido adopted a CAP as a pathway toward creating a more sustainable, healthy, and livable community. The strategies outlined in the Plan not only reduce GHG emissions but will also provide energy, fuel, water, and monetary savings while improving the quality of life in Escondido. The City recently initiated an effort with the help of SANDAG to update the City’s CAP, with the objective of recommending updated strategies and programs to ensure compliance with updated state policies and regulations. This means that the City will reevaluate GHG reduction targets consistent with State guidelines, refine existing CAP strategies, and potentially develop new goals, quantitative actions, and qualitative supporting measures. Also assisting the work program is Ascent Environmental Inc. and EPIC. These services are free to the City, and were made available through SANDAG’s Local Government Partnership with SDG&E.

During the course of updating the CAP, community ideas and input will be gathered in multiple ways, including public events and workshops. The approach to community engagement has been embodied in a draft Outreach Plan, which can be accessed at Project website from the link below.

<https://www.escondido.org/climate-action-plan-documents.aspx>

The work program expected to occur throughout most of 2018, with potential CAP adoption in early 2019. The proposed Outreach Plan and schedule proposes a series of meetings with the Planning Commission over the next year to discuss different aspects and components of the CAP and to bring back certain issues and facilitate Commission review. In general, the concept of an expanded review

process in a public setting increases public input and facilitates additional dialogue. The format will provide the Commission with an opportunity to learn more about the project; hear from residents, businesses, and community members; and to discuss preliminary issues/comments. Study sessions and “check-ins” in advance of final action allow the Commission to methodically work through new policies and potential CAP measures. Concluding these sessions will be a formal public hearing culminating in formal recommendations on the CAP update to the City Council. It is anticipated that public hearings will occur in early 2019.

The May 8, 2018 Planning Commission meeting is devoted to providing a basic description of the CAP update work program and define the purpose of completing the project. As set forth, the Commission will be asked to review the overall work program schedule and provide direction, which in turn will be presented to City Council at a future meeting date.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MDS", written in a cursive style.

Mike Strong
Assistant Planning Director

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS:

The action before the Planning Commission is statutorily exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies. This organizational and administrative activity relates to the ongoing study of preparing a CAP update. The Planning Commission will provide direction as appropriate to facilitate the public's review of the CAP update. This general direction does not have a legally binding effect on any possible future discretionary action.

Public input received and technical information prepared during the proposed process will be utilized in preparing a future environmental review document to support the CAP update work program. As of this writing, it is anticipated that the CAP update would culminate into something intended to streamline future environmental review of development projects in Escondido by following the CEQA Guidelines for a Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy.