

City of Piedmont  
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

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DATE: July 17, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Rosanna Bayon Moore, City Administrator

SUBJECT: Consideration of a Resolution Adopting Updated Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Targets and Finding Adoption of Amendments Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

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RECOMMENDATION

By resolution, adopt amendments to the Climate Action Plan 2.0 establishing updated greenhouse gas emission reduction goals for the City and finding adoption of amendments exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guideline sections 15061(b)(3) and 15308.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Piedmont has been working to address global climate change for more than a decade. In 2010, City Council adopted the initial Piedmont Climate Action Plan (CAP). In March 2018, the Council adopted the [Piedmont CAP 2.0](#) which includes the goal of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 40% below 2005 levels by 2030 and 80% below 2005 levels by 2050. The GHG emission reduction targets set forth in the CAP 2.0 were consistent with the State's direction to local governments at the time of its adoption.

Changes have since taken place at the state, federal and global levels. In September 2018, California set two new bold goals for 2045. [Senate Bill 100](#), sets a target of 100% carbon-free electricity by 2045. [Executive Order B-55-18](#) sets a new statewide goal to achieve carbon neutrality<sup>1</sup> no later than 2045 and achieve and maintain net negative emissions thereafter. The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC), the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change –now seeks to halve global emissions by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality as soon as possible. This is aligned with the [targets set forth by the Biden Administration](#), which aim to achieve a 50-52% reduction in GHG emissions from 2005 levels by 2030.

Piedmont CAP 2.0 GHG emission reduction goals are no longer aligned with current state, federal, and global targets. As such, staff recommends the adoption of updated emissions reduction goals as follows:

- Achieve municipal and community-scale carbon neutrality no later than the year 2045, and transition to a post-carbon community.

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<sup>1</sup> Carbon neutrality is the rate of greenhouse gas emissions where negative emissions from sequestration equal positive emissions entering the atmosphere from the combustion of fossil fuels.

- Establish an interim target of 50% emissions reductions from a 2005 baseline emissions level by the year 2030.

## BACKGROUND

### **Global and National Context**

Scientific studies demonstrate that it is imperative to significantly curtail global GHG emissions to reduce the most adverse risks and impacts of global warming. The [Paris Agreement](#) that emerged from the 2015 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) set a goal of dramatically reducing GHG emissions in order to keep global surface temperature rise in this century well below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the global temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicates that crossing the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold risks unleashing far more severe climate change impacts. In March 2023, the IPCC released its [Synthesis Report of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report](#) which states that human activities, principally through emissions of GHGs, have unequivocally caused global warming and that warming of 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius will be exceeded in this century unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other GHG emissions occur. According to the report, limiting human-induced global warming to a specific level requires limiting cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, reaching at least net zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and achieving strong reductions in other GHG emissions. This calls for rapid, deep, and immediate GHG emission reductions in all sectors this decade, including halving emissions by 2030 and achieving net zero emissions by 2050. These targets are aligned with those set forth by the Biden Administration in 2021, which aims to achieve a 50-52% reduction in GHG emissions from 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero emissions no later than 2050.

### **State Action**

California has long been a leader in taking action on climate change. Assembly Bill 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, established the goal of reducing statewide GHG emissions levels to 1990 levels by 2020. In 2016, Senate Bill 32 was passed, establishing an interim target of 40% GHG emissions reductions below 1990 levels by 2030. In September 2018, then-Governor Brown signed Executive Order B-55-18<sup>2</sup>, committing California to achieving carbon neutrality no later than 2045, and achieving and maintaining net negative emissions thereafter. Also in 2018, the state passed Senate Bill 100, which set a target of 100% carbon-free electricity by 2045. These regulations have chartered a path towards carbon neutrality for California by 2045.

### **Local Context**

To better understand where GHG emissions originate in the community and to inform the development of GHG emissions reduction measures and actions, the City has tracked GHG emissions over time by completing GHG emissions inventories on an annual basis. The most recent inventory was completed for calendar year 2021. In 2021, Piedmont achieved a 34% reduction in GHG emissions compared to 2005 levels. The reductions since 2005 are largely attributed to continued global warming trends, which require fewer heating days, as well as localized decreases in emissions from building appliances and enrollment in 100% renewable electricity service plans.

## DISCUSSION

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<sup>2</sup> Executive Orders have not been codified by the State, but are binding for State agencies and therefore, must be addressed by qualified GHG reduction plans (i.e., follows CEQA guidelines and review process and the requirements of Section 15183.5).

Staff reviewed major climate action frameworks and long-term GHG reduction targets enacted by local and state agencies. Regionally, most cities in Alameda County have adopted 2030 GHG emission reduction targets of at least 40% below baseline levels and have adopted or are considering 2045 carbon neutrality goals. Nine cities in Alameda County have already committed to carbon neutrality by 2045 (Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Dublin, Fremont, Hayward, Livermore, Oakland, and Pleasanton). Accordingly, staff recommend the City should update its GHG reduction targets for 2030 and 2045, calculated based on the GHG emissions forecast and State requirements set forth by SB 32 and EO B-55-18 to the following:

1. Achieve municipal and community-scale carbon neutrality no later than the year 2045, and transition to a post-carbon community.
2. Establish an interim target of 50% emissions reductions from a 2005 baseline emissions level by the year 2030.

### **How the GHG Reduction Goals Could be Met**

Meeting the ambitious GHG reduction goals outlined above will require reducing emissions in every sector and will entail improving energy efficiency in buildings, decarbonizing buildings, increasing the use of renewable energy, and reducing vehicle-related emissions. Below are City staff's plans on how the new GHG reduction goals could be met.

#### ***Buildings & Energy Use***

In Piedmont, natural gas use comprises the vast majority of emissions (~95%) in the buildings and energy use sector and also contributes a significant share of Piedmont's total emissions. To meet the proposed 2030 goal, natural gas consumption will need to be reduced by 50% below the 2005 baseline (2005 baseline: 16,771 MTCO<sub>2e</sub>; 2030 goal: 8,385 MTCO<sub>2e</sub>). To meet the proposed 2045 goal, natural gas use will need to be significantly reduced. These goals can be achieved by incentivizing homeowners to transition from natural gas-powered appliances to electric-powered appliances in existing buildings.

The City has actively implemented policies and programs to reduce natural gas use, including adopting [Reach Codes](#), launching an [Electrification Rebate Program](#), and hosting an [Induction Cooktop Lending Program](#). In addition, all Piedmont residential, commercial, and municipal electricity accounts are able to receive electricity service powered by 100% renewable sources. Currently, 93% of all Piedmont electricity customers do so, so Piedmont is well on its way to attaining this goal. In combination with power supplied by clean energy sources, the community will have to increase the efficiency of their electricity use. This can be achieved through aggressively pursuing energy efficiency upgrades for existing homes, replacing existing appliances with energy efficient ones, and increasing enrollment and participation in utility demand-response programs.

#### ***Transportation***

Piedmont has seen a small decrease in transportation emissions from 2005 to 2021. However, this reduction in emissions should be credited to increased vehicle efficiency since vehicle miles traveled (VMT) have increased since 2010. Assuming the continuation of increased vehicle efficiency and that passenger vehicles remain the prominent mode of transportation, 50% of gasoline vehicles registered in Piedmont would need to be replaced with electric vehicles (EVs) by 2030 and 100% by 2045. While very challenging, these goals are helped by [California's gas-powered car ban](#) that will phase out the sale of new gas-powered vehicles by 2035 and the fact that

many automobile manufacturers are transitioning to production of all-electric vehicles, with some planning to stop manufacturing gas-powered passenger vehicles altogether.

The [City is supporting EV adoption](#) by partnering with EBCE to install publicly accessible EV fast chargers in the Civic Center and providing a [streamlined EV charger permitting](#) process. Additional efforts the City may want to pursue include further developing public EV charging infrastructure, encouraging businesses to install EV charging stations, electrifying the City fleet, and encouraging telecommuting policies and land use decisions that increase work-live and mixed zoning. In addition to adoption of EVs, reductions from the transportation sector can be made through encouraging mode shifts, i.e., increasing the number of Piedmonters who choose low-carbon forms of transportation like taking public transportation, bicycling, or walking. The [Piedmont Safer Streets Plan](#) adopted in 2021 provides a roadmap of measures the City can take to do just that.

### FISCAL IMPACT

There is no immediate fiscal impact to adopting this resolution. However, it calls for continuing City action on climate change, which may have fiscal impacts in the future. Any actions taken to address the City's adoption of the updated GHG emission targets will be brought forth to the City Council at a future date, as resources allow. It should be noted that establishing a carbon neutrality goal opens funding possibilities for implementing projects which help to achieve GHG reductions. These commitments would give the City the opportunity to join networks such as the [Cities Race to Zero](#) campaign.

### CEQA

The proposed action is exempt under CEQA Guideline Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in that it can be seen with certainty that it has no potential for causing a significant negative effect on the environment, and CEQA Guideline Section 15308, because this is an action by a regulatory agency for the protection of the environment.

### CONCLUSION

Aside from minimal City staff time spent towards the preparation of this report, and with no direct costs, Piedmont's adoption of updated GHG emission reduction targets will underscore the City's steadfast commitment to climate action. These updated targets will provide meaningful milestones to track progress relative to the anticipated emissions reductions and to adjust action items.

### ATTACHMENT

1      5-6      Resolution Adopting Updated GHG Emission Reduction Goals

By:    Alyssa Dykman, Sustainability Program Manager

**RESOLUTION \_\_\_\_\_****A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PIEDMONT AMENDING THE CITY OF PIEDMONT CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2.0 ESTABLISHING UPDATED GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTION GOALS FOR THE CITY AND FINDING THE ADOPTION OF AMENDMENTS EXEMPT FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO CEQA GUIDELINES SECTIONS 15061(b)(3) AND 15308**

**WHEREAS**, on September 27, 2006, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, committing California to reducing statewide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 15, 2010, the City of Piedmont adopted its first Climate Action Plan (CAP) including a goal for reducing GHG emissions by 15% below 2005 levels by 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 12, 2015, the Paris Agreement was adopted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of Parties (COP21), setting a goal of keeping global mean surface temperature (GMST) rise in this century well below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit); and

**WHEREAS**, on January 4, 2016, the City Council approved joining the Global Covenant of Mayors (previously known as the Compact of Mayors), a global coalition of mayors and city officials resulting from the COP21, in efforts to reduce local GHG emissions, enhance resilience to climate change, and track progress publicly; and

**WHEREAS**, on April 22, 2016, President Barack Obama signed the United States onto the Paris Agreement, which obtained enough parties to enter into force on November 4, 2016; and

**WHEREAS**, on September 8, 2016, California Governor Jerry Brown signed into law Senate Bill 32 (SB 32), the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2016, expanding upon AB 32 to commit California to reducing statewide GHG emissions 40% below 1990 levels by 2030; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 17, 2017, the City Council authorized the formation of a Climate Action Plan Advisory Task Force charged with aiding staff in the development of an updated CAP and emission reduction target for 2030;

**WHEREAS**, on June 1, 2017, President Donald Trump announced his intent to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement, and subsequently the United States left the Paris Agreement; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 19, 2017, the City Council adopted a resolution expressing the City of Piedmont's commitment to supporting the goal of the Paris Agreement and to continue the City's progress towards reducing GHG emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 18, 2018, the City of Piedmont adopted its second Climate Action Plan (CAP 2.0) including a goal for reducing GHG emissions by 15% below 2005 levels by 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, on September 18, 2018, California Governor Jerry Brown signed Executive Order B-55-18, committing California to achieving carbon neutrality no later than 2045, and achieving and maintaining net negative emissions thereafter; and

**WHEREAS**, on October 7, 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius to the UNFCCC stating the current rate of global warming (approximately +0.2 degrees Celsius/decade) is expected to increase global mean surface temperature (GMST) to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels between the years of 2030 and 2052. The IPCC Special Report recommends “deep emissions reductions” and “rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society” in order to stay within 1.5 degrees Celsius of GMST rise and avoid the worst impacts of climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, California, Piedmont and their residents, economy, and environment are already experiencing impacts of climate change in the form of prolonged wildfire seasons and stagnating smoke, severe droughts, air pollution, and extreme heat and that these impacts will grow more severe if global GHG emissions are not significantly reduced; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Piedmont does hereby resolve, declare, determine, and order as follows:

SECTION 1. The proposed action to amend the GHG emission reduction goals is exempt under CEQA Guideline Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in that it can be seen with certainty that it has no potential for causing a significant negative effect on the environment, and CEQA Guideline Section 15308, because this is an action by a regulatory agency for the protection of the environment.

SECTION 2. The following GHG emission reduction goals in the CAP 2.0 shall be amended as follows:

1. Achieve municipal and community-scale carbon neutrality no later than the year 2045, and transition to a post-carbon community.
2. Establish an interim target of 50% emissions reductions from a 2005 baseline emissions level by the year 2030.

[END OF RESOLUTION]