

City of Piedmont
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: February 5, 2024

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Rosanna Bayon Moore, City Administrator

SUBJECT: City of Piedmont Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Goals
Implementation

RECOMMENDATION

Receive an informational update on the implementation of programs intended to work toward achieving the City's updated greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. No action required.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 17, 2023, the City Council adopted amendments to the Piedmont Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2.0 establishing updated greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals. The amendments, which align with current state and federal targets, are to achieve a 50% emissions reduction from a 2005 baseline level by the year 2030; and achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2045.

This report describes the City's priorities for implementing the CAP 2.0 to achieve the new GHG emissions reduction goals. Five key prioritization criteria, listed below, were used to determine where Sustainability Division staff would focus efforts in 2024:

1. Impact on Piedmont's largest emission sectors: homes and transportation
2. Alignment with federal, state, and City actions
3. Funding and collaboration opportunities
4. Areas of municipal influence
5. Long-term benefits to the Piedmont community

Based on the criteria listed above, the three main areas of focus for implementing the CAP 2.0 in 2024 are:

1. Develop an Existing Building Electrification Strategy, with a community task force, to map out an equitable transition of Piedmont's homes and buildings sector to net-zero GHG emissions.
2. Continue to promote the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) by installing publicly available charging stations and exploring opportunities to electrify the City's fleet, based on findings of the 2022 Piedmont Fleet Assessment Report.

3. Engage with the community with the aim to enable and motivate Piedmonsters to make sustainable choices in their homes and transportation.

BACKGROUND

On July 17, 2023, Piedmont City Council unanimously adopted a resolution to update the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals of the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2.0 to align with state and federal targets. The updated goals are:

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.

The CAP 2.0 Implementation Status Report, presented to Council on July 17, 2023, outlines the expansive sustainability actions already completed and currently underway that work toward meeting these goals. In recognition of these actions, the Institute for Local Government awarded the City of Piedmont with the Vanguard Award, its highest honor through the Beacon Program, in 2023. Examples of existing CAP 2.0 implementation measures include, but are not limited to:

- Promoting energy efficiency upgrades during major renovations,
- Launching a [Building Electrification Rebate Program](#), and
- [Home Energy Assessment Policies](#).

A comprehensive list and more information on existing projects and programs can be found in the [Report on the 2021 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, and Piedmont's Climate Action Plan 2.0 Implementation Status](#) presented on July 17, 2023.

DISCUSSION

Determining Next Steps

Building on the actions already underway, on July 17, 2023, the City Council was presented with a list of possible near-term CAP 2.0 implementation measures. This report presents the Sustainability Division's three focus areas for 2024. Strategic priorities were analyzed based on the following key criteria, listed in no particular order.

1. Impact on Piedmont's largest emission sectors:
Prioritize projects that address Piedmont's most significant emissions-generating sectors. The 2021 GHG emissions profile of the City of Piedmont demonstrates that over 97% of in-boundary GHG emissions come from community – not municipal - activities, with 48% of emissions stemming from homes and buildings and 47% from transportation choices.

More information on Piedmont’s annual GHG emissions can be found in the [Report on the 2021 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Piedmont’s Climate Action Plan 2.0 Implementation Status](#).

2. Alignment with federal, state, and City actions:
Prioritize projects that leverage the momentum of efforts being made to meet or exceed legislative requirements or are already planned for by other City departments.
3. Funding and collaboration opportunities:
Prioritize projects that best prepare Piedmont for anticipated federal, state, and other funding programs. Currently, climate-related funding programs include themes of GHG emission reduction per dollar spent, equitable decarbonization, policy-enabled projects, and collective/regional approaches.
4. Areas of municipal influence:
Select projects where the City has jurisdiction to make an impact, acknowledging that the City is one actor of many and only by working together will it be possible to achieve Piedmont’s GHG emissions reduction goals.
5. Long-term benefits for the Piedmont community:
Select projects that lead to long-term benefits for future generations of Piedmonsters by promoting solutions that ensure future cost avoidance (through fuel switching and conservation), increase resiliency and reliability in a changing climate, and reduce the inequity gap for vulnerable residents.

Implementation Priorities

Based on the criteria listed above, the three focus areas for implementing the CAP 2.0 in 2024 are as follows:

Building sector: Develop a strategy to eliminate GHG emissions from existing homes and buildings.

The primary strategic project of 2024 and early 2025 will be to complete an Existing Building Electrification Strategy (hereafter referred to as the Strategy). The Strategy will outline a phased approach to a legal and equitable transition of Piedmont’s existing homes and buildings to net-zero GHG emissions. It will compile and build on the significant strides already made by the City, listed in the [Report on the 2021 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Piedmont’s Climate Action Plan 2.0 Implementation Status](#) and presented to Council on July 17, 2023.

As outlined in Piedmont’s 2021 GHG inventory, natural gas – used primarily for space and water heating – contributes almost half of Piedmont’s total in-boundary GHG emissions. Therefore,

any path to achieving the updated GHG emission reduction goals will require transitioning buildings away from natural gas to 100% renewably sourced electricity. This is demonstrated by Figure 1, which shows that electricity related GHG emissions were vastly reduced in 2018 when Piedmont enrolled in Ava Community Energy (formerly East Bay Community Energy), with over 93% of Piedmont addresses currently using 100% renewably sourced electricity.

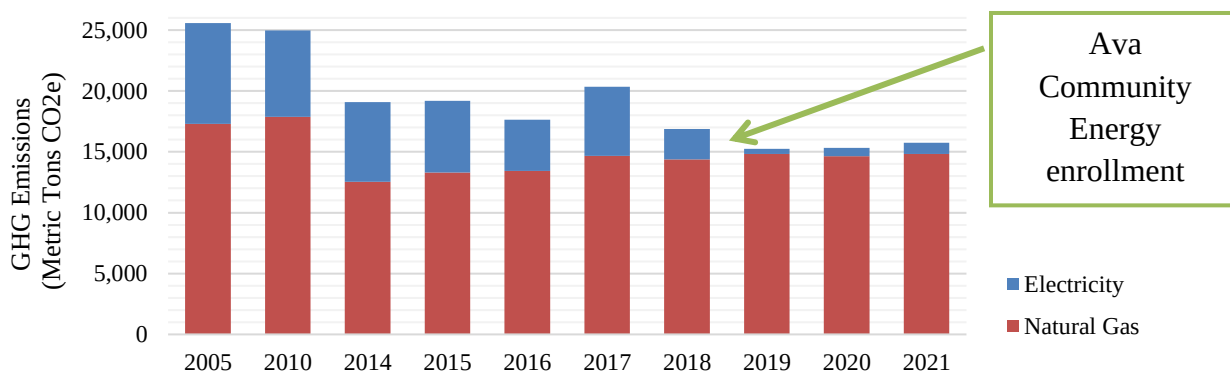


Figure 1. Piedmont homes and commercial buildings GHG emissions by year.

The development of the Strategy, as outlined in the City Council resolution adopted in February 2023, will integrate the diverse perspectives of the community through a task force. Where possible and to expedite action, the Sustainability Division will bring forward opportunities to implement measures as the Strategy is being finalized.

Transportation sector: Continue to promote the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs).

In 2024, the City will continue to promote the adoption of EVs by Piedmont residents to reduce transportation related GHG emissions. The City is partnering with Ava Community Energy to install four EV fast charging stations on Magnolia Avenue near the Exedra. Ava Community Energy currently anticipates construction for this project to begin in fall 2024 and completion in early 2025.

Publicly available charging stations are integral to reducing barriers for EV adoption, addressing range anxiety, and providing infrastructure to individuals that are otherwise not able to install private chargers at their residence or that commute to Piedmont to work.

The City will also continue to explore opportunities to electrify the municipal fleet based on the findings of the Piedmont Fleet Assessment Electrification, completed by Ava Community Energy in 2022.

Community-wide: Engage with community on making sustainable choices.

While the City will continue to lead by example and develop strategies, tools, and policies that promote sustainability, community members must participate in achieving Piedmont's GHG emissions reduction goals. In 2024, the City will deliver engagement and outreach that builds capacity for community members to take action on a wide variety of climate change topics. These endeavors will aim to enable and motivate community members to make sustainable choices in their homes and transportation choices. Engagement efforts will:

- Increase awareness of the community's role in meeting Piedmont's GHG emissions goals.
- Improve access to information that reduces barriers for taking action.
- Promote the City's new and existing efforts and achievements.

Sustainability Division staff are working with the City's Communications Program Manager to develop an effective outreach and engagement strategy to advance these objectives.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no immediate fiscal impact to receiving this informational report. Actions taken to address the City's adoption of updated GHG emission goals will be brought forth to the City Council at a future date.

CONCLUSION

It is recognized that past actions have led to a clear framework to responsibly approach climate action. The City's award-winning sustainability program is now poised to take transformational next steps. This report outlines three CAP 2.0 implementation priorities for 2024. These priorities acknowledge that only through community-wide action to cut emissions in both the building and transportation sectors will Piedmont be able to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

The Sustainability Division will continue to present an annual GHG emissions inventory and implementation report to Council to ensure that the City tracks progress on climate action efforts and impacts. The Sustainability Division will also continue to work across departments and with the community to ensure implementation reflects Piedmont's diverse perspectives and takes an equity lens to achieving a resilient and sustainable future.

By: Deniz Ergun, Sustainability Program Manager