



May 17, 2021

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San Rafael City Council
14 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

RE: GHG Emissions Report and CCAP Priorities Update

Honorable Mayor and Council Members,
The Greenhouse Gas Emissions numbers before you tonight paint a picture of local climate change progress that is both encouraging and challenging. The updated Climate Change Action Plan two-year Priorities recommended by staff would put San Rafael on the road to achieving its climate goals for 2030 and beyond.

A time to celebrate

We should celebrate that we have brought down GHG emissions by 25% in the last ten years. That means we're on a trajectory to reduce another 25% in the next ten years—to 50% below 2005 GHG levels, and 40% below 1990 levels. That would meet San Rafael's CCAP 2030 goal, while also tracking closely on State, U.S., and U.N. goals.

It would also keep us on course to meet Drawdown Marin's countywide goal of zero net emissions by 2045, sequestering more CO₂ annually than we emit, and storing it in healthy forests, soils, and shorelines.

A time to recommit

However, we will only achieve these goals by adopting and implementing the kind of priority strategies recommended in the CCAP Priorities Update, especially in Priority #1, Zero Emission Vehicles; Priority #2, Mandatory Organics Recycling; and Priority #5, Building Electrification.

These sectors represent over 90% of San Rafael's carbon footprint. Yet the two largest emission sectors are also those we have so far reduced the least, transportation by -18% and natural gas by only -7%. Those meager success rates underline the clear challenges of transitioning to EVs, getting off natural gas, and cleansing our landfills of methane.

The good news is that the technologies and techniques needed to meet these challenges are already at hand. We have affordable access to GHG-free electricity, electric vehicles, electric heat pumps and appliances, and organics recycling.

Sustainable San Rafael therefore heartedly endorses adoption of

the proposed 2021-2023 Priorities. We need to keep moving forward on all fronts to implement CCAP 2030 actions. In particular, we urge inclusion of the following refinements to the three key strategies that are essential to meet our climate goals in the dwindling time left to do so:

1. Zero Emission Vehicles. Develop and implement a Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Plan with the goal of making 25% of San Rafael passenger vehicles ZEVs by 2030, and at least 60% by 2040. The Plan should provide for additional charging stations, potential rebates from MCE and others, preferential parking for ZEVs, and additional programs that incentivize ZEV use by San Rafael residents.

2. Building Energy Efficiency & Electrification. Implement electrification of building systems and appliances in new buildings and those that currently use natural gas by requiring new or replacement furnaces and appliances to be electric and to utilize fossil-free electricity.

3. Mandatory Organics Recycling. Implement a mandatory community-scale program for curbside collection, composting, or other low-emission conversion of food and green waste, as well as vegetation cleared through fire prevention efforts, in compliance with SB 1383 requirements to divert at least 75% of organics.

Implementing low-emission transportation, building electrification, and waste management strategies in the near term will have the added benefit of enabling the City to approve its General Plan 2040 later this summer with confidence that San Rafael can reach at least a 60% reduction of GHG by 2040.

We commend staff for a thorough report and well-founded proposals to proactively meet the challenges that intensifying climate change is bringing to San Rafael.

Sincerely,

William Carney
Board President

Copies:

Jim Schutz, Cory Bytof, Paul Jensen, Barry Miller