



September 15, 2024

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San Rafael City Council
1400 Fifth Avenue
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RE: GHG Emissions and Climate Action Priorities

Honorable Mayor and Council Members,
Sustainable San Rafael would like to second the staff report's emphasis on the challenge of reaching the City's 2030 greenhouse gas (GHG) emission goals. We urge your continued commitment to providing the leadership and resources to reduce GHG by 40% of 1990 levels (or about 50% below 2005 levels). That will put us on a solid trajectory to reach net zero emissions by 2045, which is the timeline needed to stabilize our climate before it veers dangerously out of control.

Redoubling efforts to reduce GHG

San Rafael is not currently on that critical trajectory. The 2022 GHG Inventory shows that we reduced emissions by 159,846 tons in the 17 years since 2005, and that we need to reduce another 76,630 tons in the eight years remaining to reach the 2030 goal. That means doubling our annual rate of reduction from an average of 2% per year to an average of 4%. Table 2 of the Inventory shows that that rate is not unprecedented, but sustaining it will be. So, when the staff report says that the City will need to "redouble" its efforts, we believe the metrics show that to mean literally doubling the average rate of reduction through 2030.

Reaching 2030 GHG reduction goals

It's clear where to cut emissions to reach the 2030 goal. And the City has the plans to guide it and many of the tools to use. The Climate Change Action Plan 2030 (CCAP) sets useful subgoals for the major types of emission. The EV Acceleration Strategy adopted last year and the Electrification Roadmap due before you this fall address reductions amounting to over 90% of our carbon footprint. The Climate Action Priorities before you this meeting are solidly based in these three plans.

Given the need to redouble efforts for the remainder of this decade, we suggest that next year's 2-year Climate Action and Budget Priorities include quantified measures for achieving the GHG reductions needed each year.

Here are some particular ideas we suggest pursuing as soon as possible, linking the Climate Priorities framework more directly to the metrics in the GHG Inventory and CCAP 2030:

EV Acceleration Strategy (GHG Summary Table items 2.2 & 2.4; Action Priority 4). The lynchpin of San Rafael's EV Strategy is EV promotion, including ride & drive events (Strategies OE-2 & 3). We recommend multiple such events each year, with countywide outreach, to spur the additional 24% of GHG reduction (64,063 tons) from cars called for by CCAP 2030. Continuing to model EV adoption by moving to a 100% EV public fleet (MR-2 & 3), and expanding EV charging infrastructure in public facilities and priority communities (PC-1, 3 & 10) can further underpin EV promotion efforts.

Building Electrification Roadmap (GHG Table item 1.1; Action Priority 5). As with transportation, the key to reducing GHG emissions from buildings is to widely promote the transition from fossil fuel fired gas appliances to electric heat pump water heaters and furnaces. Early promotion and education (Roadmap Actions-A & G), backed by strong reach codes and other requirements (RM-C & I) and financial incentives (RM-A, B & D), could lead to the additional 14% GHG reduction (12,915 tons) from buildings specified by CCAP 2030.

Renewable Energy (GHG Table item 1.4; Action Priority 10). We urge San Rafael to use its voice on the MCE Board of Directors to champion MCE's purchase of additional renewable electricity at least sufficient to support CCAP 2030's target of 10% more GHG reduction (8,877 tons) from energy generation, while also increasing MCE funding of EV and electrification priorities, especially in low-income areas.

SB 1383 Implementation (GHG Table 3.2; Action Priority 2). Continuing implementation of San Rafael's recent mandatory organics recycling ordinance will help the City reach the additional 27% of GHG reduction (5,150 tons) from waste management targeted by CCAP 20230.

The GHG reductions projected above total over 91,000 tons, providing some cushion in meeting the 76,630-ton reduction that the Inventory shows is needed to achieve an overall reduction of 40% from 1990 levels by 2030. We encourage the City to supercharge its pursuit of these and similar measures to reach its critical 2030 and 2045 climate goals.

Sincerely,

William Carney,
Vice President