



COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA COMMUNITY CLIMATE ROADMAP 2035

Public Review Draft



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ROADMAP 2035

With climate change only projected to worsen over the coming decades, the County has developed this Roadmap to accelerate efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from community activities and help contribute to GHG reduction on a statewide and national scale. Building upon extensive community outreach and public feedback, the Roadmap presents a series of:

- Key implementation strategies and actions to reduce GHG emissions in unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County, and
- Regionally coordinated strategies that pool resources and leverage partnerships with cities, public agencies, and partners countywide to reduce countywide GHG emissions.

This framework positions the County and partners in Santa Clara County to meet or exceed the state's GHG emission reduction targets. The County has demonstrated its ability to implement robust policies, leverage existing decarbonization technologies, and collaborate with the community and surrounding cities and counties to achieve climate goals. Building upon that foundation, this Roadmap provides Santa Clara County with strategies and actions that will accelerate climate action in unincorporated areas of the county, as well as regionally, to promote sustainable growth and transition away from fossil fuels.

Each increment of warming that the world avoids - through actions that cut emissions or remove carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere - reduces the risks and harmful impacts of climate change.
- 5th National Climate Assessment

Carbon Neutrality by 2035 for Unincorporated County

The County aims to reduce unincorporated county greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2035. This Roadmap sets forth strategies and actions designed to achieve its 2030 goal. Additional actions, including carbon sequestration and/or carbon offsets, will be needed to achieve a carbon neutral future by 2035.

In unincorporated county, a carbon neutral future would require:

- Most residential and commercial buildings to be all-electric and powered by renewable or carbon-free electricity;
- 25% of Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) to shift to active and shared transportation;
- 90% or more of passenger, commercial, and off-road vehicles to be all-electric;
- 95% of organics to be diverted from the landfill; and
- The remaining emissions to be sequestered through natural and working lands.







Pathway to Carbon Neutrality for Unincorporated County

To achieve these aggressive targets and remain in line with State climate goals, the County would need to adopt and implement key actions. Each strategy is supported by the most effective actions available, with particular focus on the highest emitting sectors: energy and transportation. Although implementing the actions are technically possible with existing technology, the County recognizes the need for flexibility as the plan may need to be adapted over time to account for uncertainties in implementation and technological advancements.

Table 1 summarizes the emissions reductions from the key strategies for unincorporated county for 2030. Table 2 presents the key implementation actions for each sector through 2030.

Table 1: Emissions Reduction for Key Strategies by 2030 for Unincorporated County

Sector	Strategy	Overall Emissions Reduction
 WASTE	Implement and enforce Senate Bill (SB) 1383 requirements to reduce landfilled organics and increase food recovery	39%
 ENERGY	Reduce natural gas use in existing commercial buildings	23%
	Reduce natural gas use in existing residential buildings	15%
	Continue to require all-electric newly constructed buildings	7%
 TRANSPORTATION	Increase passenger zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) adoption	7%
	Electrify or otherwise decarbonize off-road equipment	3%
	Shift VMT to active, public, and shared transportation	3%
	Increase commercial zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) adoption	1%
 CARBON SEQUESTRATION¹	Implement and enforce SB 1383 requirements to procure recycled organic products	2%

¹ An additional quantifiable goal for sequestering carbon from natural and working lands will be established in partnership with the agriculture sector partners by 2025.



Table 2: Key Implementation Actions



WASTE

Required Organics Waste Collection: Continue to require residential and commercial organic waste collection and front-of-house organics collection containers in commercial buildings throughout unincorporated county.

Foodware Ordinance: By 2025, consider adding additional single use plastic requirements beyond existing state law (SB 1276 and SB 54).



ENERGY

Engagement: Engage and educate low-income and marginalized communities about electrification. Outreach may include a Community Ambassador program, demonstration events, green home tour videos, and focus groups.

Permit Support: Develop a pilot program to provide 1:1 support to permit applicants at the building permit counter about electrification resources.

Neighborhood Electrification: Work with partners to implement a neighborhood scale electrification pilot in a marginalized unincorporated community.

Adopt Electrification Policies: Consider adopting policies to equitably phase out gas appliances in existing buildings, starting with major retrofits and expanding to all equipment replacement, taking into consideration community concerns and priorities.

Building Performance Standards: Conduct a feasibility study and consider implementing a Building Performance Standards (BPS) program in the unincorporated county that requires large commercial buildings to report their energy usage and reduce their GHG emissions over time.



TRANSPORTATION

Active Transportation Plan: Develop and adopt an Active Transportation Plan and implement pedestrian and bike network safety improvements identified in the Plan, particularly in underserved neighborhoods. Explore the feasibility of bike network improvements along county expressways.

Electric Vehicle Chargers: Collaborate with partners to develop a countywide electric vehicle charging infrastructure plan, and work with public and private partners to add new publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations to the unincorporated county. Promote funding and technical assistance programs for multifamily EV charging, prioritizing affordable housing, and support the installation of EV charging in affordable housing.

VTA Funding: Work with VTA to identify additional funding solutions for local transit operations to implement service improvements adopted in VTA's Visionary Network.





CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Establish Goal: By 2025 identify a quantifiable carbon sequestration goal for the County and a roadmap for implementation.

Technical Assistance: Help farmers, ranchers, and landowners get access to technical assistance programs such as the Agricultural Resilience Incentive Grant, Healthy Soils, and State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program to increase carbon sequestration.



WATER

Secure Resources: Dedicate staff time or resources to develop and support water conservation programs and policies.

Water Conservation in New Buildings: Conduct research on considerations for adopting a Model Water Efficient New Development Ordinance which would require water efficiency measures in new developments.

Regional Collaboration

Imperative to the County’s—and the entire State’s – success will be the ability to coordinate climate action planning among cities and different stakeholders within Santa Clara County. The Roadmap focuses on regionally coordinated strategies that pool resources, leverage partnerships, and unlock the potential of community-centered climate action.

The County has a key role to play as a leader and convener to increase collaboration among the diverse and ambitious stakeholders already involved in climate action planning across the county. A key mechanism for regional collaboration is the Santa Clara County Climate Collaborative (Collaborative), which the County launched to serve as a cross-sector network and community of practice for public agencies, academia, nonprofit and community-based organizations, and business and community leaders to advance regional solutions to climate change. Coordination and partnerships on regional action will continue through the Collaborative to establish joint climate action priorities, meet requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Program funding received by the County, and secure implementation funding.

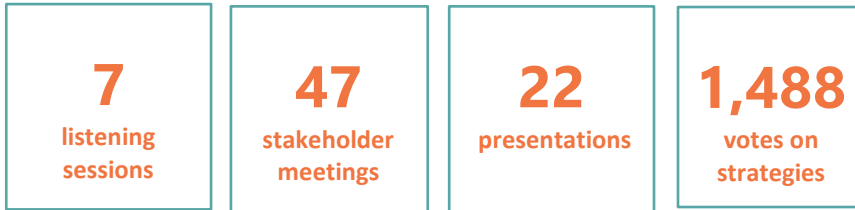
Advance regional climate action planning through the Santa Clara County Climate Collaborative and secure implementation funding.

Roadmap Development Process

The Roadmap was developed using an extensive equity-centric community outreach process to ensure that voices across Santa Clara County were heard and included in the strategy feedback process. This approach used a multi-faceted strategy to connect with a representative section of the community, collecting input on strategies from the general public and key stakeholder groups across the county.



This was accomplished through a focus on community-based organization (CBO) collaboration and outreach, mini grants to compensate CBOs for their work, targeted stakeholder outreach, and multilingual, multi-platform (online and in-person) outreach approaches, in addition to workshops, surveys and a publicly available online tool found at <https://www.climatenetworkscc.org/>.



Looking Ahead

The County received an award of \$1 million from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Program as part of the Phase I Planning Grant to conduct climate action planning in the Santa Clara County and San Benito County metropolitan region. This work includes the following: update GHG emissions inventories, conduct a low-income and disadvantaged communities benefits and workforce planning analysis, develop a regional Priority Climate Action Plan and Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, conduct outreach and engagement, and facilitate coordination between jurisdictional partners.

Provide your Input Below

Quick Survey



Or go to: <https://bit.ly/4bbmZRa>

Read and comment on the full Roadmap



Or go to: <https://communityclimateroadmap.konveio.com>



Public Review Draft