

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS INDEX SHEET**

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Continue Date(s): [1] 4/17/12

Index: --Letter of the Planning Director, dated March 30, 2011
--Proposed Work Plan for the Scounty of Santa Cruz CAS

Item: 33.1 ACCEPTED AND FILED report on a plan to develop a Climate Action Strategy for the County of Santa Cruz; concurred with the proposed approach, and directed staff to return on or before April 17, 2012 with a Draft Climate Action Strategy, as recommended by the Planning Director



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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APPROVED AND FILED
KATHLEEN MOLLOY PREVISICH, PLANNING DIRECTOR
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

April 4, 2011

DATE: 4/12/11
COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
SUSANA MAURIELLO

AGENDA DATE: April 12, 2011

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
EX OFFICIO CLERK OF THE BOARD
DEPUTY

Subject: Proposed Plan for Development of a Climate Action Strategy for the County of Santa Cruz

Members of the Board:

Efforts to reduce human contributions to causes of climate change are underway in California at the State, regional and local levels. One of these efforts involves preparation of a Climate Action Strategy (CAS), also sometimes called a Climate Action Plan. A Climate Action Strategy or Plan provides the framework for local implementation of AB 32, and for compliance with SB 97 and SB 375, which are three pieces of State legislation that address local responsibilities related to climate change and sustainable community planning.

On February 8, 2011 your Board directed the Planning Department to return at this April 12, 2011 Board meeting with a proposed work plan for developing a Climate Action Strategy (CAS), which would provide for completion of a draft CAS prior to April 20, 2012. Your Board also requested that staff provide an update about the Sustainable Communities Strategy process and how it relates to the CAS.

Climate Action Strategy Content and Planning Process

In the most general terms, the CAS will serve as a framework for identifying actions that the County of Santa Cruz and the general public can take to lessen human contributions to climate change, as well as measures to undertake to be ready for the anticipated effects of climate change. The CAS will address three levels of actions:

- 1) Steps that the County can take to reduce the impact of County activities;
- 2) Measures that can be taken to help reduce impacts of activities of residents and businesses;
- 3) Steps that can be taken to support regional efforts to reduce human contributions to climate change, such as encouraging development patterns that promote reducing vehicular miles traveled by the public, strategies for reducing emissions from energy production, and so forth.

The CAS will articulate the County's and community's vision for how to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to climate change. The CAS will set goals (including a target for reduced Green House Gas emissions which builds on the two existing GHG inventories); and will contain programs, policies and measures which will be pursued to meet the goals. The CAS will focus on identification of practical and feasible means of achieving the vision. The CAS will also be used to establish "thresholds of

significance" for use in preparing CEQA environmental review documents, and for identifying feasible mitigation measures that would be imposed as conditions of approval on development projects.

It is anticipated that the draft CAS will yield suggested new or amended General Plan goals and policies, and possibly suggestions for new regulations or Code amendments to implement these goals. The work product that will be drafted by April 2012 would contain various "project descriptions" for these proposed new goals or regulations, and CEQA review and adoption of such would occur as a "phase two" of activity to implement various aspects of the CAS.

At this time, the types of impacts in the Monterey Bay Area that could potentially result from global climate change could include those listed in the following table.

Potential Impacts as a Result of Global Climate Change as of 2099	
o Rise in temperatures during summer months	o Loss of some native species and functioning ecosystems
o More severe storms	o Less productive range for grazing
o Accelerating sea level rise	o Increase in invasive species
o Increased challenges securing adequate water supplies (saltwater intrusion)	o Shrinking beaches (rising seas and increased erosion)
o Declining forest health and productivity (drought, fire, insect damage)	o Agricultural Effects (temperature, pests, water supply)
o Eroding coastal bluffs	o Increase in natural disasters (coastal flooding, drought, wildfires).
o Declines in water quality and flow in streams and rivers	o Public health impacts
o Increase in erosion and sediment	o Declining wetlands, marshes, and estuaries

The CAS will endeavor to characterize which of the above impacts could occur in Santa Cruz County, to what extent, and what can to done to minimize adverse effects.

The preliminary work plan for developing the draft Climate Action Strategy is provided as Attachment 1.

The proposed process for preparing the CAS is a tentative outline, which can be modified as needed to respond to public interests, new information, and ensuring that it relates well to the Sustainable Community planning efforts that will also be underway. The CAS itself will also need to incorporate flexibility and be easily adaptable to new information, as there is and will be continued uncertainty associated with the type of expected change and the speed of changes. Research into local impacts especially, will be on-going. Staff envisions the CAS to be a living, changeable document that will guide a multitude of practical endeavors in land use, resource management, County operations, transportation, building, economic development and emergency management.

Relationship of Climate Action Strategy to Sustainable Communities Planning Efforts

Regional Sustainable Communities Strategy

On the regional level, the first Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for the Monterey Bay Area will be drafted by AMBAG and integrated into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and reflected in area Housing Elements. The first SCS will be adopted by 2013 and is projected to be updated every 4 to 8 years thereafter (8-year Housing Element cycle). SB 375 provides an outline for what the Sustainable Communities Strategy will contain, as follows:

1. Identify the general location of uses, residential densities, and building intensities within the region.
2. Identify areas within the region sufficient to house all the population of the region, including all economic segments of the population, over the course of the planning period of the regional transportation plan taking into account net migration into the region, population growth, household formation and employment growth.
3. Identify areas within the region sufficient to house an eight-year projection of the regional housing need for the region.
4. Identify a transportation network to service the transportation needs of the region.
5. Gather and consider the best practically available scientific information regarding resource areas and farmland in the region.
6. Consider the state housing goals.
7. Set forth a forecasted development pattern for the region, which, when integrated with the transportation network, and other transportation measures and policies, will reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles and light trucks to achieve, if there is a feasible way to do so, the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets approved by the state board.
8. Allow the regional transportation plan to comply with the federal Clean Air Act.

County Sustainable Communities Strategy

On the local level, as you know, the County received a \$500,000 State grant and will use \$125,000 in County Redevelopment Funds to develop a Sustainable Community and Transportation Corridor Plan. The Planning Department expects the State to be ready to contract for the funds this June. Shortly after the contracts are signed, work by consultants and staff will begin. The Sustainable Community and Transportation Corridor Plan will result in recommendations for land use changes, new or amended regulations, multi-modal transportation improvements, community design improvements, and economic development initiatives. Some of the recommendations will be expressed as proposed General Plan and zoning ordinance amendments. Though not proposed to be completed until 2014, staff will arrange for information that is generated by the work on the Sustainable Community and Transportation Corridor Plan to be fed back into the CAS as it becomes available. Further, we expect that any policies and programs that flow from the Sustainable Community and Transportation Corridor Plan will be fully aligned with the CAS, as the two efforts have the mutual goal of fostering sustainable communities and reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and associated reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

RECOMMENDATION

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board take the following actions:

1. Concur with the proposed approach to preparing a Climate Action Strategy;
2. Direct staff to return to your Board on or before April 17, 2012, to present the Draft Climate Action Strategy for consideration, with preparation of a CEQA document to be initiated after the Board confirms the proposed content and measures of the Strategy;
3. Accept and file this report.

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Sincerely,



Kathy Molloy Previsich
Planning Director

RECOMMENDED:



SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

Attachment:

1. Proposed Work Plan for the County Climate Action Strategy

CC: Commission on the Environment
Department of Public Works
Department of General Services