

DRAFT CAP PUBLIC COMMENT

Frequently Asked Questions | October 2021

DRAFT CAP FAQ OVERVIEW

Thank you for commenting on the online Draft CAP! This document presents answers to commonly asked questions about the content of the Draft CAP. The City has also posted a summary of the comments received on the online comment platform as well as by e-mail. Although the City is no longer accepting online comments, follow this link to view the online document and comments: <https://raimi.konveio.com/santa-clara-draft-climate-action-plan>.

If you have any questions about the CAP development process, please contact Nimisha Agrawal at NAgrawal@santacalaraca.gov.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General Questions

1. In what way has the CAP development process prioritized input and ideas from marginalized communities?
 - a. *The CAP public outreach efforts have engaged many individuals, businesses, and community organizations with a variety of interests and perspectives. In addition to two public workshops, two online surveys, and outreach to the City's governing bodies, the consultant team hosted two series of focus groups to conduct targeted outreach to underrepresented and vulnerable groups including youth, students, schools, housing and health advocates, community-based organizations, and renters.*
2. Does the City intend to use the 2021 CAP in its review and approval (or disapproval) of ministerial or discretionary projects under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA")?
 - a. *Yes, the CAP is undergoing the review process to be a "qualified" plan meaning that it "qualifies" for a provision in California law which allows project developers to tier their projects off of the greenhouse gas analysis already completed in the CAP when performing their own California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis. This "CEQA streamlining" is helpful for project developers, by making the environmental review process easier for discretionary projects, as well as helpful to ensure that projects approved in Santa Clara meet GHG reduction goals. To be a qualified plan, the CAP must be consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15183.5 (b), adopt the SB 32 GHG reduction target of 40% reduction by 2030, and monitor progress toward it.*

By definition, ministerial projects are not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

GHG Inventory

3. How do we calculate transportation emissions from commuters?
 - a. *Per the ICLEI Community Protocol for Accounting and Reporting of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, the community inventory includes 100% of emissions from trips internal to the city, and 50% of*

emissions from trips that either originate or terminate within the city boundary, including commute trips.

4. Why are nonresidential natural gas emissions so much lower in 2016 than 2008?
 - a. *Nonresidential natural gas emissions are less in 2016 than 2008 as a result of incomplete data. In 2016, nonresidential natural gas data did not meet the State's account aggregation requirements so were not provided by the utility in order to protect customer privacy. Aggregation rules are in place in order to anonymize individual account usage. Therefore, it is likely that natural gas emissions in 2017 were actually higher than shown.*
5. How did the City achieve a 9% reduction in transportation emissions despite population and economic growth?
 - a. *Transportation emissions likely decreased as a result of a series of State and Federal transportation policies that set stricter fuel-efficiency standards for vehicles, the adoption of electric vehicles, and an expanded regional public transit system that provide alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle.*

Buildings & Energy

6. Why don't data centers get the same carbon free electricity as homes?
 - a. *Currently, SVP only procures enough carbon-free energy to provide to residential customers. SVP will be exploring the procurement of additional carbon-free electricity in its upcoming Integrated Resources Plan (IRP) update.*
7. Will rates go up with the addition of more carbon free power?
 - a. *Rates for all customers will likely increase but preliminary analysis suggests rates may increase 44-55% over the next 15 years above the typical 3% rate increase in order to provide 100% carbon free electricity by 2035. That would mean an annual rate increase of about 6%. Rates will be studied further as part of the forthcoming IRP update process.*
8. Since electricity is more expensive than natural gas, will I have to pay more in an all-electric building?
 - a. *Although electricity is more expensive than natural gas, new electric appliances are more efficient than older natural gas ones and use less energy. New electric technologies including heat pumps and induction cooktops are much more efficient than traditional electric resistance heating. Similarly, the CAP proposes as part of action B-1-1 that SVP will explore additional incentives to help customers transition to electric appliances including rebates for wiring and panel upgrades. Additionally, the low-income CARE rates will remain in place for those who qualify.*
9. Will SVP be able to supply additional electricity as vehicles and buildings are electrified?
 - a. *Yes, current projections indicate there is sufficient wholesale supply and/or conservation opportunities to meet additional vehicle and building electrification. Resource procurement will be studied in more detail as part of the IRP update process.*
10. If trying to save energy, why do buildings leave lights on at night?
 - a. *The City cannot regulate how people operate their buildings once constructed. However, the City could conduct educational outreach encouraging building owners and tenants to conserve energy by turning off lights when not in use and encouraging the installation of occupancy sensors and other demand management technologies.*

Transportation & Land Use

11. What is the City doing to change the car-driven culture and promote socialization in neighborhoods?
 - a. *The City is implementing the bicycle master plan, has adopted a Vision Zero policy to promote safety, and is considering higher density development close to transit and amenities.*
12. What incentives are available for EV purchases?
 - a. *EV incentives are provided by the State and Federal Governments: <https://cleanvehiclerebate.org/eng/ev/incentives/state-and-federal>. Additionally, the cost of used EVs is becoming increasingly affordable.*
13. What is lite level 2?
 - a. *Automatic Load Management software (ALMS) allows sharing of chargers without requiring upgrading transformers, but ALMS requires all spots to have the same charging equipment. So, the current thinking is to provide 25% L2 receptacles for 6.6kW charging and 75% NEMA L14-20 receptacles which is limited to 20 amps at 240V which after derating is 3.8kW or Level 2 Lite. Lower level 2 charging is also being considered by the California Energy Commission with the proposed language of “Low Power Level 2”.*
14. Does the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan include collaborations with neighboring cities?
 - a. *The VTA bicycle plan defines bicycle corridors and across-barrier connections within Santa Clara County, with Pruneridge being a high priority. The VTA staff and BPAC are also working on regional active transportation plans in conjunction with Caltrans District 4 and others, and work has begun on a county and regional bicycle superhighway network, in an effort to create and connect very high-quality bicycle facilities regionally.*

Bicycle Master Plan: <https://www.santaclaraca.gov/our-city/departments-g-z/public-works/engineering/traffic-engineering/bicycle-master-plan-update-2018>

Pedestrian Master Plan: <https://www.santaclaraca.gov/our-city/departments-g-z/public-works/engineering/traffic-engineering/pedestrian-master-plan>

Materials & Consumption

15. Does the City provide free classes on backyard composting?
 - a. *The City does offer composting classes and low-cost bins in partnership with the County of Santa Clara: http://cesantaclara.ucanr.edu/Home_Composting_Education/Composting_Workshops/*
16. How effective are the City’s current recycling programs?
 - a. *The City of Santa Clara provides mixed waste processing, which diverts higher rates of recycling, yard, and food waste from going into the landfill. The City’s diversion rate for residential recyclables is 50%.*
17. Why is composting not listed as a measure?
 - a. *Composting is already required by SB 1383 Short-Lived Climate Pollutants Act, which is included as part of action M-1-1 Compliance with State Solid Waste Ordinances. This law requires cities to divert 75% of organic material including food waste from landfill by 2025. Cities are required to provide mandatory composting services to all commercial and residential customers, recover edible food waste, and provide education and technical assistance.*

Natural Systems & Water Resources

18. Can the planting of lawns be prohibited?

The City is seeking to amend its Water Service and Use Rules and Regulations to set stricter water use standards for new landscapes that would prohibit:

- *turf grass*
- *spray irrigation*
- *moderate and high water-using plants (as defined by Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS))*

The City encourages/recommends residents to convert existing high water-use turf to low water-use landscapes with Landscape Conversion Rebates offered in partnership with Valley Water. The City supplements the rebate amount totaling \$3 per square foot for the first 1000 square feet of converted area and \$2 per square foot thereafter up to the per-site caps for single and multi-family properties:
<https://www.valleywater.org/saving-water/rebates-surveys/landscape-rebates>.