



DATE: July 2022
TO: Climate Work Group
SUBJECT: Proposed Climate Action Plan Commitments (Goals)

Realize climate equity

All residents in our region will be affected by climate change, but we are not all impacted in the same way. Those who are already vulnerable due to a range of historical, social, and economic factors have less ability to prepare for, deal with, or recover from climate change impacts ([Citation](#)). Some in our region have greater access to decision-making processes around climate change solutions. These, and other forms of inequity, can make our region less prosperous and less resilient for all.

Through an environmental justice lens, climate action can help reverse the impacts of these historic and current practices and work toward racial and economic equity, thereby building resilience.

Embed environmental justice principles into creation, implementation, and evaluation of our climate action work.

Achieve carbon neutrality

In 2015, the world community – including the United States – adopted the Paris Climate Accords which set up a framework to reduce global GHG emissions to a level sufficient to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This target was selected to avoid even more extreme climate effects on people and ecosystems.

To meet this goal however requires a dramatic acceleration of efforts to reduce global GHG emissions. Specifically, the global call to action is to achieve a 50% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2030 from current levels and cutting them to net-zero by 2050.

To achieve these levels of emissions reductions will require a transformation of how and where we use energy - including the decarbonization of electricity generation, the electrification of transportation and most heating systems, dramatic improvements in energy efficiency, and the expanded use of alternative fuels such as hydrogen and biomass.

Other essential mitigation strategies include reducing fugitive methane emissions -from the production and transport of natural gas, addressing emissions in GHG-intensive industries (e.g. steel, chemical and cement manufacturing); shifting transportation mode to mass transit and non-motorized travel; and improved agricultural and forestry management practices

Achieve carbon-neutrality through accelerated reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations.

Through existing and new partnerships, help to meet the State’s emissions reduction goals.

Reduce climate risks and build community resiliency

In August of 2021, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a “code red for humanity.” This statement, supported by rigorous science, requires that we must act now to keep the

| Earth's temperature increase in the range of 1.5° and 2.0° Celsius to avoid the most devastating consequences of a warming climate ([IPCC, 2021](#)). While we can adapt to some aspects of our changing climate, we need to accelerate the reduction greenhouse gas emissions to reduce the intensity and frequency of future climate impacts.

In the United States, it is estimated that 80% of all anthropogenic (human-generated) GHG emissions come from carbon dioxide (CO₂). The remaining 20% is split between GHGs with high global warming potentials. Methane, a gas with about 25 times the global warming potential as CO₂, contributes 10%; nitrous oxide another 7%; and fluorinated gases the remaining 3%. The major contributing sectors include transportation, electricity, and industry, which together combine to account for 77% of the total. Commercial and residential contribute another 13% while agricultural activities contribute the final 10% [[Citation](#)]

Existing and planned Council assets and services are resilient to climate hazards through adaptation practices

Regional partners have the climate technical assistance that they need to adapt to a changing climate