



SIERRA CLUB

LOMA PRIETA CHAPTER

SAN MATEO, SANTA CLARA & SAN BENITO COUNTIES

July 2, 2021

City of Milpitas

455 E. Calaveras Blvd

Milpitas, CA 95035

Via email to: Mayor Rich Tran rtran@ci.milpitas.ca.gov , Vice Mayor Carmen

Montano cmontano@ci.milpitas.ca.gov , Councilmember Karina Dominguez kdominguez@ci.milpitas.ca.gov ,

Evelyn Chua echua@ci.milpitas.ca.gov , Anthony Phan aphan@ci.milpitas.ca.gov

Cc: City Manager Steve McHarris CityManagerOffice@ci.milpitas.ca.gov , and Deputy Public Works Director Elaine Marshall emarshall@ci.milpitas.ca.gov

RE: Milpitas Climate Action Plan Update

Dear Mayor Tran and Milpitas City Councilmembers,

We live in a climate crisis that threatens the survival of organized human life on Earth. The federal government has been unreliable in its commitment to environmental regulations and an equitable transition away from fossil fuels. However, strong climate policies from Bay Area cities are influencing state level policy, and federal money may soon be available for key infrastructure projects that align with actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Time is running out, and our best opportunity for climate action is for cities to lead the way with strong local policies.

According to the [Risk Finder tool by ClimateCentral.org](#), the City of Milpitas has property at risk during a 3 ft flooding event combined with sea level rise. The probability of a 3 ft flood event by 2030 is estimated at 34% - 68%, and by 2050 the probability range is 76 % – 100%¹. In addition, the Silicon Valley 2.0 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment tool² shows that by mid-century 31.5 million sq ft of buildings, 2609 acres of land and 56 miles of roadway in Milpitas are classified as having High or Moderate Vulnerability to riverine flooding and/or wildfire.

¹ ClimateCentral.org Risk Finder Assessment for City of Milpitas:
https://riskfinder.climatecentral.org/place/milpitas.ca.us?comparisonType=city-council&forecastType=NOAA2017_intlo_p50&level=3&unit=ft

² Silicon Valley 2.0 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Tool using inputs of: Geography: Milpitas / Climate Variables: Sea Level Rise, Riverine Flooding, Wildfire and Extreme Heat / Horizon Year: Mid-century- 2050 / Emissions Scenario: B1-Low / Sea Level Rise Scenario: zero cm and no storm surge / Assets: All assets selected (parcels, buildings, transportation, energy, wastewater, communications, hazardous materials, and coastal protection). <https://siliconvalleytwopointzero.org/home>

By 2050, economic impact in Milpitas from replacement costs, interruption of economic activity, and loss of fiscal revenue is predicted at \$4.45 billion due to riverine flooding of buildings, roadways, railway, and the wastewater treatment plant, plus wildfire destruction of buildings.

The only certain way to delay and minimize the impacts of climate change is to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). This will be a collective effort in which every city has a critical role to play, including Milpitas. To this end, we recommend that Milpitas set GHG reduction goals well beyond the current state targets and focus its Climate Action Plan (CAP) update on feasible mitigation policies that are, as advised by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), "rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented." In addition, Milpitas must strengthen itself against climate impacts³ by preparing a Vulnerability and Adaptation Plan for flooding, wildfires, drought, extreme heat, and sea level rise.

- **Climate Action Plan Assessment Form:** In order to support your development of a strong CAP, we invite you to complete and return the attached form which lists elements we consider most critical for an effective CAP.
- **Focus on a few impactful actions with trackable metrics:** We recommend that Milpitas streamline its CAP to focus on the measures that will achieve the largest reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Also, consider adopting an abbreviated format⁴ that is more accessible to all readers, including decision makers and the public. We strongly encourage you to create a clear plan for tracking the actions in your CAP, measuring and reporting progress publicly at least quarterly.
- **Citizen Advisory Body:** We have also found that the most effective CAPs are often produced, not by consultants, but by knowledgeable citizen advisory bodies, as both Mountain View and Menlo Park have done. Because residents often recognize there is so much at risk in the City from climate change, they bring a high level of motivation, focus and skill. Please consider empowering the Energy and Environmental Sustainability Commission to participate in drafting and guiding your climate action plan.

We appreciate the opportunity to present Milpitas with recommendations for climate action and are available for further clarification and discussion. We look forward to working with Milpitas to create the strongest Climate Action Plan possible.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gladwyn d'Souza, Co-Chair, Conservation Committee
Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club

³ An example action plan: <https://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/2020-2025-strategic-plan/OPC-2020-2025-Strategic-Plan-FINAL-20200228.pdf>

⁴ For an example of an abbreviated Climate Action Plan, see City of Menlo Park 2030 Climate Action Plan, July 2020, <https://menlopark.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/11486>



Gita Dev, Co-Chair, Sustainable Land Use Committee
Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club



Kristel Wickham, Climate Action Leadership Team
Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club



Lauren Weston, Executive Director
Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet

Robert Means, Secretary, LoopWorks and Milpitas resident
Lisa Oliver, science teacher and Milpitas resident

cc: James Eggers, Executive Director, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club

Climate Action Plan Assessment Form

Please use the form below as a guideline for your City's proposed Climate Action Plan and send it to the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter's Climate Action Leadership Team dashiell.leeds@sierraclub.org for additional resources.

Action #	Description	Included in CAP?	Comments
1	Adopt a bold goal to reduce community wide GHGs by at least 80% by 2030, given that scientific findings now show California's goal of a 40% reduction is no longer sufficient to address the speed and severity of the crisis. ⁵	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Specify all resources required to implement each action in the plan, including dollar amounts, staff hours and departmental owners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	For each CAP measure, include easy-to-track metrics to help Council members and the public gauge success of the plan, and define a reporting frequency for each metric.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Electrify all new buildings: Strengthen the city's reach code to require new construction to be all electric with narrow and justified exceptions. Reference Sunnyvale's All Electric Reach Code ⁶ requiring all new residential and commercial buildings to be 100% electric. Design buildings that benefit the local wildlife and habitat. ⁷	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Electrify Existing Buildings: Develop a set of policies paired with financial options, if feasible, to encourage and/or require building owners to convert from gas to electric when appliances are retired - with an eye to equity protections. ⁸	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Plan to reduce vehicle miles traveled by 25% , which can be accomplished by a) rezoning to encourage higher density near transit and b) creating a Green Streets network ⁹ that makes the City easier and safer to navigate without a car. ¹⁰	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Increase access to electric vehicle (EV) charging , especially for those living in multi-family housing and in places where charging can be done during the day using abundant clean solar energy from California's electric grid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	Plan to replace 100% of the City's municipal assets that currently use fossil fuels with efficient electric alternatives, including but not limited to: gasoline, diesel and natural gas municipal fleet vehicles, furnaces, water heaters, and pool heating equipment. Require park maintenance contractors to also phase out their gas-powered landscaping equipment. Redirect financial assets away from fossil fuels.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	Create a climate adaptation plan focused on protecting areas of the community vulnerable to extreme heat events, flooding, wildfires, drought, and sea level rise as forecasted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and county agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	Utilize the Energy and Environmental Sustainability Commission to support the development and implementation of the updated CAP, and then to monitor progress and metrics. Consider adding youth representatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

⁵ Palo Alto has adopted a goal of 80% GHG reduction by 2030 and Menlo Park's adopted goal is 90% GHG reduction by 2030.

⁶ Sunnyvale adopted their reach code considerably later than other cities such as Milpitas, but have required all-electric new construction in all building types with minimal exceptions. <https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=235920-2&DocumentContentId=68906>

⁷ Implement Bird-Safe Design and reduce light pollution: (See Cupertino's draft ordinance as an example): <http://cupertino.legistar.com/gateway.aspx?M=F&ID=5fc6b30b-ad27-4970-9ba0-58501a8d208d.pdf>

⁸ Reference the proposed 'burn-out ordinance' in Menlo Park's CAP. City of Menlo Park 2030 Climate Action Plan, July 2020, <https://www.menlopark.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/11486>

⁹ Sierra Club Guidelines for a Green Streets Network: <https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce-authors/u4142/Sierra%20Club%20Loma%20Prieta%20Open%20Streets%205-1-20.pdf>

¹⁰ For an example of a City that has implemented Green Streets, see Oakland's Slow Streets Program, <https://www.oaklandca.gov/projects/oakland-slow-streets>