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DATE: February 7, 2024

TO: Tree Advisory Committee

FROM: Heather Gurewitz, Senior Planner  
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SUBJECT: Receive Presentation and Discuss the Draft City of Petaluma Blueprint  
for Carbon Neutrality and Consider Providing Committee Feedback

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Tree Advisory Committee should consider providing feedback on the draft Blueprint for Carbon Neutrality to Staff.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2019, the City of Petaluma officially recognized a Climate Emergency and formed a Climate Action Commission with the aim of guiding the city towards climate neutrality. Throughout 2020, the commission, in collaboration with city staff, crafted the Climate Emergency Framework (CEF). This framework, endorsed by the Petaluma City Council on January 11, 2021, outlines the city's commitment to achieving climate neutrality by 2030. It not only presents a vision for Petaluma's future but also establishes fundamental values to steer the city's initiatives in climate planning.

In 2020, the City of Petaluma also launched a General Plan Update, designed to include the development of a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. Through a competitive Request for Proposal and selection process, Raimi and Associates emerged as the primary consultant for both the General Plan Update and the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. Recognizing the urgent timeline for achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, the City opted to expedite the creation of a standalone document known as the "Blueprint for Carbon Neutrality" to address greenhouse gas reduction. This precedes the comprehensive General Plan update. The formulation of climate adaptation and resiliency policies and actions are being integrated into the broader General Plan through the applicable policy frameworks which will be available for public review in Spring of 2024.

As the designated advisory board with a climate focus, the CAC has played a crucial role in the development of the Blueprint. Ad-hoc committees provided feedback on each of the action plan areas to support the drafting of the Blueprint and will be providing feedback on the public draft for incorporation into a final draft. The CAC will deliberate and make a formal recommendation to the City Council for adoption. The preliminary version of the Blueprint was shared with the Climate Action Commission (CAC) during their meeting on October 12th, offering a comprehensive overview and eliciting initial questions and comments. An Ad-hoc committee was formed to conduct an in-depth review of the plan and to make recommendations to the CAC. The CAC has met to begin reviewing Ad-hoc recommendations and feedback from community groups.

## **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of the Blueprint for Climate Neutrality is to provide a roadmap for how the City can become carbon neutral by 2030. This includes an ambitious action plan that can be enacted by the City, and also requires a change in the activities and behaviors of the community to be effective. The City of Petaluma's 2018 Greenhouse Gas Emissions were 472,422 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO<sub>2e</sub>). The majority (67%) of these emissions are generated by on-road transportation. An additional 24% of emissions are the result of energy (usage).

To reduce emissions, the Blueprint includes seven action plans to address Clean Energy, Buildings, Transportation and Land Use, Resource Consumption, Water, Sequestration, and Municipal Operations. While some actions will result in a more significant reduction than others, all actions are necessary to reduce emissions to the greatest extent feasible. For example, community members and the City purchasing clean energy, electrifying existing buildings, and vehicle electrification will result in the largest reductions in carbon emissions. However, some of these strategies are also the highest in cost, including the electrification of existing buildings and vehicle electrification.

Carbon sequestration is the long-term removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere into the earth's natural systems and can be achieved through urban forestry and increasing canopy tree coverage. While aggregate greenhouse gas reductions from urban forestry are not as significant as from electrification and other changes, the cost may lower, and sequestration provides additional benefits. For example, expanding the urban forest can help mitigate the urban heat island effect, improve air quality, provide traffic calming, and reduce energy use.

The proposed implementation actions for the urban forestry strategy include current ongoing actions and proposed actions as follows:

1. (Ongoing) Collaborate with ReLeaf Petaluma to support their 10,000 trees program, including potential fee reductions or water bill credits, if feasible.
2. By 2025, conduct an inventory of existing trees in Petaluma.
3. By 2025, adopt a revised Tree Ordinance that prioritizes tree preservation.

4. In 2025, revise tree pruning and clarify and reinforce removal criteria for street trees to minimize the loss of street trees, increases street tree planting opportunities, and improve maintenance of existing trees for long term health of urban canopy.
5. By 2025, adopt an updated List of Approved Street Trees that prioritizes climate and ecosystem appropriate trees and plants. Consider integrating the ReLeaf Petaluma Plant Palette recommendations.
6. By 2026, complete a study to establish a pathway and funding mechanisms to reduce emissions from off-road equipment focusing on lawn and garden equipment, and other sources of off-road emissions in the city.
7. By 2026, develop and adopt a Petaluma Urban Forest Plan in partnership with community organizations.
  - a. Establish a citywide minimum tree canopy cover goal.
  - b. Establish minimum tree canopy cover goals for specific land use types and scales:
    - i. Publicly accessible open spaces
    - ii. Streets / ROW
    - iii. New development (building parcel) – commercial and residential
  - c. Establish a new tree planting goal by 2030.
  - d. Identify which DACs to prioritize tree planting efforts.
  - e. Develop street / public ROW tree and vegetation design standards.
  - f. Develop and promote water-efficient tree irrigation system standards.
  - g. Adopt code amendments and update permitting requirements to be consistent with established tree canopy goals for land within the City’s jurisdiction.
8. By 2026, establish and fund a citywide street tree maintenance and tree planting program.
9. By 2026, adopt a monitoring system to track tree canopy cover over time.
10. By 2027, determine baseline data on existing carbon sequestration including Petaluma’s share of legacy emissions and consumption emissions.
11. By 2027, establish an incentive program to reduce impervious surfaces on private property.
12. By 2030, offset carbon that cannot be sequestered locally through regional carbon sequestration and offset programs.<sup>1</sup>

As part of the public outreach effort, City staff are requesting feedback from Petaluma’s Commissions, Committees, and Boards (CCBs). While some members of the Tree Advisory Committee (TAC) have provided independent feedback through the public comment period, the TAC may wish to provide formal comments as a committee to the CAC for consideration.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The development of the Climate Neutrality Blueprint is the outcome of collaborative endeavors involving Petaluma community members, the Climate Action Commission, City staff, and consultants. Aligned with the Climate Emergency Framework, the Blueprint is designed to advance the framework's implementation. The Climate Action Commission, through extensive community engagement, played a pivotal role in drafting the Climate Emergency Framework, and this valuable input has significantly shaped the Blueprint. Additionally, ad hoc committees of the Climate Action Commission were solicited to review and offer feedback on early draft sections relevant to their respective focuses.

To ensure community awareness and participation throughout the release, review, and revision phases leading to adoption, the City is adopting a multifaceted approach. This strategy

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<sup>1</sup> When a year is referenced, such as, “by 2026” it means that the action would be implemented by January 1, 2026.

encompasses various outreach initiatives, from the pre-release phase to the proposed public outreach during adoption. This includes the following outreach efforts up to the release of the public draft and including proposed public outreach through adoption:

- **May 2021:** Initiated process with CAC, discussed General Plan integration, and reviewed approach
- **November 2021:** Overview presentation on climate hazards. Discussed climate hazard mitigation and adaptation strategies
- **January 2022:** Overview presentation of community inventory and forecast, municipal inventory, emissions reduction pathways, and draft GHG reduction measures
- **September 2022:** Received “Theory of Change” diagrams from Ad Hoc Committee with their priorities and recommended actions for buildings, natural systems, transportation, and consumption
- **March 2023:** 5 meetings with CAC Ad Hoc Committees to discuss comments and priorities on the GHG Action Plans
- **October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023:** All community newsletter email with release announcement that the Blueprint will soon be published
- **October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023:** Boosted social media post and email that contains a link to the feedback form
- **October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023:** Social media post to remind the community about the feedback form and to attend the open house/CAC meeting on October 12<sup>th</sup>
- **October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023:** Community Open House, CAC meeting; reminder to submit feedback through the community update
- **October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023:** Planned email reminder about the opportunity to provide feedback in the community newsletter
- **October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023:** Feedback form to close
- **December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023:** Community Feedback Complete
- **December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023:** Community newsletter inviting the public to attend the December CAC meeting to recommend the approval of the final draft
- **December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023:** Social media post to remind community to attend the December CAC meeting
- **December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023:** CAC members will give their individual feedback to the Ad Hoc
- **January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024:** Review period for Petaluma CCBs closes
- **January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024:** CAC Ad Hoc Review Period Closes, CAC discusses comments

The following dates are subject to change:

- **February, 2024:** PC workshop to provide feedback on the draft Blueprint
- **February, 2024:** CAC workshop to discuss feedback and recommended edits to the Blueprint
- **March, 2024:** CAC hearing to recommend Final Draft of the Blueprint to move forward to City Council
- **March, 2024:** Planning Commission hearing to recommend Final Draft of the Blueprint to move forward to City Council
- **April-May 2024 TBD:** City Council hearing on the Blueprint

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

As a workshop item this is not subject to environmental review at this time because no decision is

being made. Prior to action to adopt the Blueprint for Climate Neutrality, staff will prepare a recommended CEQA determination in compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for consideration by the decision-making body.

### **CITYWIDE GOALS & PRIORITIES**

The proposed actions within the Blueprint support the following FY 21 through FY 23 City Council Goals and Priorities:

- **Goal 46:** Establish and promote a citywide sustainability program leading with exemplary environmental practices.
- **Goal 47:** Adopt a Zero Waste ordinance.
- **Goal 56:** Update Implementing Zoning Ordinance (IZO) to ensure ability to provide full environmental review for all discretionary projects.
- **Goal 60:** Adopt a citywide single-use plastic and polystyrene ban.
- **Goal 64:** Create tool / dashboard that tracks City progress on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sequestration.
- **Goal 66:** Educate our community and provide sustainability tools for City staff, developers, employers, property owners and all residents.
- **Goal 191:** Develop an initial outreach and engagement plan that the city funds as part of resourcing and educating Petalumans, including outreach campaigns and events to increase knowledge of energy efficiency and building electrification benefits and ensure that local energy providers or businesses that sell home energy equipment provide up-to-date and climate-smart options
- **Goal 193:** Identify funds to support Storm Water program and infrastructure
- **Goal 194:** Adopt a VMT policy that is consistent with the 2030 carbon neutrality goal. In order to meet these targets, prepare policy recommendations for rapidly implementing alternative clean, safe, accessible, and affordable and active and public transportation modes to meet the rising community need for climate-friendly transportation.
- **Goal 196:** Update the City's Integrated Pest Management Plan and formalize a policy of how the City maintains its parks, trails, open spaces, streetscape, creeks, landscape assessment districts, and other City's properties in a more sustainable way that is better for the environment, the community, and the health of the public and staff.
- **Goal 203:** Impose a moratorium on City purchases of fossil fuel powered vehicles, power equipment, and appliances, with limited exceptions for emergency vehicles and equipment where no low climate pollution causing alternatives are reasonably available.

- **Goal 206:** Develop an assessment of climate change impacts by neighborhood and demographic group to assess where and for whom environmental justice and equity work needs to be focused.
- **Goal 42:** Find ways for City operations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve water, decrease waste, and minimize use of fossil fuels and investigate and pursue options for carbon sequestration.
- **Goal 49:** Install solar panels on city-owned properties where appropriate and work with Sonoma Clean Power on a solar program for potential revenue generation.
- **Goal 50:** Engage the Regional Climate Protection Agency, City Council, staff, and community members in the development of a city-wide Climate Action Plan.
- **Goal 52:** Develop a framework to move the city and transit vehicle fleet from fossil-fuel based to hybrid, renewable compressed natural gas, and/or electric vehicles and continue pursuing grant funding opportunities for electric vehicles.
- **Goal 71:** Revisit flood plain management practices to address climate change and sea level rise.
- **Goal 192:** Ensure equitable new development, including affordable housing and shelters, by revising the General Plan, building and development codes, and other relevant City policies to apply climate-action equity priorities fairly across the board.
- **Goal 197:** Inform and invite local California Native peoples into our ongoing dialogue as part of cultivating respectful and collaborative relationships with indigenous communities with the intention to understand, highlight, and integrate their community needs, climate action priorities, and ecological insight and values into our climate actions
- **Goal 200:** Use the Climate Emergency Framework as a foundation for the new General Plan update, including all guiding principles.
- **Goal 201:** Integrate climate action, environmental justice and public health improvements throughout the General Plan document and include elements and/or extensive discussion (including community and expert discussion) and metrics for Environmental Justice, Climate and Healthy Communities so that all planning and land use related CEF goals and objectives are fully developed and embodied in the General Plan. As part of the General Plan process develop and adopt a Climate Action Plan that contains the actions the City shall take and ask the community to undertake over the life of the General Plan towards meeting the CEF goals. Ensure equitable new development by revising building and development codes, and other relevant City policies to apply climate-action equity priorities fairly across the board concurrently or in advance of the General Plan update process.
- **Goal 204:** Evaluate the process to divest from all fossil-fuel investments including pension funds and the costs/benefits of developing a new carbon neutral and green economy investment portfolio.
- **Goal 207:** Adopt a natural gas ban for new construction and adopt a policy to phase in building energy retrofits for existing buildings to meet climate targets. Provide resources

and programs to ensure retrofits are available and affordable to low-income residents and do not cause rent increases for tenants over and above monthly savings on utility bills from the upgrades and include tenant protections to avoid displacement and eviction.

The proposed actions within this plan support the following FY 23/24 City Council Top Ten Goals and Priorities:

- Citywide Electrification Plan
- Pest Management Plan
- Tree Preservation Ordinance

### **CLIMATE ACTION/ SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS**

The Blueprint for Climate Neutrality sets forth a plan of action for the city and municipality of Petaluma to work towards climate neutrality through greenhouse gas emission reductions. Additional aspects of citywide sustainability and climate resilience will be addressed as part of the ongoing General Plan update process.

Note: Please visit: <https://www.planpetaluma.org/blueprint-for-carbon-neutrality> to view the complete Blue Print for Carbon Neutrality.