

BAAQMD Climate Action Leadership Summit

Which Way To Go?

General Plans or Climate Action Plans

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Session Participants

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Session Objectives

- Share knowledge about how to incorporate GHG targets and strategies in local planning.
- Understand options of how to link climate action plans with general plans.
- Discuss how to position and take advantage of CEQA streamlining.
- Explore if a general consensus exists about the approach for addressing GHG reduction in local planning

The Starting GHG Premises

- GHG impacts are cumulative
- Impacts and mitigation are best addressed in large-scale planning
- Public participation is important
- GHG analysis, planning, and CEQA review should be efficient for projects, so resources are focused on implementing solutions rather than writing documents



Achieving Efficiency in CEQA Compliance



- Solutions to efficient project-level CEQA approaches are found in your planning strategies, not in your CEQA
- Regular streamlining rules allow for shelter from repeated project-by-project GHG analysis
- But, first, ... planning must do its job
- Planning choices exist or are in development

The Choices

- Choices for handling GHG reduction planning:
 - a. Not my job...we'll wait for the SCS/APS and AB 32 regulations
 - b. Update our General Plan?
 - c. Prepare a Climate Action Plan?
 - d. A combination of b and c
 - e. Other?



Some of the Questions



- What should go in your GP Update? Policy? Targets? Actions?
- Should we set targets now?
- Should we focus on GHG alone or add broader sustainability measures? Vulnerability, too?
- What should go in a CAP?
- Does a CAP need CEQA?
- What are the stumbling blocks for local GHG reduction plans?

General Plan Updates:

- Should we address GHG reduction in every General Plan Update?
- What should be in the General Plan?
 - Reduction Policies and Objective
 - GHG Reduction Targets? Quantified?
 - Direction to prepare a CAP?
 - Implementation actions themselves?
- Is it premature to adopt GHG targets?
- Adopt “uniformly-applied development policies or standards” ? (for PRC 21083.3 Streamlining)

Nature of Policies in General Plans and Mitigation in General Plan EIRs

- Should GHG policies be flexible/encouraging or mandatory/directive?
- Mandatory vs. voluntary GHG-related policies and mitigation, in light of:
 - Feasibility
 - Jurisdiction (enforceability)
 - Political acceptance
 - Legal defensibility (adopt v. study, implement v. consider, require v. encourage)

Purpose of a Climate Action Plan

- What should the purpose of your CAP be?
- (An implementation plan that coordinates and directs community programs to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to climate change)
- Does CAP adoption need CEQA compliance?

General Plan and CEQA Streamlining

- How can we best streamline CEQA review of GHG for projects?
- Create policies to address climate change issues and mitigate potential impacts
- Include implementation measures as mitigation to reduce and offset GHG emissions (i.e., “uniformly-applied development policies or standards” ? (for PRC 21083.3 Streamlining)
- General Plan EIR can then list land use policies and implementation measures that will reduce GHG emissions as mitigation measures

Challenges and Other Issues for Local Planning for GHG Reduction?

- What are the stumbling blocks for local GHG reduction plans?
- Evolving regulations and guidance?
- Planning money available?
- Role of SB 375 SCS/APS process?
- Role of climate vulnerability and adaptation, in addition to GHG reduction?

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Perspectives

- Office of Planning and Research
- Attorney General's Office
- Bay Area Cities

Draft Proposed BAAQMD GHG Thresholds

- First proposed, non-industrial GHG threshold in CA
- Interim, until AB 32 and SB 375 are implemented
- Based on “gap” between AB 32 reduction goals and GHG reductions by green building code and low-carbon fuels – i.e., new development’s fair share
- Calculated to be 3% of BAU, or 2 MMT/yr in region
- Several options offered: total emissions, use of performance standards, various effectiveness levels
- Project thresholds: 1,100 – 1,200 MT without performance standards; 1,700 – 2,500 MT with them

Questions and Discussion