



POLICY REPORT

HCHR Active Transportation / Active Living

September 2019



County of San Diego
Health & Human Services Agency
Public Health Services
Maternal, Child, and Family Health Services Branch
Health Services Complex
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San Diego, CA 92110-3652

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Healthy Cities, Healthy Residents is a program of Live Well San Diego: Healthy Works and implemented by Vista Community Clinic with support from Circulate San Diego. This work supports Live Well San Diego, the County of San Diego's vision of a region that is Building Better Health, Living Safely, and Thriving. For Cal-Fresh information, call 2-1-1. Funded by SNAP-Ed, an equal opportunity provider and employer. Visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net for healthy tips.





*Image: Pop-up Saturday temporary bulbout on Avocado Ave. and Main St., June 1, 2019
Image source: IRC, 2019*



*Image: Placemaking event workshop with Coalition members at El Cajon City Hall, March 7, 2019
Image source: Circulate San Diego, 2019*

Executive Summary

El Cajon is one of the most diverse cities in the region and is home to 103,314 residents (as of 2017). El Cajon is the second most populous refugee resettlement city in the County, behind the City of San Diego. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has an office in El Cajon, and works closely with refugee residents to support the transition to their new home environment through social and technical services. The IRC was selected by the County of San Diego HHS to be a community-based organization (CBO) for the County's Healthy Communities, Healthy Residents (HCHR) project to achieve policy goals related to active transportation, access to healthy foods, and placemaking. The IRC's relationship with the refugee population in El Cajon helped build the Coalition, which has expanded over the three years of the project.

The Coalition has been an integral part of the visioning process for growing a healthier, better-connected El Cajon, and its members have acquired skills to

become more involved in the development of their community. In addition to working on a healthy food development project concept and the implementation of a downtown streetscape event, the Coalition was also heavily involved in policy development, and in providing input to the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP was being written in pace with the HCHR project, which created the opportunity to intersect both projects, and incorporate the vision and goals of the Coalition into the final version of the CAP. Priorities from the Coalition include **safer walking streets, green beautification, more affordable housing, and more jobs**. When the Draft CAP was released for public review, recommendations from the Coalition that address these priorities were provided to the City. This document provides a summary of that process, and the recommendations that were suggested. The implementation of these recommendations support the needs of El Cajon's residents, support El Cajon's CAP goals in relation to reducing greenhouse gases, and contribute to a healthier city.

¹ 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, American Fact Finder, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

² California Department of Social Services, Refugee Programs Bureau – Calendar Years 2006-2011, https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/programs/phs/documents/Refugee_FactSheet2011.pdf



“Healthy El Cajon means providing a clean and nice place to live and grow. It means supporting physical and mental health, and encouraging healthy habits, such as exercise and eating healthy foods.”

- SALWA
HEALTHY EL CAJON COALITION MEMBER

Table of Contents

i EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3 BACKGROUND

3 HEALTHY EL CAJON COALITION AND PROJECT PARTNERS

4 THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN AND THE COMMUNITY

7 STATEMENT OF NEED

9 PROCESS

9 CITY PROCESS

12 COMMUNITY PROCESS LED BY THE HEALTHY EL CAJON COALITION

15 PRIORITIES FOR CAP POLICIES

17 CAP POLICY SCAN

21 RECOMMENDATIONS

25 NEXT STEPS



*Image: Pop-up Saturday Coalition member volunteers, June 1, 2019
Image source: IRC, 2019*

Background

County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Health Cities, Healthy Residents (HCHR) program supports community-based organizations (CBOs) to achieve policy goals related to active transportation, access to healthy foods, and placemaking. The County awarded contracts to three CBOs to work on the project from 2017-2019. They are Vista Community Clinic in the City of Vista, International Rescue Committee (IRC) in El Cajon, and Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) in National City. Circulate San Diego was also awarded a contract to provide the three CBOs technical assistance for their active transportation initiatives. This report will focus on the support provided to IRC to identify and champion solutions to improve and sustain the quality of life for residents of El Cajon, and the health of their environment.

Healthy El Cajon Coalition

At the start of the project, IRC convened a Coalition comprised of City staff, residents, business owners, and other community stakeholders to serve as an working group for the HCHR program, and provide their input on active transportation and food environment concerns. The Coalition, which met once a month in El Cajon, was instrumental to charting the project forward. This report will exclusively refer to this group as the Coalition to avoid confusion, and the recommendations provided in this document address the priorities and goals set out by the Coalition. In addition to the Coalition, other community partners for throughout this process have included:

- **Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego**
- **Cajon Valley Union School District**
- **Salvation Army**
- **El Cajon Family Health Center**
- **City of El Cajon**
- **UPAC**
- **UCSD Center for Community Health**
- **San Diego State University**
- **Business owners**
- **Individuals from the community**



Figure 1 | Coalition meeting to vote on CAP recommendations, May 16, 2019
Image source: Circulate San Diego, 2019

The Climate Action Plan and the Community

The first two years of the HCHR project were based on forming the Coalition, setting goals for the project, and introducing the focus topics established by the HCHR program – active transportation, healthy food environments, and placemaking. Throughout this process, the Coalition developed an understanding of these topics, and worked towards implementing a policy that is Coalition-driven and exemplifies their vision for the future of El Cajon. The Climate Action Plan (CAP) was selected to be the vessel for collecting and disseminating these policy recommendations. Coalition members learned about the purpose of the

CAP and its role as a legally enforceable document to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs). Strategies for reducing GHGs also align with several priority issues of the Coalition’s work, and were included as recommendations for the final version of the CAP. Priority issues for the Coalition include:

- **Safer walking streets**
- **Green beautification**
- **More affordable housing**
- **More jobs**



“The City of El Cajon proposes to prepare and adopt a CAP to both reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and help the community adapt to the effects of climate change in the City, consistent with State and local guidance. A CAP is a document that includes policies, measures, and strategies to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to climate change, as well as to improve the health, safety, mobility, and livability of the greater community.”³

³ City of El Cajon Community Development Department Notice of Scoping Meeting and Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report, February 28, 2019. <https://www.cityofelcajon.us/home/showdocument?id=19617>



*Image: Pop-up Saturday Coalition member volunteers, June 1, 2019
Image source: IRC, 2019*

Statement of Need

The community urges the City of El Cajon to develop into a more pedestrian-friendly community, and respond proactively to environmental and economic changes so that the city can support the health and well-being of current and future generations.

The IRC provides opportunities for refugees, asylees, victims of human trafficking, survivors of torture, and other immigrants to thrive in America. The IRC works with government bodies, civil society actors, and local volunteers to help them translate their past experiences into assets that are valuable to their new communities. The City of El Cajon is home to a high percentage of refugees and asylees, and the IRC has an office located along Main Street to be accessible for this population of the community. Much of the work that the IRC does in El Cajon is in support of this population while providing resources and benefits for the greater community. A unique way the IRC supports the City of El Cajon is through their experience with building healthy food environments for IRC members and other residents to participate in.⁴

In 2012, the City of El Cajon worked with the IRC to implement the City's first community garden and chicken ordinance, which led to establishing a successful five-acre community garden on Travelodge Way. In 2013, the IRC launched the El Cajon Farmers' Market (ECFM), located in the heart of downtown El Cajon. IRC closed the ECFM in October 2017.

In addition to healthy food environments, the IRC also recognizes the importance of active transportation and equitable mobility options. Many residents in El Cajon, including IRC members, often rely on alternative modes of transportation, such as

walking, biking, and taking the bus, to move about the community and around the region. Alternative transportation opportunities are vital for providing residents with access to local amenities, employment, and community gatherings and events, as well as reducing the City's carbon footprint.

The City of El Cajon and its residents want to create a more vibrant, active, and healthy El Cajon. However, the desire for these changes is met by the reality of changes occurring to the climate and environment. At a local level, annual temperatures and annual precipitation in the City are projected to increase steadily over time. These changes could result in increased heat waves, wildfire risk, and flooding, resulting in adverse effects on human health and safety, economic prosperity, infrastructure, and provision of public services in the City.⁵

El Cajon is one of the last cities in the County to adopt a Climate Action Plan, a plan that would help address both environmental and resident health and well-being. The HCHR project was well-positioned to work in tandem with the development of the Climate Action Plan, and incorporate policy recommendations for healthy environments and active transportation. Between the expertise of the IRC and Circulate San Diego, as well as the support of the HCHR initiative, El Cajon has the tools and ability to meet its goal of becoming a healthier and more accessible city.

⁴ International Rescue Committee, March 11, 2019. <https://www.rescue.org/united-states/san-diego-ca>

⁵ City of El Cajon Climate action Plan, April 2019. <https://www.cityofelcajon.us/home/showdocument?id=19739>



CITY OF EL CAJON

Climate Action Plan



*Image: El Cajon Climate Action Plan cover
Image source: City of El Cajon, 2019*

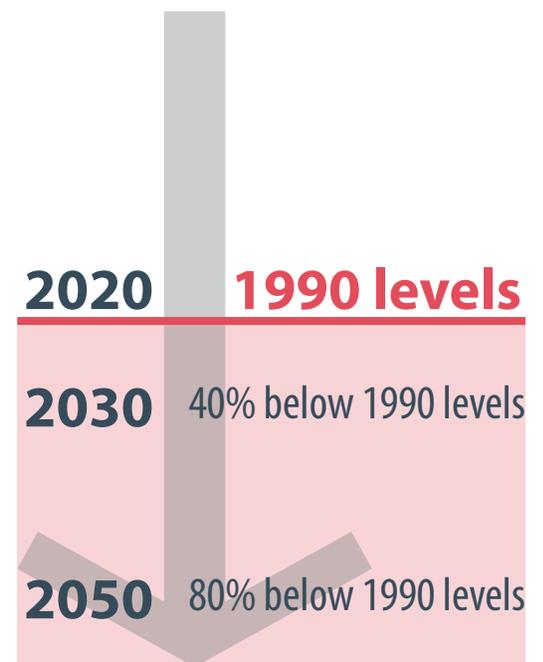
Process

This section looks at the process of introducing the CAP to the general public and engaging in public outreach. Outreach included educational trainings to learn about a CAP, and how it is a public document that residents can respond to with recommendations. The trainings incorporated empowerment and advocacy activities that helped residents prepare for how to advocate for change and address goals of the Coalition. Outreach with the community included presentations from City staff, as well as discussions and trainings as a part of the HCHR project during the monthly Coalition meetings.

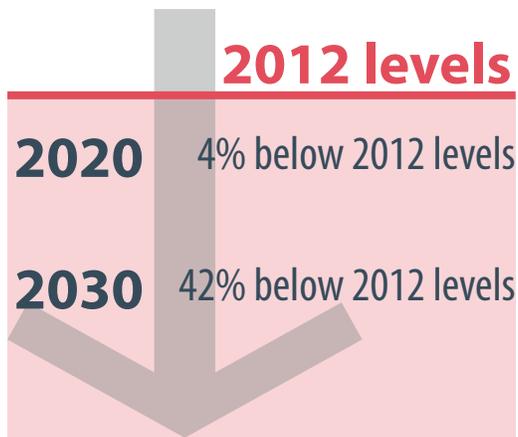
City Process

The City of El Cajon committed to adopting a CAP in 2018 and including residents in the development and implementation of this plan. City staff attended Healthy El Cajon Coalition meetings, as well as other resident events, to provide education to residents about the importance of the CAP, and inform residents about the actions the City will be taking to combat the climate change crisis. City staff met with Coalition members on several occasions to present and explain the CAP document. These presentations allowed residents to learn about key terms included within a CAP, such as “GHGs” and “emissions”, and ask questions about what they were learning. This process, in combination with presentations from the IRC about climate change, helped Coalition members understand the purpose of a CAP, and how goals of the Coalition can be addressed within the document.

2050 State-wide Goal GHG Emissions



2030 El Cajon Goal GHG Emissions



The CAP has been prepared to be consistent with the requirements of AB 32 (2006), which tasked the California Air Resources Board (ARB) with developing a Climate Change Scoping Plan to establish an interim target to achieve 1990 levels of GHG emissions by 2020. Local governments are expected to contribute to the GHG reductions necessary to achieve the target and SB 32 (2016), which requires a 2030 statewide GHG reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.⁶

At the local level, and over the last decade, the City has taken steps to address climate change by reducing GHG emissions, both in the City's operations as well as activities in the broader community. However, these measures were assessed as a part of the CAP process, and it was determined that current efforts would not lead to satisfying the 2030 and 2050

targets. El Cajon's CAP uses the community GHG emissions inventory starting in 2012, which is also known as the baseline year. In 2012, community activities in the City accounted for 685,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO_{2e}), with transportation contributing more than half of the GHG emissions. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of all of the contributing factors to the 685,000 metric tons.

Using this emissions inventory, the City has set a 2030 target based upon the trajectory necessary to meet the Statewide 2050 goal. The City's targets would require GHG emissions to be reduced to 659,000 MTCO_{2e} by 2020 and 397,000 MTCO_{2e} by 2030.

Based on the GHG emissions, the leading causes (shown in Figure 2), and the reduction targets, the strategies in the CAP were organized into the following topics:

**Strategy 1 - Increase the Use of Zero-Emission/
Alternative Fuel Vehicles**

Strategy 2 - Reduce Fuel Use

Strategy 3 - Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled

Strategy 4 - Increase Building Energy Efficiency

**Strategy 5 - Increase Renewable and
Zero-Carbon Energy**

Strategy 6 - Increase Water Efficiency

Strategy 7 - Reduce and Recycle Solid Waste

Strategy 8 - Carbon Sequestration

⁶ *Id.*

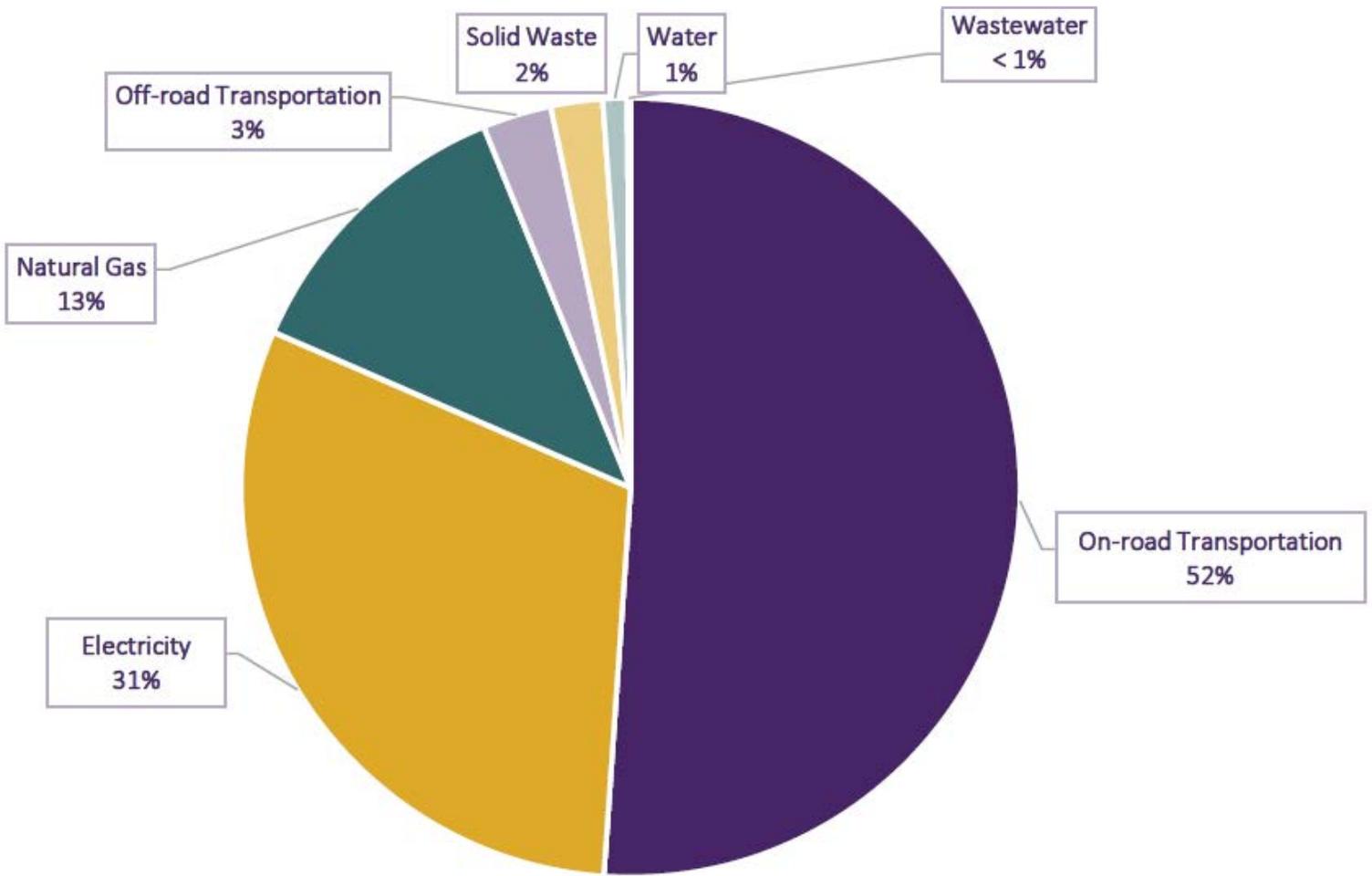


Figure 2 | Breakdown of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) emissions
Image sources: EPIC and Ascent Environmental, 2019

Community Process Led by the Healthy El Cajon Coalition

Education about the CAP and the community participation in the planning process were common topic areas discussed during the Coalition meetings. In addition to having little knowledge about what a CAP is, most Coalition members had never participated in a public planning process or provided input to a Commission or City Council. Presentations at the Coalition meetings were given by IRC, Circulate San Diego, City staff, County staff, and other guest speakers. Presentations by the City and the IRC largely covered CAP terminology, the purpose of the CAP, and how Coalition goals can be integrated as policies within the CAP.

Prior to the release of the CAP, Circulate San Diego led meetings with the Coalition to better prepare them for participation as public participants at community meetings and in planning processes. Circulate San Diego provided a public speaking training to Coalition members to learn strategies for how to be an effective public speaker. This training directly supported the project, but it also provided Coalition members with a new skill that could be applied for other purposes beyond this project.

After the CAP was released for public review on April 17, 2019, a workshop session was hosted as a part of the regular Coalition meeting time to learn about how the goals of the Coalition can be reflected through the CAP. This workshop included walking through the CAP document, and discussing which implementation strategies align with the goals of the Coalition.

Strategy 3 - Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled and **Strategy 8 - Carbon Sequestration** were identified as sections within the CAP document that would most appropriately host recommendations from the Coalition because of their close alignment with Coalition’s priorities. This workshop gave Coalition members the opportunity to review the CAP, and served as a brainstorming session to formulate recommendations, specifically for Strategies 3 and 8. The totality of these recommendations have been included in the “Recommendations” section of this document.

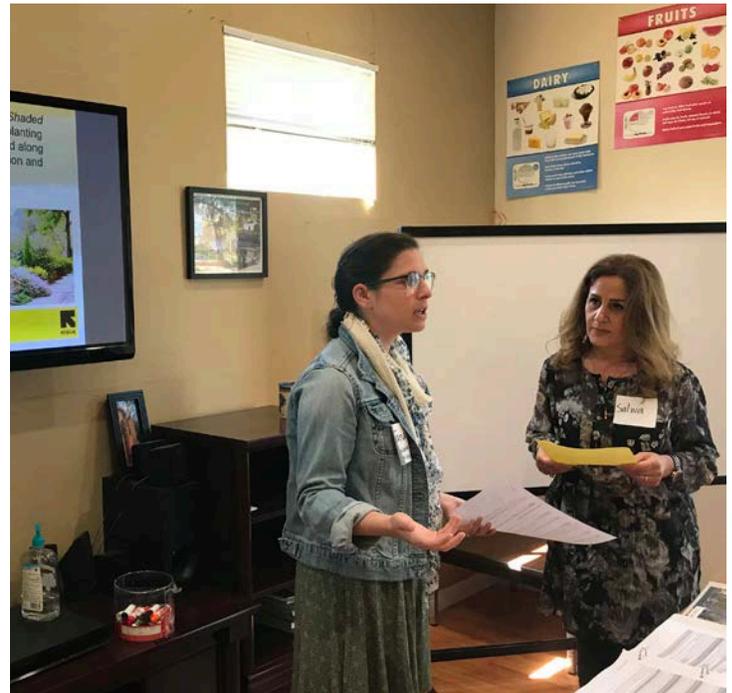




Figure 3 | Coalition members participation in CAP recommendations, May 16, 2019
Image sources: Circulate San Diego and IRC, 2019



Image: Coalition meeting to review Draft CAP, May 16, 2019
Image source: Circulate San Diego, 2019

Priorities for CAP Policies

The City of El Cajon adopting a CAP is strongly supported by the Coalition, as the CAP serves to better the well-being of residents and the environment in El Cajon. Any and all recommendations made beyond what is already included in the CAP is only to reinforce the values of the Coalition. Topic areas that are of highest importance to the Coalition include: safer walking streets, green beautification, more affordable housing, and more jobs.

Safe walking streets

The promotion of walking as a viable and safe mobility option to improve accessibility for all, but especially for vulnerable groups – children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and the economically disadvantaged. Safe walking streets include sidewalks and street crossings, which provide connections between destinations.

Green beautification

The application of more greenery in the urban environment for aesthetic and functional purposes, such as shade and carbon sequestration. Implementation of more greenery across the City provides color and appeal that can be enjoyed throughout the year.

More affordable housing

Access to safe, affordable housing options that support healthier living for residents and the environment. Promoting housing options to include accessibility to transportation options, eco-conscious materials, and community-oriented amenities to foster a community culture around safe, healthy living.

More jobs

The provision of more employment opportunities wherever possible and prioritizing the local workforce for future development projects.



*Image: Pop-up Saturday Coalition members planting activity in front of Mal Al Sham, June 1, 2019
Image source: Circulate San Diego, 2019*

CAP Policy Scan

A comprehensive policy scan was completed for the El Cajon CAP to assess the proposed policies and how they align with the vision and goals of the Coalition. The Draft CAP was made available for public review starting on April 17, 2019, and recommendations from the Coalition were submitted to the City within the public comment period. This section summarizes that process and the recommendations provided.

The Climate Action Plan

This section reviews the Draft CAP document and pulls out policies that speak to the topic areas of importance for the Coalition – safer walking streets, green beautification, more affordable housing, and more jobs. The following list was extracted from the

Draft CAP because they touch on the values of the Coalition and/or provide opportunity to incorporate the topic areas of importance for the Coalition into the final CAP document.

Strategy 3: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled

Measure T-5: Increase Alternative Modes of Travel

City Action T-5.1: Increase Alternative Modes of Travel Through Transportation Demand Management

Require new non-residential development to develop a TDM Plan.

Goal	GHG Reduction Potential in 2030 (MTCO ₂ e)
Increase use of alternative modes from employee commuting by nine percent at new non-residential developments through 2030.	232

Measure T-6: Encourage Active Transportation

City Action T-6.1: Complete an Active Transportation Plan

Complete an Active Transportation Plan that includes a sidewalk master plan and an updated Bicycle Master Plan.

Goal	GHG Reduction Potential in 2030 (MTCO ₂ e)
Install or convert eight additional miles of bike lanes to Class II or better by 2030.	236

Measure T-7: Reduce Household Vehicle Miles Traveled Through Smart Growth Development

City Action T-7.1: Increase Residential Dwelling Units in Transit Oriented Development Areas

Complete a MOU with MTS on the development of the MTS Parking Lot with residential uses at the El Cajon Transit Center.

Goal	GHG Reduction Potential in 2030 (MTCO ₂ e)
Complete the development of the MTS parking lot into 126 dwelling units by 2030.	190

City Action T-7.2: Encourage Development in Mixed-Use Residential Overlay Areas

Allow for parking reductions, or deviations from development standards, for developments in the Mixed-Use Residential Overlay Areas.

Goal	GHG Reduction Potential in 2030 (MTCO ₂ e)
Reduce parking in projects built in Mixed-Use Overlay Areas by an average of 40 percent through 2030.	605

City Action T-7.3: Implement the Transit District Specific Plan

Implement the TDSP by actively marketing and encouraging development in the Plan's proposed area, including new housing projects within the area.

Goal	GHG Reduction Potential in 2030 (MTCO ₂ e)
Move towards full buildout of the TDSP by 2030, with full buildout expected in 2035.	528

City Action T-7.4: Transition to an Online Submittal Permitting System

Transition to an online submittal permitting system, where all permits are processed online, reducing the need to drive to obtain permits.

Goal	GHG Reduction Potential in 2030 (MTCO ₂ e)
Completely transition to an online-submittal permitting system by 2030.	10

Strategy 8: Reduce Carbon Sequestration

Measure CS-1: Increase Urban Tree Planting

City Action CS-1.1: Increase Shaded Landscape Area

Continue to require development projects to plant a minimum of one tree per 600 square feet of required landscape area.

Goal	GHG Reduction Potential in 2030 (MTCO _{2e})
Plant 100 shade trees annually in development project landscaped areas through 2030.	46

City Action CS-1.2: Increase Tree Shade in Surface Parking Lots

Update the landscape ordinance to require a minimum of one shade tree per five parking spaces in surface parking lots for all new developments.

Goal	GHG Reduction Potential in 2030 (MTCO _{2e})
Plant 40 new shade trees annually in surface parking lots of new developments through 2030.	14

City Action CS-1.3: Increase Street Trees

Require all new developments to plant one street tree for every 30 linear feet of street frontage.

Goal	GHG Reduction Potential in 2030 (MTCO _{2e})
Plant 110 street trees annually at new developments through 2030.	39

Figure 4 | City of El Cajon Climate action Plan strategies

Image source: City of El Cajon, 2019



Figure 5 | Downtown El Cajon wayfinding

Image source: CityWorks.biz, 2019



Image: Garden tour at the IRC community garden during the September 2019 Coalition meeting, September 5, 2019
Image source: Circulate San Diego, 2019

Recommendations

*The Coalition reviewed the Draft CAP on April 25, 2019 as part of a monthly Coalition meeting. As a group, the Coalition came up with the following 13 recommendations, which were submitted to the City on April 26, 2019. These recommendations were drafted to help strengthen the CAP, while also addressing the goals of the Coalition. The Coalition heartily supports all 13 recommendations and prioritized the three in **bold**.*

Coalition Policy Recommendations to **Strategy 3: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled**

1. Create a new goal to City Action T-6.1: **Install or repair 20 miles of sidewalk, 4'-0" minimum width, in moderate and high-density areas by 2030.**
2. Create a new goal to City Action T-6.1: Provide a minimum of eight pedestrian safety oriented traffic measures (i.e. bulbouts, mid-block crossings, grade-separated crossings, audible crossings, etc.) along four high-volume corridors or high-use areas by 2030.
3. Create a new goal to City Action T-7.1: **Require all new TOD projects to include one third of the units as affordable.**
4. Create a new goal to City Action T-7.1: Offer parking reduction incentives for providing affordable housing.
5. Modify City Action T-7.1: Increase the range of land uses in Transit Oriented Development Areas.
6. Create a new goal to City Action T-7.1: Incorporate a food-oriented development as part of a TOD site to increase employment and entrepreneur opportunities.
7. Create a new goal to City Action T-7.3: Provide 50 percent of the construction and operation jobs of these TDSP projects to El Cajon residents.

Coalition Policy Recommendations to

Strategy 8: Carbon Sequestration

8. Modify City Action CS-1.1: Continue to require development projects to plant a minimum of one tree per 300 square feet of required landscape area.
9. Modify a goal to City Action CS-1.1: Plant 200 shade trees annually in development project landscaped areas through 2030.
10. Create a new goal to City Action CS-1.1: Provide other street planting options to implement at the street-level and along pedestrian corridors to provide sequestration and beautification benefits by 2030.
11. Create a new goal to City Action CS-1. 1: **Plant 100 shade trees a year in existing residential areas that demonstrate regular pedestrian use and do not currently have a mature shade canopy by 2030.**
12. Modify a goal to City Action CS-1.2: Plant 80 new shade trees annually in surface parking lots of new developments through 2030.
13. Modify a goal to City Action CS-1. 3: Plant 200 street trees annually at new developments through 2030.

All 13 recommendations were considered by the City. The CAP was adopted on July 9, 2019. The final version is on the project webpage www.cityofelcajon.us/cap. As a result of the Healthy El Cajon Coalition, the City incorporated changes to Strategy 8 under Carbon Sequestration, which reads: § Pursue grant opportunities to fund street planting along pedestrian corridors to provide sequestration and beautification benefits. A direct link to this section can be found here: <https://www.cityofelcajon.us/home/showdocument?id=20009> (Page 51).

POP-UP SATURDAY

الانبثاق

What is your favorite feature at Pop-Up Saturday?

ما هي الميزة المفضلة لديك في إنبثاق السبت

The bulbout on the corners

الاستدارة في الزاوية

The pedestrian refuge in the crosswalk

ملجاء المشاة في الممر

The parklet in the parking stall

المتنزه في كشك موقف السيارات

The plants and greenery

النباتات والخضرة

The entertainment and events

الترفيه والحدث



The activity supports Live Well San Diego, the County's vision of a regional area that is building better health, living better and thriving. Funded by UCSD, San Diego State and other community partners and sponsors.

Image: Pop-up Saturday voting board for preferred pedestrian improvements, June 1, 2019
Image source: Circulate San Diego, 2019

Next Steps

The HCHR Coalition members have played a substantial role in the City of El Cajon Climate Action Plan process, both participating in the city-led processes as well as leading their own set of discussion on priority needs and opportunities to improve the quality life in El Cajon.

Recommendations that were not incorporated as a part of the CAP have been received by the City and should be considered for future plans, such as the Active Transportation Plan. These suggestions will help accelerate the transformation of El Cajon into a

more vibrant, healthy and active living-oriented place - a reality to the benefit of all the City's residents. The Coalition members have been trained and encouraged to participate in future planning efforts and remind the City of the priorities outlined in this document.

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