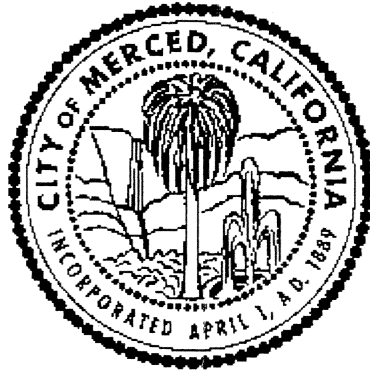



Agenda Item:H.9  
Meeting Date:6/1/2015



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

 Print

TO: City Manager  
FROM: Bill King, Principal Planner  
DATE: 04/20/2015  
SUBJECT: Information Only - Programmatic Climate Action Plan Update

REPORT IN BRIEF

This is an informational item summarizing Staff's progress in crafting the draft Programmatic Climate Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

No action is requested.

ALTERNATIVES:

Not applicable.

AUTHORITY:

Charter of the City of Merced, Section 405.

History and Past Actions:

The City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) was adopted in 2012, and provides guidance to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020. The CAP is grounded in four community values, each with related goal areas. These are listed below:

**1. Healthy Communities**

Enhance Mobility of all Transportation Modes  
Sustainable Community Design

## 2. Quality Natural Resources

- Water Conservation and Technology
- Protect Air Resources
- Waste Reduction

## 3. Clean Energy Resources

- Increase the Use of Renewable Energy Resources
- Building Energy Conservation

## 4. Leaders and Partners

- Public Outreach and Involvement

In September 2013, the City Council authorized City Staff to hire PMC as the project consultant to help City Staff and the community to create a Programmatic Climate Action Plan (PCAP). The PCAP will be crafted: 1) to enable the City to qualify for permit streamlining as provided for in CEQA statutes; 2) to be consistent with the values and goals of the 2012 CAP; and 3) to emphasize incentives and encouragement versus regulations and requirements.

### Description:

#### **Sample Actions**

There are numerous examples of programs and projects that can be implemented to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the community. A sampling of the 150 ideas listed in the City's 2013 CAP include:

- Install water conserving/drought-tolerant landscapes
- Coordinate traffic signal timing
- Compost organic materials
- Install functional bikeways, sidewalks, and transit
- Install solar panels
- Enable "Property Assessed Clean Energy" (PACE) Program

#### **Permit Streamlining**

Permit-streamlining, as it applies to CEQA-based assessment of greenhouse gas emissions, will be an outcome of the PCAP project. Technical studies to assess a project's impacts on global warming add costs, time, and uncertainty to the CEQA review process. With an adopted PCAP, those steps are front-loaded to pre-qualify development. Addressing greenhouse gas reductions in this programmatic manner is encouraged and supported by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project does not circumvent CEQA, but rather front-loads the required assessment in a manner that benefits the community, creating efficient government operations, early community member involvement, and lessening a regulatory impediment for businesses, industry, and new home construction. It is important to note that project-streamlining can only occur if the projects in the PCAP are actively implemented.

#### **Components of the PCAP**

The PCAP is being crafted to include the following components: 1) a recommended list of projects and programs to achieve the City's adopted greenhouse gas reduction target; 2) monitoring protocols

and worksheets; and 3) a user-friendly design manual to provide a more predictable development review process. While the project does not include new or amended development code language for Council consideration for formal adoption, a PCAP product is a general list of suggested changes to the code that the City may consider at some point in the future. PCAP component objectives are described below:

### **Programmatic Climate Action Plan**

- Enable permit streamlining
- PCAP actions and programs should be cost-effective
- Track and monitor implementation
- Align extent of GHG reductions with actual levels of urban growth

### **Monitoring**

- Track GHG Reductions of implemented PCAP measures
- Identify actual level of urban growth
- Align GHG reduction actions with urban growth
- Monitor Progress to PCAP Targets
- Report findings and progress to the City Manager

### **Urban Design Manual**

- Visual representation of existing relevant codes, policies, or mitigation measures
- Craft the UDM to be user-friendly for the general public, staff, and the development community
- Apply the UDM to site-design type projects (subdivisions, conditional use permits)

### **Public Outreach**

The components of the PCAP will be developed with input of the local community through a variety of methods including, public workshops, Focus Group meetings, local development community stakeholder meetings, community meeting, and City Council Meetings. The PCAP Focus Group members are listed below:

#### **Sector**

Builders  
 Engineers and Surveyors  
 Engineers and Surveyors  
 Local Chambers of Commerce  
 Real-Estate Brokers and/or agents  
 Mobility, Air Health Advocate  
 Conservation  
 Local "green-jobs"  
 Local "green-jobs"  
 City Council Representative Mayor  
 City Planning Commissioner

#### **Member**

Adam Cox  
 Dena Traina  
 Des Johnston  
 Jennifer Krumm  
 Robert Dylina  
 Michelle Xiong  
 Erin Stacy  
 Dan Caris (Mr. Ink Pro)  
 Brent Jerner (APG Solar)  
 Stan Thurston  
 Peter Padilla

The PCAP Focus Group, which also includes staff from many City departments, in coordination with the guidance and assistance of the consultant, will work to achieve the objectives of the project.

### **Implementation/Leadership**

The recommended actions and programs, along with cost-benefit information, will be included in the PCAP, and if adopted will play an important role in guiding City Department work programs and selection of capital improvement projects. Concurrent with this future work, emission reductions will be recorded and monitored. These follow-up actions are essential to the ability of the City to utilize the permit-streamlining function of the PCAP. Permit Streamlining will only be able to occur if the City is on-track in meeting its greenhouse gas reduction target. City Council priorities and lack of City Department staff, among others, may negatively affect the ability of the City to achieve the City's GHG target and associated capacity to offer permit-streamlining.

### **Future City Council Actions**

The PCAP project is anticipated to be complete by September 2015, with City Council review and potential adoption to occur in early 2016.

#### Budget/Appropriate Action:

No budget/appropriation is needed as a result of this report.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill King, Principal Planner

Reviewed,

David Gonzalves, Director of Development  
Services

Approved By,

John M. Bramble, City Manager

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

No Attachments Available