



Memorandum

TO: TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Lori Mitchell

SUBJECT: Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan Status Report

DATE: January 13, 2025

Approved

Date:

1/24/2025

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the report on the status of the Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan.

BACKGROUND

In 2018, the City Council approved the City of San José's climate action plan, Climate Smart San José ("Climate Smart"). Climate Smart provides strategies to reduce communitywide greenhouse gas emissions. While the City is working to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and therefore the future impacts of climate change, Climate Smart also noted the climate adaptation and resiliency planning as an item for future work since the City recognizes that it is likely to encounter increasing climate change impacts like droughts, wildfires, changing weather, and sea level rise.

In June 2023, the California Governor's Office of Research and Planning Adaptation Planning Grant Program awarded \$649,970 to the City for the development of a Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan ("Adaption Plan") to address the city's climate vulnerabilities and to enhance resilience against future climate impacts, with a focus on critical infrastructure and the needs of vulnerable communities. The City must expend all grant funds by January 31, 2026. The grant application and Adaptation Plan efforts are part of a collaborative effort with the Santa Clara Valley Water District, which offers guidance and advisory support. Community engagement support for the Adaptation Plan is in collaboration with the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association, which has previously provided support and advice to City staff on community engagement with local community-based organizations representing the City's vulnerable population.

ANALYSIS

The initial Adaptation Plan development phase included defining the project scope, outlining the project schedule, and completing several foundational tasks. This phase also involved engaging stakeholders and subject matter experts through a newly established Climate Ready Working Team and conducting technical analyses to identify existing vulnerabilities and policy gaps. The Climate Ready Working Team is comprised of City staff representatives from the City Manager's Office, Office of Emergency Management, Departments of Environmental Services, Planning Building and Code Enforcement, Public Works, Transportation, and project partners, Valley Water and the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association. Utilizing services by Raimi and Associates, lead City staff, in collaboration with the Climate Ready Working Team, have made significant progress in developing the Adaptation Plan, as detailed below.

Progress to Date

Internal Guidance and Planning Documents

- **Community Engagement Plan and Efforts:** The Community Engagement Plan (Attachment A) details the proposed community engagement and outreach efforts to support the Adaptation Plan. Public input, community engagement, and local capacity building are essential to effectively updating and implementing the Adaptation Plan. The community engagement activities identified in the Community Engagement Plan provide all residents and stakeholders opportunities to actively participate in the process and develop a path to climate resilience. The meetings and workshops included are designed to empower a wide variety of residents, City staff, and decision-makers, including those not typically involved in civic projects or planning processes. The Community Engagement Plan includes a snapshot of the San José community and a sampling plan of subpopulations that may require targeted outreach.
- **Vision for the San José Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (“Vision”):** The Vision (Attachment B) defines the intent, scope, geographical boundaries, timeframe, responsible entities, and desired outcomes of the Adaptation Plan. It guides the development of foundational measures, policies, and procedures necessary to reduce or eliminate the San José community's exposure to climate-related threats.
- **Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan Framework (“Framework”):** The Framework (Attachment C) establishes the priorities and organizational structure to guide the development of the Adaptation Plan. The Framework indicates that the Adaptation Plan will identify the foundational measures, policies, and procedures needed to eliminate or reduce the City's community's exposure to

climate-related hazards. The Framework also describes and outlines the categories into which the upcoming measures will be grouped, including knowledge, governance, physical interventions, and communication. The development of the Adaptation Plan aligns with the City Infrastructure Strategy and will follow a consistent graphic style as Climate Smart, conveying the complementary nature of the two plans.

Technical Assessment

- **San José Climate Vulnerability Assessment (“Vulnerability Assessment”):** The Vulnerability Assessment (Attachment D) identifies the potential impacts of projected climate changes on the city’s populations, infrastructure, and critical systems. The assessment evaluates projected trends such as rising temperatures, more extreme precipitation, sea level rise, prolonged droughts, and heightened wildfire risks using a high-emissions scenario as a worst-case basis. It evaluates vulnerabilities by analyzing exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity, incorporating local and state resources data to guide planning for a resilient future. Findings showed:
 - critical facilities, transportation infrastructure, and populations in San José face significant risks from climate change hazards;
 - flooding is a major vulnerability for critical facilities, such as fire stations and hospitals, with operations disrupted and public safety compromised. Transportation infrastructure, including roads, transit systems, and electric vehicle charging networks, are susceptible to flooding, extreme precipitation, and wildfire, with potential impacts on access, maintenance, and evacuation procedures highlighted; and
 - vulnerable populations, including low-income households, mobile home residents, and individuals with social and biological sensitivities, are disproportionately affected by climate hazards such as heat, poor air quality, and flooding.

Given these findings, adaptation strategies are proposed to focus on facility assessments, infrastructure upgrades, community engagement, and resilience measures tailored to these vulnerabilities.

Looking Ahead

To inform the development and finalization of Adaptation Plan measures, actions, and financial analysis, City staff is planning the following community engagement activities leading to a final draft of the Adaptation Plan for City Council’s consideration:

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January – March 2025

- Host small group meetings about the Adaptation Plan and the development process, including a Youth Commission meeting (January 2025), Alviso Neighborhood Association, and East San Jose community-based organizations.
- Host public engagement workshops to share information and gather input from staff who speak Spanish and Vietnamese
- Develop a City of San José Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan webpage to support engagement, provide updates, and share resources.

April – June 2025

- Present to the Climate Advisory Commission (May 2025).

July – September 2025

- Post and promote the Adaptation Plan Public Review Draft.
- Host second public engagement workshops to share information and gather input.

October – December 2025

- Organize pop-up events at existing community events to engage the community, offering multi-lingual access.
- Post the final draft of the Adaptation Plan.

January – March 2026

- Present the Adaptation Plan to the City Council.
- Post adaptation and resiliency metrics dashboard, pending City Council adoption and programmatic funding.

Ongoing

- Collaborate with the Climate Ready Working Team during monthly meetings for review and input.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Staff will return to the Transportation and Environment Committee within the next year to share the Adaptation Plan for input before City Council consideration.

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COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the Offices of the City Manager and City Attorney.

/s/

Lori Mitchell

Acting Director, Environmental Services

For questions, please contact Julie Benabente, Deputy Director, at

Julie.Benabente@sanjoseca.gov.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A – Community Engagement Plan

Attachment B – Vision for the San José Climate Adaptation and Resilience

Plan Attachment C – Final Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CARP)

Framework Attachment D – City of San José Climate Vulnerability Assessment