



City Council Staff Report

From: City Manager

Report Type: INFORMATION REPORTS

Lead Department: Public Works

Meeting Date: May 20, 2024

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TITLE

Staff Report - Quarterly Information Report on Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) Implementation; CEQA status - Not a Project

RECOMMENDATION

No Council action is required. This is an update on Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) Implementation Progress through the first quarter of calendar year 2024. It is provided to give the City Council and public an overview of S/CAP workplan items status since adopted by Council in June of 2023.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consistent with Council's adoption of "Climate Change & Natural Environment: Protection and Adaptation" as one of the four priorities for calendar year 2024, staff is implementing the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) to help the City meet its sustainability goals, including its goals of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 80% below 1990 levels by 2030 (the "80 x 30" goal) and achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. This is the third quarterly S/CAP Implementation update. Highlights of Q1 2024 progress include:

Climate Action

- As of March 28, 2024, 282 residents had signed contracts to get a heat pump water heater (HPWH) installed through the full-service HPWH program; 66 of these projects applied for on-bill financing. In addition, in Q1, 20 residents installed heat pump water heaters on their own, receiving a rebate from the City.
- Eleven customers participated in the City's Residential Energy Assistance Program (REAP) to receive energy and water efficiency improvements at no cost. In addition, 19 REAP customers have had a site assessment to receive a HPWH at no cost and are awaiting installation.
- Twelve multi-family properties representing 452 housing units have installed EV chargers facilitated through the City's EV programs.
- The City launched a Spring Forward, Ca\$h Back business rebate program to encourage local businesses to participate in the Business Energy Advisor (BEA) Program.
- Palo Alto Link, the city's eco-friendly rideshare service, provided 14,620 completed

rides, averaging 225 completed rides per service day.

- The City implemented key programs of the Housing Element before the State's January 31, 2024 deadline.
- The City received delivery of 13 new Chevy Bolt Electric Vehicles, which replaced internal combustion engine fleet vehicles.
- The City held three Electric Vehicle workshops, one E-bike workshop, a Planning a Simple Native Garden for Beginners Workshop, a compost workshop, and a Repair Cafe.

Sustainability

- Since Q4 2023, the percentage of customers who have accessed the WaterSmart portal increased from 17% to 22%.
- In January 2024, City Council adopted an ordinance authorizing improvements to the Palo Alto Baylands as part of the Horizontal Levee Pilot Project.
- In January 2024, City Council reviewed the Tree Protection Ordinance, which began in July 2022. During the first year of implementation, staff made note of code sections that caused confusion or did not work as originally intended and provided recommendations to City Council on proposed changes to Palo Alto Municipal Code. In February, City Council reviewed the second reading of the ordinance amending Chapter 8.04 and Chapter 8.10 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code. City Council will review the Ordinance again in April.
- As part of the new Zero Waste Living outreach campaign, the City published thirteen Zero Waste Minute e-newsletters in Q1 2024.

BACKGROUND

In April 2016, the City Council adopted the goal of reducing GHG emissions 80% below 1990 levels by 2030 (the "80 x 30" goal),¹ and in October 2022 Council adopted the ambitious goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.² Staff, with community and Council input, referred to the 2016 Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) Framework and 2018-2020 Sustainability Implementation Plan to create a comprehensive S/CAP and Three- Year S/CAP Workplan.

In June 2023, Council adopted the 2022 Sustainability and Climate Action Plan,³ certified the Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Report Addendum: Update to the Sustainability and

¹ City Council, April 18, 2016; Agenda Item #10; SR #6754,
<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/reports/city-manager-reports-cmr/2016/20160418/20160418id-6754.pdf>

² City Council, October 3, 2022; Agenda Item #9; SR #14720,
<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/city-council-agendas-minutes/2022/20221003/20221003accsm-amended-presentations.pdf#page=131>

³ 2022 Sustainability and Climate Action Plan;
https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/sustainability/reports/2022-scap-report_final.pdf

Climate Action Plan,⁴ and accepted the 2023-2025 S/CAP Workplan.⁵ The S/CAP is an ambitious plan to reduce the city and community's GHG emissions, while also guiding how Palo Alto uses land and natural resources in ways that ensure quality of life for future generations.

The first S/CAP implementation update included progress through Q3 2023 and was introduced in November.⁶ The second S/CAP Implementation updated included progress through Q4 2023 and was introduced in February.⁷

The 2022 S/CAP and 2023-2025 S/CAP Work Plan align with one of the four Council Priorities for CY 2024: "Climate Change & Natural Environment: Protection and Adaptation". In addition, there are several overlapping Council Priority Objectives, the status of which can be found in the 2023 Council Priority Objectives Q4 Report.⁸ This report references the Council Priority Objectives in parentheses where applicable.

ANALYSIS

The City is committed to a sustainable future. The City owns, operates, and maintains a full-service utilities portfolio that provides electric, natural gas, fiber, water, refuse, and wastewater services to residents and businesses in Palo Alto. Palo Alto's continued leadership in advancing sustainability commitments has succeeded mainly because of the continued collaboration of community stakeholders, City departments, and the leadership of the City Council.

The S/CAP Goals and Key Actions are divided into eight areas, four of which are climate-focused and include actions to achieve the city's 80 x 30 and carbon neutrality by 2030 goals (Climate Action, Energy, Electric Vehicles, and Mobility) and four of which are focused on actions that create a sustainable natural environment and adapting to a warming climate (Water, Climate Adaptation & Sea Level Rise, Natural Environment, and Zero Waste). The Work Plan is similarly divided between climate-focused and sustainability-focused priorities.

There are 23 Council Priority Objectives in Council Priority Area Climate Change and The Natural

⁴ Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Report Addendum: Update to the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan, 2023; <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/city-council-agendas-minutes/2023/2023comprehensive-plan-environmental-impact-report-addendum-update-to-the-scap.pdf>

⁵ 2023-2025 S/CAP Workplan, 2023;

https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/sustainability/reports/2023-2025-scap-work-plan_final.pdf

⁶ City Council, November 13, 2023; Agenda Item #11; SR # 2308-1901, <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/sustainability/reports/cy2023-q3-informational-report-on-sustainability-and-climate-action-plan-scap.pdf>

⁷ City Council, February 5, 2024; Agenda Item #15; SR # 2312-2348, <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/sustainability/reports/cy2023q4-informational-report-on-sustainability-and-climate-action-plan-scap.pdf>

⁸ City Council, January 29, 2024; Agenda Item #2A; SR #2401-2526, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=e2acdc3b-a774-4838-8157-4429fee07577>

Environment (CC&NE). This report addresses 16 of those Council Priority Objectives, as well as two in Council Priority Area Community Health, Safety, Wellness, and Belonging (CHSW&B):

Climate Change and the Natural Environment (CC&NE)

Climate Change Protection

- 14 CC&NE: Conduct community engagement and data collection and analysis to develop a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Safety Action Plan for Council approval in 2024
- 15 CC&NE: Continue community engagement efforts to inform the update and receive Council feedback on the 2025 Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan (BPTP) characteristics in preparation for next steps including environmental review and adoption in 2025
- 16 CC&NE: Complete initial pilot area of electric grid modernization
- 18 CC&NE: Continue to improve the Advanced Heat Pump Water Heater Pilot Program in preparation for a full-scale program
- 19 CC&NE: Adopt a residential whole home electrification pilot program
- 20 CC&NE: Refine existing HVAC pilot program to encourage participation as a next step toward a 2025 Council approved commercial rooftop HVAC electrification advanced pilot program
- 21 CC&NE: Develop and approve an Electric Vehicle Strategic Plan
- 22 CC&NE: Develop an EV Replacement Program for the City Fleet
- 23 CC&NE: Develop and initiate implementation of a Reliability and Resiliency Strategic Plan
- 24 CC&NE: Develop draft S/CAP funding study with Council input
- 25 CC&NE: Evaluate and report out Palo Alto Link pilot performance and consider continuation and/or expansion of future services
- 26 CC&NE: Begin community engagement to consider parking policy updates that enhance customer satisfaction, improve program sustainability, and aligns with S/CAP mobility goals
- 27 CC&NE: Amend local building regulations to establish a "One Margin" energy efficiency standard, to allow installation of natural gas plumbing while imposing more stringent energy efficiency and all-electric readiness requirements to all new buildings
- 28 CC&NE: Initiate the 2026 California Building Standards Code update, including the California Green Building Standards Code
- 29 CC&NE: Complete community engagement for the Airport's Long-Range Facilities & Sustainability Plan in accordance with Federal requirements and hold a study session with Council on the draft plan

Climate Change Adaptation: Flood Protection

- 33 CC&NE: Coordinate with Federal and regional partners on a path forward exploring the development of a Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan

Community Health, Safety, Wellness, and Belonging (CHSW&B)

Invest in Reliable Safety Infrastructure and Systems

- 70 CHSW&B: Approve updated Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- 71 CHSW&B: Update Foothills Fire Management Plan

Climate Action

Covering the S/CAP Areas of Climate Action, Energy, Electric Vehicles, and Mobility, this section reports on progress based on the Work Plan Climate Action Priority areas.

The City began work on a “One Margin” energy efficiency standard (27 CC&NE), in light of the temporary moratorium on enforcement of Palo Alto’s current all-electric new construction requirement.⁹ A “One Margin” reach code applies additional efficiency requirements to all new buildings, but takes into account energy use at the source, which favors the additional efficiency and lower emissions of all-electric equipment using carbon neutral electricity. It uses standard energy modeling practices to set its requirements rather than novel approaches like local air-quality standards. It does not discriminate between gas and electric appliances like an “Electric-preferred” code. Staff will bring a reach code amendment to City Council this year.

Because the next building code cycle is for 2026-2028, the interim One Margin code will only be in effect for approximately one year. Staff is evaluating potential regulatory approaches for City Council to consider with the next cycle of the Building Code regulations that are slated to come to Council in 2025 (28 CC&NE).

P1. Grid Modernization (16 CC&NE)

The focus of Priority 1 is to complete the grid modernization plan and begin construction to increase reliability and transformer capacity for electrification. The City’s grid modernization project is meant to prepare the grid for widespread electrification in support of the S/CAP 80 x 30 goal, as well as to improve reliability, replace aging infrastructure, and modernize the grid to accommodate higher penetration of solar, storage, and other technologies. The grid modernization pilot is underway and involves 1,200 homes centered in the northeast part of Palo Alto within Embarcadero Road, Louis Road, Colorado Avenue, Greer Road, and West Bayshore Road.

In February 2024, City Council reviewed the draft Reliability and Resiliency Strategic Plan (23 CC&NE), which is intended to address the need for a reliable, well maintained electric system with enhanced reliability to support an electrified community and a desire among residents for ways to maintain some level of electric supply during outages.¹⁰ The City Council will vote on

⁹ City Council, February 26, 2024; Agenda Item #14; SR #2402-2644, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=8ac11983-10ba-4a79-a823-3693203c22d7>

¹⁰ City Council, February 12, 2024; Agenda Item #1; SR #2311-2211, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=1437d776-f5ce-4d15-82d0-ad5dca3861b0>

approving the Reliability and Resiliency Strategic Plan at the April 15, 2024 Council Meeting.

P2. Launch Programs

The focus of Priority 2 is to launch effective programs for emissions reductions with the highest impact and lowest cost such as single-family electrification, strategic promotion of EVs, commercial rooftop HVAC, and expanded transportation alternatives.

P2.1. Residential Emissions Reduction

- The City launched the Full-Service Heat Pump Water Heater (HPWH) Pilot Program in March 2023 (18 CC&NE). As of March 28, 2024, 282 residents had signed contracts to get a heat pump water heater installed through the full-service HPWH program; 66 of these projects applied for on-bill financing. In addition, in Q1, 20 residents installed heat pump water heaters on their own, receiving a rebate from the City. With the current pace of new signups, the City is on a pace to complete around 300 installations per year, equivalent to about 30% of the water heaters replaced each year. The City continues to expand outreach and improve the program in preparation for a full-scale program (19 CC&NE). In addition, the City is reviewing proposals for a Water Heater Emergency Replacement Program.
- The City's Residential Energy Assistance Program (REAP) for income-qualified customers continues to reach our most vulnerable population, offering energy and water efficiency improvements at no cost to the customer. In Q1 2024, 11 customers participated in the REAP program. Additionally, 19 REAP customers have had a site assessment to receive a HPWH at no cost and are awaiting installation.
- The City held three Electric Vehicle workshops and one E-bike workshop in Q1. Events have included thirteen EV Expos, four financial incentive clinics in multiple languages (Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Mandarin and Cantonese), a month-long EV discount campaign, three e-bike workshops, an e-bike test ride event, and two e-bike discount campaigns.
- The City continues to build out EV infrastructure and expand access in affordable housing and multi-family buildings. As of March 2024, 12 multi-family properties representing 452 housing units (about 4% of all multi-family units in Palo Alto) have installed EV chargers facilitated through the City's EV programs.

P2.2. Non-Residential Emissions Reduction (20 CC&NE)

- The City launched a Spring Forward, Ca\$h Back business rebate program¹¹ to encourage local businesses to participate in the Business Energy Advisor (BEA) Program. As part of the program, the City boosted all efficiency incentives by 20% for BEA customers who complete projects by May 31st, 2024.

P2.3. Citywide Mobility

- Between January 1, 2024 and March 31, 2024, Palo Alto Link, the city's eco-friendly

¹¹ February 2024; Spring Forward, Ca\$h Back, <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/utilities/bill-inserts/spring-forward-cash-back.pdf>

rideshare service, provided 14,620 completed rides, averaging 225 completed rides per service day (25 CC&NE). The top locations for riders were Stanford Research Park, Palo Alto High School, and Gunn High School. Seniors continue to represent a key ridership demographic for Palo Alto Link. City Council heard a study session on Palo Alto Link in February 2024¹² and will review a Palo Alto Link One-Year Service Evaluation in April 2024.¹³

- On March 25, 2024, the City enhanced Palo Alto Link by offering teenagers select rides for free. Teens can now ride to specific destinations supporting teen mental health and wellbeing for free.¹⁴
- In January 2024, City Council reviewed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan Update (15 CC&NE), including various elements of the existing conditions and needs analysis.¹⁵
- The City met with several California cities to learn about their experiences with micro-mobility options, including piloting bike/scooter share programs and neighborhood mobility hubs to provide last-mile connections. The City also began researching options for a Staff E-bike Pool Program.
- The City began development of a road safety plan, “Safer Palo Alto”, funded by a Safe Streets for All grant (14 CC&NE). Safer Palo Alto plan development is critical to reaching Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) goals because improving safety for vulnerable road users is key to reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and increasing green travel. In February, the Planning and Transportation Commission reviewed a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Action Plan Collision Analysis.¹⁶
- The 6th Cycle 2023-2031 Housing Element (Housing Element) was adopted by the City Council on May 8, 2023 and submitted to the state Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) on June 7, 2023. Staff received additional comments from HCD on the adopted Housing Element¹⁷. The Housing Element was revised based on these comments and released for public comment. The revised Housing Element was adopted by the City Council, upon recommendation by the Planning and Transportation Commission, at a joint meeting on April 15, 2024. The adopted Housing Element, with minor modifications directed by Council, will be sent to HCD for review and certification consideration.

¹² City Council, February 6, 2024; Agenda Item #1, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=589&type=2>

¹³ City Council, April 1, 2024; Agenda Item #3, SR #2401-2535, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=70974076-d908-4ee3-b797-2e174e0f925a>

¹⁴ Palo Alto Link Teen Service, March 25, 2024; <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Community-Services/Teen-Services/Palo-Alto-Link-Teen-Service>

¹⁵ City Council, January 22, 2024; Agenda Item #14; SR #2312-2331, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=c1e4514d-05fd-4a07-9b94-8e93f73f1ba1>

¹⁶ Planning and Transportation Commission, February 28; Agenda Item #2; SR #2402-2630, <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/1/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/planning-and-transportation-commission/2024/ptc-2.28-safe-streets.pdf>

¹⁷ Palo Alto Housing Element, April 2024; <https://paloaltohousingelement.com/>

- In December 2023 and January 2024, the City implemented key programs of the Housing Element before the State's January 31, 2024 deadline. This involved adopting Municipal Code amendments to rezone and adjust development standards for consistency with the Housing Element site inventory, and to provide a process for by-right review and approval of certain Housing Element sites.

P2.4. Municipal Electrification

- In Q1 2024, the City received delivery of 13 new Chevy Bolt Electric Vehicles, which replaced internal combustion engine fleet vehicles. There are 28 EVs in the City fleet, or about 15% of the passenger vehicles and light duty trucks and vans (22 CC&NE).
- There are currently 99 City-owned EV chargers, with a total of 131 charging ports. 10 of those chargers are dedicated to City vehicles, while the rest are primarily for public use. A total of 7 ports were recently added, including at Cubberley Community Center, Utilities Engineering, and the Municipal Service Yard.

P2.5. EV Strategic Plan (21 CC&NE)

- In June 2023, Council approved policy guidelines for an Electric Vehicle Strategic Plan. In Q1 2024, the City's consultant completed an EV Adoption Scenario brainstorm. This plan is part of the S/CAP Funding Study (see P5. Funding Needs and Sources).

P3. Build Awareness and Confidence

The focus of Priority 3 is to build community awareness and confidence in electrification through engagement, addressing concerns, and program results.

- The City completed data collection for the 2022 Greenhouse Gas Inventory. The 2022 Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory will be completed in May, and the 2022 Municipal Greenhouse Gas Inventory will be completed in July.
- Staff continues to publish a monthly Climate Action Blog and a Quarterly Sustainability Newsletter. In Q1 2024, the City published a January¹⁸ and February¹⁹ Climate Action Blog; and a February²⁰ Sustainability Newsletter. The February Sustainability Newsletter had a 57% open rate, which is the percentage of readers that open the e-mail you send them. The average open rate for electronic newsletters is 21.5%.
- In Q1, the City held three Electric Vehicle workshops, one E-bike workshop, a Planning a Simple Native Garden for Beginners Workshop, a compost workshop, and a Repair Cafe. Staff provided information on the HPWH program at the Lunar Year Fair, a Neighborhood Town Hall Meeting, and the Downtown Palo Alto Farmer's Market.
- In March, the Climate Protection Ad Hoc Committee²¹ held a Working Group meeting discussing the S/CAP Funding Study, the Reliability and Resiliency Strategic Plan, and the

¹⁸ Climate Action Blog, January 2024; <https://medium.com/paloaltoconnect/progress-on-sustainability-and-climate-action-goals-d714f7d7f056>

¹⁹ Climate Action Blog, February 2024; <https://medium.com/paloaltoconnect/climate-action-blog-emergency-preparation-in-an-electric-future-133d3ca298a4>

²⁰ Sustainability Newsletter, February 2024; https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Sustainability-Newsletter-February-2024.html?soid=1138677832922&aid=X2xDcyszQ_Q

²¹ Climate Protection Ad Hoc Committee, <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/City-Clerk/City-Council-Committees/Climate-Protection-Ad-Hoc-Committee>

2024 City Council Priority Objectives.

- The City completed a proposal for a Youth Climate Advisory Board and hopes to launch that later this year.
- The City is updating the Palo Alto Airport Long-Range Facilities and Sustainability Plan (LRFSP), in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration requirements (29 CC&NE). The City held three public meetings in 2023 on the LRFSP²². In Q1 2024, the City held the fourth public meeting in February 2024. At that meeting, participants reviewed facility requirements, environmental and sustainability considerations, and draft airport alternatives. In addition, the City introduced the concept of runway location and levees as a result of sea level rise.

P4. Additional Emissions Reductions (24 CC&NE)

The focus of Priority 4 is to identify an additional 9% in emissions reduction opportunities to achieve 80 x 30.

- The City is developing a comprehensive plan to gather ideas from community members and experts about new technologies and potential approaches to additional emissions reductions in Palo Alto. More work will be done when the S/CAP Funding Study is completed.
- As part of the S/CAP Funding Study, the City plans on identifying potential building electrification measures for commercial and multi-family buildings and to prioritize the most cost-effective approaches to achieving the additional emissions reductions needed to achieve 80 x 30.

P5. Funding Needs and Sources (24 CC&NE)

The focus of Priority 5 is to identify, by 2024, funding needed and potential funding sources for full scale implementation of the highest impact emissions reductions.

- At the January 16 Council Meeting, City Council approved a professional services contract with Energy and Environmental Economics, Inc. (E3) for the S/CAP Funding Study.²³ The S/CAP Funding study will assess the funding needs and explore funding sources to meet Palo Alto's building and transportation electrification goals and will center around the development of an analytical model to estimate the "community cost to electrify" and to structure the financing of future electrification programs. Since then, E3 has completed data collection, conducted a funding model workshop, completed an EV Adoption Scenario brainstorm, drafted an S/CAP funding model framework, drafted a funding source survey, and presented to the Climate Protection Ad Hoc Committee Working Group.

²² Palo Alto Airport Long Range Facilities & Sustainability Plan (LRFSP), <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Public-Works/Palo-Alto-Airport/Palo-Alto-Airport-Long-Range-Facilities-Sustainability-Plan-LRFSP>

²³ City Council, January 16, 2024; Agenda Item #4; SR #2308-1939, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=0e530b89-bae8-4971-93d5-849d82973b6e>

Sustainability

The Sustainability section of the work plan includes the following S/CAP Areas: Water, Climate Adaptation & Sea Level Rise, Natural Environment, and Zero Waste.

Water: Further Water Conservation

The near-term focus for water is reducing water consumption while exploring ways to capture and store water and increase the availability and use of recycled water.

- Since Q4 2023, the percentage of customers who have accessed the WaterSmart portal, a water management tool which provides residents information about their water consumption and personalized water conservation measures, increased from 17% to 22% in Q1 2024. In Q3 2023, 15% of customers accessed the WaterSmart portal. In addition, through this program, home water reports are sent to around 11,000 single-family customers on a monthly basis. A control group of around 4,000 single-family customers currently do not get the reports. In Q1 2024, the average open rate of home water report emails was 73%.
- The Regional Water Quality Control Plant (RWQCP), which protects the San Francisco Bay by cleaning and treating wastewater before it is discharged into the bay, continues its work on the Advanced Water Purification System design, which will reduce the salinity of treated water used for irrigation.

Climate Adaptation and Sea Level Rise: Prepare for Climate Change (33 CC&NE)

The near-term focus for Climate Adaptation and Sea Level Rise is to develop and adopt a multi-year Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan and minimize wildland fire hazards through Foothills Fire Management Plan implementation, zoning, and collaborating with Fire agencies.

- In January 2024, City Council adopted an ordinance authorizing improvements to the Palo Alto Baylands as part of the Horizontal Levee Pilot Project.²⁴ Horizontal levees are a green, nature-based, multi-beneficial alternative to traditional greyscape solutions (e.g. rip rap, sheet piling) for wave attenuation on the bayside of flood control levees. Since 2017, the City has been working in collaboration with the Association of Bay Area Governments to design and eventually construct the Palo Alto Horizontal Levee Pilot Project on the east side of Harbor Road near Byxbee Park.
- The Army Corps of Engineers concluded its Shoreline II Feasibility Study which assessed federal interest in funding shoreline protections such as levee improvements. The USACE determined that there is no federal interest at this time for funding shoreline improvements and will close out the study in Q2 2024. Staff is meeting with Valley Water to determine other potential collaboration efforts for sea level rise protection.
- Staff is participating in regional discussions and focus groups that will inform requirements for SB272 Regional Sea Level Rise planning requirements and aligned subregional plans. These efforts will specifically inform requirements and next steps for Palo Alto's own sea level rise planning efforts (33 CC&NE).

²⁴ City Council, January 22, 2024; Agenda Item #5, SR #2303-1230, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=da4264ea-77a8-4485-abd9-17c0987ccb67>

- The City is working to continue progress where possible for sea level rise planning (33 CC&NE). The City signed a Sea Level Rise Coalition Letter to the California State Legislature, urging them to preserve funding for sea-level rise protection in the State budget. In addition, the City submitted an individual letter regarding the Governor's proposed cuts to Bay Area shoreline restoration and flood protection projects.
- Staff prepared a professional services agreement to update the Palo Alto Foothills Fire Management Plan and Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and combine both plans into one document to integrate the wildfire mitigation efforts among the Palo Alto community (71 CHSW&B). The City is reviewing proposals and anticipates completion of the update in Q2 2024.
- The federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires all cities, counties, and special districts to adopt a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) to receive disaster mitigation funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The City is working on an update to the 2017 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (70 CHSW&B).

Natural Environment: Enhance Biodiversity

The near-term focus for Natural Environment is to increase Palo Alto's Tree Canopy, reduce pesticide usage in parks and open space preserves, and support the Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan and incorporate it in municipal projects.

- In January 2024, City Council reviewed the Tree Protection Ordinance, which began in July 2022.²⁵ During the first year of implementation, staff made note of code sections that caused confusion or did not work as originally intended and provided recommendations to City Council on proposed changes to Palo Alto Municipal Code. In February, City Council reviewed the second reading of the ordinance amending Chapter 8.04 and Chapter 8.10 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code.²⁶ City Council will review the Ordinance again in April.²⁷
- In February 2024, the City launched the Canopy Tree Plotter²⁸, a collaboration with Canopy. Tree Plotter is a tree inventory software created by Plan-it Geo, a company that specializes in trees and technology. This online resource is a useful tool that enhances tree planting and tree care management, explores the benefits trees provide, and enables users to share tree stewardship activities.

Zero Waste: Support Waste Reduction

The near-term focus for Zero Waste is to encourage food waste reduction, prevention, and recovery and provide waste prevention technical assistance; eliminate single-use disposable containers; and prioritize domestic processing of recyclable materials.

- As part of the new Zero Waste Living outreach campaign, the City published thirteen

²⁵ City Council, January 16, 2024; Agenda Item #13; SR #2310-2190, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=c760bc3c-83e1-483d-b3e2-42638d781c49>

²⁶ City Council, February 26, 2024; Agenda Item #11; SR 2402-2631, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=582d22a1-59a2-4d07-a2dd-ac4253f4247e>

²⁷ City Council, April 1, 2024; Agenda Item #10; SR 2403-2809, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=132d1d26-0e8c-49c2-8773-ff6e0c9dc1f3>

²⁸ Canopy Tree Plotter, February 2024; <https://pg-cloud.com/Canopy/>

Zero Waste Minute e-newsletters in Q1 2024.

- The City will hold a compost workshop on April 6, 2024 for residents to learn how easy it is to make their own compost. Palo Alto residents can receive a free compost bin or worm bin (one per household) by attending a compost workshop.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

Initiatives will be managed and funded across various departments and funds. The Fiscal Year 2024 work items in the 2023-2025 draft S/CAP Work Plan can proceed with the actions and resources approved in the Fiscal Year 2024 Adopted Budget. Staff expects to submit additional resource requests as part of the annual budget process in subsequent years as the work plan proceeds.

Some items in other work plans are also relevant to the S/CAP Work Plan. The Utilities Strategic Plan, for example, includes workforce development and advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) work items that are directly relevant to the S/CAP. Some of these may involve future budget requests as well.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement on S/CAP implementation is wide-reaching and coordinated with multiple departments. Efforts include direct engagement, webinars, social media and other digital marketing/outreach, website updates, public signage, Ad Hoc Committee meeting participation, leveraging the city's communication platforms, and more. Stakeholder engagement efforts were described in the Analysis section, under P3. Build Awareness and Confidence.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This report is for informational purposes only with no action required by the Council, and therefore it is not a project subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

APPROVED BY:

Brad Eggleston, Director Public Works/City Engineer