



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

### AGENDA ITEM

**DATE:** January 27, 2021

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

#### SUBJECT

**FRAMEWORK FOR OUR FUTURE: DEVELOPING A REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN TO GUIDE SAN DIEGO COUNTY TOWARD A ZERO CARBON FUTURE (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

#### OVERVIEW

If we are to have any chance of limiting global warming to below 2.0°C and thereby avoiding the most disastrous effects of climate change, we must immediately transform and decarbonize all sectors of the economy within the next twenty years. It will take unprecedented, collective effort of all levels of government and civil society to achieve this goal.

In the San Diego region, climate change is already causing extreme heat and historic droughts, wildfires, torrential storms and historic 100- and 500- year flooding, sea level rise, millions of dollars in property damage, and threats to public health. Communities of color and low-income communities are disproportionately impacted by environment injustices and health disparities that will continue to get worse due to the climate crisis. In recent years, nearly all of the region's 18 local governments have adopted climate action plans (CAP) to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in their communities. While progress has been made through the implementation of these plans, the region must do more through collaborative action to make meaningful reductions in GHG emissions.

The County of San Diego (County) has an important role to play in leading decarbonization efforts within our region. The County has made some progress in reducing GHG emissions in the unincorporated areas and within its facilities by implementing 26 measures contained in the 2018 CAP. However, in order to achieve significant reductions, the County must adopt an aggressive and legally enforceable CAP and lead through bold regional action. A regional approach to climate action would establish a framework to achieve the goal of zero carbon across the region as quickly as possible. This effort will achieve greater GHG reductions than the County could achieve on its own and bring shared prosperity and economic dynamism to the region. The County is partnering with the University of California San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy to harness its global expertise in decarbonization strategies to develop this framework for the San Diego region.

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Today's action includes a recommendation to take the first step toward developing a regional zero carbon sustainability plan by crafting a framework that will position the region as a global leader in climate planning as we strive for zero carbon by 2035.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**SUPERVISOR TERRA LAWSON-REMER AND VICE CHAIR NORA VARGAS**

1. Find that the proposed project (the direction to staff in this letter) is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15060(c)(3) and 15378(b)(5).
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a framework for a regional zero carbon sustainability plan in partnership with the University of California San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy which shall include strategies and initiatives to achieve zero carbon in the region by 2035.
3. Pursuant to Board Policy A-87, authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting, upon successful negotiations and determination of fair and reasonable price, to award a contract for the development by the University of California San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy of a regional framework and report to the Board as described below, with an option for additional research and leadership on subsequent actions as directed by the Board. Authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting, in consultation with the Director, Planning and Development Services, to execute the option based on funding availability and to amend the contract as needed.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Operational Plan for the Land Use and Environment Group Executive Office. There is no net change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years for Fiscal Year 2020-21. After the regional framework is developed and based on the recommended actions that the County and others can take, additional funding and additional staff years may be required to continue any County role in the framework in Fiscal Year 2021-22 and beyond.

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

The proposed actions will help businesses in San Diego County through the support and development of technological advances in the green economy.

**ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

N/A

**BACKGROUND**

In 2015, the Paris Agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change established a long-term goal to limit global warming to well below 2.0°C in order to reduce the global risks and impacts of climate change. In support of this Agreement, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a United-Nations-sanctioned international body that

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continues to provide regular updates on global climate change, has recognized that carbon neutrality must be achieved by mid-century to meet this goal. In 2018, former Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-55-18 to establish a statewide goal of carbon neutrality no later than 2045, in alignment with the Paris Agreement.

The County of San Diego (County) has made some progress in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the unincorporated areas and within its facilities through implementation of the 2015-2020 Strategic Energy Plan, 2018 Climate Action Plan (CAP), and the Electric Vehicle Roadmap. However, even with the adoption of a new CAP by the County, a commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2035-2045, and despite considering adopted CAPs by most of the region's local agencies, more must be done. To make progress towards the Paris Agreement goal and Executive Order B-55-18, and to avert the worst impacts of climate change, the region needs to take a carbon neutral approach to climate action planning immediately.

Regional collaboration between agencies, universities, businesses, workers, and communities is essential to develop policies and programs that aim to make the needed GHG emissions reductions and carbon sequestration to achieve zero carbon by 2035. A regional approach will incorporate strategies tailored to the region's local context to achieve zero carbon in key sectors including energy, transportation, and land use. In addition to rapidly reducing GHG emissions, these climate mitigation measures and investments will have substantial co-benefits, including improving public health and quality of life in the region, reducing the burden of transportation costs on working families, increasing the dynamism of our regional economy, addressing our region's affordable housing crisis, and providing San Diegans with thousands of well-paying jobs building the infrastructure that will propel our region into the future.

An agreement with the University of California San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (UCSD GPS) qualifies for a single source exception to Board Policy A-87 under paragraph D.3 of that policy. UCSD GPS, in alliance with the Jacobs School of Engineering, has been a leader in global and national research on decarbonization strategies and is well-positioned and uniquely-qualified to scale this work to the San Diego County region. Their research has been recognized by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Brookings Institution, Initiative on Energy and Climate, and has been foundational in the development of the America's Zero Carbon Action Plan (2020), led by the Zero Carbon Consortium and published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

UCSD GPS will lead the development of the framework for a regional zero carbon sustainability plan. This framework will (1) show the physical infrastructure changes and investments necessary to connect today's energy system with net zero emissions goals by 2035, (2) create a roadmap of actions that need to be taken in the public and private sectors, (3) provide a model of how the region's various agencies and jurisdictions can collaborate to achieve shared climate action goals, (4) identify places where San Diego (county and other institutions) have the leverage needed for action and where engagement with other institutions at higher (state, federal) and lower (city, community) levels will be needed, and (5) demonstrate how climate mitigation can benefit all of San Diego's residents by improving air quality, creating well-paying employment opportunities, and reducing household costs for communities of color and low-income communities. The

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framework should build on the work and findings of the Energy Policy Initiatives Center (EPIC), a non-profit research entity of the University of San Diego School of Law, that is currently developing a database of existing federal, state, and local regulations that is meant to illustrate what additional GHG reduction opportunities are available in the region. The summary reports by emissions sectors, such as transportation, waste, industrial and agricultural, are anticipated to be complete by the end of February. The UCSD GPS team should collaborate with municipalities and other entities in the region, to establish the framework by which the San Diego region combats global climate change.

Consideration of opportunities in energy, transportation, built environment, industry, agriculture, open space, and materials should be prioritized. Investment strategies should focus on expansion of employment in the green economy, equity, and the achievement of environmental justice. The framework should also provide a roadmap to implementing these actions and describe existing constraints and barriers to collaboration.

The UCSD GPS team should build on the work currently being done in the region by local agencies, including the County, 18 cities, Port of San Diego, San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, San Diego Association of Governments, and transportation authorities, such as the Metropolitan Transportation System and North County Transit District. Drawing on tools like SANDAG's Climate Action Data Portal and Regional Climate Action Planning Framework (ReCAP), the team should work with County staff and consultants, including Ascent Environmental, Inc., EPIC, and Harris & Associates, to develop a regional plan that integrates the County's concurrent CAP, SEIR, and other climate planning processes with the GHG reduction strategies of jurisdictions across the county.

The UCSD GPS team should return at regular intervals to report on its progress to the Board, or a committee specifically constituted to advise the Board on climate policy, and work with staff to ensure robust public and stakeholder participation throughout the process.

At the completion of work, the UCSD GPS team will return to the Board to provide recommendations on the framework and next steps toward the development of a regional zero carbon sustainability plan. Should the County elect to do so, staff may exercise an option under the contract with UCSD GPS for additional research and/or implementation of the recommendations.

Today's action is the first step in the development of a regional zero carbon sustainability plan by crafting a framework that will position the San Diego County region as a global leader in climate planning as we strive for zero carbon by 2035.

**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Today's proposed action to develop a framework for a regional zero carbon sustainability plan supports the County of San Diego's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan's Sustainable Environments/Thriving Initiative by enhancing the quality of the environment by focusing on sustainability, pollution prevention, and strategic planning.

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Respectfully submitted,

TERRA LAWSON-REMER  
Supervisor, Third District

NORA VARGAS  
Vice Chair, First District

**ATTACHMENT(S)**  
None

**AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**

**REQUIRES FOUR VOTES:** ☐ Yes ☒ No

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**WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED**

☐ Yes ☒ No

**PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:**

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**BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:**

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**BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:**

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**MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:**

Click here to enter text.

**ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):**

Click here to enter text.

**ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:** Click here to enter text.

**OTHER CONCURRENCE(S):** Click here to enter text.

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