



**Status of General Plans**  
**(for the local governments of Contra Costa)**  
**June 2020**

Antioch

Brentwood

Clayton

Concord

Danville

El Cerrito

Hercules

Lafayette

Martinez

ga

Pleasant Hill

Richmond

San Pablo

San Ramon

Walnut Creek

Unincorporated, Contra Costa County

in 2020

= No Updates



**A general plan (GP) is the local government's long-term blueprint for the community's vision of future growth.**

***Each county and city must adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgement bears relation to its planning. (§65300) The general plan acts as a "constitution for future development."***

**--Leshar Communications V. City of Walnut Creek**

The General Plan Guidelines for cities are published by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) as required by state planning law (§ 65040.2). Guidelines include discussion of general plan process, format, statutory requirements, and other laws and issues which can influence the general plan.

In 2016, the Legislature passed and Governor Brown signed [Senate Bill 1000 \(Leyva, Chapter 587\)](#), requiring cities and counties that have disadvantaged communities to incorporate environmental justice (EJ) policies into their General Plans, either in a separate EJ element or by integrating related goals, policies, and objectives throughout the other elements. This update, or revision if the local government already has EJ goals, policies, and objectives, must happen "upon the adoption or next revision of two or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018." [http://opr.ca.gov/docs/Environmental Justice General Plans.pdf](http://opr.ca.gov/docs/Environmental_Justice_General_Plans.pdf)



# Introduction

The immediate and impending impacts of climate change pose a threat to our generation and generations to come. Look no further than July 2019, which was the [hottest recorded month](#) in history. The latest [annual assessment report](#) from the United Nations states that greenhouse gas emissions are still rising dangerously. Globally, we have failed to limit the rise of greenhouse gasses despite repeated warnings from scientists. [China](#) and the [United States](#), the world's greatest polluters, *increased* their emissions last year and will have to take part in "deeper and faster cuts." Furthermore, the highest [carbon dioxide reading](#) in millions of years, 410 parts per million, was reported by scientists in 2017. This is an entirely new atmosphere that cities and all of humanity will have to contend with.

In many regards, the Bay Area is a national leader in progressive environmental policy and on a local policy level, cities are playing a significant role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. For Contra Costa County Cities, one of the most immediate actions they can take is updating their General Plans.

A city's General Plan dictates its goals for the future and how it plans to achieve those goals. California State law requires that each city and county in California prepare and maintain a General Plan, which serves as "the local government's long-term blueprint for the community's vision of future growth." As obligated by state law, "each county and city must adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgement bears relation to its planning ([§65300](#)). In 2016, the State of California adopted [Senate Bill 1000](#) (SB 1000). The Bill requires that all General Plan updates incorporate environmental justice (EJ), which occur "upon the adoption or next revision of two or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018." A guide for [drafting](#) a general plan has been published as required by state law ([§65040.2](#)).

General Plan, or Policy? In recent years, cities have primarily focused on developing policy documents such as Climate Action Plans (CAP) and Climate Action and Resiliency Plans (CARP), which typically call for the calculation of greenhouse gas inventories, set targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emission, and develop an emergency plan to respond to the impacts. Many CAPs have been influenced by the [Global Warming Solutions Act](#) (AB 32). This historic law set the goal to reduce "the state's greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050." CAPs serve as important guidance and policy documents for cities to achieve this goal and will continue to provide the details for how a city will reach established, measurable reductions.

However, a city's priorities and policies are driven by the General Plan, which acts as a "constitution for future development" and the blueprint for local governance. Therefore, it is essential that the General Plan be an umbrella to drive action, ensure consistency with CAPs and outline and provide the city's overall goals and objectives. A General Plan must be reviewed every year, whereas CAPs are policy and guidance documents—both serve an important role. In light of SB 1000, the time for General Plan updates is now.

This report reviews the status of all General Plan updates in Contra Costa County and provides links and comparisons of all 19 cities and the county in order to identify and share best case examples of updated General Plans to best address the climate crisis.



**Five Contra Costa County cities (Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo, Brentwood and San Ramon) have recently taken action to incorporate new separate General Plan elements or language in existing elements to address climate action, sustainability, resiliency and/or environmental justice into their General Plans.**



**Seven Local Governments (Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Oakley, Lafayette, Martinez, Hercules and Unincorporated County) in our County are currently reviewing their General Plans and have the current opportunity to be leaders ensuring robust Sustainability & Climate Policies are put in place.**



**The other Seven remaining Local Governments may have some climate action plans in place or in consideration, but the slate is currently clean in regards to General Plans updates. These cities have not updated their General Plans to include policy to address the local impacts of climate change.**

**TABLE I: SUMMARY OF GENERAL PLAN STATUS IN EACH CONTRA COSTA COUNTY CITY**

Antioch	
Brentwood	✓
Clayton	
Concord	
Danville	
El Cerrito	
Hercules	IP
Lafayette	IP
Martinez	IP
Moraga	
Oakley	IP
Orinda	
Pinole	✓
Pittsburg	IP
Pleasant Hill	IP
Richmond	✓
San Pablo	✓
San Ramon	✓
Walnut Creek	
Unincorporated, Contra Costa County	IP

 = Completed
  = In Process in 2020
  = No Updates







## Antioch

**Population:** 111,535

**Last GP Update:** 2003

**Link to GP:**

[https://www.antiochca.gov/fc/community-development/planning/Antioch\\_Adopted\\_General\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.antiochca.gov/fc/community-development/planning/Antioch_Adopted_General_Plan.pdf)

**GP Status:** To be updated in the next few years

**Is there a CAP?** Yes

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable goals?** Yes

**Link to CAP**

<https://www.antiochca.gov/fc/environment/climate/Antioch%20CCAP%20Final.pdf>

**Summary:** Antioch's General Plan was last updated in 2003 and includes references to the sustainable use of water, energy, and vehicle efficiency. It is expected that the General Plan will be updated in the next few years, but there is no designated start date. With the planned update to the General Plan, a separate element to address environmental justice will be included. In June 2009, City Council passed [Resolution 2009/57](#), which set the goal of reducing GHG emissions by 25% below 2005 levels by 2020 and 80% below 2005 levels by 2050. The city has passed a resolution to complete a greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory—both municipal and community-wide—every five years. The last complete inventory was taken in 2015. In September 2016, City Council approved [completed inventories](#) from 2005, 2010, and 2015. The inventories show a 21% emission reduction in the municipal sector and a 12% reduction in community emissions. More recently, a basic GHG inventory was completed in 2017 through the East Bay Energy Watch Program. The city adopted a CAP in 2011. Of significance is that the City is currently updating their CAP and turning it into a [Climate Action Resilience Plan](#) (CARP). The city will most likely be completing a survey for their CARP during the winter and completing the CARP by March 2020. A CARP is a guidance document which seeks to incorporate the principle of resiliency. The City does not offer MCE as an alternative to PG&E. Currently, there are no policies relating to plastics. More information on Antioch's Climate Action Initiatives can be found [here](#).

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# Brentwood

**Brentwood is one of five cities (Brentwood, Danville, Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo) who have lead the way to include Sustainability & Climate Change in their General Plan**

**Population:** 63,800

**Last GP Update:** 2014

**Link to GP:** <https://www.brentwoodca.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=52464>

**GP Status:** To be updated in 2024

**Is there a CAP?** No

**Does it have a GHG inventory & measurable goals?** No. But General Plan does!

**Link to CAP:** N/A

**Summary:** The City of Brentwood last updated its General Plan in 2014. The city expects to update its General Plan every ten years with the update occurring in 2024. The plan includes some good references to climate change.

- **Chapter 4, The Conservation and Open Space (COS)**” page 4-1; element of their general Plan includes
  - **“Goal COS 8: Reduce air pollutants and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions”** page 4-11; lists 9 policies itemized and 6 action items; and
  - **“Goal COS 9: Promote conservation of energy and other natural resources”** page 4-13; lists 9 policies itemized and 7 action items.
- Of particular note is this language for other cities to use in General Plan updates:
  - Item COS 8-6 in the 2014 General Plan calls for the implementation of a CAP, and Action COS 8c clarifies it will have:
    1. A baseline greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory;
    2. An adopted GHG emissions reduction target of at least 15% below the business-as-usual projections by 2020;
    3. GHG reductions measures that apply to community wide operations, City operations, and future development projects; and
    4. An implementation and monitoring program.
  - **However, it is important to note that as of 2020, the City of Brentwood has yet to begin the process of the 2014 plan for creating a climate action plan. Six years later, there remains no definitive start date for the creation of a CAP in 2020, and staff say its creation could roll over into the next General Plan update in 2024!**

It is important to ensure that good GP language is followed up with action to actually implement and reduce GHG emissions. The City has yet to offer MCE as an alternative to PG&E. It has not considered policies on plastics.

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# Clayton

**Population:** 12,192

**Last GP Update:** 2016

**Link to GP:** <https://ci.clayton.ca.us/2018/03/08/general-plan-doc-buttons/>

**To be updated next:** No planned update

**Is there a CAP?** No

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable goals?** No

**Link to CAP:** N/A

**Summary:** The last General Plan update in Clayton occurred in July 2016. The last update was not comprehensive, however, and was focused on miscellaneous land use. There are currently no plans to update the General Plan. There is interest in the creation of a Downtown Specific Plan. Due to Clayton's small size and low level of growth, a GHG component is not included in the General Plan. Rather, the City works with environmental consultants who analyze each project individually to determine GHG emissions. The City does not have a CAP and there are currently no plans to implement one at the time. The City currently does not offer MCE as an alternative to PG&E. There are currently no policies relating to plastics.

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**Population:** 129,688

**Last GP Update:** 2007

**Link to GP:** <http://www.cityofconcord.org/418/General-Plan>

**GP Status:** No planned update

**Is there a CAP?** Yes

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable goals?** Yes

**Link to CAP:**

<https://ca-concord.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/487/Citywide-Climate-Action-Plan-PDF>

**Summary:** Concord's General Plan has a time horizon through 2030 and was originally adopted in 2007. A number of amendments have been adopted since that time, but no comprehensive update is currently scheduled. The General Plan contains a dedicated [Parks, Open Space, and Conservation chapter](#). The Land Use Chapter includes references to [green building](#) and the Transportation chapter calls for [lessening the impact of transportation](#) on climate change. However, most of the City's specific and measurable climate target goals are listed in its CAP, which was adopted in 2013. The CAP poses 2005 as its baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory. Additionally, the City is currently in the process of completing a [Specific Plan for the Concord Naval Weapons Station](#) which also has an adopted [CAP as part of the precursor Area Plan](#). Since June 2017, the city has offered MCE as a [community choice energy alternative](#) to PG&E. The City implemented a [Styrofoam ban](#) in January 2019. In addition, the City has adopted an [environmental purchasing policy](#).

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# Danville

***Danville is one of five cities (Brentwood, Danville, Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo) who have lead the way to include Sustainability & Climate Change in their General Plan***

**Population:** 44,650

**Last GP Update:** 2013

**Link to GP:**

<https://www.danville.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1026/2030-General-Plan-PDF?bidId=>

**GP Status:** No planned update

**Is there a CAP?** Yes

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable goals?** Yes

**Link to CAP:**

<https://www.danville.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/558/Danville-Climate-Action-Plan-PDF?bidId=>

**Summary:** In 2013, the Danville Town Council adopted the Danville 2030 General Plan.

**Chapter 6: Resources and Hazards**" page 6-1 includes **"Goal 6D. Sustainability and Greenhouse Gas Reduction"** includes:

- **"Goal 31: Conserve non-renewable resources through solid waste reduction, water conservation, and energy efficiency programs.** Lists 13 policies
- **"Goal 32: Encourage building and construction practices that minimize environmental impacts and natural resource consumption"** and lists 9 policies
- **"Goal 33: Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the Town of Danville in a manner that is consistent with state law and regional initiatives"** and lists 13 policies
  - Of particular note, page 6-38 includes a nice definition of types of greenhouse gases: and on page 6-56: a clear measurable statement: "Town will be able to meet (and exceed) the (California 15 percent reduction threshold by 2020), as established by the California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan. To reduce emissions 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050, Local measures may be needed to supplement the state and federal measures that will result in reductions during the next decade.
  - at the bottom it states "Please consult the Danville Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) for more information on greenhouse gas emission forecasts and reduction measures" Concurrent with the adoption of the Danville 2030 General Plan, the Town prepared and adopted a Sustainability Action Plan (SAP); replacing Danville's CAP March 2009. The overarching goal of the SAP is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and Danville's obligations under Assembly Bill 32 to achieve a greenhouse gas reduction target of 15% below 2005 levels by the year 2020. The SAP serves as a community-wide CAP but addresses broader concerns related to waste reduction and resource consumption. The Town's baseline GHG inventory, completed in 2008, can be found in its SAP. The General Plan does not have a separate or implementing element to address environmental justice or climate change.
  - Item 33-04 is clear that "During the development review process, impose appropriate mitigation measures on new development to reduce greenhouse gas emissions" but notes that this is addressed by the June 2010, Bay Area Air Quality Management District adopted thresholds for identifying significant air quality and greenhouse gas impacts, along with guidelines for evaluating the impacts of new development on climate change. Mitigation measures can help reduce emission levels by reducing vehicle trips and energy use.
  - The Town adopted a [plastic bag ordinance](#) in December 2014. MCE was offered as an alternative to PG&E in [April 2018](#); [town offices](#) are powered by 100% renewable energy through MCE.
  - Note the language for Danville is a bit more defined, 15% below 2005 levels with a GHG inventory already completed. And those numbers are actually referenced and included in the general Plan for targeting and accountability: "Activities in Danville generated about 351,690 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> (MTCO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent gases in 2008. Continuing "business as usual" would result in a 6 percent rise in emissions (to 373,630 MTCO<sub>2</sub>) by 2020 and a 19 percent rise (to 420,440 MTCO<sub>2</sub>) by 2035. Most of what is in the general plan is more "Consistent with other fed/state regs, or Education, Promote, Encourage, Support" and more voluntary---rather than policy driven.
  - and vague with 33-13 "Periodically review the Town's progress toward meeting its greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets" whereas some cities have passes resolutions for specific and timely review

MCE was offered as an alternative to PG&E in [April 2018](#); [town offices](#) are powered by 100% renewable energy through MCE. The Town adopted a [plastic bag ordinance](#) in December 2014.

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# El Cerrito

**Population:** 25, 601

**Last GP Update:** 1999

**Link to GP:**

<https://el-cerrito.org/718/General-Plan>

**GP Status:** To be updated in coming years

**Is there a CAP?** Yes

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable goals?** Yes

**Link to CAP:**

<https://www.el-cerrito.org/325/Climate-Action-Plan>

**Summary:** The city of El Cerrito has demonstrated commitment to sustainability and addressing climate change. The General Plan was last updated in 1999 and has environmental elements. The city has some plans to update the General Plan, however, a [series of amendments](#) in 2014 have been used to implement the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, which has been the bigger focus for the city. The [San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan](#) focuses on transit-oriented development and creating complete-streets in El Cerrito's main corridor. The city adopted its CAP in 2013 with the intention of updating it in 2020. The following [report](#) was used to evaluate implementation of the CAP in June 2019. The city's GHG emissions reduction [targets](#) are to reach 15% below 2005 levels by 2020 and 30% below 2005 levels by 2035. The baseline greenhouse gas inventory is based on 2005 levels and the most recent inventory was completed in 2016. El Cerrito developed and employed its own excel-based calculator for emissions. The GHG inventory is both municipal and community-wide. The city also has an [Urban Greening Plan](#) and an [Active Transportation Plan](#). A major part of the City's mission and vision, as outlined in their current [Strategic Plan](#), focuses on environmental sustainability. El Cerrito has an environmental preferential purchasing agreement, which was passed by [resolution](#) in 2006. The city has passed resolutions on the distribution of expanded [polystyrene \(EPS\) foam food ware](#) and the use of [plastic bags](#). The City Council also approved of a resolution declaring a [climate emergency](#) in August 2019. The city offers MCE as an alternative to PG&E and, in July 2017, decided to Opt Up to Deep Green for 100% renewable energy for their city-owned operations. The City posts monthly updates of its "Green Happenings" [here](#).

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# Hercules

**Population:** 26,276 (Census estimate – 2019)

**Last Comprehensive GP Update:** 1998

**Link to GP:**

<https://www.ci.hercules.ca.us/government/planning/general-plan>

**GP Status:** Currently updating Safety Element  
(<https://www.ci.hercules.ca.us/government/planning/safety-element-hazard-mitigation>);  
no comprehensive update is currently scheduled.

**Is there a Climate Action Plan?** No

**Does it have a GHG inventory?** No

**Link to CAP:** N/A

**Summary:** The Hercules General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 1998. The City has since then completed updates to select elements of the General Plan, including: Circulation Element (2018); Housing Element (2015), and Growth Management (2013). The City is currently updating the Safety Element of the General Plan, which will address aspects of climate change such as sea-level rise. The updated elements do not directly address environmental justice, as there are no designated disadvantaged communities within the City limits. In 2007, Hercules joined Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) as a full member to participate in the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign. In 2008, the City Council passed an ordinance limiting polystyrene in food service, and in 2011, approved participation in RecycleMore's regional effort to implement a model single-use bag ordinance in West Contra Costa County. However, Hercules does not have a Climate Action Plan, and there are no current plans to implement one.

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# Lafayette

**Population:** 26,521

**Last GP Update:** 2002

**Link to GP:**

<https://www.lovelafayette.org/city-hall/city-departments/planning-building/general-master-specific-plans/general-plan>

**GP Status:** Update to begin in 2020

**Is there a CAP?** The City implemented an Environmental Action Plan

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable goals?** Yes

**Link to CAP:**

<https://www.lovelafayette.org/home/showdocument?id=4138>

**Summary:** The last comprehensive General Plan update was adopted in 2002. Lafayette most recently updated its General Plan Land Use Element in 2018 and its Housing Element in 2014. The City is beginning the next comprehensive update in 2020. The 2002 General Plan does not address environmental justice or climate change. However, there are sustainable aspects throughout the plan, including minor elements on energy conservation, reducing vehicle emissions and solid wastes and conserving water. The City of Lafayette adopted an Environmental Action Plan (EAP) in 2017. There is language in the EAP that it will be used as the baseline for future climate action planning projects. Previously, the City adopted the [Environmental Strategy](#) in 2006, which was later updated in 2011. The City undertakes a municipal GHG inventory analysis every five years. The next will take place in 2020; the baseline was conducted in 2005. GHG emissions from 2015 can be found [here](#). The City officially joined [MCE](#) in January 2016 and, in 2017, voted to opt up to Deep Green and operate on 100% renewable energy for city-owned operations. In honor of Lafayette's 50th Anniversary last year, the City initiated a campaign to have 1,000 homes and businesses participate in the city's largest ever community gift of green energy. Lafayette homes and businesses were invited to Opt Up to MCE Deep Green and choose 100% renewable electricity sourced from California wind and solar farms. More information can be found [here](#). In December 2014, the City adopted [Ordinance 626](#), which regulates single-use carryout bags and food packaging recycling. The City is currently considering regulating [straws and disposable food service ware](#).

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## Martinez

***Martinez is 1 of five local Governments (Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Oakley, Martinez, Unincorporated County) in our County who are currently reviewing their General Plans and have the opportunity to be leaders ensuring robust Sustainability & Climate Policies.***

**Population:** 38,402

**Last GP Update:** 1973

**Link to GP:**

<https://www.cityofmartinez.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=17257>

**GP Status:** Currently being updated

**Is there a CAP?** Yes

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable goals?** Yes

**Link to CAP:**

<https://www.cityofmartinez.org/documents/Martinez%20Final%20CAP.pdf>

**Summary:** The City's current General Plan was originally adopted in 1973. There have been individual element updates to the plan, but it has not had a comprehensive update. The City is currently in the process of an update and we expect to adopt the new General Plan in 2020. The existing General Plan does not include elements to address environmental justice or actions to address climate change. However, in the draft General Plan, both Environmental Justice and Climate Change are addressed in various elements of the plan, but not as individual elements). Both of these topics are woven throughout the document rather than carving out specific elements for them. The City adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2009. The City elected to link its CAP to the GHG reduction targets identified in [Global Warming Solutions Act](#) of 2006 (AB 32). The city's baseline inventory was completed in 2005. An update was done and presented to Council in November 2017. Martinez adopted MCE as its [default energy provider](#) in 2018.

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# Moraga

**Population:** 17,692

**Last GP Update:** 2002

**Link to GP:**

[https://townofmoraga.worldsecursystems.com/dept/planning/docs/GenPlan/GeneralPlan\\_Complete%20Master.2018.pdf](https://townofmoraga.worldsecursystems.com/dept/planning/docs/GenPlan/GeneralPlan_Complete%20Master.2018.pdf)

**GP Status:** No planned update

**Is there a CAP?** No

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable goals?** Yes

**Link to CAP:** N/A

**Summary:** The town of Moraga last updated its General Plan in 2002. There is no current plan to update it. In October 2014, the Town Council accepted a Climate Action Plan as an advisory document, although it has yet to be formally adopted. The Town Council and Community Goals for 2019 calls for the implementation of [viable strategies](#) in the CAP. The CAP's goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 15% below 2005 levels by 2020. The Town had a greenhouse gas inventory completed through East Bay Energy Watch. In May 2019, Moraga purchased two [dual-port electric vehicle charging stations](#) as part of the plan to implement the CAP. At this same time, the town also agreed to complete [energy efficient light upgrades](#), which are estimated to begin in the near future. The Town offers [MCE](#) to its residents, but in 2019 decided not to go to 100% renewable for city operations. There are currently no policies relating to plastics.

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## Oakley

***Oakley is 1 of five local Governments (Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Oakley, Martinez, Unincorporated County) in our County who are currently reviewing their General Plans and have the opportunity to be leaders ensuring robust Sustainability & Climate Policies.***

**Population:** 42,129

**Last GP Update:** 2016

**Link to GP:**

[https://www.ci.oakley.ca.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2016-Update-Complete\\_2-2-16.pdf](https://www.ci.oakley.ca.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2016-Update-Complete_2-2-16.pdf)

**GP Status:** Currently being updated

**Is there a CAP?** No

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable goals?** Yes

**Link to CAP:** N/A

**Summary:** The City of Oakley is currently in the process of [updating](#) its General Plan with environmental and planning assistance from De Novo Planning Group. The update is focused on Environmental Justice (Compliance with SB 1000), Mobility (Compliance with SB 743), and Climate Change and Adaptation (Compliance with SB 379). The current update is “focused” and will apply to applicable elements are related to these elements. The current update will integrate environmental justice and climate change into several elements to allow for greater internal consistency. As of November 2019, two white papers (one for Environmental Justice and the other for Climate Adaptation) are in draft form and will be available to the public once they are published. In respect to the update, two public visioning workshops have been held, a public outreach survey was conducted, and the City Council has conducted two public work sessions thus far. The General Plan was most recently updated in February 2016. The update was related to compliance with Central Valley Flood Protection Act of 2008 (SB 5, 2007). Updated elements included Open Space and Conservation Element as well as the Health and Safety Element. A CAP is not in the city’s immediate plans or budget, but Oakley has employed a [Strategic Energy Plan](#) which functions as a Climate Action Plan. The city has completed [two greenhouse gas inventories](#)—one in 2005 and another in 2010. The inventories were both municipal and community-wide. There are no current plans to conduct another inventory. Quest completed the 2010 update and used IEAP and LGOP. The city began to offer MCE as an alternative to PG&E in late 2017. There are currently no policies relating to plastics.

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## Orinda

**Population:** 19,806

**Last GP Update:** 1987

**Link to GP:**

<https://cityoforinda.app.box.com/s/affasxge4slve822oxbg>

**To be updated next:** No planned updated

**Is there a CAP?** No

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable targets?** Yes

**Link to CAP:** N/A

**Summary:** Orinda's only General Plan was written in 1987. There are currently no plans to update it. It includes minor elements on energy conservation and managing natural resources. The City currently has no plans to prepare a CAP. A [greenhouse gas inventory](#) was completed in 2008 through East Bay Energy Watch. Implementing policies on plastics and Styrofoam is anticipated to be in discussion soon. Orinda does not offer MCE as an alternative to PG&E for renewable energy. There are currently no policies relating to plastics.

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# Pinole

***Pinole is one of five cities (Brentwood, Danville, Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo) who have lead the way to include Sustainability & Climate Change in their General Plan***

**Population:** 19,318

**Last GP Update:** 2010

**Link to GP:**

[https://www.ci.pinole.ca.us/city\\_government/planning/general\\_plan](https://www.ci.pinole.ca.us/city_government/planning/general_plan)

**GP Status:** No plans to update

**Is there a CAP?** No

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable goals?** Yes

**Link to CAP:** N/A

**Summary:** The City of Pinole recently updated their General Plan in 2010. The General Plan does not mention environmental justice, but does mention social sustainability.

- **“ Chapter 11: Sustainability”** The city’s sustainability goals and policies are in the General Plan as a stand-alone chapter ; it outlines 9 climate goals for the city
  - “Completion of a Greenhouse Gas Inventory to establish a baseline level of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions within Pinole.” it defines the three legs of sustainability and lays out various goals pertaining to waste diversion and green building.
  - “In June, 2009, the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) prepared a report on ways for local governments to address climate change. They determined that there are five core areas of local government operations responsible for climate change. Those areas are energy use, waste and recycling, water delivery and wastewater treatment, transportation, and the built environment. Pinole has addressed those five core areas in the goals, policies, and implementation actions set in this Element and in the Community Character Element, Growth Management Element, Land Use and Economic Development Element, Circulation Element, Community Services and Facilities Element, and Natural Resources and Open Space Element.”
  - POLICY SE.3.1 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from City operations and community sources by a minimum of 15 percent below current or baseline levels by the year 2020.
    1. Action SE.3.1.1 Complete the in-progress Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory for Government Operations and the community (or Planning Area) consistent with State or other accepted protocol. The Inventory shall provide a business-as-usual forecast for GHG emissions for 2020 and 2030.
    2. Action SE.3.1.2 Within 12 months of completion of a baseline GHG Inventory, initiate development of a Climate Action Plan that identifies how the City will achieve its 15% reduction target by 2020, at a minimum.
- The city completed a municipal GHG inventory with 2005 as the baseline. It was used to develop sustainable strategies used in the Draft Environmental Impact Review for the General Plan.
- There is no plan at the moment to rerun the greenhouse gas inventory. Many cities have policy that identify how often a CAP and GHG inventory will be reviewed.
- Since April 2018, MCE has been the primary electricity provider for the city. The city implemented a polystyrene ordinance in 2018.

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## Pittsburg

***Pittsburg is 1 of five local Governments (Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Oakley, Martinez, Unincorporated County) in our County who are currently reviewing their General Plans and have the opportunity to be leaders ensuring robust Sustainability & Climate Policies.***

**Population:** 72,437

**Last GP Update:** 1987

**Link to GP:**

<http://www.ci.pittsburg.ca.us/index.aspx?page=228>

**To be updated next:** Currently being updated

**Is there a CAP?** No

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable targets?** Yes

**Link to CAP:** N/A

**Summary:** The City of Pittsburg last updated its General Plan in 2001. The plan has references to preserving open space, removing invasive species, and introducing stricter water conservation measures. The City implemented a housing update in 2010. The General Plan is currently being updated and its expected adoption is set for December 2020. The current General Plan does not contain references to environmental justice or climate change. However, environmental justice and climate change policies will be incorporated into the updated General Plan. The City completed a municipal and community-wide GHG inventory in 2019. Pittsburg currently does not have a CAP, but is working on one to support the General Plan. The City joined [MCE](#) in 2017. Pittsburg has implemented policies relating to [plastic bags](#) and polystyrene. In addition, the City has an environmental preferential purchasing agreement for city operations.

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## Pleasant Hill

***Pleasant Hill is 1 of five local Governments (Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Oakley, Martinez, Unincorporated County) in our County who are currently reviewing their General Plans and have the opportunity to be leaders ensuring robust Sustainability & Climate Policies.***

**Population:** 34,903

**Last GP Update:** 2003

**Link to GP:**

<https://www.ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/314/Current-General-Plan?bidId=>

**GP Status:** Currently being updated

**Is there a CAP?** No

**Does it have a GHG inventory?** No

**Link to CAP:** N/A

**Summary:** The Pleasant Hill General Plan was last updated in 2003 and is current through 2023. The city operates on 20-year time frames for General Plan updates and is currently in the process of updating its Plan. The [new plan](#) will be current through 2040. Prior to this comprehensive update, the city has updated their Housing Element and Growth Management and Circulation Element. The current update will address environmental justice and climate change. The city completed a greenhouse gas inventory in 2013 through East Bay Energy Watch. Pleasant Hill does not have a Climate Action Plan and there are no current plans to implement one. Since November 2019, the city has offered MCE as an [alternative](#) to PG&E. A [single-use plastic bag ordinance](#) has been in effect since February 2015. The city has also instituted an [environmental preferential purchasing agreement](#) since 2008.

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# Richmond

***Richmond is one of five cities (Brentwood, Danville, Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo) who have lead the way to include Sustainability & Climate Change in their General Plan. Theirs is the most robust!***

**Population:** 110,146

**Last GP Update:** 2012

**Link to GP:** <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/2608/General-Plan-2030>

**To be updated next:** Unknown

**Is there a CAP?** Yes

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable targets?** Yes

The Richmond Climate Action Plan (CAP) uses community input and cross sector collaboration to prioritize action and outcomes with the greatest community benefits for the Richmond community. Many people may think of climate action solely as a means to address environmental concerns; Richmond's plan builds on this narrative with a more comprehensive strategy. The Richmond Climate Action Plan continues the mission that the City set forth with its Community Health and Wellness Element and its Health in All Policies Strategy: to create initiatives that improve the equitable delivery of services and improve the overall quality of life in Richmond. This Climate Action Plan strengthens Richmond's commitment to health equity and creates a strategy to serve the interests and well-being of the entire community – the environment, economy, and residents.

**Link to CAP:** [www.richmondcap.org](http://www.richmondcap.org)

**Summary:** The Richmond General Plan was last updated in 2012. Of its 15 elements, there are dedicated chapters to [Land Use and Urban Design](#), [Energy and Climate Change](#), [Health and Wellness](#) and [Conservation and Natural Resources](#).

**a. "Element 3: Land Use and Urban Design"**

- i. GOAL LU6 High-Quality and Sustainable Development; Maintain a high standard of design, planning and construction of new and renovated public and private facilities, infrastructure and services. Continue committing to a comprehensive planning approach that supports a sustainable and healthy community and reduces impacts on the natural environment. Provide new development near transit and in areas with existing transportation infrastructure.
- ii. Policy LU3.1 Environmentally Progressive Businesses and Industries Encourage existing businesses and industries to become increasingly environmentally progressive and continue making positive contributions to the community;
- iii. Action LU3.A Green Business Strategic Plan Work with local business support agencies and community stakeholders to develop a strategic plan to retain, attract, and support innovative "green" companies, consistent with City Council Resolution 45-07, which declared Richmond a "Green Economic Development Area."
- iv. Policy LU4.2 Open Space and Conservation Areas Preserve open space areas along the shoreline, creeks, and in the hills to protect natural habitat. Maintain the integrity of hillsides, creeks and wetlands. Protect existing open space, agricultural lands and parks.
- v. Policy LU4.3 Habitat and Biological Resources Protection and Restoration Natural habitat is essential to ensuring biodiversity and protecting sensitive biological resources. Protect these areas and work with the California Department of Fish and Game, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, the East Bay Regional Park District and other regional agencies to identify areas for special protection and establish appropriate protection measures for these areas. Protect resources to maximize the efficacy of natural systems & encourage sustainable development practices & conservation measures to ensure a healthy natural environment.
- vi. Policy LU6.2 Complete Streets Promote mixed-use urban streets that balance public transit, walking and bicycling with other modes of travel.
- vii. Policy LU6.4 Long-Term Environmental Sustainability Promote development standards and land use patterns that encourage long-term sustainability. Support the restoration of natural features such as creeks & wetlands in urban areas as a means of connecting residents with nature and reversing





damage to natural systems. Promote landscaping that incorporates native, drought-tolerant plants and sustainable maintenance practices and standards. Provide trees on residential& mixed-use streets & green infrastructure to reduce stormwater runoff. Encourage compact development close to amenities & green buildings to reduce energy use.

**b. “Element 7: Conservation and Natural Resources”**

- i. GOAL CN5: Environmental Sustainability Reduce the City's carbon footprint and manage resources wisely to meet the needs of a growing population and economy. Base community planning decisions on sustainable practices that reduce environmental pollutants, conserve resources and minimize waste. Lead the Bay Area in reducing dependence on fossil fuels by encouraging design of energy efficient buildings, using renewable energy and promoting alternative methods of transportation.
- ii. Action CN1.B Priority Conservation Areas the City will identify areas of the City with significant natural habitat, open space and recreation resources and promote conservation, preservation and environmental rehabilitation.
- iii. Action CN1.H Urban Creek Restoration Where feasible, restore creek corridors in urban areas. Creeks currently diverted in culverts or hardened channels should be restored to their natural state.
- iv. Policy CN2.4 Agricultural Lands Preserve agricultural lands for sustained crop production, grazing and farming. Encourage local organic food production such as microfarming in community gardens and private yards. Protect viable topsoils to ensure working landscapes.
- v. Policy CN2.6 Protect Soil and Reduce Erosion Minimize soil depletion and erosion. Prevent erosion caused by construction activities. Retain natural vegetation and topography and minimize grading of hillsides.
- vi. Action CN2.B Open Space Easements Consider opportunities for establishing open space easements where natural resources may be protected or accessed on private property. The City may accept or purchase easements from private landowners for open space and resource conservation.
- vii. Action CN2.G Sustainable Urban Agriculture Assessment Work with non-profits and regulatory agencies to explore the potential for creating, expanding and sustaining local urban agriculture, including community gardens, orchards and farmers' markets; AND a number of strategies are listed.
- viii. Policy CN5.4 Leadership in Sustainability Continue to require all City facilities and services to incorporate energy and resource conservation standards and practices.
- ix. Action CN5.A Renewable Energy Encourage and support the generation, transmission and use of locally distributed renewable energy. Advocate at the regional and state level for upgrades to the existing power grid so that it can support renewable energy production and transmission.
- x. Action CN6.G Tree City USA Status Maintain “Tree City USA” status by continuing to implement the revised Public and Private Tree Preservation Ordinance and utilizing the Urban Forest Committee to advise on tree issues
- xi. Action CN5.E Climate Action Plan Develop a climate action plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to meet or exceed state reduction targets. Components of the plan should include: a comprehensive greenhouse gas emissions inventory and forecast; emissions reduction target(s); assessment of the City's vulnerability to climate change; climate change resiliency goals; broader sustainability assessment; sustainability targets; strategies and measures to address climate change mitigation, sustainability and adaptation; financing and implementation approaches; a public education and information program; and a program for monitoring and reporting results. Richmond's baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory and forecast will provide a benchmark for planning and monitoring progress in achieving mandated targets. Incorporate public education programs to raise community awareness. The climate action plan should include mitigation strategies for addressing the sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the community. Adaptation strategies will focus on potential local impacts of climate change such as sea level rise, increased risk of flooding, diminished water supplies and public health. Broader sustainability measures may include the preservation of local water quality, air quality, open space and biodiversity. The climate action plan should also include information on the financing and implementation of each strategy or measure to ensure timely and well- informed action. The plan will be subject to the monitoring and reporting program to ensure the City achieves its greenhouse gas reduction, protection and adaptation targets. Update the plan periodically in accordance with evolving state and federal policy and regulatory frameworks, as well as advancements in scientific research and data on climate change.

**c. “Element 8: Energy and Climate Change,”** states: This element examines how the City's land use and transportation network will affect energy consumption and determines what measures can be implemented to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The element provides policy direction for protecting energy resources and responding to climate change” it has a nice section describing climate change, the science behind it, and why it needs to be addressed. Six goals EC1 thru EC6 are clear and all are good for consideration for relating to climate change.

- i. **GOAL EC1 Leadership in Managing Climate Change** Take steps to address climate change and to manage its effects. This entails not only pursuing ground-breaking programs and innovative strategies, but educating residents and businesses about these actions and actively monitoring results to ensure progress in critical areas. Partner with other jurisdictions and organizations to develop effective regional solutions and regulation at regional, state and federal levels. Collaborate with residents, businesses, public agencies and neighboring jurisdictions, in order to meet or exceed state requirements for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- ii. **GOAL EC2 Clean and Efficient Transportation Options** Expand the City's green transportation network by encouraging the use of climate-friendly technology, planning growth around multiple modes of travel and reducing automobile reliance. In addition to promoting improved public transit, partner with private developers to undertake citywide improvements that make active modes of travel, such as walking and bicycling, more comfortable and preferable options.
- iii. **GOAL EC3 Sustainable and Efficient Energy Systems** Reduce the City's consumption of energy by encouraging energy conservation, and supporting the consumption of energy produced by climate-friendly technologies. Reduce the City's overall waste stream by reducing the City's consumption of goods and materials, and by adopting a zero-waste philosophy.
- iv. **GOAL EC4 Sustainable Development** Reduce energy consumption by promoting sustainable land uses and development patterns. Pursue infill development opportunities and encourage the construction of higher-density, mixed-use projects around existing public transit infrastructure, schools, parks, neighborhood-serving retail and other critical services. Incorporate ecologically sustainable practices and materials into new development, building retrofits and streetscape improvements.
- v. **GOAL EC5 Community Revitalization and Economic Development** Transform Richmond into a healthy community where green industries and businesses can flourish. Support sustainable businesses and practices that provide both community and environmental benefits while stimulating job and revenue growth.
- vi. **GOAL EC6 Climate-Resilient Communities** While the impacts of climate change on local communities are uncertain, to the extent possible, prepare to respond to and protect residents and businesses from increased risks of natural disasters such as flooding or drought.
- vii. **Note: for us, maybe getting in these six could be something we can all agree upon/ and wrap this into our latest comment letter considering some of their language. As every one of the action or implementing elements that follow are well laid out with good language and good measurables. for an example but read all of them:**

- d. **The city's other climate goals are outlined in its Climate Action Plan.** The CAP features health equity and climate justice as significant features of its document framework. The City completed a baseline greenhouse gas inventory in 2005 and an updated one in 2012. The inventories are both municipal and community-wide.

The City of Richmond also includes a focus on Environmental Health and Justice in the implementing actions of their Health in All Policies (HiAP) Strategy and Ordinance <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/2575/Health-in-All-Policies-HiAP>.

As of July 2017, all city operations electricity accounts are powered by MCE Deep Green or 100% renewable energy. The City has upgraded all City facilities lighting systems and controls, and has upgraded all City street lights, underpasses, and decorative lights to energy-efficient LED technology. A few city facilities have been solarized to generate clean electricity onsite. Richmond has implemented [food ware](#) and [single-use bag](#) ordinances since 2014. In 2018, City Council updated the Food Ware Ordinance in 2018 to ban the sale and use of plastic straws and stirrers. The City has also committed itself to an [environmentally preferable purchasing policy](#). The City of Richmond has a partnership with the non-profit, GRID Alternatives Bay Area, to provide low-income households with free solar. GRID Alternatives staff help Richmond household throughout the entire process including the design, installation, permits, and connection with the utility company. We've found the biggest barriers for low-income households not participating in the free solar program are roof repairs and electrical panel upgrades. Through the partnership, the city provides funding not only for the solar installation but to cover a portion of roof repairs and electrical panel upgrades needed to receive the solar. In addition, they connect households to related resources such as Electric Vehicle incentives and energy efficiency programs.

**CAP Monitoring:** [www.transparentrichmond.org/stories/s/Sustainability-and-Health-Equity/fe48-z44c](http://www.transparentrichmond.org/stories/s/Sustainability-and-Health-Equity/fe48-z44c)

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CITY of SAN PABLO  
City of New Directions

# San Pablo

***San Pablo is one of five cities (Brentwood, Danville, Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo) who have lead the way to include Sustainability & Climate Change in their General Plan***

**Population:** 31,124

**Last GP Update:** 2011

**Link to GP:**

<https://www.sanpabloca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/669/Adopted-General-Plan-LOW-LOCKED?bidId=>

**GP Status:** Tentative update planned for 2021

**Is there a CAP?** Yes

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable targets?** Yes

**Link to CAP:**

[https://www.sanpabloca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2438/San-Pablo---Climate-Action-Plan\\_final?bidId=](https://www.sanpabloca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2438/San-Pablo---Climate-Action-Plan_final?bidId=)

**Summary:** The City of San Pablo last updated its General Plan in 2011, and plans to do another in 2021 and then 2030

- **"Chapter 7: The Open Space and Conservation"** page 7-1 has 6 objectives
- **"7.6: Air Quality and Climate Change"** page 7-30 focuses a lot of criteria air pollutants, page 7-36 addresses climate change and does a nice job of laying out a summary table of what measurables they found in their climate action plan. then for implementing elements it lists 9 policies (ODC 17 thru OSC 26) With a baseline inventory for 1990 and what to plan for 2035.
- "Chapter 8: **Health**" contains elements of environmental justice, as air quality issues are prevalent in San Pablo. Good demographics, measurables, and Health equity issues. Great opportunities for collaborating, healthy food, transportation and more. Even to level of organic neighborhood grocery stores
- Most of the City's specific and measurable climate target goals are outlined in its CAP. The CAP was created in 2012 and has undergone some informal internal review, but there is no official staff report on its progress. There is interest in implementing a CAP update, but a CAP update would most likely be timed in coordination with a General Plan update so that there is consistency between the two documents.
  - The baseline [greenhouse gas inventory](#) was completed in 2005 which was used to outline an emissions forecast for the CAP. Through the regional collaboration with East Bay Energy Watch, other GHG inventories have been completed. Once the EBEW inventories are complete, the city should have a better understanding of their progress towards this goal. EBEW employs an excel-based tool.
  - The city has offered [MCE](#) as an alternative to PG&E since 2015. And their city hall building is opted up to Deep Green, for 100% renewable energy. San Pablo has also implemented [plastic foam](#) and [single-use plastic bag](#) ordinances. The city has a relatively weak environmental preferential purchasing agreement, which has not been updated since 2007.

The city has offered [MCE](#) as an alternative to PG&E since 2015. San Pablo City Hall is opted up to Deep Green for 100% renewable energy. San Pablo has also implemented [plastic foam](#) and [single-use plastic bag](#) ordinances. The has not updated its environmental preferential purchasing agreement since 2007.

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# San Ramon

**Population:** 75,839

**Last GP Update:** 2015

**Link to GP:**

[http://www.sanramon.ca.gov/our\\_city/departments\\_and\\_divisions/community\\_development/planning\\_services/general\\_plan](http://www.sanramon.ca.gov/our_city/departments_and_divisions/community_development/planning_services/general_plan)

**GP Status:** To be updated in 2020

**Is there a CAP?** Yes

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable targets?** Yes

**Link to CAP:**

[http://www.sanramon.ca.gov/our\\_city/departments\\_and\\_divisions/community\\_development/planning\\_services/general\\_plan/climate\\_action\\_plan](http://www.sanramon.ca.gov/our_city/departments_and_divisions/community_development/planning_services/general_plan/climate_action_plan)

**Summary:** The city of San Ramon recently updated its General Plan in 2015, although minor revisions have been made since. The last comprehensive update occurred in 2011 and incorporated a greenhouse gas element. The city expects to update their General Plan every five years. San Ramon will be beginning a more comprehensive update to address the new housing cycle and will be looking at incorporating mandatory elements such as “environmental justice,” which is likely to occur in 2020. The city also expects to rerun their greenhouse gas inventory at this time. Currently, the General Plan does not have a separate or implementing element to address environmental justice or climate change. However, language pertaining to sustainable practices, such as water conservation and green building, exists as policies within larger components of the General Plan. The General Plan also contains an [air quality and greenhouse gas](#) element and an [open space and conservation](#) element, along with [growth management](#) and [land use](#) elements that target growth patterns and transit programs. However, these serve more as guidance documents, rather than implementing tools. San Ramon adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2011 and conducts a [biennial report](#) on their progress under the CAP. The City’s initial greenhouse gas inventory was also completed at this time and is reviewed every five years. The City has found that conducting a biennial report on greenhouse gas emissions has yielded inconclusive results as it is hard to gauge progress over the course of a year. In addition, the City offers MCE as an alternative to PG&E, but has yet to up to Deep Green for city operations. There are no policies relating to plastics. Although San Ramon has yet to adopt an environmental preferential purchasing agreement, the prospect is a planned agenda item for the city.

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# Walnut Creek

**Population:** 69,825

**Last GP Update:** 2006

**Link to GP:**

<https://www.walnut-creek.org/departments/community-and-economic-development/planning-zoning/long-range-planning/general-plan-2025-specific-plans>

**GP Status:** Update likely to start next year

**Is there a CAP?** Yes

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable targets?** Yes

**Link to CAP:**

<https://www.walnut-creek.org/home/showdocument?id=6479>

**Summary:** The Walnut Creek General Plan was last updated in 2006 and goes until 2025. Updates to the General Plan are likely to start next year and be a multi-year process. The City's environmental goals are most pronounced in [Chapter 4](#) of its General Plan, listed under "Environmental Integrity." Chapter 4 does not address climate change directly, but encourages strategies that have the outcome of helping to address climate change with language pertaining to energy efficiency and conservation. The General Plan does not contain a separate or implementing element to address environmental justice, but the City will look to incorporate sustainability goals with its planned update. The City's Climate Action Plan is starting its update October 2019 and is predicted to take 18 months. The CAP will become an "Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action Plan" to include strategies outside of greenhouse gas reduction, such as air quality and plastic reduction. The City will also be conducting a new [greenhouse gas inventory](#) at this time. In addition, the City has completed [staff reports](#) on their progress under the CAP. Walnut Creek completed a community greenhouse gas inventory in 2005 and 2013. The City is currently in the process of completing a 2017 community inventory. The last municipal inventory was completed in 2005 and the city is beginning its 2017 municipal inventory. Walnut Creek uses ClearPath software, a custom spreadsheet created through the East Bay Energy Watch, and an older custom spreadsheet created by their CAP consultants. In addition, since 2016, the City has offered MCE as an alternative to PG&E to its residents. City operations have opted up to 100% [renewable energy](#) since July 2018. The city has implemented [polystyrene and plastic bag ordinances](#) and committed to an environmental preferential purchasing agreement.

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## Unincorporated County: Board of Supervisors

*The Unincorporated County is 1 of five local Governments (Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Oakley, Martinez, Unincorporated County) in our County who are currently reviewing their General Plans and have the opportunity to be leaders ensuring robust Sustainability & Climate Policies.*

**Population:** Unknown

**Last GP Update:** 2005

**Link to GP:**

<https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/4732/General-Plan>

**GP Status:** The General Plan is currently being updated

**Is there a CAP?** Yes

**Does it have a GHG inventory and measurable targets?** Yes

**Link to CAP:**

<https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/39791/Contra-Costa-County-Climate-Action-Plan?bidId=>

**Summary:** The County adopted a General Plan in 2005. Since then, there have been amendments of varying magnitude every year related to policy updates, project specific modifications, and other topics. Although the current GP was adopted in 2005, it has served more to codify or better incorporate previously adopted GP amendments rather than to comprehensively update the GP. The last truly comprehensive GP update was completed in 1991. The current GP addresses neither environmental justice nor climate change. The County adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2015. However, since that time, the State has passed several laws and issued Executive Orders that have put California on a more aggressive path to addressing the impacts of Climate Change. As a result, the County is incorporating Environmental Justice and Climate Change throughout its new GP, which it is currently developing. The [update process](#) began in late 2018 and the final adoption will take place in 2020. The County will also be adopting a new CAP. While the current General Plan does not include specific and measurable climate target goals, the CAP does, which are being updated with new targets based on State requirements and scientific discoveries based off of their CAP. The CAP contains a 2005 baseline [greenhouse gas inventory](#) and 2013 interim inventory. For the CAP update, a second interim update for 2017 has been completed. The software tool the County is utilizing supports ClearPath outputs, which has been managed by their consultants. The County joined MCE in 2017 as an alternative to PG&E. The Board of Supervisors' Sustainability Committee has recommended opting up to 100% renewable energy for at least some county-owned operations. The issue has been referred to issue to the Board of Supervisors for a vote. The Board of Supervisors' Sustainability Committee will hear a staff report on opting County accounts up to 100% renewable energy in early December 2019. In addition, the County adopted a polystyrene ban in October 2019, Ordinance 2019-25. The County has adopted an environmental preferential purchasing agreement and is in the process of updating its purchasing policy.

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## Conclusion

Five of our Contra Costa cities—Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo, Brentwood and San Ramon—have recently acted to update their General Plans and incorporate environmental justice and climate action. The language in these General Plans can provide examples to other local governments and best practices for policies, programs, implementing actions that can be shared with other cities and the County when making General Plan updates.

However, we have found that despite robust language in a General Plan, it is possible that the city will not always comply with its General Plan within a reasonable time frame.

- For example, the City of Brentwood last updated its General Plan in 2014 and it contains well-written and clear goals to reduce air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions (Goal COS 8) and promote the conservation of energy and other natural resources (Goal COS 9). Furthermore, the 2014 General Plan calls for the implementation of a CAP with specific and measurable goals. *However, as of 2019, the City of Brentwood has yet to begin the process of creating a CAP.* Policies that require cities to review implementation of their General Plans can prevent discrepancies such as this.

It is essential that General Plan updates include specific deliverables and timelines, and that community based organizations, residents, health department, city staff and electeds are knowledgeable, trained, and clear that their implementation is essential and required. Not to be ignored, or simply postponed indefinitely. So How do we ensure that?

As of the writing of this paper, a number of cities are in the process of updating their General Plans: Lafayette, Martinez, Oakley, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, and the unincorporated County. A number of other cities are anticipating General Plan updates in the next few years. General Plan updates are significant and comprehensive updates that are typically only done every ten or twenty years. There is great opportunity to ensure the Climate Crisis is addressed in robust and meaningful ways.

Contra Costa County Climate Leaders (4CL) has joined more than 16 local organizations to draft a number of broad goals and objectives that we insist are considered in any General Plan update. (see Attachment A).

Further, these same organizations have reviewed best practices, and added specific detail and measurable language that must be incorporated to ensure that the policies to address the climate Emergency are kept front and center. Implemented and reviewed on a regular basis. (see Attachment B).

4CL reviewed the five (5) cities who have already incorporated Environmental Justice and Climate Action into their General Plans and provide their following observations, reflections, and best practices from their city staff:

- **Pinole:** The City of Pinole has found that having a dedicated chapter to Sustainability has been especially impactful and provided a good framework for the City. In the absence of CAP, small steps such as the City's polystyrene ban have been effective.
- **Richmond:** It is important for cities to incorporate the communities goals and receive cross sector collaboration for all city plans. Partnerships with non-profits, educational establishments, and community based organizations that serve the Richmond community are crucial for achieving CAP goals. MCE, GRID Alternatives, Y-Plan, UC Berkeley, and Richmond's Community Based Organizations (CBOs) such as GroundWork Richmond and Rich City Rides are just a few of the organizations the city has partnered with for feedback on the CAP and implementation. The partnerships allow for the city to expand implementation work while supporting community members to take action through trusted partners.
  - There are funding challenges in the City's General Fund to support the implementation of the CAP. As such, staff have been working to increase funding sources and grants received. In addition staff time is limited, the city found the open data portal crucial for monitoring progress towards reaching the CAP goals, inform policy decisions, and providing data to the community.
  - When applicable the Environment and Health Division includes a section called "Policy Synergies" in staff reports for City Council to show how the agenda item supports implementation of the Climate Action Plan, General Plan, and or Health in All Policies. . This helps to strengthen the agenda item going to City Council for approval.
- In 2013 the City joined Marin Clean Energy (MCE) to increase renewable energy choices for local businesses and residents. Richmond City facilities are currently enrolled in MCE's Deep Green program to effectively eliminate the carbon pollution associated with electricity usage. In 2017, Richmond became home to MCE's Solar One, a 10.5 MW ground mount solar farm. One of the largest solar projects in the Bay Area, Solar One was constructed on a 49-acre parcel at a former Chevron Richmond Refinery brownfield site. MCE teamed with RichmondBUILD to train and hire employees for the Solar One Project. The project created approximately 344 local jobs and generate enough power for nearly 3,000 homes per year. Important to incorporate health equity. The environment is an important determinant in community health. The CAP builds on the goals and policies in the City's General Plan and the Health in All Policies Strategy (HiAP) to further the City's efforts to build health equity through the reduction of local GHG emissions, and to simultaneously ensure that the community is well prepared for the impacts of climate change.
- **San Pablo:** The City of San Pablo has had a particularly efficient environmental agenda. The City has pointed to a number of actions that they have found to be particularly impactful. The City has found that the adoption of MCE has been a very successful way to reduce GHG emissions. In addition, the installation of solar panels as part of a group purchasing contract has enabled the City to shift energy consumption to almost fully renewable. The City has also switched to a four-day work week, which reduces staff community and decreases electricity usage and building pressures. However, the City has found that between its [23<sup>rd</sup> Street Specific Plan](#), its General Plan, and the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, it cannot tell which has been the most influential. The City also notes that its [Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan](#) has played a role in guiding bicycle infrastructure throughout the city.
- **Brentwood:** The City of Brentwood feels that elements in their General Plan to address climate change have had limited effectiveness. The City is currently still some ways off of implementing a CAP as was called for in their General Plan.



- **San Ramon:** The City has found that those practices that combine both fiscal and environmental responsibility have had the most successful implementation. For example, the city sights the installation of LED streetlights as a positive implementation in terms of economic concerns and energy savings. In addition, San Ramon has found that turf conversion meets the goals of water reduction and lowering maintenance costs. Changes in the stormwater program and roadway improvements have also offered themselves as green infrastructure opportunities. Projects that address multiple issues at once are particularly potent.

We also reviewed the CCC cities that have yet to update their General Plans or are currently in the process of an update can also provide a model for environmental action.

- **El Cerrito**, one of the County's most environmentally robust cities, is a source for sound environmental policies that other cities can seek to model after. While El Cerrito has not recently updated its General Plan, its robust San Pablo Specific Action Plan has had positive environmental impacts.

Other cities provide a compelling model for various other reasons.

- **Antioch**, for example, is in the process of updating its CAP and turning it into a Climate Action and Resilience Plan, which, as the name would suggest, requires the incorporation of the principle of resiliency.
- **Danville** and **Walnut Creek** have all incorporated notable language in their attempts to implement environmental practices.

A common concern voiced by many of the cities was the need for public support for environmentally sound policies. City councils have resisted passing ordinances and other policies if there has not been enough support from the general public.

Civic Engagement and Community Involvement is best achieved when residents of the community understand the process, and when and how to provide comment and input. In 2020, 4CL will host workshops and trainings to disseminate information and encourage residents to attend ["Just One"](#) city council meeting each year.

**TABLE I: LINKS TO ALL GENERAL PLANS FOR ALL CITIES IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY**

Antioch	<a href="https://www.antiochca.gov/fc/community-development/planning/Antioch_Adopted_General_Plan.pdf">https://www.antiochca.gov/fc/community-development/planning/Antioch_Adopted_General_Plan.pdf</a>
Brentwood	<a href="https://www.brentwoodca.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=52464">https://www.brentwoodca.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=52464</a>
Clayton	<a href="https://ci.clayton.ca.us/2018/03/08/general-plan-doc-buttons/">https://ci.clayton.ca.us/2018/03/08/general-plan-doc-buttons/</a>
Concord	<a href="http://www.cityofconcord.org/418/General-Plan">http://www.cityofconcord.org/418/General-Plan</a>
Danville	<a href="https://www.danville.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1026/2030-General-Plan-PDF?bidId=">https://www.danville.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1026/2030-General-Plan-PDF?bidId=</a>
El Cerrito	<a href="https://el-cerrito.org/718/General-Plan">https://el-cerrito.org/718/General-Plan</a>
Hercules	<a href="https://www.ci.hercules.ca.us/government/planning/general-plan">https://www.ci.hercules.ca.us/government/planning/general-plan</a>
Lafayette	<a href="https://www.lovelafayette.org/city-hall/city-departments/planning-building/general-master-specific-plans/general-plan">https://www.lovelafayette.org/city-hall/city-departments/planning-building/general-master-specific-plans/general-plan</a>
Martinez	<a href="https://www.cityofmartinez.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=17257">https://www.cityofmartinez.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=17257</a>
Moraga	<a href="https://townofmoraga.worldsecuresystems.com/dept/planning/docs/GenPlan/GeneralPlan_Complete%20Master.2018.pdf">https://townofmoraga.worldsecuresystems.com/dept/planning/docs/GenPlan/GeneralPlan_Complete%20Master.2018.pdf</a>
Oakley	<a href="https://www.ci.oakley.ca.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2016-Update-Complete_2-2-16.pdf">https://www.ci.oakley.ca.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2016-Update-Complete_2-2-16.pdf</a>
Orinda	<a href="https://cityoforinda.app.box.com/s/affasxge4slve822oxbg">https://cityoforinda.app.box.com/s/affasxge4slve822oxbg</a>
Pleasant Hill	<a href="https://www.ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/314/Current-General-Plan?bidId=">https://www.ci.pleasant-hill.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/314/Current-General-Plan?bidId=</a>
San Ramon	<a href="http://www.sanramon.ca.gov/our_city/departments_and_divisions/community_development/planning_services/general_plan">http://www.sanramon.ca.gov/our_city/departments_and_divisions/community_development/planning_services/general_plan</a>
Pinole	<a href="https://www.ci.pinole.ca.us/city_government/planning/general_plan">https://www.ci.pinole.ca.us/city_government/planning/general_plan</a>
Pittsburg	<a href="http://www.ci.pittsburg.ca.us/index.aspx?page=228">http://www.ci.pittsburg.ca.us/index.aspx?page=228</a>
Richmond	<a href="http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/2608/General-Plan-2030">http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/2608/General-Plan-2030</a>
San Pablo	<a href="https://www.sanpabloca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/669/Adopted-General-Plan-LOW-LOCKED?bidId=">https://www.sanpabloca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/669/Adopted-General-Plan-LOW-LOCKED?bidId=</a>
Walnut Creek	<a href="https://www.walnut-creek.org/departments/community-and-economic-development/planning-zoning/longrange-planning/general-plan-2025-specific-plans">https://www.walnut-creek.org/departments/community-and-economic-development/planning-zoning/longrange-planning/general-plan-2025-specific-plans</a>
Unincorporated, Contra Costa County	<a href="https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/4732/General-Plan">https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/4732/General-Plan</a>

**TABLE II: LINKS TO ALL OF THE CLIMATE ACTION PLANS  
(IF THEY EXIST) FOR ALL CONTRA COSTA CITIES**

Antioch	<a href="https://www.antiochca.gov/fc/environment/climate/Antioch%20CCAP%20Final.pdf">https://www.antiochca.gov/fc/environment/climate/Antioch%20CCAP%20Final.pdf</a>
Brentwood	N/A
Clayton	N/A
Concord	<a href="https://ca-concord.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/487/Citywide-Climate-Action-Plan-PDF">https://ca-concord.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/487/Citywide-Climate-Action-Plan-PDF</a>
Danville	<a href="https://www.danville.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/558/Danville-Climate-Action-Plan-PDF?bidId=">https://www.danville.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/558/Danville-Climate-Action-Plan-PDF?bidId=</a>
El Cerrito	<a href="https://www.el-cerrito.org/325/Climate-Action-Plan">https://www.el-cerrito.org/325/Climate-Action-Plan</a>
Hercules	N/A
Lafayette	<a href="https://www.lovelafayette.org/home/showdocument?id=4138">https://www.lovelafayette.org/home/showdocument?id=4138</a>
Martinez	<a href="https://www.cityofmartinez.org/documents/Martinez%20Final%20CAP.pdf">https://www.cityofmartinez.org/documents/Martinez%20Final%20CAP.pdf</a>
Moraga	N/A
Oakley	N/A
Orinda	N/A
Pleasant Hill	N/A
San Ramon	<a href="http://www.sanramon.ca.gov/our_city/departments_and_divisions/community_development/planning_services/general_plan/climate_action_plan">http://www.sanramon.ca.gov/our_city/departments_and_divisions/community_development/planning_services/general_plan/climate_action_plan</a>
Pinole	N/A
Pittsburg	N/A
Richmond	<a href="http://www.richmondcap.org">www.richmondcap.org</a>
San Pablo	<a href="https://www.sanpabloca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2438/San-Pablo---Climate-Action-Plan_final?bidId=">https://www.sanpabloca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2438/San-Pablo---Climate-Action-Plan_final?bidId=</a>
Walnut Creek	<a href="https://www.walnut-creek.org/home/showdocument?id=6479">https://www.walnut-creek.org/home/showdocument?id=6479</a>
Unincorporated Contra Costa County	<a href="https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/39791/Contra-Costa-County-Climate-Action-Plan?bidId=">https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/39791/Contra-Costa-County-Climate-Action-Plan?bidId=</a>



Earth Guardians

Elders Climate Action  
Northern California

Center for Human  
Development

Jim Blickenstaff,  
30 Year Contra Costa  
Environmental Activist

## PLEASANT HILL General Plan Update: Equitable Smart Growth Vision

*Since the last Pleasant Hill General Plan, there has been a sea change in our understanding of the need for climate protection and equity, alongside widespread awareness of rapidly increasing economic inequality. This new understanding and awareness also includes recognition of the growing threat of natural resource scarcity and depletion, influenced by the climate crisis and driven by natural limits alongside a growing population.*

*The Pleasant Hill General Plan needs to be equitable, inclusive, and community-driven. In order for a jurisdiction to adapt and thrive in the face of the climate crisis, its General Plan needs to set goals that are not just incremental, but ambitious and transformative.*

**In our vision, the Pleasant Hill General Plan is a roadmap for sustainability and resiliency now and in the future, recognizing that the climate crisis is our greatest threat. Each jurisdiction will maintain the natural and managed systems that support healthy and equitable outcomes and a high quality of life for all residents, prioritizing the needs of disadvantaged communities.**

**We envision** a sustainable region that meets the needs of both the present and the future, while ensuring equitable outcomes for all residents. Sustainability is built on three pillars: environment, economy, and equity.

**We envision** a resilient future, where individual residents, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a community are able to survive, adapt and grow in the face of natural, man-made and environmental disasters guaranteed by the climate crisis. A resilient community is one that has developed capacities and emergency planning to ensure its social, economic and technical systems and infrastructures are able to maintain essentially the same functions, structures, systems and identity in the face of these challenges.

**We envision** a future that is ready to adapt to the impacts of the climate crisis, where all growth, development, or redevelopment plans and accounts for these impacts, and vulnerability reduction is prioritized.

**We envision** an equitable future that prioritizes the needs of those who have long been systematically disadvantaged, and accounts for historical inequities and ongoing institutional barriers.





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Environmental Activist

### To achieve this vision in our General Plan, Pleasant Hill must:

- Protect and preserve our natural spaces: open space, waterways, shorelines, and green infrastructure;
- Plan for more equitable outcomes for residents, prioritizing the needs of disadvantaged and historically marginalized communities;
- Take bold action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, sequester carbon, and transition to a carbon-free economy;
- Strengthen community and natural environment resiliency through climate adaptation efforts;
- Protect and improve our agricultural lands and associated economy;
- Ensure transit-oriented development, focus economic development near housing or transit, reduce vehicle miles traveled and promote equitable access to jobs and services, especially for disadvantaged communities;
- Prioritize efficient land use and house every resident ethically and affordably through new housing production, tenant protection, and existing housing preservation;
- Ensure accountability to the goals and priorities laid out in the General Plan.

### In order to achieve these goals, the General Plan must:

- Name and address climate action explicitly, and incorporate Climate Action Plan goals and strategies within the General Plan. Incorporate climate adaptation, mitigation, and resiliency strategies into every section;
- Strengthen the urban limit line, and preserve lands along the line.
- Identify disadvantaged communities, and include clear implementing policies with measurable metrics that will improve outcomes that shift towards clean industry, affordable housing, effective public transit, and overall healthy places;
- Create a jurisdiction-wide program for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled that incentivizes carbon sequestration, zero-emission buildings and vehicles, soil building agricultural activities, and natural based shoreline adaptation measures and social resilience;
- Create conditions and incentives for affordable housing close to employment and transit services;
- Promote equitable smart growth principles in both urban and rural regions, focusing density in existing communities;
- Provide for systematic reviews of General Plan progress and associated metrics that are transparent, engage the community, and demonstrate measurable equitable outcomes consistent with the Plan's intent.

## Contra Costa County General Plan Update:

### Policy Suggestions from Environmental Advocates

In order for Contra Costa County to adapt and thrive in the face of the climate crisis, the General Plan needs to set goals that are not just incremental, but ambitious and transformative. Clear measurables must be included to support the following concepts from our [original vision letter](#) that we shared in the Fall of 2019. Building on our original vision, below are some specific policy language suggestions for each item outlined in our vision

#### 1. **Protect, restore and preserve our natural spaces and water: open space, hillsides, riparian habitats, vernal pools, waterways, shorelines, wetlands, sloughs, and green infrastructure.**

- Preserve and protect hillsides and vistas. Identify and create an inventory of areas in the County with significant natural habitat, open space and recreation resources and promote conservation, preservation and environmental rehabilitation of these lands. Work with property owners to acquire or dedicate those lands that could be preserved as open space.
- Develop hillside development guidelines that will ensure construction activities retain natural vegetation and topography and minimize grading of hillside. Minimize soil depletion and prevent erosion.
- Require all new construction to protect and restore natural features such as waterways, creeks & wetlands in urban areas as a means of connecting residents with nature and reversing damage to natural systems. Where feasible, restore creek corridors in urban areas. Creeks currently diverted in culverts or hardened channels should be restored to their natural state.
- Prohibit the use of invasive plant species such as broom and ivies, especially adjacent to wetlands, riparian areas, or other sensitive habitat. Require landscaping that incorporates native, drought-tolerant plants and sustainable maintenance practices and standards. Provide trees on residential & mixed-use streets. Ensure a 3 to 1 replacement of all trees removed. Plant trees to shade county buildings, businesses and residential homes to reduce energy use and sequester carbon. Require green infrastructure such as impervious surfaces to reduce stormwater runoff and provide swales and retention basins.
- Require new development and significant remodels to reduce the waste of potable water through the use of efficient technology, recycled water plumbing (purple pipe), and conservation efforts that minimize the County's dependence on imported water and conserve groundwater resources.







## 2. Plan for more equitable outcomes for residents, prioritizing the needs of disadvantaged and historically marginalized communities

- Develop a plan to transition from toxic industries to clean industries that offer good-wage jobs that are accessible by biking, walking and public transportation. Include a local hiring incentive or requirement.
- **Mitigate historic and current toxic uses adjacent to frontline communities through brownfield clean up, buffer zoning for open space in and around disadvantaged communities, and developing high-quality urban parks in disadvantaged communities**
- Work with local Native American tribes to protect recorded and unrecorded cultural and sacred sites and to educate developers and the community at large about the connections between Native American history and the environmental features of our local landscape.

## 3. Take bold action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, sequester carbon, and transition to a carbon-free economy;

- Require implementation of a Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, that includes a baseline greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory for both community wide and county operations, that is reviewed and adjusted on an annual basis to ensure GHG reduction goals are met or exceeded. The Inventory shall provide a business-as-usual forecast for GHG emissions for 2020 and 2030 and beyond if needed. The GHG emissions reduction target will align with Executive Order B 55 80, committing to net zero carbon by 2045 and will include commitment to SB100, 100% zero carbon energy by 2045.
- Establish a goal: "County leadership in addressing the climate crisis". This goal will commit to 1) leadership in promoting new initiatives and innovative strategies that meet and exceed state requirements; 2) proactive education of residents and businesses about the importance of these actions; 3) Participation with other jurisdictions and organizations to develop effective regional solutions and regulation at regional, state and federal levels; 4) Collaboration with residents, businesses, public agencies and neighboring jurisdictions, in order to meet or exceed state requirements for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Establish a goal: "Climate-Resilient Communities". While the impacts of climate change on local communities are uncertain, to the extent possible, prepare to respond to and protect residents and businesses from increased risks of natural disasters and extreme weather events such as flooding or drought.



#### **4. Strengthen community and natural environment resiliency through climate adaptation and emergency planning efforts**

- Name and address climate action explicitly, and incorporate Climate Action Plan goals and strategies within the General Plan.
- Incorporate the climate adaptation and resilience strategies in the [San Francisco Bay Shoreline Adaptation Atlas](#), into all relevant policies to protect environmental quality and public health and safety, with a focus on disadvantaged communities.
- Identify all infrastructure, particularly industrial infrastructure, at risk of floods, seismic/liquefaction risk and enhanced wildfire risk due to climate change. Require needed safety upgrades identified in hazard mitigation assessment and emergency preparedness policies and procedures and hold public meetings to discuss these plans and ensure widespread understanding and confidence in these plans.

#### **5. Protect and improve our agricultural lands and associated economy**

- Implement the policy recommendations from "[Recommendations on Reforming Agricultural Land Use Policies in Contra Costa County](#)" document from Fall 2019.
- *Preserve agricultural lands for sustained crop production, grazing and farming. Encourage local organic food production on commercial farms and through micro farming in community gardens and private yards. Protect viable topsoils to ensure working landscapes. Incentivize regenerative farming practices.*
- *Adopt farmland mitigation programs aimed at preserving farmland while giving agricultural landowners the opportunity to recover equity in their property without developing it. These should be coordinated among localities so as to create a level playing field and prevent developers from playing one jurisdiction against its neighbors. LAFCOs can help do this by adopting their own policy of requiring cities to mitigate farmland loss as a condition of annexation.*
- *Encourage small-scale food production, such as community gardens and cooperative neighborhood growing efforts, on parcels within the city limits, provided that the operations do not conflict with existing adjacent urban uses. Collaborate with water suppliers and wastewater treatment plant operators to increase the availability of treated or recycled water for agricultural purposes.*



**6. Ensure transit-oriented development, focus economic development near housing or transit, reduce vehicle miles traveled and promote equitable access to jobs and services, especially for disadvantaged communities**

- Strengthen the urban limit line, and preserve lands along the line.
- Create a jurisdiction-wide program for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled that incentivizes carbon sequestration, zero-emission buildings and vehicles, soil building agricultural activities, and natural based shoreline adaptation measures and social resilience;
- Expand the green transportation network by encouraging the use of climate-friendly technology, planning growth around multiple modes of travel and reducing automobile reliance. In addition to promoting improved public transit, partner with private developers to undertake citywide improvements that make active modes of travel, such as walking and bicycling, more comfortable and preferable options. Establish an energy efficient fleet management and operation practices.
- Reduce energy consumption by promoting sustainable land uses and development patterns. Pursue infill development opportunities and encourage the construction of higher-density, mixed-use projects around existing public transit infrastructure, schools, parks, neighborhood-serving retail and other critical services. Incorporate ecologically sustainable practices and materials into new development, building retrofits and streetscape improvements. In areas that are already built-up include affordable and deeply affordable housing, as a means to reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions, and facilitate walking, bicycling, and transit use, including through mixed-use corridors and activity centers.
- Work with existing shuttle service providers to coordinate their services with other forms of transit, special events and work centers. Encourage home offices, live/work sites and satellite work centers in appropriate locations. Encourage telecommuting options through public outreach and with new and existing employers, as appropriate and modeled by County policies that encourage telecommuting whenever feasible.
- Coordinate with ride-sharing programs to provide up-to-date lists of potential riders and to educate the public on commuting options. Encourage the development of employer-funded vanpool and shuttle bus services to new employment centers. Encourage employer provision of information on alternative modes of transit. Encourage employers to offer flextime arrangements to their employees in order to reduce the percentage of trips made during peak hours.

**7. Prioritize efficient land use and house every resident ethically and affordably through new housing production, tenant protection, and existing housing preservation**

- We recognize that the housing element is not part of this current update and will have more comments when the housing element is updated in the future.

**8. Ensure accountability to the goals and priorities laid out in the General Plan.**

- Add a section to all staff reports that reviews impact on sustainability, resiliency, and equity; as well as fiscal impact.
- Mandate annual reporting on general plan progress be posted on the front page of the county website with a clear dashboard that indicates progress on implementation plans. And clear visuals of how the county is meeting its greenhouse gas reduction goals.
- Conduct annual outreach events to the communities identified as disadvantaged per SB1000 to update on progress and elicit community comment and guidance for future action.
- Provide for systematic reviews of General Plan progress and associated metrics that are transparent, engage the community, and demonstrate measurable equitable outcomes consistent with the Plan's intent.

## ATTACHMENT C: FACT SHEET WITH RESOURCES AND LINKS TO BEST PRACTICES

[www.cccclimateleaders.org/workshops/general-plan-updating/](http://www.cccclimateleaders.org/workshops/general-plan-updating/)

### GENERAL PLAN FACT SHEET

#### Contra Costa County Climate Leaders

A project of Generation Green - a 501(c)3 Nonprofit organization

Find Links to Other Local Government Policy Opportunities at

[www.cccclimateleaders.org](http://www.cccclimateleaders.org)



#### WHAT?

According to state law, each California city and county is required to prepare a general plan. A general plan is defined as “a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning.”<sup>1</sup> The general plan sets up a framework of goals in which subsequent implementation policies can be enforced. They often have “Implementation” sections in which next steps for these policies are outlined. California Government Code (Section 65000 et seq) require seven “elements” to general plans: land use, circulation, noise, conservation, housing, open space and safety<sup>2</sup>.

The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) is preparing to release an update to the General Plan Guidelines (GPGs). The new GPGs represent a change in format and information presentation. The draft will be released in early 2014 with a voluntary 60 day public review period and outreach meetings across the state. The OPR’s [Annual Planning Survey](#) provides the latest information on local planning, the status of both city and county General Plans and local perspective on statewide issues. California law requires general plans are to be updated periodically in order to stay current with state laws and local needs. General Plan updates are typically done every 10 years.

#### WHY?

Since California law requires every city and county to periodically update its General Plan, the document is considered by many to be the Constitution for land-use decisions at the local level.

After the United States failed to sign the Kyoto Protocol, many city mayors signed onto the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, which was an agreement to meet or beat the nation’s assigned target under Kyoto to reduce emissions below 1990 levels by 2012<sup>3</sup>. Currently, 1,060 mayors throughout the country have signed on to the agreement. In addition, California passed Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 375 which set the 1990 reduction goal into law to be achieved by 2020.

In order for cities to do their part in meeting these goals, they have begun taking a more overall or “umbrella” approach, by including General Plan elements for Climate Action, Energy, Health, etc. General Plans provide a framework of a community’s goals and needs by comments from both community members and elected officials. Since the General Plan establishes this framework, future land use and development projects cannot be conducted unless they are consistent with the community’s General Plan. Once Climate Action Planning elements are included in the General Plan, cities can have actual implementation of policies focused on combating climate change.

#### WHERE?

San Pablo has set specific implementation policies into their 2011 General Plan update which include conducting GHG inventories, mandating green building, and encouraging non-polluting transportation options.

<http://www.sanpabloca.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/669>

Pinole’s 2010 General Plan update includes more than 90 climate adaptation and mitigation policies focused on topics such as resilience to storm events, open space protection and water conservation. <http://www.icleiusa.org/action-center/learn-from-others/case-study-incorporating-adaptation-to-climate-change-in-pinole2010s-general-plan-update>

The City of Vacaville added an Energy and Conservation Action Strategy Plan to its current GP update where it outlined goals for energy conservation, improved air quality and water conservation and detailed specific actions to do so.

[http://www.vacavillegeneralplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/4\\_ConservationOpenSpace\\_PublicReview.pdf](http://www.vacavillegeneralplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/4_ConservationOpenSpace_PublicReview.pdf)

The City of San Mateo created a new Energy and Climate Change Element for the General Plan, in addition to integrating EECAP measures into existing General Plan goals, policies, and implementation

project of Generation Green - a 501(c)3 Nonprofit organization Find Links to Other Local Gov. ....

[www.cccclimateleaders.org](http://www.cccclimateleaders.org)



EAST BAY  
energy  
watch



# GENERAL PLAN FACT SHEET

## Contra Costa County Climate Leaders

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Find Links to Other Local Government Policy Opportunities at  
[www.cccclimateleaders.org](http://www.cccclimateleaders.org)



programs. <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/planning/rechargesmc/pdf/docs/Energy%20&%20Climate%20Change%20Element.pdf>

The City of Richmond has incorporated an Energy and Climate Change element into their General Plan. The element provides policy direction for Richmond to protect its energy resources and respond to climate change. In this General Plan, Richmond created 6 main goals in which each task was assigned to a city department, increasing accountability.

<http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/8813>

The City of Livermore included a Climate Change Element in 2009 within their General Plan. The element includes a baseline GHG inventory and outlines implementation policies regarding land use, transportation, Green building, water efficiency, etc.

<http://www.cityoflivermore.net/civica3x/filebank/documents/6103/>

### HOW?

Existing General Plans will often have GHG reduction strategies in them, however they are just as likely to contain policies that work against this. There are opportunities to strengthen existing General Plan policies and/or incorporate new policies that reduce emissions.

In general, an effective Climate Change Element in a General Plan includes three parts:

- 1) **the introduction**, which should provide a description on climate change and its impacts, as well as the need for incorporating this topic into the General Plan. More information on how to write an introduction can be found at the website for the Air Resources Board.
- 2) **the GHG inventory** establishes a baseline of emissions which can help determine the type of GHG reduction policies needed, and facilitate tracking of policy implementation and effectiveness. Examples include San Pablo, Vacaville.
- 3) **the objectives and policies section**, spells out the policies that can or will reduce GHG emissions. These are often categorized in the following ways: land use, transportation, energy efficiency, alternative energy, municipal operations, waste reduction, conservation, and education.

Jurisdictions can incorporate climate protection goals into their General Plans, either through a stand-alone element or by integrating into existing elements. These options are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they will provide the most robust reductions in greenhouse gases if they are implemented together, with careful attention to coordination of goals and optimizing limited resources.

### TO LEARN MORE?

<http://www.coolcalifornia.org/article/climate-action-planning>

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/67101.html>

[www.icleiusa.org/action-center/planning/ActionPlanningMissyStults.ppt](http://www.icleiusa.org/action-center/planning/ActionPlanningMissyStults.ppt)

[http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/files/documents/best\\_practices\\_cap.pdf](http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org/files/documents/best_practices_cap.pdf)

[http://www.epa.gov/greenkit/q5\\_energ.htm](http://www.epa.gov/greenkit/q5_energ.htm)

<http://www.epa.gov/statelocalclimate/local/activities/action-plan.html>

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/50845.html#Guide>

[http://opr.ca.gov/docs/EGPR\\_ReviewDraft.pdf](http://opr.ca.gov/docs/EGPR_ReviewDraft.pdf)

<sup>1</sup> [http://opr.ca.gov/s\\_generalplanguidelines.php](http://opr.ca.gov/s_generalplanguidelines.php)

<sup>2</sup> [http://opr.ca.gov/docs/General\\_Plan\\_Guidelines\\_2003.pdf](http://opr.ca.gov/docs/General_Plan_Guidelines_2003.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.usmayors.org/climateprotection/agreement.htm>

project of Generation Green - a 501(c)3 Nonprofit organization Find Links to Other Local Gov  
[www.cccclimateleaders.org](http://www.cccclimateleaders.org)



EAST BAY  
energy  
watch



## RESOURCES LIST:

Office of Planning and Research, General Plan workshop <http://www.cccclimateleaders.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Post-2019-Climate-in-GP-Contra-Costa.pdf>

with Helen Campbell from the Governor's [helen.campbell@opr.ca.gov](mailto:helen.campbell@opr.ca.gov)

- 2017 Guidelines on Climate Change:  
The safety element may be the “home” for adaptation discussions in the general plan, but climate change adaptation should be integrated throughout the elements of a general plan to create internal consistency and support holistic consideration of this important issue. CAPs and GPs that incorporate GHG emissions reductions are required to analyze impacts of policies on environment.  
<http://opr.ca.gov/planning/general-plan/food-waste.html>
- CEQA and Climate Change. <http://opr.ca.gov/ceqa/climate-change.html>
- Governor Brown signed Senate Bill 246 (Wieckowski, PRC 71354) in 2015, which directs OPR to form the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program. The Program is designed to develop a cohesive and coordinated response to the impacts of climate change across the state. Through its activities, the Program will develop holistic strategies to coordinate climate activities at the state, regional and local levels, while advancing social equity. <http://opr.ca.gov/planning/icarp/>
- Opportunities to align SB 1000 and SB 379 v Defining Vulnerable Communities OPR's Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program v Resource Guide for Defining Vulnerable Communities [http://opr.ca.gov/docs/20180723-Vulnerable\\_Communities.pdf](http://opr.ca.gov/docs/20180723-Vulnerable_Communities.pdf)
- Cal-Adapt - <http://cal-adapt.org>
- California Adaptation Clearinghouse - <http://resilientca.org>
- California Adaptation Planning Guide - <http://resources.ca.gov/climate/safeguarding/local-action/> 4. California Climate Action Portal (CAP-Map) - <https://webmaps.arb.ca.gov/capmap>
- CalOES MyHazards - <http://myhazards.caloes.ca.gov/>
- CalOES MyPlan - <http://www.caloes.ca.gov/cal-oes-divisions/hazard-mitigation/myplan-internet-mapping-tool>
- CalOES Office of Access and Functional Needs - <http://www.caloes.ca.gov/cal-oes-divisions/access-functionalneeds/oafn-web-map>
- Coastal Storm Modeling System: CoSMoS - [https://walrus.wr.usgs.gov/coastal\\_processes/cosmos/](https://walrus.wr.usgs.gov/coastal_processes/cosmos/)
- Cool California - <http://www.coolcalifornia.org/>
- Funding Wizard - <https://fundingwizard.arb.ca.gov>
- Georgetown Climate Center Adaptation Clearinghouse - <http://www.adaptationclearinghouse.org> 12. NOAA Sea Level Rise Viewer - <https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/slr>
- Our Coast Our Future Sea Level Rise Viewer - <http://data.pointblue.org/apps/ocof/cms/>
- SEEC Clearpath California Emissions Management Tool - <http://californiaseec.org/seec-clearpath/>
- US Climate Resilience Toolkit - <https://toolkit.climate.gov/>
- Urban Footprint - <http://www.sgc.ca.gov/resources/urban-footprint/> General Plan Mapping Tool <http://opr.ca.gov/planning/general-plan/data-mapping-tool.html>

