



August 23, 2021

To: Mayor Steinberg and City Councilmembers

Re: Achieving Carbon Zero through the City of Sacramento's 2040 General Plan Update

The SacMoves coalition appreciates this opportunity to provide the City of Sacramento with our perspective and vision for the city's 2040 General Plan Update. This update is the most important plan that the city has ever undertaken. It is the first general plan update with a 20-year planning horizon virtually coinciding with the critical state and local goals of achieving Carbon Zero by 2045. Moreover, the Mayor and Council have already recognized that the quickening pace of climate change has rendered the 2045 target date inadequate. In December 2019, the City of Sacramento adopted a Climate Emergency Declaration directing the 2040 General Plan Update and Climate Action Plan to "present the City's approach to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 and emergency actions needed towards emissions elimination by 2030, building on recommendations and analysis from the Mayor's Commission on Climate Change, significant community outreach by City staff, and mitigation measures incorporated from climate experts, community members, and financial advisors."

Together with the concurrent adoption of the City's Climate Action Plan, the 2040 General Plan Update presents a unique opportunity for Sacramento to adopt a blueprint showing the rest of California and the nation how a growing, diverse urban center can continue to grow and prosper while achieving Carbon Zero emissions as early as 2030. Seizing this opportunity will not be easy, but the challenge for the City is clear - to translate the recommendations of the landmark Mayors' Commission on Climate Change (MCCC) Report, which the City Council adopted in full last year, into enforceable and effective General Plan policies and a blueprint to eliminate locally produced greenhouse gas emissions as early as 2030.

Because the largest share of local greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is generated by the transportation sector, we request that the Mayor and Council ***hold a public workshop focused on general plan transportation and land use policies*** capable of producing significant

reductions in GHG reductions as quickly as possible, ramping down to Carbon Zero as early as 2030. Our coalition stands ready to assist the city in planning and preparing for this workshop.

For the past two years, SacMoves and Sacramento Metro Advocates for Rail and Transit (SMART) have been leading a broad-based coalition of business, labor and community groups united behind a common vision that Sacramento should have an innovative, seamless, and diversified transportation network offering a wide range of accessible, affordable, and efficient mobility choices coupled with supportive land uses, better air quality, safer neighborhoods, and a stronger and more equitable economy. To that end, we have consistently advocated for the inclusion of projects and policies in transportation, land use, and climate action plans for the City, the Sacramento Transportation Authority, SACOG, and the greater Sacramento region that are consistent with the groundbreaking work of the MCCC. Our goal is to ensure that these types of progressive projects and policies are adopted comprehensively throughout our region in policies, programs, and other actions, big and small.

In addition to implementing the MCCC Report, the 2040 General Plan Update must also implement the principles and policies in the SMART/SACMOVES POLICY FRAMEWORK if the city is to come anywhere close to Carbon Zero as early as 2030 (attached). This Policy Framework, which was the product of extensive community outreach, advocates adoption of growth management transportation policies that preserve the local environment and support existing communities. It sets forth model transportation and land use policies based on best practices from urban centers throughout California, giving priority to transportation projects, policies, and programs that:

- Support livable communities by creating safer, more connected bike/ped networks, and fixing and modernizing existing neighborhood streets
- Support density and transit centers to facilitate bus, light rail, and passenger train rides that are faster, safer, cleaner, more convenient, and more frequent
- Conform with state and federal air quality targets, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research's Technical Advisory on SB 743 Implementation, SACOG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS), and the Mayors' Climate Change Commission Final Report
- Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions
- Eliminate roadway fatalities and severe injuries, improve health outcomes, and increase access to physical activity
- Provide access to quality transportation, jobs, housing, education and training, and health care
- Promote a stronger economy that attracts greater private investment and sustains a larger and more diversified job base and regional gross domestic product

If the urgency of acting in response to climate change were not already clear, the New York Times Editorial Board summed up the most recent report of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as follows:

“First, nations have waited so long to curb emissions that a hotter future is essentially locked in, as are more droughts, more forest fires, more crippling heat waves, more sea level rise, more floods. The greenhouse gases that have already been pumped into the atmosphere are going to stay there a long time, inflicting misery for years to come.”

“Point two: Humanity can still take a stand. It must. If countries make a coordinated effort to stop adding carbon dioxide to the atmosphere by, say, midcentury, and undertake through reforestation and other means to remove carbon from the air, global warming might level off at around 1.5 degrees. This in turn means mustering the will to stave off a darker future than the one the world has already locked itself into. **It also means, in policy terms, a rapid shift away from fossil fuels; big investments in wind, solar and nuclear power; a rebuilt electric grid; more efficient homes and buildings — in short, a wholly different energy delivery system.**” (NYT, Sunday, August 15, 2021; emphasis added.)

The City of Sacramento cannot afford to wait and see how the nations of the world will respond to this clarion call. We can and we must do everything in our power locally to remove carbon and hold global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius, while also doing what's necessary to adapt our region to the inevitable challenges of climate change. Through the combined efforts of SAFCA, the Water Forum, nature conservancies, and others, we have been doing our part in terms of flood control, water and habitat management. Moreover, we are served by a municipal utility in SMUD that is committed to generating carbon-free electricity by 2030. However, our efforts in terms of land use and transportation remain woefully inadequate.

City leaders must take a stronger leadership role in California and the nation to expedite the transition to a sustainable and livable future. To have any realistic chance of achieving carbon zero as early as 2030, the city absolutely must do everything within its power so that every resident, business, and visitor in the city can get everywhere they need to go and do everything they need to live, work, and play without burning fossil fuels, as quickly as possible.

Finally, we note that the Mayor and Council will soon be considering adopting the City's expenditure plan for its \$112 million tranche of federal funding under the American Rescue Plan. We certainly have no qualms with the Mayor's proposal to spend money on programs for small business support, homeless and housing initiatives, youth, workforce training, gang violence prevention and the arts. However, notably missing from this list of worthy programs is funding for transportation and other infrastructure projects that would reduce GHG emissions that contribute to wildfires and other extreme weather events and help lessen our vulnerability to COVID.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Yours truly,
SacMoves Coalition

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