

# Climate Action 2020 and Beyond

SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ~ HIGHLIGHTS AND SUMMARY



# Climate Action 2020 and Beyond

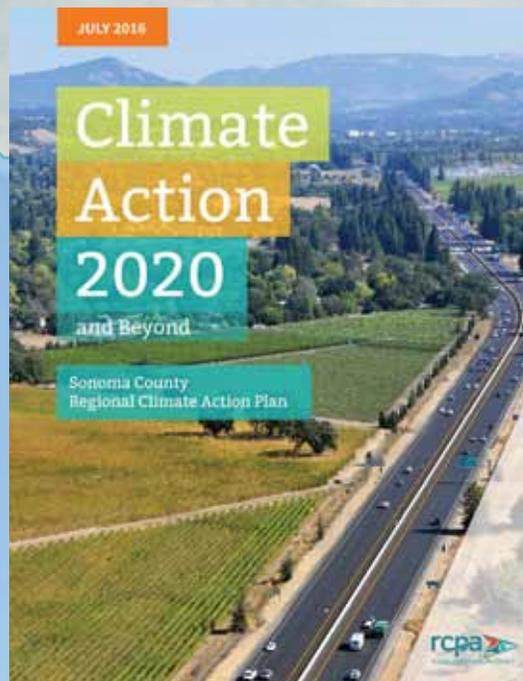
**Climate Action 2020 and Beyond is a collaborative effort among all nine cities and the County of Sonoma to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and respond to the impacts of climate change through a Regional Climate Action Plan.**

This effort was made possible by countless contributions from members of our Sonoma County community.

**Thank you all!**

Climate Action 2020 and Beyond was prepared by:  
The Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority  
on behalf of the:

County of Sonoma  
City of Cloverdale  
City of Cotati  
City of Healdsburg  
City of Petaluma  
City of Rohnert Park  
City of Santa Rosa  
City of Sebastopol  
City of Sonoma  
Town of Windsor



A PDF of the full 370-page plan is available for download at: [rcpa.ca.gov/ca2020](http://rcpa.ca.gov/ca2020)



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**Climate Action 2020 and Beyond is a plan for all Sonoma County communities.** It creates an efficient and consistent framework enabling each local government to take locally appropriate actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This summary booklet highlights key issues and actions found in the full Plan.

### The Top Plan Highlights:

- ★ Climate change is real and an increasing threat, especially for vulnerable populations, today's youth and future generations.
- ★ The near-term goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25% below 1990 levels.
- ★ Energy used for transportation and buildings accounts for 89% of countywide greenhouse gas emissions.
- ★ Climate action provides local opportunities for innovation and job growth.

### We can meet local emissions goals, if we:

- ★ Substantially increase the use of renewable energy and low-carbon fuels.
- ★ Switch to more fuel-efficient and electric powered vehicles and equipment.
- ★ Reduce waste in our use of energy, water and materials.
- ★ Protect and enhance the value of open and working lands.
- ★ Make further progress through collaboration and investment by all levels of government and the entire community.

# Introduction

# A Call to Action

## Steps for Success

**Climate change is a global challenge that demands action at every level.** Climate Action 2020 and Beyond takes another big step forward as local governments commit to concrete actions that will further reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It builds upon earlier local initiatives and actions. Sonoma County communities can reduce GHG emissions to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 and assist other community priorities, such as economic resilience, public health, water efficiency, air quality and overall quality of life.



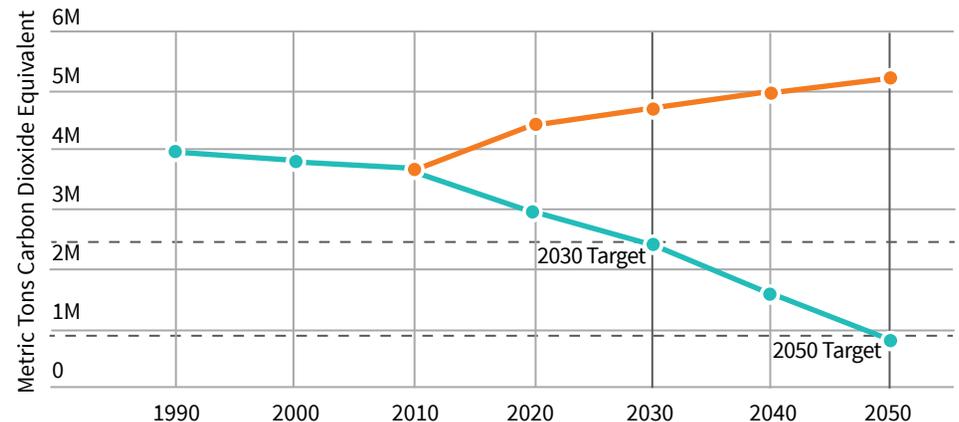
## Climate Change Is a Serious Threat

**There is a strong scientific consensus that recent climatic changes are largely the result of human activities.** Although variations in global climate have been previously recorded, human influence on the climate system is clear. Increased greenhouse gas emissions and concentrations in the atmosphere are at record highs—destabilizing the climate and placing natural systems, human health and community well-being at risk. Such risks include increased temperatures, more variable rainfall, flooding, droughts, wild land fires, economic disruption and related health concerns—an increasing threat for vulnerable people and future generations. The chart below forecasts that emissions will continue increasing if a “business as usual” approach is taken.



**Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Sonoma County**

2020 trend ●  
Business as usual ●

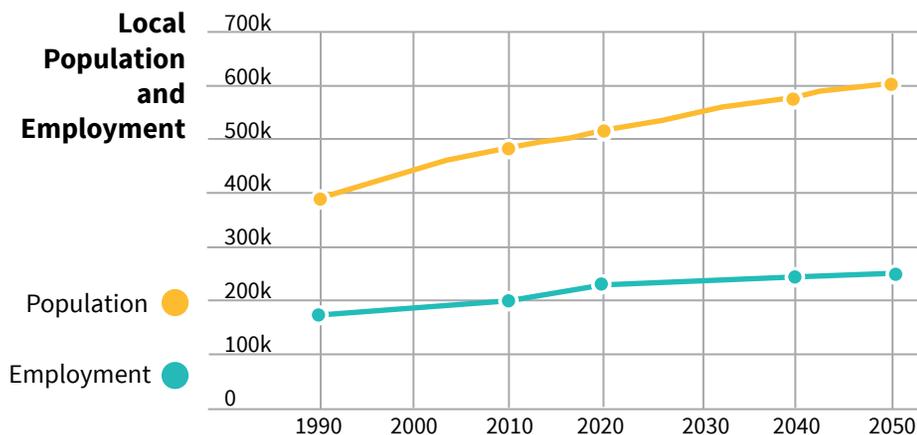


# Working Together

## A Regional Approach

**Climate change calls for a coordinated, multi-partner effort.** With the creation of the Regional Climate Protection Authority, a first-in-the-nation collaborative planning and implementation entity, the cities and County of Sonoma are confronting climate protection head on. Continued progress depends on Sonoma County communities working together. Regional collaboration recognizes the shared nature of the climate challenge and helps align state and local resources.

Communities each have a different capacity to achieve reductions. The Plan identifies reduction measures to be led by cities or the county, along with measures more efficiently implemented at a larger scale.



# Leadership



## We Know What to Do

**Sonoma County communities are recognized innovators in combating climate change.** Local leadership includes early adoption of greenhouse gas reduction targets—an effort led by the community-based Center for Climate Protection. These targets were officially adopted in 2005 by all the Cities and the County of Sonoma. Similarly, collaboration among business, community organizations and local governments has been a hallmark of local climate action leadership, captured in the 2008 Cool Plan [coolplan.org]. Other leadership examples include the City of Santa Rosa first adopting its Climate Action Plan in 2012, Sonoma County’s Energy Independence Program, Sonoma Clean Power and the Sonoma County Water Agency’s carbon-free water conveyance program.



# Community Benefits

## Climate Action Benefits Community Residents and Business

**Reducing greenhouse gas emissions will benefit Sonoma County residents and businesses.** Benefits include energy and cost savings, improved air quality, improved public health, job creation, resource conservation and readiness for local hazards. Climate Action 2020 and Beyond may also be used by qualifying projects to reduce the time and costs of environmental review.

Combating climate change is a smart investment. Weatherizing and adding solar to existing homes creates construction jobs and cuts utility bills. When businesses increase energy efficiency or add on-site renewable energy generation, they reduce operating costs and employ electricians, engineers, builders and plumbers.

The measures in Climate Action 2020 and Beyond provide an opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and achieve a diverse range of community co-benefits, identified in the Plan with “Benefits” icons.



## Benefits



### ENERGY SAVINGS

Reduced costs, less dependence on imported fossil fuels



### AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Reduced pollution, less damage to ecosystems, people and infrastructure



**PUBLIC HEALTH IMPROVEMENT**

Improved human health and longevity; reduced respiratory, heart and other diseases



**JOBS CREATION**

More jobs in renewables and energy efficiency, construction, transportation; recirculates dollars in local economy



**RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

Reduced water and material consumption, less demand on landfill space; increased protection of open space and working landscapes



**COST SAVINGS**

Increased efficiencies, reduced health care expenses, less need to develop costly new water sources



**CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

More secure against harm from climate hazards, such as hotter temperatures, drought, floods and sea level rise



**EQUITY**

Increased opportunities for people of all backgrounds to share in prosperity, well-being and safety; climate justice that avoids disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations



# Countywide Greenhouse Gas Inventory



**Transportation and building energy generate 89% of local greenhouse gas emissions.** Countywide emissions have already decreased since 1990, primarily because technologies have become more efficient and our power supply cleaner. However, without additional measures, emissions will steadily rise again as population and employment increase.

Greenhouse gas inventories help determine where communities can reduce their contributions to climate change, further define strategic priorities and track progress. Using an activity-based approach, greenhouse gas emissions sources were carefully estimated. Greenhouse gases are expressed as metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO<sub>2</sub>e), based on the warming potential of the gases.



## 2010 Countywide Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Source

Building Energy 34%

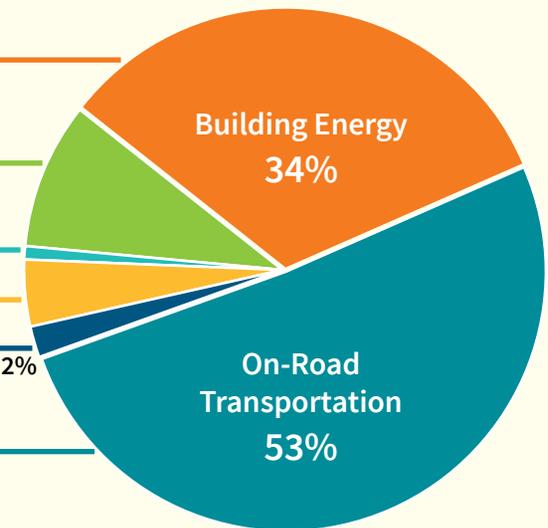
Livestock 7%

Water & Wastewater 0.5%

Solid Waste 4%

Off-Road Transportation & Equipment 2%

On-Road Transportation 53%



# 20 x 2020: Countywide Reduction Goals



## GREENHOUSE GAS Sources



BUILDING ENERGY



TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE



SOLID WASTE



WATER & WASTEWATER



LIVESTOCK & FERTILIZER

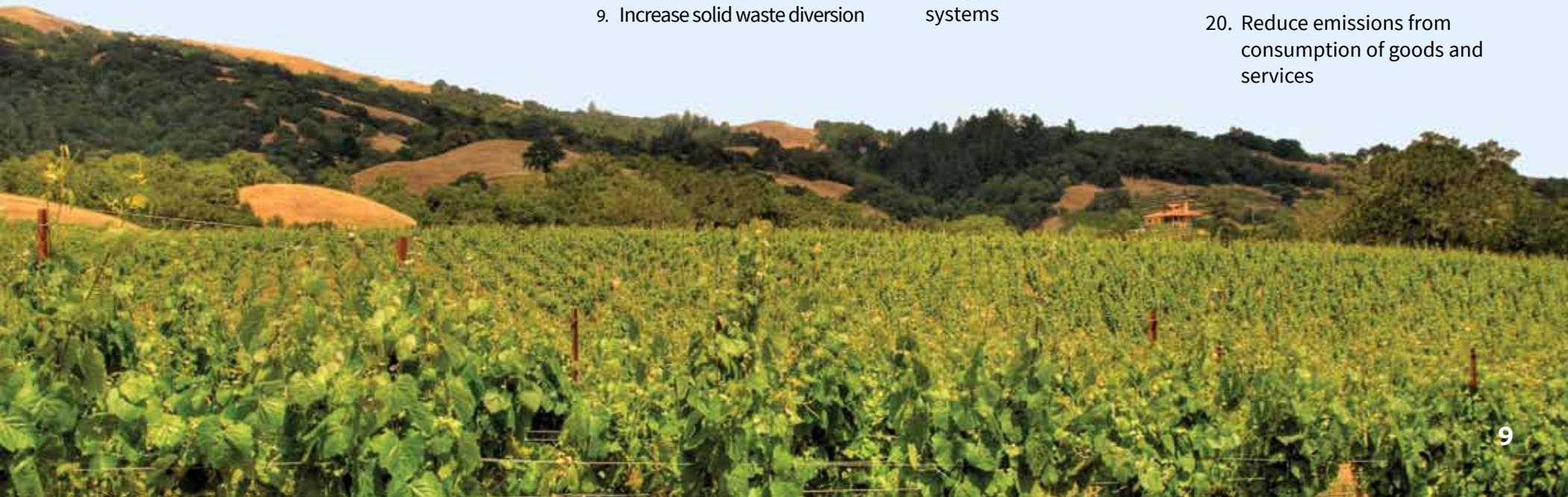


ADVANCED CLIMATE INITIATIVES



## 20 Goals for Reducing Greenhouse Gases

1. Increase building energy efficiency
2. Increase renewable energy use
3. Switch equipment from fossil fuel to electricity
4. Reduce travel demand through focused growth
5. Encourage a shift toward low-carbon transportation options
6. Increase vehicle and equipment fuel efficiency
7. Encourage a shift toward low-carbon fuels in vehicles and equipment
8. Reduce idling
9. Increase solid waste diversion
10. Increase capture and use of methane from landfills
11. Reduce water consumption
12. Increase recycled water and graywater use
13. Increase water and wastewater infrastructure efficiency
14. Increase use of renewable energy in water and wastewater systems
15. Reduce emissions from livestock operations
16. Reduce emissions from fertilizer use
17. Protect and enhance the value of open and working lands
18. Promote sustainable agriculture
19. Increase carbon sequestration
20. Reduce emissions from consumption of goods and services



# Putting Climate Action to Work

**Continued progress requires collaboration and investment from the entire community**—residents, businesses, non-profits, tribal communities and all levels of government. Sonoma County residents and businesses have set a great example by individual actions, such as saving water, conserving electricity and installing solar. Our community is also a leader in working together to face challenges, including the creation of Sonoma Clean Power and jointly preparing a Climate Action Plan.

**This Plan provides a palette of strategies to choose from.** Local actions include encouraging building energy retrofits with incentives, financing and technical assistance; expanding green building ordinances; increasing outdoor lighting standards; and planting more shade trees.

While national and state measures play a critical role, this regional Plan focuses on countywide and local near-term strategies. Many countywide measures have been adopted and are already underway. Local actions in this Plan are adopted and implemented by the cities and the County of Sonoma.

The Regional Climate Protection Authority will coordinate and facilitate implementation by the cities, the County, and regional agencies, and monitor progress. Each city and the County will also develop its own team to implement this Plan.



If 10% of Sonoma County residents and businesses signed up for “EverGreen” zero carbon electricity, this would reduce emissions by **28,000** MTCO<sub>2</sub>e\* per year.

\*MTCO<sub>2</sub>e (Metric Tons Carbon Dioxide Equivalents)





## BUILDING ENERGY

Energy used in buildings contributes around 33% of local greenhouse gas emissions, the second-largest source in Sonoma County. In the near term, increasing the use of renewable energy in combination with higher energy efficiency is among the most promising building energy strategies.

**Sonoma County communities are well served by regional programs already committed to reducing greenhouse gases.** Local residents and businesses are incentivized to make existing buildings more energy efficient, install solar hot water and photovoltaic systems, and even repay associated loans along with their property taxes.

Sonoma Clean Power, created in 2014, offers Sonoma County communities the choice of purchasing lower-carbon and zero-carbon electricity delivered through PG&E power lines.



### Building Energy (34% of emissions)

GHG Reduction Target **322,500** MTCO<sub>2</sub>e

1. Energy efficiency **53,877**
2. Renewable energy **267,027**
3. Electrify equipment **1,625**



If 10% of Sonoma County residents and businesses switched their hot water heater from gas to low-carbon electricity, this alone would reduce emissions by an additional **4,000** MTCO<sub>2</sub>e per year by 2020.



## TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE

**Transportation results in 53% of the countywide greenhouse gas emissions**, the largest local source. The link between land use and transportation helps determine where jobs, housing, stores and other uses are located; how people and goods move around (e.g., on foot, bicycle, bus, car, truck); and what kind of fuels are used (e.g., electricity, biofuels, gasoline, diesel).



### GOALS

#### Transportation (55% of emissions)

GHG Reduction Target

	<b>426,000</b> MTCO <sub>2</sub> e
4. Reduced travel demand/focused growth	<b>4,693</b>
5. Shift to low-carbon transportation	<b>43,058</b>
6. Increased vehicle and equipment fuel efficiency	<b>358,720</b>
7. Shift to low-carbon fuels in vehicles and equipment	<b>19,413</b>
8. Reduce idling	<b>163</b>

**Communities that make it easier to get around without a car emit fewer greenhouse gases** than sprawling places largely designed with cars in mind. Fortunately, Sonoma County adopted city-centered growth policies long ago. Still, car trips are expected to increase as the population and economy grow.

**Combined actions at the state, regional and local levels are needed to reduce emissions.** These center on increasing vehicle and fuel efficiency and encouraging a shift toward low-carbon transportation like biking, walking and transit. Other actions include encouraging a shift toward low-carbon fuels like electricity and reducing travel demand through focused growth.

Placing new development and mixed uses in city centers and along active transit corridors enables more transportation choices. However, building needed affordable housing and increased densities along transit hubs tends to be a slow process. Over time, incentives like reduced parking requirements along with a faster and more certain regulatory process and financing opportunities can encourage infill and transit-oriented development.



**Switching to transportation systems powered by renewably generated electricity is very promising.** With access to renewable sources of electricity now readily available, additional electrical vehicle charging stations at employment centers, schools and public parking lots will help scale up this transition.

Other important local and regional strategies include increased use of fuel-efficient vehicles and low-carbon fuels, reduced-cost transit passes, carpool incentives, and ride sharing and Safe Routes to Schools programs. Working with large- and small-scale employers on a trip reduction ordinance and adoption of an ordinance limiting the idling of commercial vehicles are also recommended.

**Providing more choices for safe and convenient mobility is an overarching challenge.** Further innovations are proposed, such as the expanding guaranteed ride home programs for employees, along with bikeshare and careshare projects. The Plan also proposes more “complete” streets with transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and revised parking policies.



You can reduce your greenhouse gas emissions from driving by **94%** when you switch from a typical gasoline-powered vehicle to a typical electric vehicle using 100% renewably powered electricity.



## SOLID WASTE

**Diverting waste and generating electricity from landfill gases are time-tested strategies.** Local residents and businesses generated over one million tons of solid waste in 2010, about one-third of it landfilled. Converting landfill gas to fuel or energy helps reduce additional emissions that would otherwise occur. Increasing population and job growth will result in even more waste-related greenhouse gases, unless wastes are further reduced, recycled, composted or otherwise diverted from landfills.



### GOALS

**Solid Waste (4% of emissions)**

*GHG Reduction Target*

	<b>65,400</b> MTCO <sub>2</sub> e
9. Increase solid waste diversion	<b>26,219</b>
10. Increase capture and use of methane from landfills	<b>39,140</b>



**74%** of household waste in Sonoma County could potentially be diverted from the landfill or composted, according to a 2014 study. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through recycling and composting is an easy way to take action.



## WATER & WASTEWATER

Consuming less water is key, along with using renewable energy to move and process it. The Sonoma County Water Agency is a leader in this regard. Local residents and businesses consumed more than 20 billion gallons of water in 2010. Under business as usual, water consumption would increase an additional 28% to 27 billion gallons by 2020.



### GOALS

#### Water and Wastewater (0.5% of emissions)

<i>GHG Reduction Targets</i>	<b>22,600</b> MTCO <sub>2</sub> e
11. Reduce water consumption	<b>19,217</b>
12. Use more recycled water and graywater	<b>75</b>
13. Improve the efficiency of water and wastewater infrastructure	<b>759</b>
14. Use more renewable energy in water and wastewater systems	<b>2,556</b>



## LIVESTOCK & FERTILIZER

Dairy cow feeding practices and manure management can reduce emissions, as would reducing the use of nitrogen-based fertilizers. Livestock and fertilizer emissions are a significant emission source in Sonoma County.



### GOALS

#### Livestock and Fertilizer (7% of emissions)

<i>GHG Reduction Targets</i>	<b>1,800</b> MTCO <sub>2</sub> e
15. Reduce emissions from dairy/livestock operations	Not quantified
16. Reduce emissions from fertilizers	<b>1,759</b>



## ADVANCED CLIMATE INITIATIVES

### Carbon Sequestration, Open Space and Working Lands

**Natural and working lands can help stabilize atmospheric carbon.** Living systems found in nature, in rangelands, and in urban and rural forests help store carbon in soil and vegetation. Although carbon is an essential element, it is now at alarming levels in the earth's atmosphere. Sequestration is the only way to reduce atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>.

This Plan does not identify annual changes to carbon stocks caused by human activities. But it does estimate the baseline stored in soils and plants, demonstrating the value of preserving and enhancing biological processes on natural and working lands.



Estimates of Countywide Carbon Stocks (2010)		MTCO <sub>2</sub> e
<b>Forest land carbon stock</b>	Carbon stored in trees, wood, debris, shrubs and soil	<b>161.3</b> million
<b>Grassland carbon stock</b>	Carbon stored in soil	<b>11.7</b> million
<b>Shrubland carbon stock</b>	Carbon stored in shrubs and soil	<b>35.6</b> million
<b>Urban, agricultural, and other lands carbon stock</b>	Carbon stored in trees and soil	<b>6.4</b> million



## CONSUMPTION

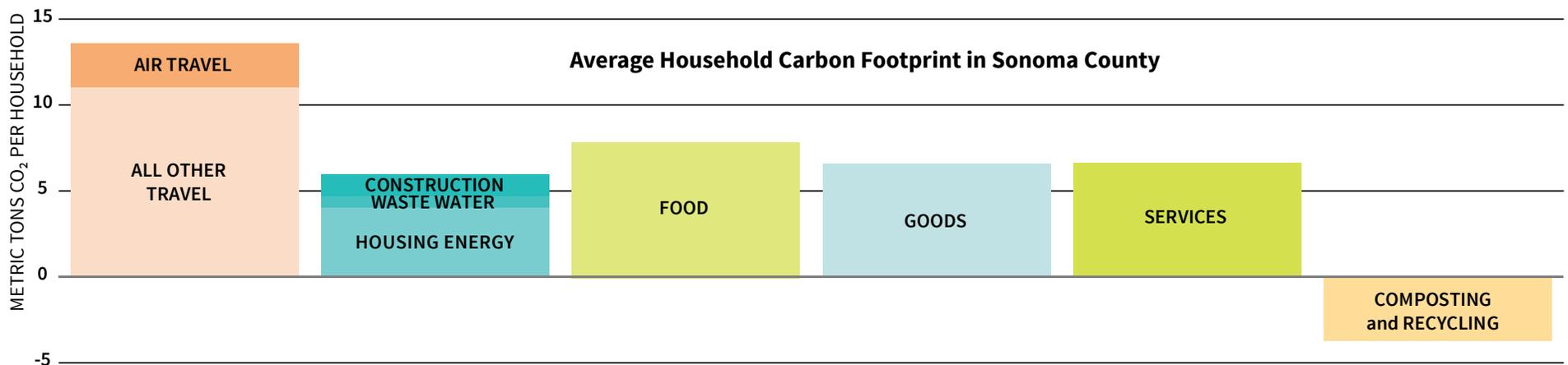
Following standard practice, Climate Action 2020 uses an activity-based inventory to calculate emissions from human activities occurring within Sonoma County. Activity-based inventories focus on emissions that local jurisdictions can more directly influence. This approach does not account for individual choices that produce carbon emissions elsewhere, such as from air travel or the consumption of goods and services produced outside Sonoma County.

**A consumption-based approach looks at global lifecycle** and indirect emissions over which local communities have little direct control. For example, greenhouse gases produced outside Sonoma County from harvesting, mining, manufacturing, processing or transporting materials.

A 2015 University of California, Berkeley, study\* presented a groundbreaking consumption-based inventory of San Francisco Bay Area neighborhoods, cities and counties that assigned emissions from all economic sectors to household scale end-users. In 2013, Bay Area emissions were 44.3 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e per household compared with 50 for the average U.S. household. Sonoma County communities were generally lower, ranging from 37.4 to 44.7 metric tons per household.

**Sonoma County residents are responsible for 7,184,627 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e**, roughly double emissions from household energy use. This demonstrates that individual choices have large impacts on climate change beyond our local borders.

A consumption-based analysis provides another lens to consider in future updates. For instance, using a consumption-based inventory, food generated 20% of local emissions, roughly three times more than household energy use. Many of the reduction measures included in this Plan will also reduce consumption-based emissions. Better understanding of consumption helps individuals reduce our contribution to climate change.



\*2015 University of California, Berkeley, study, *A Consumption-Based Greenhouse Gas Inventory of San Francisco Bay Area Neighborhoods, Cities and Counties*, by Christopher Jones and Daniel Kammen.

# Adaptation: Climate Resilience Roadmap



## Hazards



EXTREME  
HEAT



EXTREME  
DROUGHT



MORE  
WILDFIRES



WARMER  
WINTERS



UNEXPECTED  
FLOODS



HIGHER  
SEAS

**Sonoma County is a leader** in reducing emissions to slow down climate change. However, even with these measures, serious climate hazards cannot be avoided.

Climate resilience or climate readiness means we are prepared to deal with the hazards of climate change by reducing our vulnerabilities to them and preparing to maintain or even improve our quality of life despite climate stresses.

To facilitate climate resilience, the North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative has created a Roadmap with goals, actors and actions.

# A Comprehensive Response

**Climate resilience solutions are everywhere.** The Roadmap is the first prioritization of how all types of actors—government, businesses, nonprofit organizations, working lands managers, individuals/ households—can do their part.

Through these collective actions, we can create a comprehensive response to climate threats and improve general quality of life, social equity, ecological functions, water supply, wildlife and open space protection, economic stability and safety.

For the full list of actions, see the complete Roadmap at [northbayclimate.org](http://northbayclimate.org)



What would climate resilience planning look like if every person in Sonoma County was involved —school child, designer, official, tradesperson, farmer, and retiree?



# Top Goals and Actions for Climate Resilience

## Community Resources Affected

People and social systems  
Built systems  
Natural and working lands

## A VISION FOR SONOMA COUNTY

## Hazards Addressed

Extreme heat  
Extreme drought  
More wildfires  
Warmer winters  
Unexpected floods  
Higher seas

### 9 CLIMATE RESILIENCE GOALS

#### 1. Promote healthy, safe communities

#### 2. Protect water resources

#### 3. Promote a sustainable, climate-resilient economy

#### 4. Mainstream the use of climate projections

#### 5. Manage buffer zones

#### 6. Promote ag preparedness and food security

#### 7. Protect infrastructure

#### 8. Increase emergency preparedness and prevention

#### 9. Monitor climate and its effects

#### Process

### TOP 20 ACTIONS

1. Improve baseline resilience in vulnerable populations

2. Foster a connected community

3. Use less water for working lands

4. Use less water for households

5. Manage water as one; protect watersheds; expand wetlands

6. Diversify agriculture

7. Be ready; seize opportunities to prepare and adapt

8. Build a resilient supply chain; evaluate for vulnerabilities

9. Quantify benefits of resilience investments

10. Make room for water by maintaining wider buffers

11. Align plans with hazards

12. Farm carbon, water and diverse crops

13. Subsidize sustainably-grown local food

14. Position your business to recover from extreme events

15. Reduce forest flammability; improve biodiversity and water supply

16. Prepare yourself for emergencies; learn CPR and first aid

17. Invest in radical collaboration for inter-agency preparedness

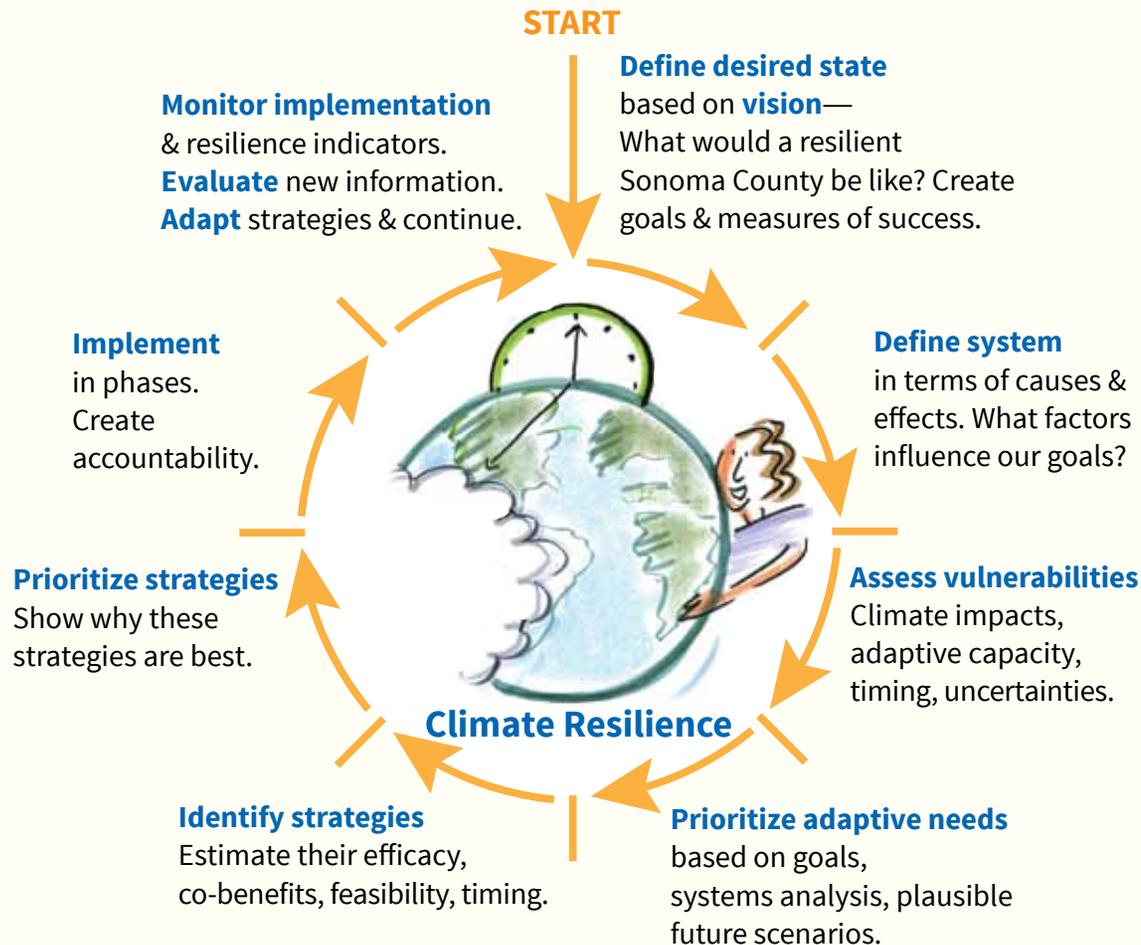
18. Reality check with real-time condition to refine climate change models

19. Align investments with values; coordinate incentives and funding streams

20. Measure resilience over time; create a well-being index

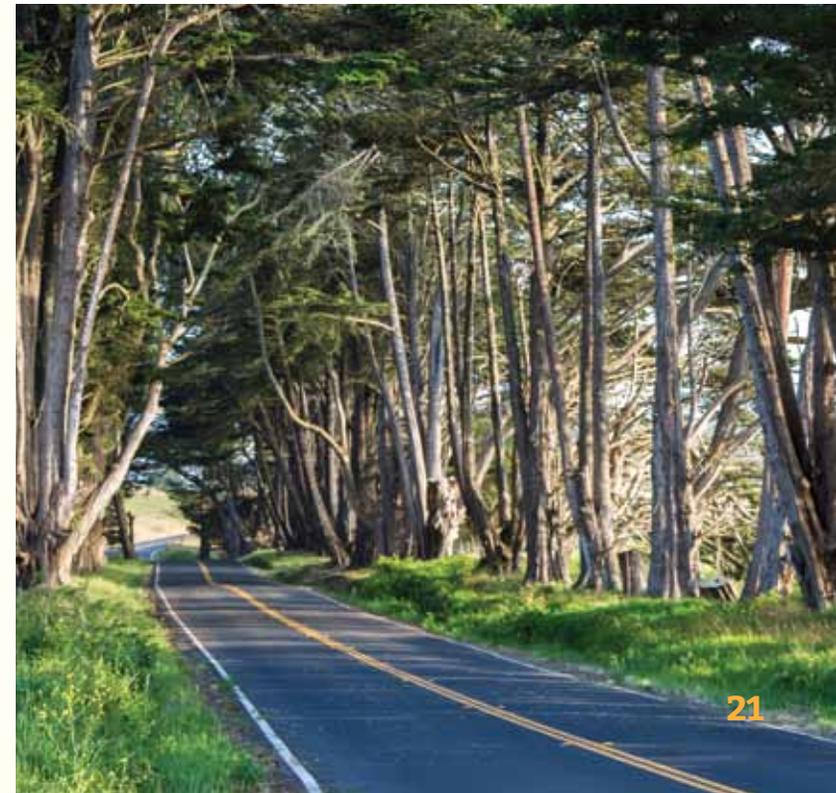
# Next Steps for Climate Resilience in Sonoma County

## Strategic Planning Sequence



## Process matters.

A thoughtful strategic planning process helps to capitalize on the diversity of perspectives among all the actors. When we connect our community, whether through emergency response planning, designing neighborhoods for the future or identifying upstream investments, we invest in a more resilient future. As new knowledge and resources become available, we must repeatedly revisit and improve each step in the sequence.



# You Can Do It!



- 1 Switch to 100% renewably powered electricity.**  
Easy to do! Simply sign up for Sonoma Clean Power’s 100% renewable “EverGreen” service currently available to most local residential and business customers. Or ask your utility about other options. Installing solar on your home or business is another available option.
- 2 Shop for an electric vehicle.**  
Especially attractive if commuting fewer than 80 miles per day. If on a tight budget, consider a used or leased vehicle.
- 3 Conduct a home or business energy audit**  
and calculate your personal carbon footprint. Extra points if you share your experience with others.

## **CLICK & LEARN MORE...**

Regional Climate Protection Authority  
<http://rcpa.ca.gov>

Sonoma Clean Power  
<http://sonomacleanpower.org>

Sonoma County Energy and Sustainability Division  
<http://www.sonoma-county.org/gs/energy>



Given Sonoma County’s anticipated population and economic growth, long-term targets call for an 87% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions per person by 2050 (compared to 1990).

**To ensure we meet our 2020 goals** and adapt to changing technologies, regulations and community behaviors, this Plan calls for ongoing monitoring and adaptive management. Two interim greenhouse gas emissions inventories will be completed before 2020, and a mid-course review will be conducted to identify changes that may be needed to stay on target.

**For long-term climate action**, the Regional Climate Protection Authority will also adopt goals to reduce greenhouse gases by 40% (compared to 1990) by 2030 and by 80% by 2050. This will require another planning phase after 2020. The good news is that the actions in this plan will put the county on a solid path to achieve future goals.

# Acknowledgments



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## **Regional Climate Protection Agency:**

Elected officials from all 10 local jurisdictions

## **Staff Working Group:**

Local government staff from RCPA, SCTA and all 10 jurisdictions

## **Stakeholder Advisory Group:**

38 members from local organizations, companies and government entities.

Find the full RCPA *Climate Action 2020* for download at [rcpa.ca.gov/ca2020](http://rcpa.ca.gov/ca2020)

## *Climate Action 2020 and Beyond – Highlights and Summary*

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Photo credit page 7: The Geysers. Calpine Grant (Unit 18) Power Plant located in Sonoma County.  
Photography by John Grice, compliments of Calpine Corporation.

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## **Community Partners and Consultants**

Center for Climate Protection

Climate Corps Bay Area

ICF International

North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative

Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control

Pacific Gas & Electric

Pepperwood Foundation

Pete Parkinson, AICP

Sonoma Clean Power

Sonoma County Ag Preservation & OS District

Sonoma County Waste Management Agency

Sonoma County Water Agency

Sonoma Ecology Center

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[northbayclimate.org](http://northbayclimate.org)

[sonomacountyadaptation.org](http://sonomacountyadaptation.org)



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