

AMBAG Energy Watch/Green Communities Program

CEQA and Climate Action Plans

Climate Action Plans

Not defined by law

- A plan for reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions?
- For adapting to climate change?
- Or both?

Contents

- Inventory of jurisdiction's emissions and projected emissions
- Reduction goals
- Policies and programs, perhaps

Relationship to the GP? To CEQA?

- Unclear

GHG Reduction Plan

CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5

- Describes the elements that “a plan for the reduction of GHG emissions” should contain
- GHG reduction plans can *streamline* CEQA analysis of individual projects
- Key considerations:
 - Establishing thresholds of significance
 - Tiering analysis of later projects on the GHG Reduction Plan contents

Link to GP or land use plans? Not required.

Link to SCS? Not directly.

GHG Reduction Plan Elements

- Quantify GHG emissions
- Establish emissions goals and thresholds of significance
- Identify and analyze GHG emissions from future actions
- Specify measures to achieve the specified emissions level
- Establish a monitoring mechanism
- Adopt after a public process, including environmental review

GHG Reduction Plan Elements

Quantify GHG emissions resulting from activities within a defined geographic area

- Emissions inventory
- Select reasonable base year: 2005? 2008?
- Comprehensive inventory of emissions sources
 - Public and private
 - Vehicular and non-vehicular
 - Etc.

GHG Reduction Plan Elements

- Identify and analyze the future GHG emissions resulting from specific actions or categories of actions anticipated within the geographic area
 - Land use and traffic system decisions
 - Landfills
 - Municipal actions
 - Etc.
- Match the categories in the emissions inventory

GHG Reduction Plan Elements

- Establish a quantified GHG emissions reduction goal, with time frame
 - Example: 19% below projected BAU
- Time frame?
 - 2020, for sure
 - 2050, perhaps
 - Other, such as planning period for the SCS?

GHG Reduction Plan Elements

- Establish a level, based on substantial evidence, below which the contribution to GHG emissions from activities covered by the plan would not be cumulatively considerable
 - Threshold of significance for later, site specific projects
 - Simplifies later CEQA significance determinations

GHG Reduction Plan Elements

- Specify measures, including performance standards, that if implemented on a project-by-project basis, would collectively achieve the specified emissions reduction level
 - These will apply to future activities
- Potential effectiveness must be supported by substantial evidence

GHG Reduction Plan Elements

- Establish a program for monitoring the plan's progress
- Provide means of assessing the need for amendment
- Provide for amendments, as needed

GHG Reduction Plan Elements

- Adopt the GHG Reduction Plan after a public process
 - Typical process for adopting a general plan or specific plan would work
- Environmental review of GHG Reduction Plan is required
 - EIR offers the best basis for “tiering”
 - Future activities can tier from the GHG reduction plan and its EIR