

## Attachment 2

# Frequently Asked Questions – Regional Climate Action Plan



Humboldt County Regional Climate Action Plan

Public Draft

prepared by:

Humboldt County

825 5th Street

Eureka, California 95501

Contact: John Ford, Director of Planning and Building

prepared with the assistance of:

Rincon Consultants, Inc.

449 15th Street, Suite 909

Oakland, California 94612

July 2024



### What is the Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP)?

The RCAP is a long-range planning document that guides the Humboldt region towards long-term greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction in accordance with the State's goal to reduce GHG emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

The RCAP creates a Regional Climate Committee to maximize regional efficiencies, overcome challenges facing rural areas, attract funding, build a green economy, mitigate emissions, and increase resilience. By prioritizing collaborative efforts and tailored strategies, the RCAP aims to address the unique needs of the rural communities in the region while advancing comprehensive GHG reduction and economic development goals.

### What does the RCAP do?



Provides a plan for the County, cities of Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, and Trinidad, Humboldt County Association of Governments, Redwood Coast Energy Authority, Humboldt Transit Authority and Humboldt Waste Management Authority to work collaboratively to more efficiently achieve greenhouse gas reductions.



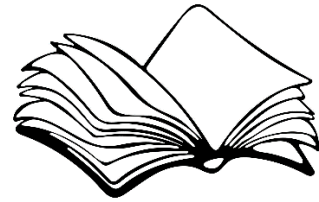
Creates a Qualified CAP for the entire county by identifying strategies, measures, actions, and tracking mechanisms to provide a foundation for sustainable development and resilient infrastructure in the region.



Allows county and cities to use the RCAP to satisfy GHG analyses to streamline future California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) assessments of projects and plans.

## What is in the RCAP?

The RCAP has been structured to allow the reader to understand the purpose and objective of the RCAP, to provide sufficient information to educate the reader on the issues being addressed, to give a summary of Humboldt County's context and to identify what will be done to address GHG emissions. It is broken down into the following sections:

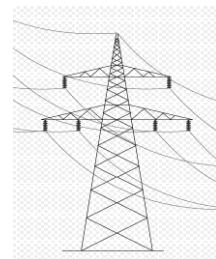


- ✓ Chapter 1: The introduction provides the Vision, and purpose of the RCAP with background on the unique context of Humboldt County and describes the process for development of the RCAP.
- ✓ Chapter 2: Describes the Scientific and Policy context for Climate Change.
- ✓ Chapter 3: Identifies GHG emissions inventory, forecast, and emission targets.
- ✓ Chapter 4: Outlines the GHG emission reduction strategy, measures, and actions.
- ✓ Chapter 5: The RCAP finishes with tracking, monitoring, and reporting and the Implementation plan.

## What are the GHG Reduction Strategies?

The RCAP has a series of basic implementation strategies to accomplish GHG reduction objectives:

1. Development of a Regional Climate Committee, supported by a Program Manager to track, report and achieve regional goals.
2. Increase use of carbon-free electricity. Working with RCEA and PG&E.
3. Decarbonization of existing buildings. This includes a reduction of natural gas, propane, and diesel consumption in existing structures and decarbonizing 30% of municipal buildings and facilities by 2030.
4. Decarbonization of new construction. Decarbonize 95% of new building construction by 2027.
5. Modify commute patterns by shifting from driving to walking and biking.
6. Modify commute patterns by shifting from driving to public transit or car-share.



7. Shift land use patterns to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). (e.g Increase mixed-use development in infill priority areas.)
8. Increase zero-emission vehicle usage, including expanding regional electric vehicle charging network and development of hydrogen hubs. Includes goals for off-road engines and to decarbonize 50% of municipal fleets by 2030.
9. Reduce organic waste in the landfill. Establish a local waste separation facility and organics management to reduce waste sent to landfills by 75% by 2030.
10. Conserve water and reduce wastewater emissions.
11. Increase carbon sequestration. Including developing a county-wide natural and working lands GHG inventory baseline by 2027 to understand existing and future GHG sequestration.

### What has been the process for Developing the RCAP?



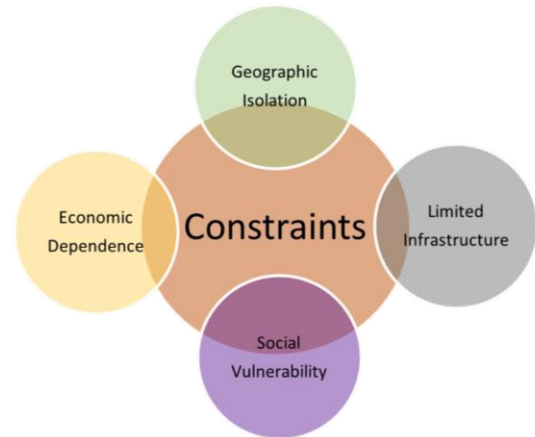
The RCAP has been developed over a period of years and has been an intentionally collaborative and evolutionary process.

- Jurisdictional Collaboration began in 2019 with support from the Redwood Coast Energy Authority leading to an initial draft produced in 2023.
- This process included numerous community outreach events and campaigns with presentations to each of the Cities, the Board of Supervisors, and other stakeholder groups.
- Unfortunately, the initial draft could not achieve a qualified status, and the process was redirected to hire a consultant to prepare a qualified CAP. Rincon was hired to prepare the qualified CAP.
- Rincon took the following actions:
  - ✦ Established a Baseline GHG emission inventory.
  - ✦ Developed feasible goals and strategies.
  - ✦ Collected feedback through an interactive community survey published on the RCAP website. 160 submissions were received.

- ✦ Identified that the region would have more success obtaining grant funds and achieve GHG reduction goals as a region rather than as individual jurisdictions and proposed the Regional Climate Committee.

## What are the Regional Constraints?

The Humboldt region is largely rural with some significant economic constraints to achieving climate goals.



- 1. Geographic Isolation and Accessibility**  
The rural character of the region presents challenges in terms of increasing cost-effective public transportation, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and developing or upgrading local infrastructure. Implementing projects over a geographically dispersed population can be costly and very complex.
- 2. Limited Infrastructure:** The region lacks local waste management facilities such as recycling, composting, or processing centers, which diminishes local control, hinders compliance with state mandates, and necessitates long-distance transportation of waste outside of the county. Additionally, the existing natural gas and electricity infrastructure presents challenges for developing renewable energy projects and electrification efforts due to transmission and distribution limitations.
- 3. Economic Dependence and Limited Resources:** The region is economically constrained due to low population, and recently diminished industries such as logging and fishing. As well, the local jurisdictions are limited in relation to available staff and resources dedicated to obtaining funding and implementing climate mitigation efforts. Converting infrastructure and transitioning to more sustainable practices can be challenging without adequate staffing, funding support, and incentives.
- 4. Social Vulnerability:** Approximately forty percent (40%) of the population is either at or below the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile of the statewide median income, categorized as low-income and increasing social vulnerability to climate change.

## What are the Regional Opportunities?

The region is rich with natural resources with an environmentally conscious and engaged community, offering several opportunities to overcome the constraints of the region.



- 1. Partnerships and Collaboration:** Regional collaboration is necessary in achieving the goals of the RCAP. No single agency is responsible for mitigating GHG emissions, and the participating jurisdictions recognize the need for strong coordination and partnerships. This will enhance the ability to obtain funding for implementing the RCAP.
- 2. Green Economic Growth:** Opportunities will arise for new green industries and job creation with transitioning to a low-carbon economy.
- 3. Funding opportunities:** There are several funding opportunities for low-income areas, including federal and state funding, incentives, and partnerships to implement climate-related projects.
- 4. Abundant Renewable Energy Resources:** The region has potential for renewable energy generation, particularly from wind, solar and biomass sources. Specifically, there is the near-future plans for offshore wind energy generation.
- 5. Carbon Sequestration in Natural Ecosystems:** The diverse ecosystems of the region provide valuable opportunities for carbon sequestration. There are significant opportunities to implement sustainable land practices that sequester carbon, protect biodiversity, enhance resilience to climate change, and support local economies.

### Cost to meet the RCAP strategies?

The strength of the Regional Climate Action Committee approach is to position the region to be more attractive to entities who grant money for Climate Resilience actions. It is envisioned that the Climate Program Manager and supporting staff will be grant funded. There are ordinances and other programs to be developed which may be developed by local staff for the benefit of the region. For local governments there is cost associated with moving fleet vehicles away from carbon fuel sources and retrofiting buildings to be energy efficient and away from gas heating.



It is anticipated this too can be grant funded. Where retrofitting private development is called for, the RCAP provides reduction goals, but leaves room for the Regional Climate Committee to accomplish those goals using grants and other means so as to not impose all the cost on the owners of existing buildings.

### What is the time frame for adoption of the RCAP?

August 14, 2024	Draft RCAP published for Public Review Period
August 30, 2024	File Notice of Preparation for EIR
September 10, 2024	RCAP Public Meeting, Wharfinger Building, Eureka, 6:00 p.m.,
September 17, 2024	EIR Public Scoping meeting, Agricultural Building Humboldt Hill, 3:30 p.m.
September 20, 2024	Public Review Period ends for the draft RCAP
September 30, 2024	30-day EIR Scoping period ends September 30, 2024
December 2024	Administrative Draft EIR completed
February/March 2025	EIR public review/comment period
May 2025	Final EIR preparation completed
June 2025	Humboldt County Planning Commission hearing
June 2025	Humboldt County Board of Supervisors hearing -- EIR certified and RCAP adopted -

Summer 2025	Cities adopt RCAP
Summer 2025	County, Cities, and JPAs work together to form a Regional Climate Committee
Ongoing	Regional Climate Committee works to secure funding, implement the RCAP, and monitor progress

### What about the GHG Reduction efforts already being pursued?



The County, cities, Humboldt County Association of Governments, Redwood Coast Energy Authority, Humboldt Transit Authority and Humboldt Waste Management Authority have all been involved in implementing projects and programs to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Many of these are incorporated into the RCAP. The RCAP is not envisioning starting over but rather to build upon the good work that has been started in the region.

The concept is to strengthen and enhance the ongoing work, and where necessary to develop new initiatives to achieve the climate reduction goals.

### Current Regional GHG Reduction Efforts

- North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP)  
Has focused on ensuring clean and reliable drinking water supplies, watershed health, energy independence, climate adaptation and economic vitality – especially in economically disadvantaged communities.
- Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA)  
The purpose of RCEA is to develop and implement sustainable energy initiatives that reduce energy demand, increase energy efficiency, and advance the use of clean, efficient and renewable resources available in the region for the benefit of the Member agencies and their constituents.
- Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA)  
Provides the following services: affordable housing, assistance with energy bills or purchase of heating fuel, energy efficiency services, home repairs, natural

resources enhancement and mitigation, services for the houseless members, youth services, and community gardens.

- Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG)

A Joint Powers Agency comprised of the seven incorporated cities and the County of Humboldt. It is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), as well as the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE). HCAOG is largely responsible for programming State highway, local street and road improvements, public transportation resources, and the roadside call box program. HCAOG also bears responsibility for preparing and implementing the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

- Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA)

A joint powers authority between Humboldt County and the cities of Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna, Rio Dell and Trinidad. HTA provides riders with affordable fixed route and dial-a-ride transportation options that allow access throughout Humboldt County.

- Humboldt Waste Management Authority (HWMA)

HWMA was established by a Joint Powers Agreement comprised of the County of Humboldt and the Cities of Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale and Rio Dell in 1999. The Authority receives municipal solid waste (garbage) and curbside recycled materials delivered by franchise haulers, and is a One-Stop Drop off for the general public for self-hauled municipal solid waste, recycling services and other material diversion programs and services.

- California Community Power (CC Power)

CC Power allows its member CCAs to combine their buying power to procure new, cost-effective clean energy and reliability resources to continue advancing local and state climate goals. CC Power members represent over 2.7 million customers across 112 municipalities spanning from Humboldt County to Santa Barbara County.

- Redwood Region Economic Development Commission (RREDC)

Dedicated to expanding economic opportunity in Humboldt County. Creates opportunity and support the growth of local businesses. Leads projects of regional significance, make loans, and offer business consulting through partner, the North Coast Small Business Development Center.