

DATE: September 4, 2024

TO: Council Sustainability Committee

FROM: Lauren Anderson, Sustainability Analyst II

VIA: Danielle Lee, Chief Sustainability and Resiliency Officer
Audrey Seymour Ramberg, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Agreement with Cascadia Consulting Group to Develop 2035 Climate Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend the City Council authorize the City Manager or designee to execute a professional services agreement with Cascadia Consulting Group to develop a 2035 Climate Strategy in a not-to-exceed amount of \$433,234.

BACKGROUND

On April 21, 2020, the City Council passed a resolution for Mountain View to become a carbon-neutral city by 2045. In response to the growing threat of climate change, the Council Sustainability Committee (CSC) expressed an interest to explore accelerating climate goals. Staff presented an assessment in April and June 2022 with the CSC directing staff to prepare a 2035 Decarbonization Roadmap (referred to as the 2035 Climate Strategy or Strategy) for City Council consideration.

The City Council has adopted multiple plans in the past that include climate goals, such as Mountain View's Climate Protection Roadmap in 2015. In addition, significant work in preparing for sea level rise has been implemented. The fourth Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) in 2019 included specific actions to develop a climate vulnerability and resilience plan and decarbonization strategy, which are listed as two priority projects in the City Council Work Plan (the Council Work Plan project related to resiliency is the development of a vulnerability assessment, which is part of the Climate Strategy Scope). The 2035 Climate Strategy will fulfill these SAP actions and Council Work Plan projects, and include an accelerated 2035 decarbonization goal.

The contract to develop the 2035 Climate Strategy exceeds \$250,000 and requires City Council approval to enter into an agreement with Cascadia Consulting Group, which was selected through a competitive process described below.

ANALYSIS

Consultant Selection and Qualifications

On March 11, 2024, the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select consultant services to develop a 2035 Climate Strategy. The RFP was posted on the City's PlanetBids webpage, receiving interest from over 50 organizations and questions from three consulting firms. The City received six proposals in response to the RFP. A selection committee, comprised of staff from the Sustainability and Resiliency Division, evaluated the proposals, interviewed the top-three respondents, and conducted reference checks for the top two respondents. After a thorough analysis based on the merits of the firm's experience, demonstration of competence with similar projects for other organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area, and project understanding, the selection committee selected Cascadia Consulting Group as the most qualified consultant for this project. For these reasons, staff recommends awarding the contract to Cascadia Consulting Group in the amount of \$433,234 to develop a 2035 Climate Strategy for Mountain View.

Cascadia Consulting Group is a consulting firm with staff experienced in strategic planning, analysis, and management of climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy efficiency and renewable energy, recycling and materials management, and resource conservation projects. Cascadia Consulting Group's climate planning and engagement work includes recent and ongoing projects to develop climate action plans for over a dozen local governments and agencies, including San Francisco, Pleasanton, Pico Rivera, Cupertino, Albany, Dublin, Foster City, Livermore, and Sonoma and San Mateo counties. To support development of the Strategy, Cascadia Consulting Group has hired a subconsultant, InterEthnica, that specializes in process facilitation, multicultural engagement, and community outreach planning. InterEthnica has extensive experience engaging frontline and disadvantaged communities.

The recommended fees are within the range typically charged for such services based on similar types of projects in the region. The base costs provided in the six proposals received in response to this solicitation ranged from \$257,455 to \$314,800. The base cost proposed by Cascadia (\$274,314) was less than the average base cost of all the submitted proposals (\$282,647). The recommended not-to-exceed contract amount of \$433,234 includes additional services that have been added to the scope of work to augment community engagement efforts and include wedge analyses to forecast future greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and reductions against adopted or proposed reduction targets.

2035 Climate Strategy Process

The proposed scope of work, included as Attachment 1, is structured to develop an integrated Climate Strategy for 2035 that includes the identification of strategies to address both decarbonization and climate resiliency. Decarbonization focuses on lowering greenhouse gas emissions while resiliency involves increasing our ability to withstand the unavoidable impacts of

climate change. Developing a plan that considers both decarbonization and resiliency provides the opportunity to identify and coordinate any interrelationships between and prioritize strategies that both curb climate change and cope with its impacts. Even with accelerated progress in decarbonization, resiliency plans are needed to address current and anticipated climate impacts.

The 2035 Climate Strategy will comprise a high-level, equity-focused set of integrated measures and actions to meet the City's decarbonization and resiliency goals. Actions will be prioritized based on criteria such as emissions reduction potential, adaptation potential, feasibility, social equity, cost, community support, and cobenefits, such as public health outcomes, economic development and workforce training, and enhanced biodiversity. Staff will seek CSC member input regarding the draft criteria in Q3 2025 as noted in the section below on CSC and Council engagement. The strategy will provide both short term options for implementation over the first five years and a pathway to decarbonization by 2035 and a longer-term resiliency approach.

With the approval of this contract, Cascadia Consulting Group could begin the project in fall 2024.

Project Scope of Work

There are eight tasks in the scope of services outlined below:

1. Conduct Project Management
2. Develop the Project Approach
3. Lead Outreach and Engagement with an Equity Focus
4. Climate Vulnerability Assessment
5. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis
6. Develop a 2035 Climate Strategy that Integrates Decarbonization and Climate Resiliency
7. Finalize Climate Strategy and City Council Adoption
8. On-Call Services for Implementation Support

More information about the tasks related to community engagement, decarbonization strategies, and resiliency strategies are summarized below.

Community Engagement

Robust community engagement will inform the development of the Climate Strategy and ensure the proposed approach includes the community's priorities and addresses the most pressing vulnerabilities. Proposed tools for engagement include, but are not limited to, community surveys, workshops, webinars, and/or focus groups.

An equity-focused outreach and engagement process will enhance the City’s understanding of the community’s vulnerability to climate change and help identify effective strategies that are accessible to all communities. One of the first tasks that the consultant will undertake is the development of a community engagement plan that will be presented to the CSC for input and approval in Q1 2025.

Decarbonization Strategies

The City has made significant progress in implementing decarbonization strategies. Some early successes include early adoption of reach codes to decarbonize the built environment; decarbonization of municipal operations through electrification of City-owned buildings and planning for fleet electrification; implementing Transit-Oriented Development; developing an Active Transportation Plan; supporting transportation infrastructure; launching a multi-family electrification initiative to address the existing building stock; and partnering with neighboring jurisdictions to launch Silicon Valley Clean Energy to provide clean electricity to the community. The Climate Strategy will build on these successes and through analysis and survey of best practices, identifying additional strategies to accelerate the City’s decarbonization progress. One of the planned tasks in developing the decarbonization strategy is the completion of wedge analyses. Wedge analyses help illustrate the impacts that various policies and climate actions could have on reducing future emissions. As shown in the following figure, a wedge analysis will estimate anticipated emissions reductions from federal and state policies and programs and key local actions.

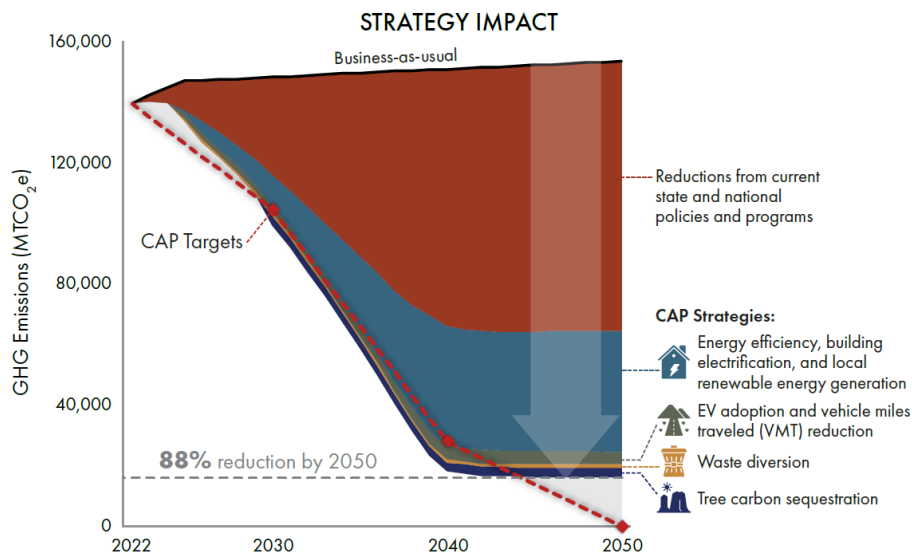


Figure 1: Example wedge analysis figure created by Cascadia to show a jurisdiction’s projected business-as-usual emissions, adjusted business-as-usual emissions (reductions from current state and national policies and programs), and emissions under several key Climate Action Plan strategies, alongside potential emission reduction targets

Resiliency Strategies

The climate vulnerability assessment and resiliency strategies will identify projected climate hazards, such as extreme heat, wildfire smoke, sea level rise, storms, and riverine flooding, and their potential impacts on Mountain View. This work will include four phases: (1) exposure analysis; (2) sensitivity analysis; (3) adaptive capacity analysis; and (4) vulnerability assessment. Cascadia Consulting Group will complement this summary of climate impacts with a social vulnerability assessment to help the City understand the distributional burden of climate change impacts across its jurisdiction as well as the social determinants of vulnerability, such as income, age, race, linguistic isolation, renter status, or other factors. The resiliency strategies will be developed from this understanding of the determinants of vulnerability and will help the City tailor climate actions to improve social equity outcomes or mitigate unintended negative impacts of climate action.

While the decarbonization approaches within the Climate Strategy will provide a roadmap for 2035, the vulnerability assessment and resulting resiliency approaches will naturally be structured over a longer time horizon.

CSC and Council Engagement and Direction

Staff will continue to solicit feedback from the Council Sustainability Committee and City Council at key points throughout the project, as outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Anticipated City Council and Council Sustainability Meetings to Discuss Climate Strategy

Estimated Quarter	Meeting Type	Discussion Topic(s)
Q3 2024	CSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement to Develop the 2035 Climate Strategy
Q4 2024	City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement to Develop the 2035 Climate Strategy
Q1 2025	CSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Plan
Q3 2025	CSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Climate and Social Vulnerability Assessments Draft Criteria for Ranking Mitigation and Adaptation Actions
Q4 2025	CSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Results Summary Draft 2035 Climate Strategy
Q1 2026	City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft 2035 Climate Strategy
Q2 2026	City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final 2035 Climate Strategy

Staff anticipates that the 2035 Climate Strategy will be presented to the City Council for adoption by Q2 2026.

Discussion Questions

Staff is seeking feedback from the CSC on the following:

Question No. 1: Does the CSC have any feedback on the overall proposed scope of work for the 2035 Climate Strategy?

Question No. 2: Does the CSC have any initial feedback or recommendations before staff and the consulting team start developing the community engagement plan?

Question No. 3: Does the CSC have any feedback on the anticipated City Council and CSC meetings to discuss the 2035 Climate Strategy?

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommended not-to-exceed contract amount is \$433,234, and there is sufficient budget in the Sustainability Project Capital Improvement Program (CIP) (Project 20-99) to cover the services. A sum of \$40,500 from the Silicon Valley Clean Energy engagement grant will be deposited into the Sustainability Project to enhance outreach and engagement efforts. There is sufficient budget in Project 20-99 to cover this contract, and no additional appropriation is needed.

In May 2023, Silicon Valley Clean Energy awarded the City of Mountain View a grant in the amount of \$70,000 to engage the community and local organizations in the codevelopment of building electrification outreach and engagement strategies. This grant includes \$40,500 to be used for incentives for community members and/or organizations that participate in the outreach process. Staff is integrating the remaining community engagement for this project into the scope of the 2035 Climate Strategy.

CONCLUSION

The contract to develop the 2035 Climate Strategy requires Council approval to enter into an agreement with Cascadia Consulting Group, who was selected through a competitive process. The proposed scope of work is structured to develop an integrated Climate Strategy for 2035 that addresses both decarbonization and climate resiliency. The desired deliverable of the project will be a high-level, equity-focused strategy that provides a menu of options for implementation over the first five years and provides a pathway to decarbonization by 2035.

With the approval of this contract, Cascadia Consulting Group could begin the project in fall 2024.

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Attachment: 1. Scope of Work for the Development of a 2035 Climate Strategy