



**DATE:** April 21, 2020

**CATEGORY:** Consent

**DEPT.:** City Manager's Office

**TITLE:** **Carbon Neutrality Resolution**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt a Resolution Adopting a Communitywide Carbon Neutrality Target of 2045, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 1 to the Council report).

### **BACKGROUND**

In November 2009, the City Council adopted voluntary greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets for the community as a whole, with initial targets for 2012, 2015, 2020, and 2050. These targets set an absolute reduction in total emissions below a baseline year of 2005 and were developed in response to the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32), which requires California to reduce Statewide GHG emissions. Subsequently, through the City's Climate Protection Roadmap, the City Council adopted additional interim targets, at five-year intervals, between 2020 and 2050, to more closely track the City's progress.

On December 3, 2019, the City Council adopted new GHG reduction targets beginning in 2025, including a 75 percent reduction in emissions by 2045. The City Council also approved a recommendation directing staff to develop a resolution adopting a carbon neutrality target of 2045 and requiring development of a carbon neutrality plan by 2025, including potential use of carbon offsets.

### **ANALYSIS**

Carbon neutrality refers to balancing GHG reductions with efforts to remove carbon dioxide from the air and store it (a process called carbon sequestration) to achieve net zero emissions. This requires a combination of reducing direct GHG emissions, utilizing natural carbon sequestration methods such as planting trees, investing in other carbon sequestration projects, or purchasing carbon offsets. California adopted a

Statewide carbon neutrality target of 2045, established by Governor Brown's Executive Order B-55-18 in September 2018.

Several local jurisdictions in the U.S. have adopted carbon neutrality goals in addition to their GHG reduction targets. While most cities surveyed by staff have a carbon neutrality target of 2050, some California jurisdictions have adopted a target of 2045 in alignment with the State's goal.

The proposed Resolution (Attachment 1) would adopt a communitywide carbon neutrality target of 2045 in alignment with the State's goal and direct staff to develop a plan by 2025 for achieving this goal. The City has already committed to long-term GHG reduction efforts, including adopting a 75 percent GHG reduction target for 2045. Achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 in addition to this GHG reduction target will require sequestering or offsetting the 176,014 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MT CO<sub>2</sub>e) that will remain after the 75 percent reduction target has been achieved.

The City has many existing efforts under way that support a carbon neutrality goal, including all of the ongoing GHG reduction initiatives. Additionally, the City has invested in programs to increase the City's tree canopy and restore wetlands and other habitat. While these actions were implemented to achieve benefits unrelated to carbon neutrality, wetlands and trees serve as natural carbon "sinks," removing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. Quantifying the expected carbon sequestration benefits from current and planned City actions such as these will enable staff to determine the incremental effort necessary to achieve full carbon neutrality.

If the City Council adopts the proposed resolution, staff will outline potential pathways to carbon neutrality for City Council consideration and public input, identifying the costs and benefits of each pathway. Because GHG reduction efforts are the foundation of any carbon neutrality strategy, adopting a carbon neutrality goal would not require a change in the City's planned sustainability actions in the near term.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no direct cost to adopt the Resolution. Staff estimates future consultant costs of up to \$150,000 to develop a carbon neutrality plan, which will be incorporated into a future Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) or a future budget request. Development of this plan is not anticipated to begin before Fiscal Year 2022-23.

The incremental cost to the City to achieve carbon neutrality in addition to the 2045 GHG reduction target will depend on: (1) the City's success in achieving the 2045 GHG target; (2) the amount of carbon sequestration expected from already-approved and

future actions pursued by the City for reasons unrelated to carbon neutrality; and (3) the specific carbon neutrality strategy chosen by the City. Any proposed actions and associated costs to implement the carbon neutrality plan will be incorporated into future SAPs for City Council approval.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. Do not adopt the Resolution.
2. Establish another target date.
3. Provide other direction.

**PUBLIC NOTICING**

Agenda posting and e-mails to community members who signed up to receive updates about the Mountain View Sustainability Program.

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Attachment: 1. Resolution Adopting a Communitywide Carbon Neutrality Target of 2045