Contra Costa County Sustainability Exchange
December 10, 2020
Topic: Climate Action Plans

Agenda

10:00 a.m.	Welcome, review agenda Review of RSVP responses.
10:05 a.m.	Speed Networking
10:20 a.m.	Report on emissions inventory
10:35 a.m.	Message from Bay Area Air Quality Management District
10:45 a.m.	Breakout Room #1
11:10 a.m.	Breakout Room #2
11:30 a.m.	Report Back
11:50 a.m.	Next Steps

During this Sustainability Exchange we had a chance to break out into groups and discuss specifics regarding each of our climate action planning efforts. Below we've included some key take-aways, follow-up items, and resources suggested during the meeting.

Welcome and Review of RSVP Responses

Who's in the room? Presentation (RSVP Poll Results)

Projects people are excited about:
- Martin Bond (MCE): Fleet electrification grant with local school district
- Jody London (Contra Costa County): First meeting of department heads across the County on CAP Implementation. And Just Transition, early stages.
- Sarah Kolarik (City of San Pablo): A Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridor Study and a Safe Routes to School Master Plan (trying out lots of new outreach strategies!), as well as an OBF project!
- Demian Hardman (Contra Costa County): Building Electrification Ordinance
- Cara Bautista-Rao (City of Walnut Creek): Electric Vehicle (EV) charger installations. 1 site is almost ready to be activated. The other site is almost ready to start construction. Then figuring out what rates to charge to recover costs
- Amanda Booth (City of San Pablo): Regional Alternative Compliance (Water Quality Project)
- Michael Kent (Contra Costa Health Services): A project to provide asthma in-home mitigation services in conjunction with weatherization services.
- Julie Haas-Wajdowicz (City of Antioch): Waste prevention in the County Senior Nutrition Program
- Emily Sadigh (Alameda County): Updating our 2010 Climate Action Plan for Government Services and Operations, including implications of our new remote work and digital services first policy

- Monica Meagher (BART): Creating a policy for EV charging for passenger stations
- Chiara Arellano (City of Oakland): Working on creating equitable implementation guides for the City's 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (ECAP) and on building out the Sustainability program's newsletter to keep up community engagement
- Adrienne Harris (City of Oakland): Developing resilience hubs for the City of Oakland and building citywide resilience as well (emphasizing the energy side of increasing citywide resilience)
- Wade Finlinson (Contra Costa Health Services): Enhanced ground squirrel monitoring and treatment near critical infrastructure to reduce reliance on anticoagulant rodenticides.
- Tracy Marcial (Contra Costa Community College District): Compiling the state, county, city, UC, CSU and Community College long term sustainability goals with the goal of developing a resolution for our board to adopt as our long-term sustainability/climate goals

"What We Measure Matters" Presentation

Miya Kitahara from StopWaste presented on emissions inventories, going over what we currently measure using the East Bay Energy Watch inventory and the limitations of only measuring using MTCO2e in the context of carbon neutrality targets. Rather than measuring MTCO2e which tends to abstract the concept of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for most people, using metrics like vehicle miles travelled (VMT), EV registrations, or homes electrified could better illustrate our progress towards carbon neutrality.

Thoughts in response to the presentation:
- What if instead of showing GHGs as a "bend the curve" graph, we showed BOTH GHG pollution and carbon drawn down - until the two trend lines met? In order to support social outreach, feedback loops are a critical component and to bring more metrics into the conversation to illustrate these changes is a good idea.
- It's interesting to reframe this discussion and articulate it almost as if we're backtracking from carbon neutrality and showing people how to get there rather than using baselines of past years when talking to elected officials.

Message from BAAQMD

Abby Young from BAAQMD shared the BAAQMD's interest in being part of local governments' CAP update and implementation processes through collaboration and discussion. She added that BAAQMD is going to start focus groups to get feedback on their CEQA threshold updates early next year if anyone is interested. Abby posited this question to the whole group: If there was one thing BAAQMD could provide, what would it be?

These were the responses:
- Cooperation on controlled burns

- BAAQMD taking the place of EBEW in providing the inventory for jurisdictions to provide consistency in metrics and reporting. Public education on metrics
- Support with existing building electrification and infrastructure, especially for low-income communities

Breakout Rooms: Report Back

1. CAP Dashboard

*How are you/will you track your goals? What are **meaningful progress metrics** to track in addition to total GHG emissions? Are there central sources of this data? What is the best mix of quantitative (volume) based metrics (e.g. 20% of homes are electrified) vs. milestone metrics (e.g. a policy is passed).*

- How to encourage other departments to do the work and report out. Technology is an issue because systems don't talk to other systems, which impedes getting data for dashboard
- Need metrics that mean something to your community, especially health and economic benefits
- What if you have negative data in your metrics (contaminated recycling). How do you break down data to show things that people really care about?
- Dashboards can be overwhelming and complex to put together. What does community value and include that as well
- How to address inequities for different communities. Consider the projects happening in those communities
- Storytelling that will engage people and motivate people (e.g. [CARB's climate investment map](#)). Show positive projects and tangible outcomes.
- Challenges getting law enforcement on board with sustainability goals and initiatives.

2. Incorporating CAP goals into your business practices

What tools are you using to institutionalize sustainability? How are you using interdepartmental groups (if you are)? What data are you tracking? How is this work incorporated into the budget cycle and practice in your jurisdiction? What incentives can we offer to departments to invest in climate actions?

- Relationship building is key to getting other staff to incorporate sustainability. Ex: an engineer could keep in the back of their mind the possibility of incorporating a bike lane or EV charging station into a project on which they are working. Cross-departmental working groups and incorporating sustainability into everyone's job description and getting more people thinking about sustainability.
- People seem more excited to work on sustainability across silos; need relationships.

3. Just Transition

What is the role of sustainability to proactively inform an economic and workforce transition plan that is just for these workers? Can local governments engage those employees in focus groups, figure out their transferrable skills and interests, to start a re-employment plan? Who do sustainability staff need to engage in other gov departments?

- How job descriptions are written can become an equity issue. Example of requiring a 4 year bachelor's degree when skills can be gotten through other avenues like trade programs. Think about a jurisdiction's recruitment and hiring practices.
- Sustainability's role in creating hope. Staff may be limited in what they can do operationally, but can help foster community-based organizations to provide services, trainings. Need to collaborate across regions, federally. Example: building light rail cars in Contra Costa County.
- Think outside of traditional "green jobs" like solar and plan for those as well
- Governor's Office of Planning and Research is putting together a roadmap on Just Transition, expected to be released in June 2021.

4. Silver Linings of COVID
What are the unexpected benefits for sustainability work you are finding in the pandemic? How can we leverage this experience to further our climate goals?
- Forcing cities to try different outreach techniques and seeing what works
- Not having to commute to meetings makes it easier to attend
- San Pablo being more intentional with social media and virtual outreach, and outreach where people are at (e.g., stickers on sidewalks with QR codes). Evaluating these approaches
- Being forced to be innovative (e.g., slow streets, work from home, digital systems), proves the government can be more nimble and innovative. Rushing these has also led to equity concerns (e.g., availability of internet, offices as resilience hubs during wildfire/smoke). How to do both?

5. Applying Equity
Share specific, concrete examples of: 1) measures you're including in your CAP that address equity or were rewritten with an equity lens; 2) implementation strategies that consider equity (even if the CAP measure wasn't written with equity in mind)
- How equity isn't just a standalone issue, it cuts across all sectors and approaches/projects. Ex. Banning natural gas or increasing EV requirements have equity impacts. Better to consider up front than make a policy and then worry about it later. Build participatory frameworks to address equity early on.
- Trying to realize the co-benefits, like health benefits.

6. Resilience Hubs
At government facilities or community-based organizations, what is the full scope of services that are needed to increase a community's resilience? What is the local government's role in supporting more of this?
- Resilience hubs including several aspects in one hub. Ex. Antioch cooling centers being comfortable, energy efficient with HVAC upgrades. Need energy storage/solar. Other hub ideas to add on: education, food security.
- City of Oakland creating an official hub run out of a government facility while also supporting community level resilience centers. People may not go to government facilities, but may go to local churches or businesses. Leverage expertise of local hubs

7. **Implementation Timeline**

How do we scale up more quickly? What are strategies we can employ to leverage momentum (i.e., public-private partnerships)?
- Health Department doing more telehealth (due to COVID)
- City of San Pablo doing stickers and QR codes on sidewalk (COVID project)
- Timelines can shift quickly (city governments going digital quickly during COVID). With the right incentives and support government can move fast.
- Spheres of control, influence, and interest. What is the right role for cities? If we know a regional/state entity is going to take action, cities don't have to expend time on it. Coordinate with higher entities
- Dynamic of jurisdictions spearheading a policy, state then adopts, then all cities implement. Have groups like BAAQMD help advocate to state.

Next Steps
- Follow-up session with Abby Young from BAAQMD about how BAAQMD can support local governments' climate action plan updates and implementation
- Google doc showing who's interested in what for email follow up
- Support for an annual CAP two-County meeting

Resources shared during the discussion:
- [EV and charger statistics for the state](#)
- [Map of California climate investments](#)