



Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0709, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrator's Office
Staff Name and Phone Number: Christel Querijero, 565-7071
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): All

Title:

Climate Action Ad Hoc Committee Update

Recommended Actions:

- A) Receive an update from the Climate Action Ad Hoc Committee;
- B) Consider directing staff to research and develop a range of climate staffing models for consideration, including the option and process to identify an interim climate lead; and
- C) Establish a Climate Resiliency Fund.

Executive Summary:

On January 6, 2020 your Board established the Climate Action Ad Hoc and adopted the Climate Action Ad Hoc Charter. At the January 28, 2020 strategic planning session, your Board established Climate Action and Resiliency as one of the five pillars of the County strategic planning process currently underway. Further, your Board adopted a resolution on February 4, 2020 to add a 1.0 full time equivalent (FTE) Administrative Analyst III to support the Climate Action Ad Hoc Committee and climate resiliency coordination.

While the Climate Action Ad Hoc has done a preliminary prioritization of near and longer term climate projects, it recommends appointing an interim climate lead who can further scope and prioritize these projects, in conjunction with County departments, agencies, and community partners. Staff recommends developing a range of climate staffing models for the near and long term for your Board's consideration. Finally, the Climate Ad Hoc recommends the establishment of a Climate Resiliency Fund with an identified funding source, potentially considering PG&E settlement funds, in order to jumpstart a centralized climate function and to leverage for climate funding opportunities.

Discussion:

On September 17, 2019, the County adopted a Climate Emergency Resolution. Among other actions, the Resolution:

- Declares a climate emergency, establishes addressing this emergency as a top Board priority, and directs staff to reevaluate existing policies through the lens of the climate emergency.
- Commits the County, including the Sonoma County Energy and Sustainability Division, to collaborate

with the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) to develop and implement a countywide 2030 Climate Emergency Mobilization Strategy, and to identify a Climate Emergency Mobilization Liaison (Climate Liaison) to coordinate with RCPA and partners on this effort. The Strategy will identify key local actions, including a list of the most impactful local policies to drive equitable system change and identify key areas for state level advocacy.

- Commits the County to working across sectors using inclusive community engagement strategies to accelerate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience measures to equitably address climate change impacts and achieve zero net emissions as quickly as possible.
- Commits the County to educating its employees and residents about the climate crisis and the work needed to catalyze an emergency climate mobilization effort at the local, regional, state, national and global levels.

In addition, the Board directed staff to coordinate with the Energy and Sustainability division and other County departments and agencies to identify Recovery and Resiliency Framework and additional actions/policies that the County could take to advance climate resiliency for discussion at the Board's strategic planning session in January 2020.

On January 6, 2020 your Board established the Climate Action Ad Hoc and adopted the Climate Action Ad Hoc Charter. The purpose of the Climate Action Ad Hoc is to receive input from County department and agency staff, and to solicit input from stakeholders, including other public entities (e.g., cities, Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA), Sonoma Clean Power, local air districts, etc.) and community members. Initial input from department and agency staff informed the Board's January 28, 2020 strategic planning session.

At the strategic planning session, your Board established Climate Action and Resiliency as one of the five pillars of the County strategic planning process currently underway. The Climate Pillar includes the following four major goals:

- All County facilities become carbon free and zero waste
- Maximize sustainability and emissions reductions in all fleet vehicles
- Maximize carbon sequestration through land conservation work and land use policies
- Invest in the community to obtain carbon neutrality by 2030

These goals will help to focus the County's efforts moving forward serving as an overarching guide for the Climate Action Ad Hoc's efforts.

The Climate Action Ad Hoc had intended to return to the full Board in the spring to discuss priority projects and initiatives to jump start focused climate action and resiliency work. Unfortunately, like many other areas, the work of the Climate Action Ad Hoc has been impacted and delayed by the COVID-19 emergency. The Ad Hoc met in January and March and resumed more frequent discussion in July (July 1, 21, and 29) to ensure that climate action and resiliency work moves forward in 2020.

Climate Action and Resiliency Projects

To identify a preliminary prioritization of some short-, mid- and long-term projects and initiatives for your Board's discussion and input, staff reviewed many specific climate objectives and proposed actions that have been developed by County departments and agencies through the strategic planning process, the development of the Recovery and Resiliency Framework, and discussions with a larger county Climate Work Group that includes several external partners. These projects generally fall into three buckets: decarbonization, carbon sequestration, and resiliency/climate adaptation.

Staff and the Ad Hoc have identified short and mid-term projects and initiatives that would have multiple benefits and could be implemented relatively quickly. Importantly, the Ad Hoc is working in close coordination with community partners, such as RCPA and Sonoma Clean Power, to ensure alignment on the climate priorities that affect the county at large. These community partners have consistently supported the County's climate-focused work and the County is committed to continuing this collaboration.

The Climate Ad Hoc anticipates further scoping and prioritization of climate projects with the future County climate lead (discussed below) but highlights a sampling of projects in Attachment 1. This partial list is indicative of the breadth of projects that have been under discussion since the Ad Hoc was created.

Climate Resiliency Staffing

On January 6, 2020, four climate staffing options were presented to your Board for consideration. Your Board adopted a resolution on February 4, 2020 to amend the County Administrator's Office (CAO) Recovery and Resiliency division position allocation list and add a 1.0 full time equivalent (FTE) Administrative Analyst III to support the Climate Action Ad Hoc Committee and climate resiliency coordination. While this climate analyst position was approved, recruitment for this position was put on hold due to COVID-19. The delay allows for the opportunity for additional discussions to refine staffing options and to consider which job responsibilities are most critical for the near and long term to accomplish the County's declared climate action and resiliency goals. It also provides the opportunity to reassess where and at what level in the County organization responsibility and accountability to achieve these goals would live, so that the County climate lead would be positioned to be most effective and successful.

The Climate Ad Hoc has held several discussions on how best to staff and address climate actions, given both the urgency of climate issues and the challenges posed by budgetary constraints. Consideration was given to the need for central coordination, communication and leadership of County-wide climate initiatives, as well as the need for staff with climate policy, technical and scientific knowledge, and staff support for grant writing for climate-related funding.

The Climate Ad Hoc also discussed the need for an interim climate lead, which your Board initially considered in January. This interim lead would provide the centralized coordination that the climate effort requires, until a permanent role is defined and subsequently hired. Salary savings from the previously approved but not yet filled climate analyst position would be used to fund the interim position. The approved climate analyst position will remain unfilled until climate staffing decisions have been made.

The Climate Ad Hoc recommends that your Board consider directing staff to research and develop a range of climate staffing models for consideration, including the option and process to identify an interim climate lead from internal staff. The Climate Ad Hoc will also address the role that the County climate staff will play relative to General Services' Energy and Sustainability Division, and community partners such as RCPA and Sonoma Clean Power, and research how other jurisdictions have staffed their climate priority, as part of the staffing discussion. Staff will return to your Board in September with proposed staffing models for the near and long-term.

Climate Resiliency Fund

The Climate Ad Hoc recommends that the Board consider establishing a Climate Resiliency Fund for unfunded climate projects. The fund would be similar to the Infrastructure Fund that the Board approved for fiscal year 2019-2020 and could be accessed to leverage grant opportunities and provide matching funds, similar to the Recovery and Resiliency set aside established after the 2017 fires. With climate priorities taking precedent in both the Recovery and Resiliency Framework and the strategic planning currently underway, there is a need to identify a funding source to support these priorities.

Prior Board Actions:

- 9/17/19 Adopted the Climate Emergency Resolution
- 1/6/20 Established the Climate Action Ad Hoc Committee
- 2/4/20 Adopted resolution to add 1.0 FTE Climate Analyst position to CAO's Office of Recovery and Resiliency

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 20-21 Adopted	FY 21-22 Projected	FY 22-23 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$215,000		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$215,000		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$215,000		
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			

Total Sources	\$215,000		
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Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The cost for an interim climate lead would be offset, either wholly or partially, by the \$215,000 FY 2020-21 General Fund support in the County Administrator’s Office (CAO) toward salary and benefits for a climate analyst position (Administrative Analyst III), approved by your Board in February 2020. At this time, no additional budget is being requested. The job class of the interim climate lead will be determined when the Climate Ad Hoc returns to your Board in September with staffing models. Should the recommended job class be beyond the Administrative Analyst III salary range, a request will be made during the Consolidated Budget Adjustment (CBA) process to use General Fund contingencies to offset the difference in the BOS-CAO departmental budget.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A - I Step)	Additions (number)	Deletions (number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Sample List of Climate Projects

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board: