



Analysis of Local Solutions to Climate Change: Community Conversations
Redwood City, California

Conducted by the City Manager's Office

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Introduction

A group of Redwood City residents has taken the lead in partnering with the City to develop a Community Climate Action Plan - a plan to reach a 15% reduction in carbon emission levels in Redwood City by 2020, through a variety of strategies encompassing community building, transportation, energy efficiency, urban ecology and waste management.

In an effort to gather additional community feedback, the City hosted a series of community conversations in November and December 2009. Three sessions were held with adult community members including.

- November 18, 2009 at City Hall with 49 participants
- December 2, 2009 at a CBETS adult English language class at Hawes School with 12 participants
- December 16, 2009 at the Redwood Shores Community Room with 4 participants from the National Hispanic Realtor Association

At each of the meetings participants were given an overview presentation of the proposed climate action plan followed by a facilitated discussion soliciting their input. At the community-wide convening on November 18th, participants also had the opportunity to post comments on poster boards that outlined the Plan's key features and to complete a survey on personal actions. A summary of key findings from data gathered through the community conversations follows.

Key Findings

Measuring Progress

Participants would like the Climate Action Plan to incorporate realistic and measurable objectives. This includes reliable metrics for measuring carbon emissions reductions using best available technology. They also expressed the importance of translating progress toward community goals in terms that everyone could understand, i.e. a ‘thermometer’ in a public place. Regular communication about the community’s progress would serve to keep the community engaged and focused. Communication should include recognition of milestones achieved.

Community Building

Community engagement and education were themes that ran throughout the discussions. Participants felt hopeful discussing ideas with their neighbors and learning that others shared similar perspectives. Implementation of the Climate Action Plan should include a continued focus on community engagement. Civic engagement strategies can be used as a means of educating the community about behavioral change and connecting people in teams to take action together. Consider including opportunities for intergenerational programs, that connect adults and youth to share their respective knowledge and expertise. Incorporate education about climate change, behavior change and conservation in school settings. Offering rewards, prizes, and recognition to individuals and groups working toward reducing their carbon footprints was identified as a means for getting the community more involved. Ensuring that the Plan involves the entire community was seen as key, for example the plan should include specific strategies for renters and not focus solely on homeowners and should involve all neighborhoods and demographic groups. Participants in the CBETS class in particular were interested in learning more about green job training and workforce development opportunities.

Transportation and Land Use

The majority of comments with respect to transportation concentrated on improving infrastructure to better support walking and biking. This should include bike lanes, bike racks, connected trails and safe routes to school programs as well as improvements that support pedestrian crossing of heavily traveled corridors. Having the Complete Streets committee up and running was identified as an indicator of success. Participants did comment that they did not want to see Cargill developed. There were also comments in support of development by Cargill if it included open space and recreation access. On the personal action survey, 27 of 40 respondents indicated that they were very likely to decrease the amount of driving they do by 4%.

Built Environment

Participants supported the idea of offering programs to reduce home energy use. They commented that the programs need to be designed to reach both renters and homeowners. Flexibility and financing for renewable energy systems was seen as a positive – for homes and commercial buildings. Doing more to make the connection between green building, energy efficiency, and health was identified. On the

personal action survey, 30 of 40 respondents indicated that they were very likely to participate request a Green@ Home Housecall and 27 of 40 respondents indicated they were very likely to participate in a “Do It Yourself” home energy conservation class, 27 of 40 respondents indicated they were very likely to develop a home energy conservation plan.

Urban Ecology

Home gardening, community gardens and access to healthy fruits and vegetables were discussed at each session. Participants expressed interest in seeing more opportunities in this area. On the personal action survey, 25 of 40 respondents indicated that they were very likely to participate in a restoration project such as tree planting, wetlands restoration, or creek clean-up.

Waste Reduction & Recycling

Participants are looking forward to the implementation of the City’s new contract with Recology and having single stream recycling available. They are eager to begin food scrap composting. There was a contingent at the November 18th meeting that expressed strong interest in banning plastic bags and/or styrafoam in the City. Interest was expressed in having a center where residents could take hard to recycle materials.

Water Conservation

Water conservation should be called out more specifically in the Climate Action Plan perhaps. Residents are interested in learning more about water catchment systems, understanding if gray water use is a viable option and conserving water in landscaping with native plants.

Redwood City Local Solutions to Climate Change Participant Personal Action Survey

Completed by 40 attendees at the November 18, 2009 community conversation

Statement	Not Likely				Very likely
	1	2	3	4	5
How likely are you to					
Request a Green @ Home HouseCall to improve home energy efficiency	3	2	2	9	21
Implement the 'Cool The Earth' program in your child's school ¹	12	1		1	6
Encourage your workplace to become a Green Certified Business	6	1	8	3	11
Create a home energy conservation plan for your household	1	2	4	11	16
Decrease the amount of driving you do by 4%	1	4	6	6	21
Replace one driving trip a day with walking	7	3	10	5	12
Replace one driving trip a day with bicycling	11	4	6	3	12
Reduce your home energy use by 20%		3	7	12	11
Participate in a 'Do It Yourself' home energy efficiency workshop	4	2	6	10	17
Purchase a renewable energy system (solar)	10	7	5	7	6
Start a neighborhood group to promote sustainability	10	8	10	4	5
Replace your lawn with drought tolerant plants ²	11	2	5	3	15
Start a community garden	8	10	7	6	7
Participate in a restoration project such as tree planting, wetlands restoration, creek clean-up	2	1	13	9	16
Volunteer to promote recycling at community events	5	4	13	6	9
Convene a community group to work on parts of the climate action plan	8	7	9	10	5
Work on a community group to put parts of the climate plan into action	4	3	11	10	11

Highlighted squares represent a combined total of 27-30 responses

¹13 of the 40 people surveyed indicated that the program was not applicable, no school age children; 1 participant indicated they were already helping to implement the program at Orion School

²8 of the 40 people survey indicated they already had or were in the process of replacing their lawn with drought tolerant plants

Poster Board Notes

Building Community

- Legalize grey water use
- Partner with our local Community Action Agency (CAA-SMc) on weatherization especially for lower income neighborhoods
- It seems most conservation efforts are focused on or limited to homeowners. What is being done to encourage renters and apartment building owners to conserve more? (i.e. low flow toilet program)
- Publicize green businesses – notice them at 4th of July parade and similar events
- Ban serving water in restaurants unless requested
- What is contribution to GHG emissions reductions for this category?
- Permit grey water use and show how
- Bring recycled water system to all residential areas in the city
- Consult experts: climatologists, oceanographers, USGS, biologists
- Reward those of us who are already conserving water
- Have a April (Earth Day Month) Month of Verde events on courthouse square – 30 Days, 30 Events – big & small
- Give high school kids credit for community service like x amount of hours per month of cleaning rivers, weeding, public parks etc. Schools need to require x amount of service for graduation requirement
- How to install grey water use in homes
- Can RWC require merchants to distance label products? Especially important for produce
- Encourage the installation of rain water collection systems

Transportation and Land Use

- Build more bike lanes and complete streets
- Pavement moratorium
- Shade sidewalks promote walking
- What about a bike to school rewards system. I read an article about Los Altos that has scanners on helmets and kids earn prizes for biking
- We have to find ways for utilizing the barren Hetch-Hetchy right of ways for walking and biking trails
- Identify and correct pedestrian barriers
- Later and more frequent hours of public transport
- Create a “fun” contest with prizes, for those who ride their bikes to work. “Reach the 1,000 mile mark”. Coordinate “bike pools” for people to ride together to work.
- No Cargill development
- Buy electric or hybrid cars
- No Cargill development on the Bay

- How efficient is Caltrain w/all the diesel engines?
- More bike racks all around city
- Build housing downtown and other areas being studied. High density, more open space.
Jobs=Housing
- Preserve wetlands and use for NATURAL carbon sequestration
- What is total contribution to GHG emissions reduction for this category?
- Insure bicycle lanes are included in the Grand Boulevard
- Total synchronization of traffic lights on major streets to efficiently move vehicular traffic
- Enable traffic lights to detect bicycles
- Include North-South bike route signage through Redwood City
- Get Complete Streets Commission up & running
- More bike lanes & ways to get to places in RWC that keep bikes and cars separate
- Reduce bus size during non-rush hours. This will reduce emissions. During rush hour when passenger occupancy increases step up to large buses
- Create a safe network of bicycle routes and lanes.
- Too many “SUV” moms drive their kids to school when the kids could easily walk or bike
- People suggest high density – but not for themselves –

Built Environment

- Single wind turbine near Bay where it is windy? – Do they make noise? It’s noisy here already
- Give schools incentives to bikers and walkers, staff and students
- Require commercial developers to provide bike parking 1 for every 3 car spaces
- Encourage more housing so people don’t have to drive so far to get to / from work. A lot of my co-workers commute from San Jose to San Mateo (ouch!)
- Need more bike racks downtown – so few
- What is the contribution to GHG emissions for this category?
- Do you know how much GHG emissions will be reduced with the new Green Building Ordinance (hooray for the new ordinance)
- Built environment that promotes our health, wellness, safety. Incorporating sustainability, indoor air quality and energy efficiency
- Eat less beef (Beef production produces more CO2 than cars)
- Redwood City demonstration rain water harvesting (e.g. City Hall)
- Give instruction how important it is to caulk around windows, crack walls and etc. Reduces energy use.
- Incorporate LEED standards for homes/residential building & commercial
- Assisted financing for home install of how water circulating pumps – reduces water and gas usage
- Design and install home windmills
- Plant milkweed in vacant lots, backyards or easements to protect the Monarch butterflies
- Incentives are critical since many residents don’t give a darn

- The property tax idea for energy upgrades is great!

Urban Ecology

- Facilitate agreement to use Hetch-Hetchy for community gardens
- Incentives offered on water bill to go natural landscaping
- Education to identify and protect oak seedlings
- Ban/Stop Cargill – it will destroy wetlands, add to city emissions
- I have also stopped growing fruits and vegetables because the critters eat it all before I can get to it
- Responsible development in “Salt Flats” with focus on restoration, open space, and playing fields is O.K!
- No development on salt works. NCR wetlands
- Build grey water systems
- More community gardens, food shared at homeless shelters, etc
- Replace lawns with low water ground cover
- What’s the difference between the Green Gardener and Master Gardener programs, why not both?
- Discourage lawn. Some people will listen. More publicity about this.
- Open up the creek and make a walking/biking path out to the harbor. (like San Antonio in TX)
- Even if community gardens are outside of RWC, if people are educated about using them (via CSAs, community supported agriculture) that would be great!
- Encourage more nurseries to sell CA native plants – they take very little water. Yerba Buena on Skyline is far away
- Ban lawns or reduce them
- Encourage neighbors to share extra space for gardening
- Can we daylight Redwood Creek and open it up more behind Kolh’s to encourage an appreciation for our natural resources?
- How can we use the Hetch-Hetchy right-away for community gardens? How about friendly contests between community gardens or at home (i.e., largest squash, etc.)
- Plant trees that improve air quality
- Make attractive covered rain barrels at reasonable cost
- Simplify gray H2O usage – ban washing machines that doesn’t recycle the water

Waste & Recycling

- What became of the recycled water project that began 6-7 years ago?
- Implement faucet water flow restrictors for households
- Educate about supporting / buying LOCAL produce (CSAs becoming more prevalent & easy to use) Home delivery of local produce or local pick-ups
- Collect storm drain runoff and use for treatment/community garden use, etc
- Campaign against junk mail. How to reduce it!

- Tax residents who produce excess waste
- Food composting ASAP
- I'd support a reasonable ban on Styrofoam. Maybe plastic bags.
- Do you know how much the new recycling / waste vendor will reduce with its new programs?
- Center for Hard to Recycle Materials. Similar plan to Netherlands, Colorado, would it be a possibility in Redwood City?
- Food Scraps!!
- Waste water treatment plant. Co-generation like EBMUDD
- Have a city wide garage sale on a specified day
- Freecycle.org – get more people to give away their trash to others instead of sending it to the landfill
- How many lbs or tons do we need to reduce in order to reduce X amount of GHG emissions?
- Compostware doesn't break down easily in landfills, is often a corn product and is energy intensive. Encourage B.Y.O.U. (Bring your own utensils – cups, mugs, plates, etc)
- Help facilitate a plastic bag ordinance! Charge extra for plastic bags at groceries
- Recycle ALL plastic.
- How many tons of GHG emissions does the City want to reduce in this category? How much will these individual programs reduce?
- Find a way to reduce faucet water usage. Doesn't lower the water pressure.
- Education to precycle (reduce use that produces waste, even recyclable waste)
- County-wide ban on plastic bags
- How about municipal composting?
- Plastic bag ordinance – require businesses to stop giving out bags – just accept used bags. Consumers then either re-use plastic bags brought back to stores or bring in cloth bags for goods purchased.
- Accept Styrafoam for recycling or re-use instead of landfill
- City-wide ordinance – ban plastic shopping/grocery bags. This is City Council business.
- County-wide ban Styrafoam
- Use rechargeable batteries whenever possible. Avoid buying disposable batteries.