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Master Responses to Public Comments Received on the Public Draft Climate Action Plan

Climate Action Plan
Planning Commission Hearing Date July 5, 2017

Napa County Climate Action Plan

Master Responses to Public Comments Received on the Public Draft

June 2017

In January 2017, the County released the Draft Napa County Climate Action Plan (CAP) for public review. The public comment period opened on January 26, 2017 and closed on March 10, 2017. County staff received a total of 45 comment letters and/or e-mail messages. Many of the comments raised common issues or concerns. Rather than respond to each comment letter individually, staff prepared a set of master responses to comments by topical area to address these common issues.

Master Response 1: Inventory Issues

Summary of Comments

Numerous comment letters expressed concern about the methods and assumptions used to prepare the 2014 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory. Examples include the approach to using vineyard projections related to the General Plan, alleged failure to comply with Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) "accounting standards", and alleged use of "wrong" or "inappropriate" global warming potential (GWP) values in the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report (AR4).

Note that some comments related to transportation also addressed inventory issues. Transportation comments are addressed under Master Response 6 below.

County Response

With respect to vineyard projections, the current CAP used a similar approach as was used in the draft version of the CAP proposed in 2011. The County used updated versions of Tables A-8 and A-9 from the previous draft 2011 CAP, which used the 2005 land use breakdown by acre of land use type. Future land use changes were based on historical trends since 2002. This information is consistent with the future land use forecast in the 2008 General Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Regarding GWP values, the County has previously heard and addressed similar comments earlier in the planning process, and respectfully disagrees with the assertion that the values used in the CAP are "wrong" or "inappropriate". GWP values have changed over time, and will continue to change over time, based on the latest global research published by the IPCC with each successive Assessment Report (AR). For example, GWP values for methane (CH_4) have increased, while those for hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) have decreased. These fluctuations present challenges in creating GHG emissions inventories that can be compared over time, along with the potential for inconsistencies in GWP values when comparing emissions inventories prepared by different levels of government (e.g., statewide, regional, or local inventories).

The County's CAP appropriately uses AR4 GWP values consistent with those used in the latest 2014 statewide GHG emissions inventory prepared by the California Air Resources Board (CARB).[1] This inventory is being used as the baseline in CARB's current Draft 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan, which is the State's plan for meeting the Senate Bill (SB) 32 target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. Maintaining consistency with the latest statewide GHG emissions inventory and the Scoping Plan is essential so that the County's CAP (including the emissions inventory, GHG reduction targets, and GHG reduction measures) will be consistent with CARB's effort to achieve statewide reductions pursuant to SB 32. To ensure accuracy and to maintain the County's ability to meet their target, it is necessary that the GWP values in the CAP are the same as those used by CARB[2]. This also applies to decisions on what is included in the baseline emissions inventory. It would not be appropriate for the County to include types of emissions that CARB is not addressing in the statewide inventory. Staff is concerned that the use of AR5 in the CAP would conflict with CARB's Draft 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan, potentially making the County non-compliant with SB 32 and preventing the County from being able to use the CAP to satisfy California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) standards.

The County recognizes that newer GWP values have been published by IPCC in AR5, and some comments correctly pointed out that BAAQMD has chosen to use these newer values. However, BAAQMD does not have jurisdiction or approval authority over Napa County's CAP or the methods used in local CAPs in the region, nor does BAAQMD's decisions on GWP values supersede the GWP values used by CARB for statewide inventories or current efforts to update the Scoping Plan per SB 32. CARB is charged with achieving SB 32 target. Similarly, the focus of the County is to show consistency with CARB's work and recommendations in implementing State requirements, rather than regional standards.

Staff believes that using AR5 GWP values at this point would increase delays and costs for the County's CAP process with very little effect. All the calculations in the CAP would need to be revised, all technical documentation would need to be republished, and the CAP would need to be revised and republished. The County believes that the relative differences in GHG emissions estimates using the newer AR5 values would not be substantial enough to warrant the increased costs and delays. It would be better to begin realizing the benefits of the CAP sooner, and address any changes in the future as they occur.

The County could, in the next update to its GHG emissions inventory in future years, determine that it would be appropriate to use AR5 GWP values (or even newer GWP values if they are available from IPCC), consistent with actions that may be taken by CARB in subsequent updates to the statewide GHG emission inventory or in the next update to the Scoping Plan. The inventory section in Chapter 2 now includes a discussion that defines GWP and explains that the CAP uses the AR4 GWP values to maintain consistency with the latest statewide inventory prepared by CARB.

[1] See ARB's 2014 Statewide GHG Emissions Inventory Technical Support document, available at https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/inventory/doc/methods_00-14/ghg_inventory_00-14_technical_support_document.pdf

[2] *Ibid.*

Master Response 2: Short-Lived Climate Pollutants

Summary of Comments

Several comment letters note that the State and BAAQMD are working on reducing a subcategory of GHG emissions known as short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs), which include methane, black carbon, fluorinated gases (F-gases) and ozone. Concerns expressed include lack of attention to SLCPs in the CAP, alleged failure to quantify black carbon and other SLCPs, and alleged failure to meet the new State targets or identify sufficient measures in the CAP for reducing SLCPs.

County Response

CARB staff prepared the Short-Lived Climate Pollutant (SLCP) Reduction Strategy pursuant to SB 1383 and other legislative mandates, which was adopted by CARB on March 24, 2017.

The SLCP Strategy states that mobile sources (primarily from diesel exhaust) and wildfire are the primary statewide sources of black carbon. The SLCP Strategy includes a statewide inventory for black carbon and notes that black carbon emissions from mobile sources have been reduced dramatically in recent decades and will continue to be reduced by recent actions contained in the State's Mobile Source Strategy, Sustainable Freight Strategy, and other regulations and actions related to mobile source emissions. Wildfires are now the largest statewide source of black carbon.

Appendix C to CARB's adopted SLCP Strategy (California SLCP Emissions)[3] explains the difficulties with developing accurate black carbon estimates at the statewide level (see excerpt below, with emphases added in bold). While CARB did include an initial black carbon inventory estimate in the SLCP, the issues presented by CARB in Appendix C to the SLCP Strategy (see excerpt below) illustrate why the County has not included black carbon in the County's emissions inventory:

> *California's black carbon emission inventory was developed using existing particulate matter (PM 2.5) emission estimates, combined with speciation profiles that define the fraction of PM2.5 that is elemental carbon.* ***Elemental carbon is the "best available indicator" of black carbon, but is not a perfect proxy for warming effects, which depend on the physical and chemical properties of the particles.*** *Elemental Carbon is not a proxy for brown carbon, thus brown carbon is not included in the inventory. The PM 2.5 inventory was assembled using a wide variety of techniques including models, data reported by local air districts, and ARB inventory calculation methodologies.*
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> *Speciation profiles were developed by ARB as part of photochemical modeling efforts.* ***Black carbon emissions depend on a variety of factors including fuel, engine operating conditions, age, maintenance, emission control technology, load, and drive cycle. Variability in these factors and their impact on speciation profiles remains a large source of uncertainty in black carbon inventory development.***

[3] The SLCP Strategy adopted by ARB in March 2017 can be found at https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/shortlived/shortlived.htm

Wildfire PM 2.5 emissions are large and can vary significantly from year to year. *California's black carbon inventory in Table 1 above uses the 10-year average wildfire PM 2.5 emissions from 2001 to 2011 to avoid large year-to-year variations in the inventory. Annual PM 2.5 emissions are calculated using geospatial fire activity and vegetation fuels data in the First Order Fire Effects Model (FOFEM). FOFEM accounts for vegetation fuel size class distributions, configuration, moisture content, fuel consumption and emissions associated with flaming and smoldering phases. The geodatabase classifies wildfires according to management objective: suppression or non-suppression (wildfire use for resource benefit).*

As with other sources, speciation profiles are applied to the 10-year average wildfire PM 2.5 emissions to estimate black carbon. ***Black carbon emissions from biomass burning vary depending on fire conditions, such as the fuel type, moisture content, oxygen availability, and local meteorology. This variation leads to high uncertainty in speciation assumptions, and adequate speciation profiles to account for various fire conditions are not available. For these reasons, the wildfire emission estimate contains very high uncertainty, and should be understood to be an order-of-magnitude estimate of emissions for a typical year.***

Also, per Master Response 1, it is important that the County is consistent with breadth of CARB's 2014 statewide emissions inventory (i.e., does not include black carbon) that is used for the basis for future achievement of State goals under SB 32 (e.g., apples-to-apples approach).

Discussion of SLCPs has been added to the CAP. SLCPs are now defined in Section 1.2 and pertinent legislation explained in Section 1.3. The Inventory section of Chapter 2 clarifies that the 2014 GHG emissions inventory prepared for the CAP included the most common and prevalent SLCPs (i.e., CH_4 (methane) and fluorinated gases). It explains that black carbon emissions are not quantified in the inventory because (1) it is difficult to develop accurate black carbon estimates, (2) reliable methods for estimation at the local level do not yet exist, and (3) CARB does not include black carbon in the most current statewide emissions inventory. The CAP explains that the State is already leading the way in reducing black carbon emissions and that State air quality policies will virtually eliminate black carbon emissions from on-road diesel engines within 10 years. The State will also continue to explore the necessary actions to decrease emissions from wildfires, which are now the largest statewide source of black carbon.

Black carbon emissions reductions are now recognized in various sections of the CAP as a co-benefit to reducing GHG emissions in on-road transportation sources and in wildfire adaptation measures. Transportation sector GHG reduction measures contained in this CAP are aimed at reducing fossil fuel combustion, increasing the use of alternative fuel and zero-emissions vehicles, and reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT). These measures will help to further reduce fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) from diesel fuel combustion and other sources, which will complement the State's efforts under the SLCP Strategy and result in co-benefits of reducing black carbon emissions in the County. Less black carbon would also be emitted into the atmosphere in the County through wildfire-related climate adaptation measures contained in this plan. These changes can be found in Chapters 3 and 4.

Master Response 3: Wetlands and Soil Conservation/Sequestration/Storage

Summary of Comments

Several comment letters express concern related to the CAP's alleged failure to quantify losses in carbon sequestration and storage associated with land use change in wetlands specifically, as well as soils in general. Some comments also expressed the need for inclusion of GHG reduction measures to help increase carbon storage and sequestration in wetlands and soils. Some comment letters also suggested the use of carbon farming and other methods to increase soil carbon sequestration in existing agricultural lands.

County Response

The CAP accounts for GHG emissions (i.e., loss of carbon sequestration potential and stored carbon) associated with loss of vegetation and woody biomass due to land use changes in a variety of land cover types, such as oak woodlands, coniferous forests and rangeland that could be removed for urban or vineyard development in future years. However, the CAP did not include GHG emissions associated with anticipated changes in wetland acreages, as shown in Table 17 of Appendix A, due to the lack of published Napa County-specific carbon sequestration and storage rates for wetlands and the high variability of these factors in literature. Reviewing available studies revealed a high degree of variability in factors associated with carbon storage and sequestration rates in wetlands depending on climate, soil composition, location, ecosystem, salinity, and other factors. Multiple literature reviews confirm this variability (see Nahlik 2016[4], Villa and Mitsch 2014[5], Miller 2011[6]). These and other similar studies show that while wetlands store carbon in its soils, the decomposition of organic material underwater also generates CH_4 emissions through anaerobic digestion. The balance between the methane emissions and carbon storage benefits of wetlands varies greatly by many factors. A future study on the carbon storage and sequestration rates of wetlands in Napa County could provide more reliable carbon storage and sequestration factors that could be applied to the GHG inventory and forecast in a future update to the County CAP.

With respect to addressing the loss of carbon sequestration and stored carbon in various types of soils due to land use change, the County appreciates the variety of suggestions submitted by the community to help the County quantify these losses and increase carbon sequestration and storage potential in soils. Regarding addressing this sector in the inventory and forecast, the CAP assumes that existing carbon concentrations in the soil remain unchanged after conversion to urban uses. However, regarding such conversions as rangeland to vineyards, where soil carbon could potentially increase, a detailed study would be needed to accurately characterize the soil carbon stocks across the County, which was not readily available.

To track the soil carbon stocks in the County, a detailed long-term study of samples from areas across all vineyard and land use types in the County would need to be conducted. While the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Carbon Management and Evaluation Tool (also known as COMET-Farm) is available to

[4] Nahlik 2016 can be found at https://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms13835
[5] Villa and Mitsch 2014 can be found at http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21513732.2014.973909
[6] Miller 2011 can be found at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13157-011-0215-2

individual farms and ranches to estimate their soil carbon levels, the use of this tool for the entire County would require a comprehensive survey of farming practices, irrigation factors, and other data needs. Quantification of soil carbon stocks using COMET and any comprehensive County-specific soil carbon studies to address the County's soil carbon stocks and forecasts could be considered when the CAP is updated in the future.

With respect to including measures that increase soil carbon, the County acknowledges the suggestions to recommend improved tilling practices and other beneficial practices as included in the Napa County Resource Conservation District's (RCD) *Huichica Creek Sustainable Demonstration Vineyard Carbon Farm Plan*. The County has added a new qualitative measure, AG-6, in Chapter 3 of the final CAP to encourage and support the use of carbon farming practices in the County, using RCD's *Huichica Creek Sustainable Demonstration Vineyard Carbon Farm Plan* as a model. This measure has a sub-action to use the RCD's report as a case study and replicate results.

Master Response 4: Carbon Sequestration and Storage Quantification Methods and Land Use Change Measures (Oak Woodlands and Coniferous Forest)

Summary of Comments

Several comment letters expressed concern related to the CAP's approach on land use conversion of oak woodlands and forests and its effect on the sequestration and storage of carbon. Some letters offered alternative calculation methods and factors to determine the carbon storage and sequestration potential of vegetation in the County. Many of these letters also differed in opinion on Measure LU-1, with some letters suggesting that the measure would be infeasible or recommending that the measure be made more stringent.

County Response

With respect to the methods and assumptions used to estimate emissions from changes in forests and oak woodlands, as well as other vegetation types, the County acknowledges and appreciates the suggested alternative methods for estimating carbon storage and sequestration rates. The CAP uses many of the same sources that were recommended. For future CAP efforts, the County could consider working with subject experts, such as the Quercus Group, that have already invested research in County-specific analysis.

Given the potential release of GHG emissions from the removal of coniferous forests and oak woodlands between 2014 and 2050 (see Table 37), the intent of Measure LU-1 was to address the forecasted losses in stored carbon and sequestration potential that would contribute to these emissions. A focus of LU-1 is to preserve as much existing vegetation as possible, setting a minimum of 30 percent of existing trees to remain, based on feasibility assessments made by County staff. LU-1 was also written with existing policies in mind, particularly the County's General Plan policy CON-24, which calls for a 2:1 replacement ratio for removed trees, and input from County staff on the feasibility of such a measure. County staff indicated that, given current resources, the County would be able to plant up to 2,500 trees per year. The limit of 2,500 trees planted per year was developed independently of the 2:1 replacement ratio. Note that LU-3 would prevent further loss of stored carbon by providing alternatives to burning removed trees.

Several comments were also raised about implementation of LU-1. To implement the measure, the 2:1 replacement ratio would act as a regulatory mechanism for any tree replanting that would be required in the future, and the 30 percent minimum tree preservation policy would be required as a countywide minimum. Although the number of trees to be replaced under the 2:1 replanting policy could exceed the County's replanting limit, tree replanting beyond the 2,500 per year could still occur at a landowner's expense in a variety of locations either within or outside the County and would be subject to review and approval by staff. However, the quantified GHG reductions associated with LU-1 only consider the preservation of 30 percent of existing trees and the replanting of 2,500 trees per year. Additionally, as the County works with arborists and local conservation organizations to implement LU-1, the Napa County Oak Woodlands Management Plan would be used as a guiding document along with other supporting programs and policies, as appropriate.

Many of the concerns expressed on the quantification of the emissions reductions associated with LU-1 questioned the tree densities used to estimate tree counts. LU-1 assumes a tree density of 152 trees per acre for oak woodlands and 139 trees per acre for mixed conifers. The tree densities were based on the average tree density across seven oak species and mixed confers across a 12-county area in northern California, including Napa County, as reported in a northern California survey recommended by County arborist staff (Waddell and Barret 1990). Comments addressing tree densities from other published studies have either been higher or lower than the estimates used in the CAP. Depending on future research and data availability, the County could consider improved tree density estimates that better reflect County-specific conditions in future CAP efforts.

Master Response 5: Agriculture Issues, Measures, Benefits, Carbon Farming

Summary of Comments

Several comments expressed a variety of concerns regarding the agricultural sector inventory, forecasts, and measures. Many comments mentioned that the CAP did not properly credit the environmental benefits already achieved in the County through best management practices at farms and the County's Agricultural Preserve program. Other comments expressed concern on whether the proposed agricultural measures would be feasible given current practices. The County acknowledges and appreciates all comments given regarding the agricultural sector.

County Response

With respect to crediting environmental benefits already achieved, the CAP's inventory and forecast looks at the difference between current and future emissions from the agricultural sector. Any benefits that may have been achieved as the result of existing policies are already reflected in baseline emissions levels shown in the inventory; or, put differently, estimated emissions in 2014 would have been substantially higher than shown if such policies were not adopted. In response to these comments, the County has added Measure AG-6 to Chapter 3 in the Final CAP that encourages sustainable agricultural practices, including the continuation of any current BMPs to reduce GHG emissions. See below for a more detailed description of changes to the agricultural measures.

Some comments desired clarification on the accounting for carbon sequestration in agriculture including in vineyards, rangeland, and orchards. Table 37 in Appendix A provides estimates of GHG emissions from changes to carbon storage and sequestration potential across all land use types, including vineyards, rangeland (modeled as grasslands), and croplands. The carbon storage and sequestration factors for grasslands, vineyard, and non-vineyard agricultural land are summarized in Table 16 in Appendix A.

In response to several comments raised, GHG reduction measures in the Agriculture sector were revised. Acknowledging commenter's concerns that there may be instances where open burning is still the most effective tool to prevent the spread of pests and disease, AG-1 was changed to encourage reductions in open burning where possible, rather than suggesting that it should be banned. Accordingly, AG-1 is now a voluntary measure as shown in Table 5-1 and is no longer a quantifiable GHG reduction measure. To offset the emissions reductions from AG-1, a new measure has been added to the Agriculture sector. AG-5 focuses on voluntary efforts to reduce N_2O emissions resulting from the application of inorganic nitrogen-based fertilizer. This measure targets reductions in the rate of fertilizer application of 5 percent by 2020, 10 percent by 2030, and 30 percent by 2050 compared to 2014 levels of inorganic nitrogen applied in the County. The loss of GHG reductions due to changes in AG-1 and the addition of new GHG reductions from AG-5 results in a slightly lower total annual reduction in 2020 and a slightly higher total annual reduction in both 2030 and 2050. For more details regarding the revisions made to the Agriculture sector GHG reduction measures, see Appendix B-2 in the Final CAP.

A qualitative measure has also been added to the Agriculture sector. AG-6, which encourages and supports the use of carbon farming and other sustainable agricultural practices in the County. The County will work with Napa County RCD to better understand the Huichica Creek Sustainable Demonstration Vineyard Carbon Farm Plan and its implementation as a pilot project for potential replication. The measure also states that the County will work with Napa County Resource Conservation District (RCD), farmers, and other stakeholders to promote best management practices in farming operations.

Edits were also made to measures AG-1 through AG-4 to address concerns over cost of implementation and mandatory requirements. See Master Response 8: Cost Burden for more information regarding these changes.

Master Response 6: Transportation (VMT, Ped/Bike, Mobile Source Boundaries)

Summary of Comments

Several comment letters identified concerns about transportation. Several comments asserted that the GHG emissions included in the inventory resulted in underestimation of transportation emissions. Others challenged the specificity of transportation GHG reduction measures, while some commenters offered suggestions for inclusion of measures to capture multi-modal projects that encourage walking and biking. Each of these sets of issues is address below.

County Response

With respect to the claim that transportation emissions were underestimated, the County respectfully disagrees. The inventory was prepared using the *U.S. Community Protocol for Accounting and Reporting Greenhouse Gas Emissions* (ICLEI 2012). According to the Protocol, local governments need to make

choices about the scope of emissions to be included in a local community emissions inventory. As part of the scoping process for preparing a community emissions inventory, local governments need to consider what GHG accounting reporting framework is appropriate for preparation of their local CAP. Like many other local governments in California, the County prepared an emissions inventory using a framework consistent with the Protocol that accounts for emissions sources over which the County would have "significant influence." These sources primarily include community-wide activities that generate emissions within the boundaries of the unincorporated County; however, in the case of transportation, on-road vehicle trip origins and destinations may be located within the County (as a whole) or the broader region (i.e., the San Francisco Bay Area).

The 2014 emissions inventory prepared for the CAP focused on local and regional on-road and off-road mobile sources associated with the combustion of transportation fuels. On-road mobile source emissions were calculated using origin and destination VMT accounting methods consistent with those used by metropolitan planning organizations for regional land use and transportation planning in California, pursuant to SB 375. This approach is consistent with the five "Basic Emissions Generating Activities" that must be included in a Protocol-compliant inventory. While use of other frameworks are possible that could address statewide, national, or global transportation emissions (such as consumption-based inventory methods that rely on more complex, life-cycle analyses that estimate a community's global "carbon footprint"), they are optional according to the Protocol and are not required elements for an inventory to be considered Protocol-compliant.

Transportation-related GHG emissions associated with various household or economic activities that occur outside the Bay Area, such as air travel, goods moving by rail or truck, or visitation trips from distant locations throughout California or in other parts of the nation or the world, are not within the County's jurisdictional control. The County also does not have regulatory authority over many sources of emissions associated with transportation. For example, aircraft and rail emissions are regulated solely by federal agencies such as U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Aviation Administration, or the Federal Railroad Administration. Additionally, attempting to account for global, life-cycle transportation emissions could also result in double-counting emissions in the inventories or other cities, counties, states, or other entities that may also be acting to reduce GHG emissions within their boundaries or regions, and thus local governments need to consider this issue carefully when deciding which accounting and reporting framework to use.

The County understands that some members of the community are concerned about the global "carbon footprint" of goods, services, tourism, or other activities that indirectly result in emissions outside the County or region. Chapter 2 in the Final CAP has been revised to explain in more detail why the GHG emissions inventory prepared for the CAP is different than a global "carbon footprint" that includes all theoretical life-cycle emissions. The County encourages local community members, businesses, or other entities to make conscious choices about the global implications of local choices, despite many of these choices being outside of the County's local jurisdiction or operational control.

Finally, the County recognizes numerous efforts are currently underway across California by other cities, counties, regions, and State agencies, to reduce transportation emissions outside of the County or the Bay Area. These include other local climate action plans, updates to and implementation of regional transportation plans (RTPs) and sustainable community strategies (SCSs) in other regions, the low-carbon fuel standard (LCFS), statewide vehicle fuel efficiency standards under the Advance Clean Cars

program, Heavy-Duty Vehicle GHG Regulations, Truck and Bus Regulations, the statewide Sustainable Freight Strategy, and other efforts.

Regarding comments on the specificity of transportation GHG reduction measures, the CAP is a countywide plan that identifies key strategies and implementation measures that would apply countywide. Many of the transportation measures are not within the jurisdiction of the County to implement and would require the County to work with or support efforts of others, such as the Napa Valley Transportation Authority (NVTA) or other entities, to implement the measures.

Additionally, the County may need to work out the details through a subsequent planning process to arrive at specific targets for each measure. For example, in the case of Measures TR-1 and TR-2, County staff will review and propose an update existing portions of County code and further develop specific performance targets, standards or guidelines that would apply during development review. Details are not currently known and will not be known until County staff initiate the process to review and recommend ordinance updates. Chapter 5 also identifies the timing and method by which GHG reductions measures will be implemented.

In response to comments suggesting that the CAP should promote active forms of transportation such as walking and biking, a new measure (TR-14) was added in the Transportation section of Chapter 3. TR-14 supports the development of active transportation projects that encourage walking and biking, such as the multi-use Napa Valley Vine Trail.

Master Response 7: CAP Consistency Checklist and CEQA 15183.5 Requirements

Summary of Comments

Several comments expressed concern that the CAP Consistency Checklist was not included in Appendix D of the Draft CAP and requested that final action not be taken on the CAP until the public has had a chance to review and comment on the CAP Checklist. Other comments also asserted that the CAP does not meet the criteria necessary for project-level GHG analysis streamlining as specified in Section 15183.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. One commenter indicated that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) should be prepared prior to adoption of the CAP.

County Response

Regarding concerns that the CAP Consistency Checklist was not posted in the Draft CAP, the CAP Checklist must be consistent with the final proposed GHG reduction measures in the CAP. The GHG reduction measures contained in the Draft CAP were draft and not yet final. The CAP checklist is the final piece in this effort and could not have been provided earlier in the process. Staff believes that including the CAP Checklist in the Final CAP is appropriate. The CAP checklist is now included in Appendix D to the Final CAP and will be available for public review well in advance of public hearings on the Final CAP with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisor. Also, it is important to note that a CAP Consistency Checklist is not a required component of a qualified plan for the reduction of GHG emissions per 15183.5. The Checklist serves as a tool for County staff to use when evaluating whether future discretionary actions are consistent with the CAP.

Regarding comments that the CAP does not meet Section 15183.5 criteria for CEQA streamlining, the County respectfully disagrees. As described in Section 5.2.1 of the Draft CAP, the CAP will provide for

streamlined review process for the GHG emissions analysis of proposed projects that are subject to discretionary review and trigger environmental review pursuant to CEQA. The CAP meets the criteria for a plan for the reduction of GHG emissions in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064(h)(3), 15130(d), and 15183(b), a project's incremental contribution to a cumulative GHG emissions effect may be determined not to be cumulatively considerable if it complies with the requirements of the CAP. If a project can show consistency with applicable GHG reduction measures in a plan for the reduction of GHG emissions such as a climate action plan or other similar plan, the level of environmental review for the project required under CEQA with respect to GHG emissions can be reduced considerably.

The CAP Consistency Checklist (included in Appendix D in the Final CAP) is based on specific measures in the CAP along with specific, enforceable requirements or performance standards related to the CAP measures against which future projects can be evaluated on a project-level basis. If a project can show consistency with all the applicable CAP measures in the Checklist, then no detailed project-level analysis will be required pursuant to the CEQA streamlining provisions described above. If a project cannot show consistency with the CAP, a detailed project-level GHG analysis will be required and must be included in the CEQA document prepared for the proposed project.

It is important to note that only those measures that can be feasibly applied to projects that are subject to discretionary review and trigger environmental review are included in the Checklist. Examples of measures that cannot be applied to projects subject to discretionary review (e.g., new development projects) are BE-1 (Work with PG&E, PACE financing programs, and other regional partners to incentivize energy efficiency improvements in existing buildings) and TR-4 (Support efforts to allow commuter service to operate on the Napa Wine Train right-of-way).

The Checklist also includes measures that would be required generally through local ordinance or code updates, but would apply at the project-level as implemented through the Checklist. Even if a measure has not yet been adopted and codified, the County may still require its implementation through project-level review when determining whether a project is consistent with GHG reductions attributable to measure the CAP. For example, the Checklist requires that eligible alterations or additions to existing buildings be required to comply with CALGreen Tier I (i.e., BE-3). While the County will take future action to adopt CALGreen Tier 1 standards by ordinance for all ministerial projects normally subject to CALGreen compliance, consistency with this measure must still be proven by applicants for projects requiring discretionary review even if the County has not yet acted to adopt such an ordinance. Also, some measures listed in Table 5-1 of the Draft CAP that are identified as voluntary may become mandatory for certain discretionary projects through use of the Checklist. The Checklist may also be updated to incorporate new GHG reduction techniques or to comply with later amendments to the CAP or local, State, or federal law.

In summary, the CAP Checklist is included in the Final Draft version of the CAP and will be available for public review prior to approval and adoption at the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisor hearings. Language in Section 5.2.1 has also been edited to better explain the purpose of the CAP Checklist and how some voluntary measures listed in Table 5-1 may become mandatory for future discretionary projects seeking consistency with the CAP.

Regarding the assertion that an EIR is required to be prepared prior to adoption of the CAP, CEQA Guidelines section 15183.5(b)(1)(F) requires that a climate action plan be adopted in a public

process after environmental review. Subdivision (b)(2) provides that "[a] plan for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, once adopted following certification of an EIR or adoption of an environmental document, may be used in the cumulative impacts analysis of later projects." (Emphasis added.) Accordingly, the statute does not specifically mandate that a local agency shall prepare an EIR, but instead requires "environmental review" and certification of an EIR or adoption of an environmental document. In this case, the County finds that the proposed project is within the scope of the 2008 General Plan Update, that the program-level EIR prepared for the 2008 General Plan Update adequately describes the project for the purposes of CEQA, and that there have been no changes to the General Plan, no changes to circumstances, and no new information of substantial importance that would necessitate supplemental environmental review.

Regarding public process, County staff hosted four public workshops throughout the development of the CAP. The first workshop was held on November 9, 2015 and focused on an overview of the climate action planning process, plan schedule, and steps necessary to establish the baseline 2014 GHG inventory. Comments regarding potential GHG emissions sources to be included in the inventory update were solicited. The County's draft GHG inventory was presented at a public workshop held on February 24, 2016. Draft GHG emissions reduction targets, reduction measures, and gap analysis were discussed in detail at a third public workshop held on June 30, 2016. A final workshop was conducted at the Watershed Information and Conservation Council (WICC) Board meeting of February 23, 2017. The WICC Board meeting featured a presentation of the Public Review Draft CAP followed by a question and answer session. Each of the four public workshops was attended by approximately 25 to 35 persons. Additional opportunity for public comment will be provided at the upcoming Planning Commission and Board of Supervisor hearings.

Master Response 8: Cost Burden

Summary of Comments

Several letters questioned the feasibility and efficacy of certain proposed measures due to their high costs of implementation and burden to homeowners and the agricultural industry. Several commenters suggested that the County should prepare a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis to better understand true financial costs and economic impact, while others asserted that new taxes would result from adoption of the County's CAP.

County Response

The CAP's Implementation chapter provides a general explanation of how the County will implement proposed measures. Table 5-1 of the CAP summarizes the first steps towards implementing the CAP and includes high-level, qualitative implementation cost rankings, along with other decision-making criteria such as environmental co-benefits. While it was not within the scope of this project (e.g., not required to be defined as a qualified GHG reduction plan per 15183.5) to do a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis for each measure, the qualitative cost assessment and rankings considered the costs to all parties involved. This includes costs to the County to start-up, administer, and enforce measures. It also considers that some measures will require funding from public entities, and that others will result in increased costs to businesses, new construction, and residents due to compliance. In some cases, long-term savings associated with energy savings, water savings, fuel savings, or other beneficial factors could exceed short-term cost increases associated with compliance, thereby resulting in economic

benefits. More detailed cost/benefit analyses would occur when County staff begin to implement each measure or propose adoption of new ordinances, programs, or other subsequent actions.

Several commenters pointed out that homeowners would bear a disproportional cost burden with regards to measure BE-6, which would gradually phase out natural gas water heating in favor of all-electric or other alternatively-fueled systems such as solar thermal or geothermal heat pumps. Commenters felt that the measure should also apply to commercial projects and that the County should offer incentives. Acknowledging these comments, CAP measure BE-6 has been edited. CAP measure BE-6 now includes commercial properties and describes some methods the County can use to incentivize the switch. The overall cost of the measure has also been changed in Table 5-1 from "Low" to "Medium."

Edits have also been made to all the agricultural measures because of public comments. Several comment letters expressed concern over the high cost to implement AG-1 through AG-4, noting that the measures should not be mandatory for all agricultural operations. Commenters also suggested grant programs be put in place to help offset the cost of implementation. AG-1 through AG-4 are voluntary measures as stated in the Final CAP, and would only apply to new development projects, or projects that trigger discretionary review. These measures would be voluntary for current agricultural operations. To avoid confusion, the measures have been changed from "mandatory" to "voluntary" in Table 5-1. The County acknowledges that the measures could be costly and measures AG-1, AG-2, and AG-4 have been revised as having a "Medium" ranking for implementation cost. Additionally, several GHG measures include language that the County will provide either financial or regulatory incentives to help offset the cost burden for compliance.

Finally, the assertion that new taxes would be imposed due to CAP adoption is incorrect. No new County taxes or increases of existing County taxes are proposed in the CAP.