

Performance Audit of the City's Climate Action Plan

The City can strengthen its oversight mechanisms to ensure departments stay on track to implement CAP goals, and can improve its fiscal planning efforts for CAP implementation by developing a prioritization mechanism and estimating costs.

Why OCA did this study

Cities play a vital role in the global response to climate change by curbing their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a flexible plan that contains a comprehensive set of goals, actions, and targets that the City can use to reduce GHG emissions.

What OCA found

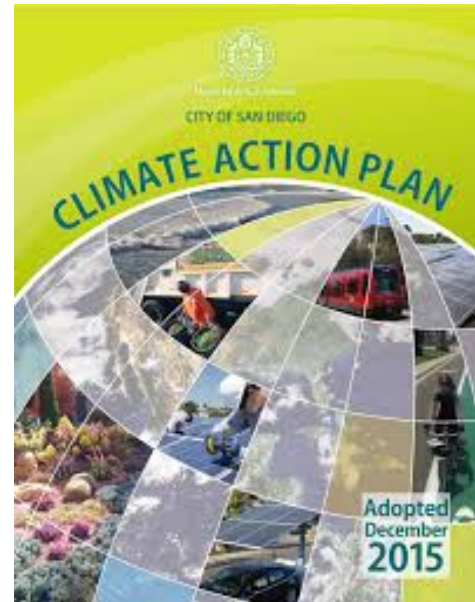
While the City has been nationally and locally recognized for its CAP, plans are only as good as their implementation, and the City has fallen behind on some of its CAP actions. We found that the City can strengthen its CAP implementation by improving oversight mechanisms for accountability, coordination, and fiscal planning.

Finding 1: The City can strengthen its oversight mechanisms to ensure City departments stay on track to implement CAP actions, and can better inform key decisionmakers of implementation progress.

- The Sustainability Department does not currently have authority or mechanisms to hold departments accountable for CAP implementation and may require additional staffing to effectively carry out its duties.
- CAP-related City departments are not required to have formally assigned staff for CAP implementation and are not required to proactively plan for CAP implementation.
- The City Council does not have dedicated opportunities for holding departments and Sustainability accountable for CAP implementation.
- Sustainability Roundtable meetings can be used more effectively as a forum for additional coordination and collaboration between departments.

Finding 2: The City can improve its fiscal planning efforts for CAP implementation by developing a prioritization mechanism and estimating costs.

- Despite several attempts, the City has not yet developed a fiscal planning document to project the future costs of implementing the actions necessary to meet CAP targets.
- CAP implementation cost estimates would need to be based on implementation plans, but these plans do not currently exist.



Source: https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/final_july_2016_cap.pdf

What OCA recommends

We make six recommendations to improve the City's CAP implementation. The City Administration and Sustainability Department agreed to implement all six recommendations.

Key recommendation elements include:

- Requiring CAP-related City departments to annually provide CAP workplans to the Sustainability department for review and approval;
- Strengthening opportunities for collaboration among City departments;
- Better informing the public and City Council on CAP implementation plans and progress;
- Developing a rating system of CAP measures to help inform prioritization; and
- Developing a CAP implementation plan, including an estimate of associated costs, information on funding sources, and identification of funding gaps.

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