

Climate Change in the SJC Comprehensive Plan

Sophia Cassam, DCD, Planner I

Planning Commission: February 19, 2021



Overview

- Climate Change
- Background
- Review Elements
- Other Counties
- Public Comments
- Staff Conclusion

Climate Change

- Caused by human-generated greenhouse gas emissions
- Wetter winters and drier summers in the Pacific Northwest
- Increases risks for: wildfires, flooding events, landslides, and other disasters
- Impacts across the board

Mitigation: reducing climate change

Resilience: adapting to climate change

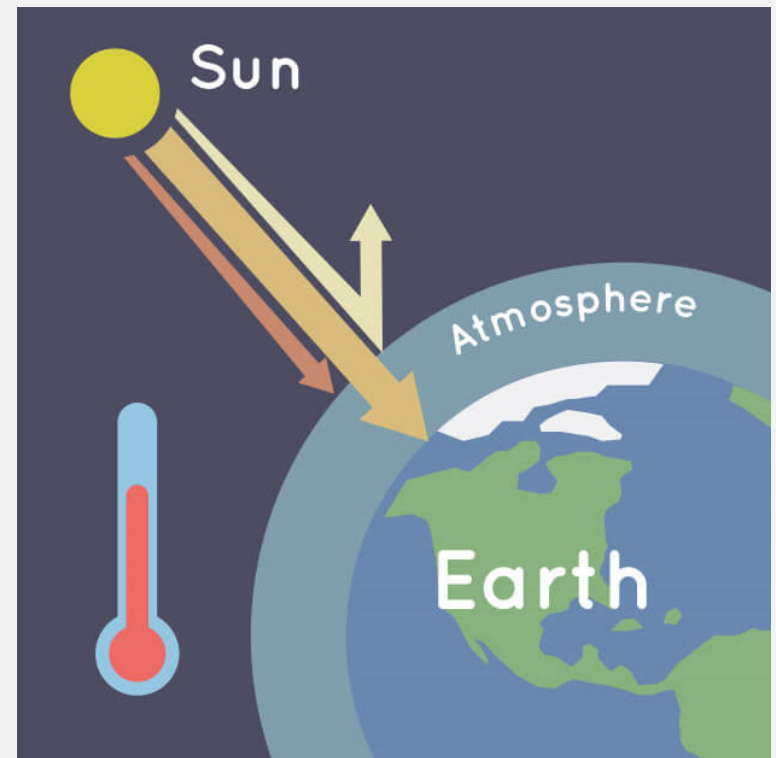


Image: NASA/JPL-Caltech

San Juan County's Response

- New climate change statement in 2018 updated Vision
- Climate change incorporated into draft *Plan* elements
- Other County documents and actions respond to climate change

Related Issues

- Climate change is interconnected with many issues in the *Plan*
- Goals and policies directly addressing climate change and greenhouse gas emissions are *one part* of the County's climate response in the *Plan*
- Goals and policies for tangentially related issues also contribute

Review Elements

How is climate change addressed in the elements?

Review Elements

How is climate change addressed in the elements?

Where could climate change goals and policies be improved?

Review Elements

How is climate change addressed in the elements?

Where could climate change goals and policies be improved?

Is the incorporation of climate change into the elements effective? Should this information be consolidated?

Section A: Introduction and Vision

- Explains how the *Plan* works, introduces SJC, includes the Vision
- Climate Resiliency listed as one of the five key challenges in the *Plan*
- Vision update included a new climate change section
- Goals and policies in elements stem from climate change vision

E1: Governance

- Establishes SJC government's commitment to serving taxpayers
- No climate change goals or policies in current draft
- A policy could be added about prioritizing climate mitigation and resilience in decision-making.

E2: Land Use

- **A topic where the County has the most authority to establish impactful regulations**
- **New section to Land Use Element Section 2.2 General Goals and Policies could be added**
- **Staff will provide draft goals and policies for an upcoming work session**

E3: Shoreline Master Program

- **Not part of this Comprehensive Plan update. No changes recommended at this time.**
- **No direct climate change goals or policies.**
- **Contains goals and policies for climate change-related issues**

E4: Water Resources

- No direct climate change goals or policies
- Contains goals and policies for climate change-related issues
- A policy could be added, connecting climate change to the issues already addressed in the draft

E5: Housing

- A significant portion of all development is residential
- Contains 1 goal with 4 policies addressing climate change
 - Selecting building sites with lower risk of climate impacts
 - Working with groups/developers who use sustainable practices
 - Providing builders with information on alternative building materials
 - Energy for housing

E6: Transportation

- Several goals and policies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and siting infrastructure
- Supports Washington State Ferries' plan to reduce carbon footprint
- PTNA-NM supports climate change mitigation effort

E7: Capital Facilities

- Contains policies about reducing County's carbon footprint
- Most services are not provided by SJC, but receive some County funding
- Goals and policies can *encourage* service providers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and consider climate resiliency

E8: Utilities

- Electricity, communications, and propane
- Contains goals and policies promoting renewable energy, energy independence, and energy efficiency
- Aims to minimize barriers for locally produced renewable energy, while protecting the character of the Islands

E9: Historical/Archaeological Preservation

- Does not contain goals or policies for climate resiliency or for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

E10: Economic Development

- **Goals and policies about economic resilience to climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in various economic sectors**
- **Climate change-related topics such as supporting local agriculture and preparing for natural disasters**

Other Local Counties' Responses

Different approaches

- **Jefferson County**
 - Incorporates climate response throughout plan
- **Whatcom County**
 - Consolidates response in one element
- **Snohomish County**
 - Focuses on climate change in one element, and includes some Transportation goals and policies for climate change

Public Comments

Staff Conclusion

- Incorporating climate change into the elements effectively addresses the issue
- Climate change affects everything
- Good strategy for effective implementation
- Improve elements by adding new goals and policies for climate change

Discussion

- Where can climate change goals and policies be improved?
- Is the incorporation of climate change into the elements effective? Should this information be consolidated?