

Moving This Plan Forward – Implementation Strategy

Implementing the CAAP requires motivating staff, finding funding for strategies, involving community members to make key changes, and sustaining momentum. Columbia has already taken steps to improve community sustainability. The following implementation strategies build on those efforts to ensure the climate action and adaptation strategies are completed. This section of the plan includes:

- A **timeline** for taking action, including projects that could be started tomorrow as well as transformations that will happen over the long term.
- A plan for **sustaining community, government, and stakeholder buy-in**. Making progress on climate action requires leadership and commitment from the city government and from the community. Community engagement has been a vital part of the CAAP development process and sustained community support is going to be equally important moving forward.
- A **structure for ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and reporting** on CAAP progress. Investing in data collection and consistent reporting is a key aspect of implementation. City staff will track and regularly report on CAAP indicators, greenhouse gas emissions, and notable progress on implementing strategies. Evaluation of progress will include revisiting project priorities based on new information regarding action need, effectiveness, feasibility, and cost.

Timeline for Implementation

Climate actions build on each other and all require community, staff, and elected officials' support. A specific overview of Year 1 implementation is outlined below, followed by a broader priority action list for initial implementation. Implementation details for all priority strategies and actions in the plan are provided in Appendix A (to be released with the final plan).

Year 1 Implementation Overview

The initial focus will be on forming the foundation for ongoing action by creating institutional accountability and maintaining public support. Year 1 actions include:

- Create **Citizen Climate Commission** to advise staff on the implementation of the CAAP.
- Ensure the critical functions of the plan are adequately staffed and supported.
- Identify opportunities for and barriers to the **equitable implementation** of CAAP strategies.
- Form an internal **CAAP Action Group** with representatives from across City departments tasked with short and medium range planning of CAAP implementation activities.
- Create a **data management and reporting system** for key performance indicators of activities related to CAAP goals.
- Include a report in the **City Manager's proposed budget** on the existing and proposed projects that improve mitigation and adaptation efforts.
- Develop specific **funding options** for CAAP priorities.

Priority Early Actions

The following actions would be prioritized early in CAAP implementation to set the city up for success in achieving long-term goals:

- **Set a “clean fuel” foundation for realizing early wins.** Behavior change is hard and takes time to achieve. Efforts to change our community driving habits, car purchasing decisions, and home and business energy consumption requires careful planning, time-intensive policy development, and resource-intensive programming—often with unknown outcomes. Given this uncertainty and sometimes slow-developing results, focusing on establishing a clean, affordable and renewable electricity source as a first phase of CAAP implementation directly addresses over 60% of our total community emissions. Achieving 100% renewable electricity will leverage the impact of actions requiring a shift from fossil fuels to electricity (e.g., gasoline to electric vehicles), making them more impactful and attractive. This approach also builds on the existing renewable energy goals of our municipal electricity utility, Water & Light. Furthermore, pathways toward achieving 100% renewable electricity such as community solar and renewable energy credits (RECs) are well-established approaches and could be emulated from other utilities across the country. Prioritizing these clean fuel actions will provide an important and viable early success for the CAAP that can help energize the community and facilitate achievement of the City’s near-term emission reduction goals. However, this initial focus does not mean that the City should not start on other infrastructure or behavior change actions in the plan as well—a balanced, mixed portfolio of actions will be important for successful, comprehensive plan implementation.
- **Focus early policy and programming on fuel switching.** With a 100% renewable electricity pathway identified and underway, we can begin shifting focus to fuel switching. Specifically prioritizing a transition of our residential and business energy use in transportation and buildings from fossil fuels to renewably generated electricity. This includes actions to transition fuels used for space and water heating in buildings to renewable electricity as well as requiring or encouraging electric passenger vehicle adoption. We see this path as a viable option for Columbia, as the current high dependency on single-occupancy vehicles is unlikely to change dramatically in the near-term—and purchasing decisions made now will have lasting impacts. For example, the average U.S. household replaces vehicles only every 10 years, so actions taken now may not realize their full potential until 2030 at the earliest. Continued improvements to our existing transit, biking and walking infrastructure will also be a key element in reducing our transportation emissions. Reducing reliance on fossil fuels also brings economic, public health, and resilience benefits, as consumers are no longer subject to price fluctuations in natural gas and petroleum markets, and local air pollution from internal combustion engines is eliminated.
- **Affordable density.** Actions to prepare for and increase density bring a host of benefits to a community. When people live closer together, the average size of living and work space declines, heating and cooling costs go down, the need for individual vehicles is reduced, and travel distances decline. Increasing density would also require new construction in Columbia—presenting an opportunity to incorporate energy efficient technologies from the start. Dense communities can create other opportunities for climate mitigation and adaptation, such as eco-districts, avoided development of important natural areas and habitats, and increased social cohesion and resilience. It will be important to create density in a manner that does not conflict with other adaptation and equity goals, however; for example, optimizing green space and tree canopy cover to provide carbon sequestration, shade, and habitat.

Sustaining Community Support

Throughout the CAAP development process, **public input** has been essential to informing CAAP priorities. Moving forward, individual actions will be necessary to meet City emission reduction targets. The City will continue to foster conversations on climate change and climate leadership through public engagement by partnering with existing community groups, neighborhoods, and business groups in climate action. In addition to informing CAAP priorities, public input throughout the CAAP development has also fostered numerous education programs and outreach ideas that will be developed and promoted as the plan is implemented. These ideas range from public service campaigns around the importance of properly inflated tires for vehicle efficiency to including greenhouse gas emissions information on utility bills.

To formally maintain public participation in CAAP implementation, CAAP strategies include creating a **citizen climate commission**. This commission will advise staff, maintain community engagement, and provide accountability.

Additionally, strengthening **City staff capacity** and knowledge will help maximize the speed and impact of CAAP implementation. Internal staff development can include workshops on climate change, support for strategy implementation, and development of CAAP planning metrics.

Monitoring and Evaluation

City staff will conduct ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on CAAP progress. This section outlines a high-level plan for these activities. Key aspects of monitoring and evaluation include:

- **Conducting annual greenhouse gas inventories** and report results to City Council. Greenhouse gas inventories inform progress towards meeting reduction targets and highlight areas that need additional action.
- **Establishing performance metrics and a tracking structure** for monitoring progress within City departments. Monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs) will help track progress on individual CAAP actions. A list of all KPIs will be provided in an appendix of the final plan.
- **Evaluating and reporting progress.** Reporting the status of CAAP implementation to City Council annually will ensure there is consistent progress. It is important to spread out actions over many years so that CAAP strategies can build on each other.
- **Adapting strategies and actions.** The results of the greenhouse gas monitoring and evaluation of actions using key performance indicators will be used to update the CAAP as necessary to meet CAAP goals.

What will be tracked?

Two primary elements of the CAAP will be monitored:

- **Action progress:** more qualitative descriptions of progress City is making toward implementation of actions in the plan.
- **Key performance indicators:** quantitative metrics that indicate progress towards higher-level goals and target outcomes of the plan.

Where will indicators be tracked and reported?

City staff will calculate and track all indicators. Key indicators will be publicly viewable on the online CAAP dashboard.

City staff will develop annual progress reports for City Council and the public. Progress reports will include a detailed appendix with all indicators and action-by-action progress.

Who will track indicators?

City staff will be responsible for calculating and reporting on indicators.

How often will CAAP indicators be updated?

The majority of indicators will be updated annually. Some indicators may be updated less frequently depending on how frequently new data are available.

What is the process for reviewing indicator progress?

The City will hold division-level meetings annually to identify goals, review progress, and identify course corrections and next steps. A dedicated group within the City—including Sustainability staff—will develop work plans from division-level outcomes.

How often will the CAAP be updated?

The CAAP, including targets and goals, will be updated every five years.

Cross-Cutting Strategies and Actions

Goal I-1. Establish climate action as a priority for the City Council and the community.

Strategy I-1.1: Include CAAP objectives in Council priorities.

I-1.1.1	Use recommendations in annual report to identify budgetary priorities that support implementation of the CAAP.
I-1.1.2	Identify State and Federal legislative issues that support the goals of the CAAP and enable its implementation.

Strategy 1.2: Utilize Citizen Climate Commission to support accountability, implementation, and awareness of the CAAP in the community.

I-1.2.1	Create Citizen Climate Commission to advise staff on the implementation of the CAAP. The Commission will represent the diversity of the community with relevant expertise, in the social, scientific, economic, and environmental components to CAAP strategies.
I-1.2.2	Advise staff in the preparation of annual CAAP progress report and recommendations for City Council.
I-1.2.3	Present annual CAAP progress report policy and budget priorities to City Council for acceptance.
I-1.2.4	Identify opportunities and barriers to equitable implementation of CAAP strategies.

Goal I-2. Establish CAAP goals as priorities in the activities of the City of Columbia as an organization.

Strategy I-2.1: Support integration of climate goals in all Divisions.

I-2.1.1	Hold biannual meetings with all Division Heads to highlight progress, plans and challenges related to projects with climate impacts.
I-2.1.2	Form a CAAP Action Group with representatives from across Departments tasked with short and medium range planning of CAAP implementation activities.
I-2.1.3	Develop a decision matrix to be used to integrate mitigation and adaptation priorities into City planning and standards (zoning, construction standards, CIP review). City departments will utilize forecasted model data (climate, health, population, economic, etc.) during these processes, where available.
I-2.1.4	Develop a process for requiring mitigation, adaptation and climate-equity impact assessments for all new policies and projects that meet threshold criteria, such as cost burden, vulnerability, or increase to net emissions.

Strategy I-2.2: Incorporate CAAP goals into the budget process.

I-2.2.1	Integrate annual CAAP report goals during the budget review process at the direction of the City Manager.
I-2.2.2	Include a report in the City Manager's proposed budget on the existing and proposed projects that improve mitigation and adaptation efforts.
I-2.2.3	Assessment of progress toward CAAP goals shall be included in the City Manager's annual performance review by the City Council.

Goal I-3. Strengthen City capacity to support community climate action.

Strategy I-3.1: Improve City staff capacity and knowledge of their role in meeting climate goals.	
I-3.1.1	Create a data management and reporting system for key performance indicators of activities related to CAAP goals.
I-3.1.2	Create and distribute an annual municipal adaptation and greenhouse gas emissions report to staff to be used in assessment of current and proposed activities.
I-3.1.3	Conduct annual GHG emissions inventories, including identification of improved processes for quantifying net carbon sequestration and solid waste emissions.
I-3.1.4	Continue to align performance measurements of CAAP actions with existing planning metrics.
I-3.1.5	Provide training and other capacity building opportunities to staff to facilitate creative, climate positive innovations in operations, project design, and implementation.
Strategy I-3.2: Support equitable climate action.	
I-3.2.1	Create a report that identifies the differential impact of climate change on neighborhoods and communities.
I-3.2.2	Develop and incorporate equity metrics in the evaluation of CAAP activities. This evaluation will be used as a criterion for the CAAP Action Group, Community Climate Commission, and budget team during review of program cost, viability, and success.
Strategy I-3.3: Develop community leadership capacity for and involvement in climate action.	
I-3.3.1	Align existing City educational and engagement programs with CAAP goals and programs. Provide additional support to education and outreach for the CAAP and its individual actions.
I-3.3.2	Engaging with community partners, identify unmet community needs, barriers, and opportunities to improve access to the green job economy for all community members.
I-3.3.3	Design and promote CAAP educational materials to ensure full engagement of community members by using methods that are accessible and relevant to all.
I-3.3.4	Develop CAAPtains to serve as ambassadors for the CAAP activities, especially youth.
Strategy I-3.4: Secure organizational and staff implementation capacity.	
I-3.4.1	Develop specific funding options for CAAP priorities.
I-3.4.2	Track cost savings associated with CAAP action across the City organization and allocate for use in supporting further mitigation and adaptation actions.
I-3.4.3	Evaluate staffing requirements to ensure successful CAAP implementation and allocate required resources.
Strategy I-3.5: Support CAAP progress through regular, transparent community reporting and education.	
I-3.5.1	Use online dashboard to report on the status of CAAP priority actions/KPIs (e.g., progress of actions that have been initiated, implementation schedule of other actions not yet started, community and municipal greenhouse gas emissions, equity impacts of actions implemented).
I-3.5.2	Host a community event every two years to celebrate annual progress report on the implementation of the CAAP.