

**From:** Warren Wells <warren@marinbike.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 1:19 PM  
**To:** Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>  
**Subject:** Public Comment - 9/16/2024 Council Meeting - Item 7.a

Mayor Kate and Members of the City Council,

I am writing regarding the 2022 greenhouse gas emissions inventory and CAP priorities update.

As is becoming increasingly clear, the critical path for achieving necessary greenhouse gas reduction at a municipal level is by addressing the transportation sector. Between this inventory and the last one conducted (the period between 2016 and 2022), the transportation sector crept up from 62% of the city's GHG emissions to 66%, fully two thirds. This is because, while other sectors have seen substantial declines over that time, transportation emissions remain stubbornly high. Since 2016, emissions from electricity have declined 87% while transportation sector emissions declined only 6%.

More alarmingly, despite the much-touted uptake of electric vehicles (which accounted for only one out of every 17 cars in the city in 2022), the transportation sector saw a mere 0.4% year-over-year decrease between 2021 and 2022. In order to hit the city's 2030 goals with this rate of decline, the city would need to completely zero out emissions from the electricity, waste, water, wastewater, and off-road sectors, *and* achieve a 50% decline in natural gas emissions (a sector where emissions are effectively flat since 2014).

It is clear that the rate of decline for the transportation sector must increase substantially. We worry that the city's [current climate action plan](#), which stated that 83% of transportation emissions reductions would happen due to vehicle electrification, is not leading the city to its desired goals. Even the California Air Resources Board ([linked here](#) in section 2.1 "Zero-emission vehicles are not enough to solve the climate crisis") has made clear that overall VMT must decrease to achieve state GHG goals, but the CAP shows walking, bicycling, and transit to be little more than rounding errors in a path toward decarbonization.

In 2021, the city took the admirable step of declaring a climate emergency. We agree in principle, but strongly urge faster action to help people reduce their personal VMT. What share of short driving trips are taken by people who might otherwise walk or ride a bike (electric or otherwise)? With the Mahon Creek Path closed to walking and bicycling traffic, what steps have been taken to ensure that children commuting to school are safe on alternative routes? The 2nd St and Grand Avenue bikeways are excellent examples of protected infrastructure, they both took multiple years to complete. Where might pop-up

bikeways that would take far less investment (but might remove some parking spaces) make a difference?

These are the questions that we urge San Rafael to consider when addressing its single biggest source of GHG emissions. We appreciate that the council and staff have many priorities, but wish to highlight the singular importance of this one.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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**Warren J. Wells, AICP**

Policy and Planning Director

Marin County Bicycle Coalition

cell: (415) 703.9898 | [marinbike.org](http://marinbike.org)

pronouns: he, him, his



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