



May 8, 2023

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San Rafael City Council  
1400 Fifth Avenue  
San Rafael, CA 94901

**RE: City Goals and Objectives 2003 to 2025**

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers,

Sustainable San Rafael welcomes the opportunity to share our thoughts on effective City goals and objectives for the next two years. Although all four of the policy focus areas that you have identified are of great importance, we will focus mainly on the 2-year goals presented by staff at last week's Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) implementation update.

Of greatest importance are the goals that lead to significant reductions of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are driving the climate crisis, and over which the City has considerable control:

- Electric Vehicle Strategy (goal 4). We look forward to San Rafael's approval of the EV Acceleration Strategy recently finalized by the Marin Climate and Energy Partnership, and your selection of implementation priorities from those recommended in the Plan. Rapid adoption of EVs can cut our GHG footprint over 60%.
- Building Electrification (goal 5). A further 25% reduction of GHG can come from replacing methane with electrical appliances like heat pumps to heat our businesses and homes and provide hot water. We ask that this goal include the objective to "Work with the County and others to develop and implement an Existing Building Electrification Plan." The County is scheduled to complete this Plan during FY2023-34.
- Mandatory Organics Recycling (goal 2). Another 5% of GHG emissions can be addressed by continuing strong implementation of SB1383 to reduce landfill methane. We are especially pleased to see the objective to "Identify opportunities for organic waste diversion that also sequesters carbon"

In addition to these core GHG reduction measures, other draft CCAP goals that we urge you to adopt include continued work to increase Climate Preparedness (goals 8 and 9) and achieve an Equitable Low-Carbon Economy (goal 6), together with innovative new initiatives like the Citywide Integration of

climate action through all departments (goal 1), exploring a Climate Financing District (goal 3), and weighing in on State Legislation that could help or hinder the City's sustainability, climate change, and preparedness goals (goal 10).

Sustainable San Rafael also has been pleased to work with the Department of Public Works and local conservation and community leaders for several years to advance the General Plan's urban forestry policies and update the City's Street Tree Ordinance. Following an investment of over five years of staff, legal consultant, and community effort, we look forward to your adoption of the revised Street Tree Ordinance in the current fiscal year, as promised last year.

We urge the Council to continue moving forward this coming year with implementation of key remaining portions of the General Plan urban forestry policies, specifically a Street Tree Inventory (Community Design and Preservation Program CDP-3.5B), Street Tree Master Plan (Program CDP-3.5A), and Tree Preservation regulations (Conservation and Climate Change Element Program C-1.17A).

We also request that you integrate this work with the General Plan's other urban forestry policies to protect, maintain and expand San Rafael's tree canopy. By implementing these General Plan policies together as a coherent whole, we can achieve a comprehensive tree plan for San Rafael in a coordinated and cost-effective manner.

Climate change makes this work urgent, given the significant role that trees play in sequestering the greenhouse gases that cause climate change and in cooling our community during intensifying heat events.

We urge you to include these important sustainability and urban forestry measures in your goals and objectives for the next two years. Thank you.

Sincerely,

William Carney,  
President