

Berkeley Climate Action Plan: Summary of Comments on the 2nd Draft

Revised 2/19/09

Below is a *summary* of comments received on Berkeley's draft Climate Action Plan (CAP). The public comment period ran from September 18, 2008 – January 16, 2009. Comments were submitted through a variety of means, including:

- On-line at www.BerkeleyClimateAction.org
- Public workshops hosted by City Commissions, Council Members and the Office of Energy & Sustainable Development
- Community meetings hosted by organizations such as the Sierra Club and TransForm's Safe Routes to School program
- By email, post and hand-delivery

Every comment received is reviewed and analyzed by City staff for potential inclusion in the Climate Action Plan. The comments are analyzed according to specific criteria, including:

- Impact on local greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- Creation of co-benefits, such as those related to public health
- Potential to create local, green jobs
- Costs associated with development and implementation of a given solution
- Funding availability and staff capacity

Frequent Comments from Community Members

- Need more frequent and reliable bus service
- Need to address pedestrian and cyclist safety
- Move forward with implementing Community Choice Energy
- Berkeley FIRST is excellent, but needs to be extended to include energy efficiency and solar thermal
- The high up front cost of energy upgrades is a major barrier
- Lively discussion both for and against "smart growth"

Building Energy & Water Use

- Plan should do more to highlight relationship between water and energy use
- Make it easier to install a grey water system in Berkeley
- Include recommendation regarding white/reflective roofs
- Assist residents to do bulk purchases of energy efficient windows
- Help local food markets compete by assisting them to increase energy efficiency
- Increase Residential Energy Conservation Ordinance (RECO) spending cap
- Adaptive reuse of buildings should be emphasized in the plan
- Need to protect solar access as density increases
- Rebate homeowners through property tax for "green" remodels
- Provide green retrofit rebates (similar to seismic rebates)
- Make energy and water more expensive in order to reduce demand
- Engage the Rent Board regarding issues of energy use in multi-family buildings
- Make government buildings more energy efficient
- Prioritize the implementation of Community Choice Energy over partnering with PG&E to generate and purchase new sources of renewable energy
- Make energy savings programs performance-based
- Seek ways to enable residents to "pool" renewable energy purchases such as solar
- Consider the lifecycle impact and toxic materials associated with solar panels
- Consider the potential for combined heat and power systems in Berkeley

- More consideration should be given to wind power
- Emphasize that commercial energy use has larger impact than residential
- Establish mandatory green building standards for new construction

Transportation & Land Use

General comments on transportation & land use chapter

- Encourage UC students and staff to take alternative transportation
- Suggested vision for the chapter: “Berkeley is a walking, transit, and cycling city with high quality, accessible open spaces, economic vitality, pedestrian streets, and livable neighborhoods.”
- Consider setting targets for mode share until better vehicle miles traveled (VMT) data becomes available
- Clarify difference between “disincentives to driving” and “revenue building actions”
- Specify role of large businesses in reducing VMT
- Ensure that the CAP is consistent with and supportive of state-level legislation, e.g., SB 375 and AB 32

Transit

- Emphasize importance of transit being “safe, reliable, and frequent”
- Include discussion of shuttles in bus-related narrative and goals
- Work with AC Transit to evaluate transit improvements throughout Berkeley
- Emphasize need to collaborate with AC Transit
- Fund EcoPass program and fare-free zones through increased parking rates. These programs could include free bus pass for all residents, bus passes for all new residential development or EcoPass for all who work in Berkeley
- Lobby state for maximum funding of transit agencies
- Institute Downtown EcoPass. Use Vista Mitigation funds for start up costs
- Push the school district to do an Eco Pass
- Implement a special tax for residents to get a Citywide bus pass
- Eco Pass should be moved to short term implementation and connected to a funding source
- Address the relative efficiency of public transit vs. highly efficient personal vehicles
- Launch a website that enables individuals to locate public transit with their cell phone
- Need more integration of transit systems, easy transfers between them
- Provide shopper shuttle connecting downtown and other nodes with residential neighborhoods
- Provide discounts for seniors and students for public transit
- Work with UC and other employers to institute CommuterCheck program
- Create online forum for real-time car sharing
- Ensure that all public transit include “universal access boarding” for the disabled
- Ensure that transit in the hills is oriented to the foot paths
- Consider private “jitney services” for the hills
- Emphasize the fact that transit service is the only mobility option many residents have
- Expedite the process to create a regional transit pass system
- Move forward with process for considering Bus Rapid Transit
- Be cognizant of the fact that bus shelters are targets for graffiti
- Revise BRT language to include additional policy-level narrative regarding its potential role as a transit mode
- Launch an integrated shuttle bus network, with specific emphasis on a free shopper shuttle between commercial nodes
- Create dedicated lanes for buses

- Address congestion in bus lanes by creating “queue-jump” lanes
- Integrate any future ferry system into other modes in order to avoid driving
- Remove any recommendations regarding ferries

Land use/Built environment/Matching jobs with housing

- Address jobs/housing balance by matching jobs w/ residents
- Recommend a “hire local” program/first source program
- More smart growth is good because it reduces driving
- More smart growth is bad because of potential impacts on neighborhood character
- Encourage shared housing in transit-oriented areas
- Ensure that increased density near BART takes neighborhood character into account
- Ensure that changes in zoning are designed to maintain local jobs
- Allocate more capacity to Office of Economic Development in order to help draw more local commercial/retail establishments and mixed-use development
- Include specific recommendations regarding the amount of residential/commercial units that could be added in various parts of the City of Berkeley
- Estimate costs associated with land use measures, and how cost savings would be utilized
- Provide data on availability of urban green space in Berkeley
- Create incentives for residents to maintain urban green space
- Establish and Open Space Plan for the City of Berkeley
- Decrease density along City nature corridors
- Absentee landlords should have some responsibility for creating planting strips in front of their property
- Emphasize the need for resident-oriented retail services in areas that are not well-served by transit, including the hills
- Emphasize preservation and the renovation/reuse of existing structures in as a climate protection strategy
- Enhance the quantitative argument for asserting that smart growth is a GHG reduction strategy
- The “smart growth” envisioned in the plan must be “green growth.” Any attempt to increase density should be coupled with promoting and preserving green elements
- Provide more open and green space within City limits
- Connect urban trails with regional parks
- The section of the CAP that focuses on land use is misguided. Berkeley’s population will not increase. New housing should not be built
- Ensure that the report reflects a consistent definition of a “transit-rich” area
- Reconsider the CAP’s recommendation to review the impact of “down zoning” on GHG emissions
- Clarify recommendation regarding ensuring that denser commercial zones transition well into lower-density residential zones
- Clarify that sometimes, historic preservation is consistent with our GHG reduction goals, and sometimes it is not. It is dependent upon the building
- Clarify where minimum building heights should be instated
- City should aggressively attract neighborhood-serving small businesses
- Clarify where restrictions on accessory dwelling units should be loosened
- Clarify what enhanced assistance would be provided during the permit process to developers that are locating a given project near transit
- Clarify what types of new developments would be required to pay a potential “open space fee”
- Encourage better architecture that is attractive and requires less energy

- Utilize the City’s planning and permitting functions to promote strategies that are consistent with GHG reduction

Bike/Ped

- Complete bicycle blvd from Ohlone Greenway to Addison and Strawberry Creek Park
- Hire pedestrian planner, transit planner, and ped/bike engineer
- Update bicycle plan and increase resources for implementation
- Study and reduce obstacles automobile level of service standards create to implementing bike and pedestrian plans
- Introduce bicycle education classes in local schools
- Introduce bicycle vouchers valid at local bike shops to reduce barriers to bicycle ownership
- Use Milvia St. as a ‘model bicycle boulevard’
- Promote local development and manufacturing of bicycle trailers and other unique non-motorized forms of transportation
- Encourage Berkeley residents to walk to their destinations
- Create car-free routes for bicycles and skateboards, or physically separate bike lanes from car lanes
- Make intersections safe for pedestrians and cyclists, and minimize complete stops
- Subsidize and promote the use of bike racks, bags and trailers to promote shopping by bicycle
- Increase bike parking for larger bikes and bikes with trailers
- Increase bike parking for rental units and reduce development parking requirements
- Create and support bike repair services in Berkeley
- Close one lane of Hearst St. along Ohlone Park to car traffic
- Encourage bike taxis
- Reconsider the recommendation to replace stop signs with yield signs at traffic circles

Vehicle efficiency/Alternative fuels

- Consider providing charging stations for electric vehicles. This would be a particularly useful service to multi-family building dwellers
- Take steps to improve efficiency of taxi service. Emphasize taxis as a viable alternative, especially for hills residents
- Organize a “gasoline reduction pledge” as a means of encouraging residents to drive less
- Provide more support for electric vehicles through tax breaks, financing, free parking, etc.
- Support the use of Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEVs) by dedicating specific NEV routes and by waving solar permit fees for installations used to power NEVs
- Prohibit open-air parking, i.e., ensure that all parking is covered with solar generation potential

Parking

- Create “parking coordinating council”
- Create parking benefits districts
- Eliminate parking minimums and create parking maximum in Downtown
- Make parking requirements more flexible for projects built near BART stations
- Enable developers to pay in-lieu fees for on-site parking requirements
- Implement Parking Cash Out program: For employers that lease parking spaces in a given garage, they must offer equivalent value to all non-parking employees
- Eliminate free parking for City employees
- Raise the parking tax and use the revenue for transportation alternatives
- Limit number of residential parking permits allocated per household, or consider graduated pricing for permits

- Un-bundle housing and parking so each is paid for separately by tenants
- Increase parking fees in high use times
- Distinguish between “car-free” and “car-lite” housing
- Provide free parking for electric and CNG vehicles
- Eliminate parking requirements for development near BART
- Provide real-time parking signage downtown
- Do not apply Residential Parking Permits citywide

Revenue generating ideas for transportation programs

- Accelerate implementation of the Transportation Services Fee so it’s in place before economy recovers and development resumes
- Tax 2nd cars as a luxury item
- Use revenue from parking tickets to support alternative transportation
- Remove the recommendation for “congestion pricing”

Other transportation/land use comments

- Recommend non-carbon delivery system for grocery stores
- Need more driver education
- Address the school district system in Berkeley, which makes students travel further to get to school
- Improve traffic engineering to reduce traffic
- Reduce amount of 4-way stop intersections
- Improve traffic signal timing so as to reduce idling and improve driver experience
- Improve street design to encourage alternative modes

Food Systems

- Emphasize low-carbon food systems and City’s role in promoting them
- Add more specific strategies for reducing the emissions that result from food production, transport and storage
- Increase access to private and public land for food production through zoning changes and other initiatives
- Support development of local food distribution and processing facilities
- Support development of local food markets
- Encourage relevant institutions to develop methodologies for monitoring/measuring the nexus between food and GHG emissions

Waste Diversion

- Plan should have better documentation of how much waste we produce/recycle
- Frame transfer station as a “state of the art zero waste facility”
- Enable residents to have trash pick-up at longer intervals and reduce cost for those residents
- Ensure new buildings are designed to include space for recycling receptacles/systems
- Be more specific about funding sources for waste-related initiatives
- Include action to define transportation needs in W. Berkeley, specifically around transfer station
- Need more staff capacity to enforce Construction & Demolition (C&D) debris ordinance
- Create a fee for service industry to provide C&D receptacles and services on site
- Ban plastic bags
- City should eliminate any plastic bottled water contracts
- Need recycling containers w/ lids, more public recycling containers around town
- Make recycling mandatory in multi-family buildings
- Acknowledge City’s lagging diversion efforts

- Estimate tons of waste diverted by each waste-related measures
- Provide incentives for companies that take responsibility for the lifecycle of their products

Green Jobs

- Place more emphasis on relationship between climate strategies and green jobs

Outreach

- Engage KPFA
- Place more emphasis on the “Low Carbon Diet” program as an outreach mechanism
- Mail Executive Summary of CAP to all residents
- Utilize public access channel for climate education
- City should create staff position in order to provide sustained, integrated environmental services and education to Berkeley businesses
- Create a citywide campaign to increase cycling
- Provide outreach and education resources to agencies throughout the community
- Seek to partner with existing neighborhood CERT teams to engage community in climate protection efforts
- Make Green Business Program certification quicker

Trees and Bio-Diversity

- Plan should place more emphasis on trees as a GHG reduction measure
- Consider doing more outreach about the City’s urban forestry program to residents
- Create developer fees that are dedicated to tree planting
- Recommend a tree ordinance
- Suggest strategies for funding additional tree planting
- Plan should make preservation of bio-diversity an explicit priority
- City should do more to promote tree planting and tree health
- Promote local gardens
- Use permeable pavement

GHG Inventory

- Disaggregate Berkeley’s GHG inventory to show the relative impact of different building types
- Site the amount of “commuter-miles” outside Berkeley that Berkeley residents are responsible for

City Government

- City government leadership is an important policy tool for the community
- City should communicate a GHG inventory for its own facilities and factor GHG emissions into its decision making
- City should encourage LBNL to develop a similar CAP and pursue efforts to partner with both UC Berkeley and LBNL in being climate leaders
- Institute a policy that prioritizes local sourcing of products procured by City

Plan Implementation

- Aggressive green programs should be accompanied by fees that support those programs
- Accelerate implementation of the plan. Action is urgent.
- Institute a program for reporting/tracking implementation of the CAP
- The CAP should be a guiding City policy document to which other related policies conform

Health

- The CAP should recommend a specific health-related analysis of the strategies outlined in the plan
- Give preference to strategies that have health-related “co-benefits,” including a reduction in local air pollution

General

- Address how the current economic downturn affects Berkeley’s climate protection efforts
- Seek opportunities to partner with UC Berkeley in developing and implementation climate protection strategies
- Strengthen the Executive Summary so as to make it a community engagement document. Highlight things individuals can do.
- Acknowledge state regulatory framework that may affect local government action
- Too many City government requirements cause needless auto trips and wasted paper
- Use carrots rather than sticks, i.e., voluntary programs are better than regulations
- Provide a shorter executive summary and shorten the entire report by placing technical information into appendices
- Use larger text and less technical jargon
- Do more to explicitly recognize the social realities and barriers that affect people’s ability to take a given action and ensure that solutions are sensitive to low income concerns
- Emphasize the fact that vulnerable populations within our community are likely to suffer a greater impact from climate change
- Include a more detailed implementation budget
- Emphasize the role of youth in taking action on climate change
- Ensure that Berkeley works in coordination with other cities, on a regional basis, to address climate change
- Clearly indicate who (or what Dept) prepared the Climate Action Plan report
- Include residents of UC-owned housing in per capita GHG emission calculations
- Clarify the purpose of the East Bay Green Corridor, and strengthen its mandate
- Update the Berkeley Climate Action Plan every 2 years
- Do more to educate the public regarding peak oil issues