



Racial Equity Analysis for Significant Board Items

Board Item Date	8/13/2024
Board Item Name	Sonoma County Climate Resilience Comprehensive Action Plan
Department/Agency (Lead)	Climate Action and Resiliency Division (CARD)
<i>If this is an inter-departmental initiative, please identify a lead above.</i>	
Person(s) Completing Analysis	Climate Action and Resiliency Division (CARD)

1. Overview: Describe your program or policy and the desired results and outcomes?

- a. What is the program or policy decision under consideration?
- b. What are the desired results (in the **community**) and outcomes (within your own **organization**)?
- c. What does this proposal have an ability to impact?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children and youth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community engagement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contracting equity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Criminal justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jobs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parks and recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning / development
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food access and affordability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government practices	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workforce equity
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other _Climate Change – The Action Plan directly implicates and addresses a series of plans, policies, and standards countywide to create climate resilience.	

A)

In March of 2021, the County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors adopted a 5-Year Strategic Plan, which includes a Climate Action and Resiliency Pillar. This pillar has an overarching goal to “Make Sonoma County carbon neutral, climate resilient, and zero waste by 2030” and contains five specific goals, as follows:

Goal 1: Continue to invest in wildfire preparedness and resiliency strategies.

Goal 2: Invest in the community to enhance resiliency and become carbon neutral by 2030.

Goal 3: Make all County of Sonoma facilities carbon free, zero waste, and resilient.

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Goal 4: Maximize sustainability and emissions reductions in all County of Sonoma fleet vehicles.

Goal 5: Maximize opportunities for mitigation of climate change and adaptation from land conservation work and land use policies.

The County of Sonoma is developing the Climate Resilience Comprehensive Action Plan (Action Plan) to identify specific actions the County can take, in collaboration with cities and communities, to achieve these goals. The Action Plan identifies Early Actions endorsed and funded by the Board to make progress towards the Climate Action and Resiliency goals. It proposes County Operations measures that will help the County of Sonoma become zero waste, carbon neutral, and climate resilient by 2030. The Action Plan also describes potential Community Progress measures through which the County could support actions in Sonoma County communities to become carbon neutral, reduce waste, and increase climate resilience; more importantly, the Action Plan proposes a year of equity-centered engagement with communities to refine and prioritize Community Progress measures that best align with communities' priorities, barriers, and opportunities to becoming climate resilient. All of the measures in the Action Plan are organized in sectors: Energy, Transportation, Waste, Water, Wildfire, and Natural & Working Lands. The Action Plan also lays out timeframes for implementation as Near-Term (2024 to 2026), Mid-Term (2026 to 2030), and Longer-Term (2030 and beyond). In addition, the Action Plan includes a detailed proposal for Community Engagement, a Cost-Benefit Analysis, and a Funding and Financing Strategy. When the Board considers the proposed Action Plan, staff will request the Board approve the County Operations measures and the proposed equity-centered Community Engagement Strategy to refine and prioritize potential Community Progress measures. Staff will begin implementing the Near-Term measures in collaboration with department and agency partners, and will identify trusted community partners for community engagement.

This Racial Equity Analysis was developed to inform the Board's consideration of the proposed Action Plan. This analysis considers input from community engagement for the Action Plan including surveys, tabling multiple events, focus group conversations, and community organization and member interviews, as well as a Climate Town Hall and two workshops with the Board of Supervisors. This engagement continued until May 2024. Staff also reviewed community input on climate resilience issues in other forums, including where engagement informed recommendations in related studies, plans, and strategies; this is especially true where proposed Action Plan measures reflect priority recommendations in those documents. The Action Plan measures incorporate the community input and findings from Staff reviewed summaries of input from the 2021 Climate Action and Resiliency Town Hall, the 2021 Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, the 2022 Climate Resilient Lands Strategy, the 2023 Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and survey results to update the Safety Element of the General Plan, among others. While this Racial Equity Analysis does not discuss community engagement findings from those forums in detail, specific elements are mentioned where particularly relevant.

B)

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The intended results and outcomes of the proposal, consistent with the five Climate Action and Resiliency goals in the Strategic Plan, are to develop a comprehensive set of actions that will lead the County of Sonoma to carbon neutral, zero waste, and resilient facilities and operations by 2030, and prioritized actions the County could take to best support communities to become carbon neutral – with a focus on communities in the unincorporated areas, as well as climate justice communities. The Action Plan will (1) establish steps to make County operations carbon neutral, zero waste, and resilient; (2) ensure community priorities guide County actions to support community progress towards climate resilience, and (3) will ultimately provide a guide for the County of Sonoma to increase resiliency to climate change and reduce climate impacts in communities across Sonoma County.

As described above, Climate Action and Resiliency Division (CARD) conducted outreach surveys, town halls, Board workshops, focus group conversations, and interviews to incorporate community needs and feedback into the proposal. Outreach efforts are summarized in Appendix 1, and data has been summarized to answer questions in the steps below.

2. Data: What's the data? What does the data tell us?

- a. Will the proposal have impacts in specific geographic areas (neighborhoods, areas, or regions)? What are the racial demographics of those living in the area?
- b. What does population level data, including quantitative and qualitative data, tell you about existing racial inequities? What does it tell you about root causes or factors influencing racial inequities?
- c. What performance level data do you have available for your proposal? This should include data associated with existing programs or policies.
- d. Are there data gaps? What additional data would be helpful in analyzing the proposal? If so, how can you obtain better data?

A)

The Action Plan has an initial focus on County operations, but ultimately encompasses the broader geography and populations of Sonoma County, with an emphasis on unincorporated, environmental justice, and climate justice communities. At the same time, individual measures may primarily affect specific geographical areas. For example, some of the Early Action Measures are demonstration projects in specific locations, such as Andy's Unity Park in Southwest Santa Rosa. County Operations Measures are focused on County-owned facilities, lands, and municipal activities. The Community Engagement Strategy embraces all communities, but has a particular focus on climate justice, environmental justice, and unincorporated communities. The ultimate Community Progress measures will reflect the priorities of different communities but should benefit all communities, with an emphasis on supporting a just transition to a climate resilient future in Sonoma County.

Climate change impacts experienced are different based on a number of factors that include race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, employment status, identity, language, and geographic location. Geographic location includes proximity to potential inundation and flooding hazards such as lakes, rivers, streams, and other areas of inundation and flooding, as well oceans, which will experience sea level rise and, in the case of seismic events, tsunamis. Additionally,

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geographic location includes proximity to relief from extreme temperatures, such as areas with sufficient heating and air conditioning, areas with heating and cooling centers, and areas with adequate shade/canopy cover. Proximity to drought-prone areas is also encompassed in geographic location, as groundwater-dependent areas of Sonoma County, as well as areas with high agricultural water use, may experience higher severity water shortages. Another dimension of geographic location includes geographic isolation, which could mean a lack of timely information being communicated or received in relation to potential, impending, or active disasters. In this case, geographic isolation means a lack of broadband access and/or adequate warning systems, lack of adequate or proximal evacuation areas or centers, and/or the inability of first responders to access people in danger and/or reach people once a disaster has occurred. Geographic location also includes proximity to high wildfire risk areas, particularly areas of dense vegetation and areas where homes have minimal defensible space. Geographic location also includes the proximity of populations to areas of pollution and/or toxins, such as gas stations, drycleaners, and facilities with on-site diesel generators or gasoline storage (hospitals, municipal facilities, wineries, some telecom sites).

Moreover, communities and populations within Sonoma County will experience the impacts of climate change differently; these communities include climate justice and frontline communities. Climate justice populations and frontline communities generally refer to those who will experience the most immediate and severe impacts of climate change, such as infants, children, people who have illnesses, older adults, the unhoused, communities of color, Indigenous/Native American populations, agricultural workers, and people in low-income communities.

According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map (CAL FIRE 2023), the eastern and northern portions of Sonoma County experience very high fire hazard severity. Specifically, the communities of Cloverdale, Geyserville, Healdsburg, Glen Ellen, Sonoma, Kenwood, and Santa Rosa are in or very proximate to very high fire hazard areas (Figure 1, State Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones). Sonoma County has experienced several severe fires in recent history, and the majority of community members interviewed, surveyed, and engaged at events, cited their specific experiences in these fires and indicated they had higher awareness of climate impacts and its relationship to fires, particularly since the 2017 Tubbs Fire. Further, tabled events indicated that addressing wildfire hazards in Sonoma County was a top priority for community members. In total, more than half of Sonoma County is rated moderate or high fire risk, according to the 2017 Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. The racial and socioeconomic demographics of these areas are as follows:

In the Cloverdale-Geyserville Census County Division (CCD) (U.S. Census Bureau 2024a), 56.6% of the population is White, non-Hispanic/Latino. Approximately 35.9% of Cloverdale-Geyserville CCD residents identify as Hispanic/Latino (any race). In this CCD, 2.5% of the population identifies as American Indian/Alaskan Native, 1.1% identifies as Asian, 0.2% identifies as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 0.7% identifies as Black or African American. Approximately 19% of the population identifies as Some Other Race, and 15.9% identifies as Two or More Races. In this area, 72.3% of people speak only English in the home (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

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In the Sonoma CCD, 62.9% of the population is White, non-Hispanic/Latino. Approximately 29.4% of Sonoma CCD residents identify as Hispanic/Latino (any race) (U.S. Census Bureau 2024b). In this CCD, 1.1% of the population identifies as American Indian/Alaskan Native, 2.4% identifies as Asian, 0.2% identifies as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 0.6% identifies as Black or African American. Approximately 15.2% of the population identifies as Some Other Race, and 13.8% identifies as Two or More Races. In this area, 75.1% of people speak only English in the home (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

In the Santa Rosa CCD, 51.6% of the population is White, non-Hispanic/Latino. Approximately 34.3% of Santa Rosa CCD residents identify as Hispanic/Latino (any race). In this CCD, 2.3% of the population identifies as American Indian/Alaskan Native, 5.7% identifies as Asian, 0.5% identifies as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 2.1% identifies as Black or African American. Approximately 19.1% of the population identifies as Some Other Race, and 13.9% identifies as Two or More Races. In this area, 67% of people speak only English in the home (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency National Risk Index, riverine flooding is very high risk in various areas of Sonoma County, particularly in the census tracts on the Sonoma County perimeter (FEMA 2024). Specifically, there are very-high-risk census tracts in/near Petaluma, Penngrove, and Guerneville (Figure 2, FEMA National Risk Index, Riverine Flooding). The racial and socioeconomic demographics of these specific very-high-risk communities are as follows:

In the Penngrove Census Designated Place (CDP), 62.9% of the population is White, non-Hispanic/Latino. Approximately 16.7% of Penngrove CDP residents identify as Hispanic/Latino (any race). In this CDP, 1.4% of the population identifies as American Indian/Alaskan Native, 2.4% identifies as Asian, 0.5% identifies as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 0.8% identifies as Black or African American. Approximately 8.5% of the population identifies as Some Other Race, and 10.8% identifies as Two or More Races. In this area, 82% of people speak only English in the home (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

In the Guerneville CDP, 73.2% of the population is White, non-Hispanic/Latino. Approximately 15.9% of Guerneville CDP residents identify as Hispanic/Latino (any race). In this CDP, 2.0% of the population identifies as American Indian/Alaskan Native, 1.1% identifies as Asian, less than 0.1% identifies as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 1.4% identifies as Black or African American. Approximately 5.6% of the population identifies as Some Other Race, and 12.7% identifies as Two or More Races. In this area, 91.2% of people speak only English in the home (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

In Petaluma, 64.5% of the population is White, non-Hispanic/Latino. Approximately 22.8% of the community identifies as Hispanic/Latino (any race). In this city, 1.2% of the population identifies as American Indian/Alaskan Native, 4.8% identifies as Asian, 0.3% identifies as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 1.4% identifies as Black or African American. Approximately 10.9% of the population identifies as Some Other Race, and 14% identifies as

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Two or More Races. In this area, 80.2% of people speak only English in the home (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

While most of Sonoma County is predominantly White, the southern/southwestern Santa Rosa census tracts are predominantly Hispanic (43%–69% Hispanic, depending on census tract). These areas also have higher Black and Asian populations compared to other areas of Sonoma County (1%–5% for the Black population, 1%–8% for Asian Americans, depending on census tract), and portions of this area are unincorporated. According to CalEnviroScreen 4.0, the southwestern Santa Rosa area, some of which is in unincorporated Sonoma County, generally has the highest pollution and socioeconomic burden within Sonoma County (OEHHA 2024). The CalEnviroScreen scores for the southwestern Santa Rosa census tracts range from 48 to 75. The Action Plan aims to reduce environmental impacts and pollution burdens associated with climate change, and thus, the Action Plan should alleviate environmental challenges facing these communities (OEHHA 2021).

The data collected indicates that, within Sonoma County, the following populations are most vulnerable:

- Immigrant and non-English-speaking neighborhoods, communities, and populations
- Agricultural workers and their families
- People experiencing houselessness
- Older adults and communities
- People with disabilities and their supportive communities
- Communities living adjacent to creeks and rivers
- People and communities living in high fire hazard areas
- People living in rural/geographically isolated areas

B)

According to the Portrait of Sonoma County 2021 Update, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) individuals, as well as immigrant and undocumented community members, consistently have lower Human Development Index (HDI) scores across Sonoma County (Sonoma County Department of Health Services 2021). HDI is a composite index of life expectancy/health, educational attainment, and income/earnings. More specifically, Black residents experienced a severe drop in HDI from 2014 to 2021 (from 4.68 to 3.99), and Black residents in Sonoma County were found to have lower levels of well-being than Black residents across the State as a whole. This includes a lower life expectancy (3 years) and 6% lower enrollment in school compared to the Black statewide average (Sonoma County Department of Health Services 2021).

The HDI of Latino residents increased from 4.27 in the 2014 report to 4.93 in the 2021 update. Latino residents in Sonoma County have much lower educational attainment and earn \$15,000 less than White Sonoma County residents but have much longer life expectancies (Sonoma County Department of Health Services 2021).

Asian Sonoma County residents have the highest well-being score compared to Black, White, and Latino residents, with high life expectancy (85.1 years) and high educational attainment.

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Despite high educational attainment, Asian residents in Sonoma County earn less than Black and White residents (\$1,428 and \$7,048 less, respectively) (Sonoma County Department of Health Services 2021).

The key takeaway from the Portrait of Sonoma County 2021 Update is that socioeconomic and racial inequalities are extremely complex. A higher income may not necessarily correlate to improved health/life expectancy, and higher educational attainment may not necessarily correlate with higher income. Discrete outcomes need to be tracked, recorded, and continuously analyzed. Root causes can be complicated, and simple statistics may not always fully capture an accurate depiction of the experiences of a community.

H-2A temporary agricultural workers, who may live in Sonoma County for as long as one year at a time (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services 2024), provide an example of how data may not always capture the experiences of a group. These workers are predominantly Latino and from Mexico (Martin 2022). The experiences of these individuals, who spend significant time living and working in Sonoma County, may not be included in statistics surrounding Latino HDI, which only accounts for Sonoma County residents. It is critical to meet with local organizations and community members who engage with this population to understand their true experiences. Understanding these experiences may complicate simple calculations that aim to quantify the health of the Latino community in Sonoma County.

Several interviews, survey responses, and tabled event conversations indicated the need for more enhanced outreach, engagement, and communication to frontline and climate justice communities through partnerships with trusted community-based organizations (CBOs) and community-based partners (CBPs). As discussed by interviewees, survey respondents, focus group participants, and community members, frontline communities may face the following barriers: language, distrust, suspicion, or fear of governmental agencies and/or representatives; and educational differences. As reported during tabled events and through online surveys, many people are unaware of events focused on engaging community members about climate change topics, or do not have adequate resources to participate in engagement. These resources include but are not limited to: childcare, meals, transportation coverage, and stipends for participation. Community members recommended that the County of Sonoma work directly with community leaders and finance their efforts to engage their community through trusted communication channels and local events. Specific venues for outreach may include migrant centers, food banks, festivals, digital media platforms, and workshops (at a convenient time and location for working people).

Furthermore, tracking trends in health, income, and educational attainment is equally as important as quantifying these metrics. If a certain demographic is experiencing a decrease in HDI, it is imperative to study this decrease and understand what factors are contributing to the decline. Tracking trends is essential for monitoring and assessing how the projects and policies outlined in the proposal influence all groups. For example, agricultural workers are on the frontlines of the climate crisis because they endure extreme heat, flood impacts, wildfire impacts, and other climate impacts when they work in the fields. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 96% of California agricultural workers are Hispanic (U.S. Department of Labor 2022). Thus, after the Action Plan is implemented completely, the County of Sonoma

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should expect to see an improvement in health metrics among Sonoma County's Hispanic population. If health metrics are not improving for this group, perhaps the policies/programs are actually benefitting a different demographic. Thus, tracking trends is critical to ensuring the equitable implementation of the Action Plan.

Of Sonoma County residents, 5% identify as Asian, 2.2% identify as Black or African American, 2.3% identify as American Indian and/or Alaska Native, and 0.4% identify as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (U.S. Census Bureau 2023). Approximately 4.4% of Sonoma County residents identify as Two or More Races (U.S. Census Bureau 2020). For these communities, which all constitute 5% or less of the total Sonoma County population, racial inequity can be perpetuated due to low population size and low representation. It can be difficult for underrepresented groups to gain social and political power to fight racial inequities when they are small in size and systematically excluded or ignored. A root cause of racial inequity in Sonoma County is likely due to Sonoma County being predominantly White, and thus, the experience, needs, and desires of the White population dominate planning processes because this racial demographic is larger and better resourced than other racial demographics ([Implicit bias \(apa.org\)](#), [Why So Many Organizations Stay White \(hbr.org\)](#), [How the Perception of Public Officials on Organizational Culture Influences Procedural Justice in Environmental Policy Processes - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)).

Finally, as previously stated, , areas of Sonoma County with higher Hispanic, Black, and Asian populations are more susceptible to environmental, social, and economic injustices, as identified by CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (OEHHA 2021). According to this data, pollution burden, exposures, and environmental impacts, as well as socioeconomic factors, roughly correlate with the presence of environmental justice groups within Sonoma County. This is consistent with the data collected through different engagement events.

C)

Natural hazard risk data is available on a county and census-tract level on the Federal Emergency Management Agency National Risk Index. While this dataset does not consider current or future climate impacts, it presents a current, baseline risk rating for 18 natural hazards. This index also includes estimates for expected annual loss (EAL, in U.S. dollars) for all natural hazards, as well as the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI data), which refers to the potential adverse impacts on communities caused by natural hazard stresses on human health. The dataset also includes a Community Resilience Index, which rates the community's ability to withstand and recover from natural hazards.

According to the Natural Risk Index, Sonoma County ranks as "relatively high" risk for all natural disasters, as "relatively moderate" on the Social Vulnerability Index (susceptibility to the impact of natural disasters), and relatively high on community resilience (FEMA 2024). As made evident through these scores, Sonoma County is already experiencing relatively high risk for natural hazards impacts, independent of exacerbated risk due to climate change. As climate change intensifies, the County of Sonoma should strive to maintain, or ideally improve, its Social Vulnerability Index and community resilience score. If these scores remain constant or improve, the County of Sonoma can remain confident that its strategies and actions are effectively building climate resilience.

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Emergency readiness, response, and recovery data from across Sonoma County is available through the County of Sonoma the Department of Emergency Management. Similarly, data surrounding the number of educational events attended or educational resources distributed regarding emergency preparedness is available from various County of Sonoma departments and affiliated agencies. Additionally, geographic information system data documenting areas of high wildfire risk, high flood risk/building loss, and areas at risk for flash flooding, etc. is available for use to determine climate resilience efforts and targeted engagement on topics.

Data surrounding flooding, drought, and water conservation can be collected from Sonoma Water. Flood Control Zones were formed in 1958 under the authority of Sonoma Water (Sonoma Water 2024). Each of the nine geographical zones encompasses a major watershed and formed to oversee the construction and maintenance of flood protection projects. Furthermore, Sonoma Water has its own Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP), which assesses the organization's ability to provide adequate water supply, flood management, and sanitation under various climate scenarios, such as temperature, flooding, wildfire, drought, sea level rise, and extreme precipitation (Eastern Research Group 2022).

Data concerning the unhoused population in Sonoma County can be found on the Sonoma County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Using data from HMIS, the Sonoma County Continuum of Care submits two reports to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) every year: System Performance Measures (SPM) and Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA). The both reports include a summary and year-to-year comparisons of system-wide counts, averages, and medians related to seven areas of performance on homelessness metrics/criteria. However, the SPM focuses on all persons served, while the LSA focuses primarily on households (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development n.d.). Both reports can be used to assess if/how the County of Sonoma is addressing the needs of the unhoused community and building this community's ability to withstand extreme weather and temperature conditions.

Additionally, two countywide plans provide critical data and guidance on climate-related hazards and efforts: the Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) and the Climate Resilient Lands Strategy. The MJHMP provides current and projected future data on climate hazard-related emergencies, including dam failure, drought, earthquake, flooding, landslide/mass movement, sea level rise, severe weather, tsunami, and wildfire. The MJHMP not only increases public awareness of hazards that threaten health and safety, but also provides a decision tool for County of Sonoma leaders to take action on addressing vulnerabilities. The MJHMP involved the collaboration of many jurisdictions with the County of Sonoma, including the City of Santa Rosa, City of Cotati, Town of Windsor, City of Sonoma, Departments and Divisions within County of Sonoma, Sonoma County Agriculture and Open Space, Sonoma Resource Conservation District, Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District, Timber Cove Fire Protection District, Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District, North Sonoma Coast Fire Protection District, and Cloverdale Fire Protection District.

The Climate Resilient Lands Strategy (Lands Strategy), developed by the County of Sonoma's Climate Action and Resiliency Division and Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District,

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provides guidance on climate-related efforts, particularly efforts surrounding the management of natural and working lands. The aims of the Lands Strategy are as follows:

- Conserve, manage, and restore as much of Sonoma County as possible across public, private, natural, developed, and agricultural lands.
- Focus early actions on areas with the greatest potential for carbon sequestration, climate risk reduction, and biodiversity enhancement.
- Provide a forum for coordinated action on climate resilience in Sonoma County.
- Reduce fragmentation of the natural lands system by adding to conserved spaces, increasing connections and corridors, and working with private landowners to develop shared management strategies.
- Partner with Native American tribes within Sonoma County to advance traditional ecological knowledge and preserve tribal cultural resources and tribal cultural properties.
- Identify funding and financing strategies within Sonoma County, the state, and the at the federal level as well as private funding sources to advance this innovative and bold plan. Identify new concepts for funding and financing sources as well.
- Prioritize equity and climate justice approaches that are measurable and clear (Eastern Research Group 2022).

The Lands Strategy presents strategies for addressing climate impacts on specific types of agricultural and open spaces, such as forests, croplands, vineyards, grazing lands, aquatic ecosystems, grasslands, shrubland and chaparral, and developed lands. Data and specific strategies are also presented by eco-region, of which there are nine within Sonoma County, allowing climate effects to be assessed at a local ecosystem level. The performance of the proposal can be assessed by the degree to which it supports the objectives outlined in the Lands Strategy and improves the climate hazard metrics discussed throughout the document, at the County and eco-region scale. Development of the Lands Strategy involved the collaboration of many agencies and organizations within Sonoma County, including Sonoma County Agriculture and Open Space, the County of Sonoma Climate Action and Resiliency Division, Permit Sonoma, Regional Parks, Sonoma Water, Sonoma Public Infrastructure, Sonoma Resource Conservation District, Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District, local leaders in land conservation and management, and local community members. A separate consultation was held with the five federally recognized Sonoma County Indian tribes. In addition, focus groups and interviews with members of underserved and under-resourced communities, such as different ethnic and racial groups, linguistically isolated farmworkers, and individuals working with unhoused residents, highlighted the particular challenges climate hazards present to these groups and landscape benefits they value. The engagement with these different groups is accessible data being used to develop measures in the Action Plan for consideration.

Furthermore, the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority has developed many strategy documents, reports, maps, programs, and committees to address climate risks and mitigate climate impacts. Specifically, data is available in the Climate Mobilization Strategy, Climate Ready Sonoma County: Climate Hazards and Vulnerabilities, a Transportation Mode Shift Action Plan, and a Transportation Fuel Shift Action Plan. Cities within Sonoma County have existing climate action plans, committees, and frameworks (Petaluma, Santa Rosa,

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Sebastopol, etc.). This Action Plan will leverage existing efforts across Sonoma County and incorporate the needs of unincorporated communities/areas lacking planning efforts to create one cohesive direction. As described in Appendix 1, the County of Sonoma conducted extensive outreach efforts including surveys, focus groups, town halls, and interviews, and leveraged learnings from prior and related engagement efforts, to collect data on what the community would like to see represented in the Action Plan.

D)

For racial groups that constitute less than 5% of the Sonoma County population, it can be difficult to collect accurate data due to low population size. There are statistical methods to account for low population size when trying to analyze the experiences of these groups, however, interviewing and collecting data through local leaders and trusted organizations can ultimately be the most successful approach. Additionally, providing access to virtual engagement options would be helpful for gathering input from community members that are from diverse ethn racial communities mentioned above. Lastly, people in online surveys indicated that a lack of awareness prevented them from engaging on climate resilience topics. Ensuring that climate-related engagement opportunities are broadcasted via different mediums (e.g.: word-of-mouth, community WhatsApp groups, etc.) will enhance the data collection in the future.

In an interview with a member of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, they stated that their community is largely dispersed across Sonoma County, and it can be difficult to create one unified set of needs/asks from the community, given its diversity. Only 3% of WRA-led online public survey respondents identified their race or origin as Asian or Asian American, and 11% identified their ethnicity as Asian or Asian American. The low number of responses from this community can create gaps in data and unclear understandings of the challenges facing this group. Other engagement activities, such as tabling events, town halls, and facilitated workshops have been successful in engaging some folks from the Asian, Asian American, and/or Pacific Islander communities on climate resilience work. The community engagement strategy will provide an opportunity to fill this data gap for the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.

A Black interviewee voiced similar concerns, stating that because the Black population is largely underrepresented in Sonoma County, it can be difficult to secure grant funding and other resources. There were no online public survey respondents for either survey, who listed their race, origin, or ethnicity as Black or African American. No responses from this group creates a large data gap and clearly more time and relationship building are needed to better understand the needs of this community. Other engagement activities, such as tabling events, town halls, and facilitated workshops have been successful in engaging some folks from the Black community on climate resilience work. However, the engagement is not representative of County demographic data, and the community engagement strategy will provide an opportunity to fill this critical gap.

Filling data gaps can be achieved by leveraging the networks and connection of CBOs and CBPs. Often, these trusted groups are able to collect data from frontline, environmental justice, and climate justice communities more easily than County of Sonoma staff, because they have

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knowledge, skills and expertise in reaching important populations, including those who may experience a valid mistrust/fear of government, who are linguistically diverse, who have low/no literacy and/or those who may not have had access to resourced formal, Western education. Funding and partnering with these local, trusted community leaders will increase engagement, so that respondents more accurately reflect Sonoma County demographics. Further, many survey respondents indicated that a lack of awareness about events related to climate resilience topics was a barrier to engaging.

Enhanced community engagement, marketing and outreach, and cross-collaboration with other County departments would amplify engagement events, and increase data collection from folks in climate justice and unincorporated communities. In addition, many community members at tabled events and through surveys have indicated that resources such as childcare, meals, and other incentives are preventing people from equitably participating in climate resilience work and engagement opportunities. These incentives could be enhanced and advertised to increase engagement.

3. Community Engagement: How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?

- a. Who are the most affected community members who are concerned with or have experience related to this proposal? How have you involved these community members in the development of this proposal?
- b. What has your engagement process told you about the burdens or benefits for different groups?
- c. What has your engagement process told you about the factors that produce or perpetuate racial inequity related to this proposal?

A)

Community organizations and local leaders were interviewed to understand how communities are impacted by climate change and the resources they believe need to be allocated to become more resilient. Historically, BIPOC communities have been excluded from policy conversations, but are often at the frontlines of local efforts and have lead grassroots efforts for climate justice, considering how tied it is to racial justice. Socioeconomic and political power largely impact a demographic's ability to meaningfully participate in planning efforts. Additionally, these groups are more susceptible to climate impacts because they may not have the resources or financial capital to fund adaptation efforts due to racism and systematic exclusion from processes that increase generational wealth. Climate discourse and research has been dominated by White people, and yet BIPOC communities are the most susceptible to impacts of the climate crisis (de La Mare 2021). Professionals who work outdoors (construction workers, agricultural workers, etc.) experience greater extremities of weather conditions under climate change, as they can spend extensive periods of time enduring extreme heat, cold, wildfire smoke, and even flooding/rain.

People with disabilities are also severely impacted by climate change, as evacuation routes and adaptation strategies (electric-vehicle parking stations, bus stops, etc.) may not be accessible to those with disabilities. Also, climate change rhetoric can be scientific and technical in nature, which may be exclusionary to those with mental disabilities. Across

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outreach efforts (interviews, tabled events, and surveys), community members identified that renters require more support as they adapt to climate change. Respondents indicated that existing rebate and tax credit programs are designed for homeowners, and renters are excluded from these benefits. Programs need to be tailored to the needs of these community members. In interviews, surveys, and focus groups, community members stated that specific outreach and support of the unhoused community is critical to ensuring successful climate adaptation. One interviewee emphasized that interactions with the unhoused community should not be punitive and need to be collaborative, supportive, and humanizing in nature.

The development of the Action Plan reflects the involvement of a wide range of community voices, subject matter experts, and implementation partners in the six sectors of climate resilience addressed in the Action Plan.

B)

People experiencing houselessness, low-income community members, and renters face unique climate change burdens. The unhoused community members are susceptible to adverse health outcomes due to extreme weather and temperatures. Similarly, low-income community members may have trouble affording infrastructure and tools needed to build resilience, such as air conditioners, heaters, electrical appliances, and generators. Furthermore, rebates and incentive programs for heat pumps, energy-efficient appliances, rainwater capture, and solar panels are typically designed for homeowners, which excludes renters from participating in programs. Additionally, engaged community members discussed how housing instability has led to greater sources of pollution in waterways, on the streets, and in public spaces. Some community members indicated that due to increasing housing costs, they had to relocate to more remote locations, without access to public transportation systems that are consistent and available throughout the day.

BIPOC communities within Sonoma County may face challenges securing resources due to their lack of representation within Sonoma County. Communities of color particularly Black/African American and Indigenous people, are also more likely to live in poverty and become unhoused compared to their White community members (National Alliance to End Homelessness 2023). They may also experience a higher amount of stress due to systemic, interpersonal, institutional, and internalized racism and racial trauma (Mental Health America n.d.). When stress and anxiety surrounding climate change, extreme weather, and extreme temperature compounds with this existing stress, communities of color may be more susceptible to adverse mental health conditions (Berberian et al. 2022). Additionally, studies show that, Asian, Black, and Hispanic populations are exposed to higher levels of air pollution, on average, as compared to White people (Tessum et al. 2021). This is due to a variety of social and economic processes that have systematically forced people of color into areas with higher pollution, such as near industrial areas and highways. Furthermore, multiple individuals interviewed voiced concerns surrounding policies and economic pressures that may push agricultural workers to work under unsafe conditions. Concerns related to agricultural workers are summarized and outlined below.

The County of Sonoma recently approved the Agricultural Access Verification Card, or “Ag Pass” program, which allows select farm and vineyard workers to return to mandatory

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evacuation zones under emergency conditions (Sonoma County Sheriff's Office 2020). Multiple interviewees indicated that this policy may bring workers to locations that were extremely proximate to dangerous wildfires, even as close as the wildfires' perimeters. Furthermore, an interviewee stated that vineyard owners have cut hours (to under 40 hours per week) for some agricultural workers so that the employer is not required to provide benefits, and the decrease in available hours in conjunction with the lack of benefits/protections creates financial distress in these communities. One interviewee reported that agricultural workers have experienced increased cancer incidence, intense bloody noses, and other adverse health outcomes due to pesticide exposure. Other interviewees discussed health risks associated with pesticide exposure, particularly glyphosate.

One interviewee articulated that H-2A workers do not have paid Federal minimum wage under current laws. The interviewee also stated that agricultural workers living in Sonoma County may be afraid to speak out against poor working conditions or advocate for better pay out of fear that their jobs will be taken by these temporary workers. Furthermore, the interviewee mentioned that undocumented workers may be hesitant or resistant to speaking out against unsafe working conditions out of fear that they will be deported out of the United States.

Strenuous working conditions, unstable housing, inaccessible resources, and low income, exacerbated by climate change, also give rise to mental health challenges and anxieties surrounding extreme weather and temperature conditions ([Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Inequities, and Responses \(apa.org\)](#), [The Impact of Climate Change on Mental Health: A Systematic Descriptive Review - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)). One interviewee specifically articulated the challenges that non-English speakers face when try to access mental health resources. They indicated that there is a lack of adequate mental health services available in Spanish and indigenous languages, exacerbating mental health crises in these communities. The interviewee indicated that more generally, there is a lack of bilingual and multilingual materials and trainings to adequately prepare and protect community members who speak languages other than English. During the Tubbs Fire, 911 became inundated with calls, and there were insufficient translation services available, which prevented non-English speakers from accessing emergency services. Further, some community members indicated they are often fearful of seeking help during emergencies and disasters and sheltering in designated evacuation centers due to the presence of local law enforcement and/or other governmental representatives (Nuestra Comunidad, [How to Serve Vulnerable Communities with Alma Bowen - After the Fire USA](#), [Undocumented farmworkers face disaster discrimination \(axios.com\)](#)). Many interviewees cited the need for increased outreach, education, and communication through trusted CBOs/Ps and appropriate messaging about the safety and security of emergency evacuation locations.

Additionally, one interviewee voiced that there are not enough Spanish resources available that explain what solar panels are and how they work. Before asking people to invest in alternative energy, the interviewee stated that it needs to be explained how the technology works, and this should be explained in their native language. The need for outreach to the Hispanic/Latino community was also mentioned at Workshops D4 and D5 (5/12/2021, 5/6/2021). Information on incentive programs is not always available in Spanish. During the

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COVID-19 pandemic, there was a County of Sonoma program that ran out of funding shortly after Spanish materials were released to the public. Interviewees indicated that there was a general lack of climate change/resilience educational materials for both English and Spanish speakers. Community members during tabled engagement, online public surveys, and in focus groups emphasized the need for more community education on climate change over 25 times. Multiple interviewees emphasized the need for programs that allow people to actively participate in climate action and adaptation work, which could support and further their education on climate-related impacts and outcomes. Community members emphasized the need for continuous outreach to clarify how to use compost, recycling, and trash bins correctly. Community members also emphasized the need for additional K–12 education to engage students on climate resilience.

Moreover, many community members stated that posting resources on websites is not sufficient outreach. One interviewee explained that accessing resources often requires complex click paths, which can be difficult for those who may not be computer literate. This includes older adults, individuals with disabilities, and/or individuals who are not proficient in English. Many people may have to access resources from a mobile device, which can be difficult when websites are not optimized for a phone screen. Further, many community members indicated that other resources are necessary to participate in climate resilience work. For example, childcare for in-person workshops, remote workshops for people in remote locations, stipends for participation, and meals for people coming straight from work to the engagement. These resources would substantially alleviate the burden of community engagement and climate action and resiliency work.

c)

Language barriers can perpetuate inequities, including racial inequity. Multiple interviewees and survey respondents noted that some community members in Sonoma County speak more than just English and Spanish. There are many indigenous languages spoken in Sonoma County, including Triqui, Chatino, Mixteco, and Zapoteco. Additionally, materials and trainings should be available in Asian languages and Farsi. When a group cannot access disaster preparedness and/or climate adaptation resources and education, they cannot properly prepare for or adapt to extreme weather events.

Interviewees indicated that rebates and tax credits do not provide enough financial support to underserved groups. Interviewees emphasized that resources (solar panels, generators, heat pumps, etc.) need to be free, since rebates and tax credits require individuals to front money to cover the cost of these technologies, which can be impossible for someone with limited expendable income. Interviewees emphasized that to truly address systems that perpetuate inequity, climate-smart technologies have to be free, and multilingual materials and trainings need to educate people on how and why the resources work.

More holistically, community members explained that County departments and agencies tend to operate in silos, preventing collaborative engagement with the same communities. This repetitive process strains community trust, and limits the ability for County representatives to engage deeply with community members. Time restraints, funding restraints, and resource restraints inhibit the ability to foster authentic connections with community members, leaving

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many frontline and environmental justice communities out of conversations related to climate resilience and justice. In order to equitably engage with communities disproportionately impacted by climate in the future, adequate resources need to be dedicated to community engagement efforts initiated by the County.

4. Analysis and Strategies: What are your strategies for advancing racial equity?

- a. Given what you have learned from research and stakeholder involvement, how will the proposal increase or decrease racial equity? Who would benefit from or be burdened by your proposal?
- b. What are potential unintended consequences? What are the ways in which your proposal could be modified to enhance positive impacts or reduce negative impacts?
- c. Are there complementary strategies that you can implement? What are ways in which existing partnerships could be strengthened to maximize impact in the community? How will you partner with stakeholders for long-term positive change?
- d. Are the impacts aligned with your community outcomes defined in Step #1?

A)

Studies have shown that climate change disproportionately impacts BIPOC communities (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2021). It is the goal of the Action Plan to build resilience to climate hazards in Sonoma County. By addressing the climate crisis through a Just Transition to climate-smart practices, the pressure that climate change imposes on these communities can be alleviated. A Just Transition is one that recognizes that low-wage, frontline minority workers often are employed by unsustainable industries, and thus, the socioeconomic needs of these workers must be considered in transitions to sustainable practices. As previously stated, Asian, Black, and Hispanic populations are exposed to higher levels of air pollution, on average, when compared to White people (Tessum et al. 2021). The County intends to address these burdens through implementation of “Community Progress” measures after they have been refined and prioritized through equity-centered community engagement, as outlined in the Action Plan. The County will collaborate with the Office of Equity to use the Anti-Racist Results Based Accountability methodology to create performance measures with communities. Potential measures include the distribution of energy resilience resources to communities that experience the highest energy burdens, like renters. Further, the Community Progress measures outline tools and resources to mitigate wildfire risks that community members face in various parts of the County. These potential Community Progress measures will be further developed and prioritized by community members over the next year, through equitable outreach and engagement. As part of this year-long engagement process, the Community Progress measures will be developed into a strategy for adoption by the Board of Supervisors. By enacting policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air particulates, these communities will face a lower pollution burden.

Finally, as previously articulated, transitions to climate-smart practices can be expensive. If the County of Sonoma is providing free materials and services and/or financial incentives to promote this transition, it may increase taxes for all Sonoma County residents, depending on the source of funding, and this may burden Sonoma County middle/low-income residents.

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However, the County of Sonoma aims to alleviate this burden by enhancing coordination amongst departments on providing climate resilience resources, which will lead to greater opportunities for resource allocation to groups experiencing the greatest climate impacts.

B)

Transitioning to climate-smart practices and policies in Sonoma County must occur through a Just Transition. If this transition to climate-smart practices occurs too slowly, climate change will enact further destructive harm to our communities and ecosystems. However, if this transition occurs too quickly, existing socioeconomic, racial, and political inequities are further exacerbated as people are forced to find new job/trades and make expensive upgrades to their homes/vehicles/infrastructure. The change must occur at a pace that promptly responds to the current state of climate emergency while also centering climate and environmental justice communities transitioning into a new, sustainable society.

Many community members engaged explained the need to train plumbers, electricians, and other workers in energy-efficient trades, along with instructing students in climate-smart, regenerative agricultural practices. The Action Plan will consider how best to train and employ the existing Sonoma County workforce. There are specific measures in the plan to train government employees on waste diversion techniques, climate-smart landscape management practices, and electrifying both County fleet operations and building infrastructure.

The Action Plan includes a cost-benefit analysis to optimize the implementation of climate solutions and prioritize goals set forth in the 5-Year Strategic Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors. By including a cost-benefit analysis in the Action Plan, unnecessary spending of taxpayer dollars is minimized, and projects with measurable, concrete, scientifically rigorous outcomes are instated. A potential consequence of using the cost-benefit analysis as a primary tool to rank prioritized projects is the inability to calculate quantitative benefits or a “return on investment” for adaptation measures that are extremely important to community members. These measures have special consideration in their ranking and prioritization criteria.

C)

Many community members, through interviews, tabled events, and surveys, voiced the importance of using local, trusted messenger organizations to connect with the community. The need for more coordination with CBOs was identified by multiple community members as a top priority. People are more willing to listen and trust information that comes from a place without a police presence, speaks their language, and understands their challenges. Interviewees noted that the County of Sonoma should evaluate how best to support and fund local networks and communication channels to ensure successful community-focused outreach.

Community members noted that public noticing through infrequent mailers and website postings are largely insufficient. Communication channels like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook are far more effective. One interviewee, who was a member of a local, trusted

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community organization, noted that her organization has a WhatsApp group with *promotoras*, or community health workers/navigators, who share vital information and resources out to their local neighborhoods. Identifying with and partnering with local organizations is essential for effective outreach. Other focused groups and interviewees emphasized the importance of neighbor-to-neighbor, worker-to-worker, and farmer-to-farmer communication of climate adaptation programs and practices. Community members engaged stated repeatedly that messages are far better received when they come from a trusted peer/neighbor.

Additionally, interviewees, survey respondents, and tabled event participants emphasized the importance of cross-collaboration between County of Sonoma departments, which will further improve communication, funding strategies, and project implementation efforts. Cross-collaboration will allow the County of Sonoma to present itself as one unified front to the community, which may help build confidence and trust in local leadership over time. Elucidating roles and responsibilities across organizations, as well as to the public, is critical for building trust and collaborating effectively across organizations and with the public. This is one of the main reasons CARD undertook a comprehensive review of related studies, plans, and strategies, and the summaries of community input into their development.

To date, CARD has collaborated extensively with other County departments, agencies, and community organizations to increase resiliency in Sonoma County. CARD has the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program, which provides financial resources for homeowners and business owners to upgrade their facilities to be more climate resilient. The Action Plan leverages the SCEIP community to ensure that Sonoma County becomes resilient to climate change. Further, CARD manages the BayREN, LGP, and Green Business programs for community members. These programs coordinate climate resilience efforts, highlight incentives for energy resilience upgrades, and allocate certifications to businesses that meet certain sustainability requirements. These programs leverage several partnerships with Bay Area organizations to ensure that Sonoma County communities are building resilience to combat climate change.

Separately, CARD has pursued funding opportunities in collaboration with community organizations vulnerable to different climate impacts. Grant applications have leveraged partnerships with local leaders to ensure funding is designated for communities burdened by the greatest impacts of climate change. In this way, CARD is building trust with local leaders, who can speak to the different experiences of the communities they serve.

D)

Yes, the outcome of the Action Plan (as defined is Step #1) is to build resiliency to climate change and reduce climate impacts for all communities across Sonoma County. Through effective multilingual resourcing and equitable, community-centered engagement, this outcome can be achieved.

5. Implementation: What is your plan for implementation?

Describe your plan for implementation:

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The Action Plan identifies Early Actions endorsed and funded by the Board to make progress towards the Climate Action and Resiliency goals. It proposes County Operations measures that will help the County of Sonoma become zero waste, carbon neutral, and climate resilient by 2030. The Action Plan also describes potential Community Progress measures through which the County could support actions in Sonoma County communities to become carbon neutral, reduce waste, and increase climate resilience; Further, the Action Plan proposes a year of equity-centered engagement with communities to refine and prioritize Community Progress measures that best align with communities' priorities, barriers, and opportunities. All of the measures in the Action Plan are organized in sectors: Energy, Transportation, Waste, Water, Wildfire, and Natural & Working Lands. The Action Plan also lays out timeframes for implementation as Near-Term (2024 to 2026), Mid-Term (2026 to 2030), and Longer-Term (2030 and beyond). In addition, the Action Plan includes a detailed proposal for Community Engagement, a Cost-Benefit Analysis, and a Funding and Financing Strategy. When the Board considers the proposed Action Plan, staff will request the Board approve the County Operations measures and the proposed equity-centered Community Engagement Strategy to refine and prioritize potential Community Progress measures. Staff will begin implementing the Near-Term measures in collaboration with department and agency partners, and will identify trusted community partners for community engagement.

In general, the Near-Term actions can be implemented with currently available resources. In most cases, the Near-Term actions will result in prioritized recommendations for implementing related Mid-Term actions along with proposed funding. In some cases, environmental review will be needed before a Mid-Term action can be implemented. The Long-Term measures generally require further development or depend on improved technologies to become available, or they require very large investments of funds; these measures will be implemented after 2030. CARD will continue applying to grants and other funding opportunities to help fund implementation of the Action Plan.

CARD will implement a year-long community engagement process to better refine and prioritize Community Progress measures with community input. As part of this process, and based on data from interviews, surveys, tabled events, etc., CARD will partner with local community leaders and organizations to share information, conduct engagement, and build trust with local government officials. Further, CARD will continue to table community events throughout the year, host focus groups and workshops during non-working hours, and continue elevating County programs like BayREN, SCEIP, and the Green Business Certification program. After completing community engagement on the Community Progress measures, CARD will identify the highest priority Community Progress measures, with consideration to reflect the priorities of diverse communities. After offering the priority measures for review by community members and public comment, CARD will present the priority measures to the Board of Supervisors for adoption.

After adoption of this additive community action plan, CARD will coordinate with different agencies to implement the measures on a Near-Term, Mid-Term, and Long-Term timescale.

Is this implementation plan:	Yes	No	I'm Not Sure
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Realistic?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequately funded?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequately resourced with personnel?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequately resources with mechanisms to ensure successful implementation and enforcement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequately resourced to ensure on-going data collection, public reporting, and community engagement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If the answer to any of these questions is no, what resources or actions are needed?

Depending on the scope of the Action Plan measures approved by the Board, CARD may require additional personnel, funding, and/or resources to implement the approved measures and actions. By design, the measures in the Action Plan will leverage parallel efforts across the County's departments and partner agencies – which means a significant amount of progress can be made without additional resources. Near-Term measures and actions can be implemented with existing resources upon approval. To meet expectations for transparency and accountability, however, CARD will need to develop an ongoing data collection, in particular the Universal Disaster Intake Form, and public reporting mechanism to ensure that measures are being implemented equitably.

6. Accountability and Communication: How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results?

- a. How will impacts be documented and evaluated? Are you achieving the anticipated outcomes? Are you having impact in the community?
- b. What are your messages and communication strategies that will help advance racial equity?
- c. How will you continue to partner and deepen relationships with communities to make sure your work to advance racial equity is working and sustainable for the long-haul?

A)

Community members engaged indicated that a public display of progress towards goals would hold the community and the County of Sonoma accountable to the Action Plan. One interviewee suggested that income inequality be quantified and tracked on the climate goal dashboard alongside the other suggested metrics (gasoline sales, trash reduced, water conserved, amount of waste composted, etc.). To maximize community impact and involvement, proposed policies and projects in the Action Plan will focus on empowering individuals to become involved in climate resilience work. Instead of proposing a list of taxpayer-funded projects, some policies/projects will focus on empowering individuals to, for example, do their own composting, recycling, rainwater capture, etc.

CARD has collaborated with RCPA on consistent data collection and reporting for climate resilience progress, recognizing that RCPA reports on regional progress and so does not collect or share progress data at the level of detail that the County will need to do. By selecting a common platform to support data collection and storage and using the same visual representation themes and structures for the dashboard, CARD aims to ensure a consistent and familiar user experience.

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B)

Equitable and Inclusive Representation

1. **Focused Outreach:** Conduct focused outreach to communities that are often underrepresented in climate discussions, including low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, indigenous populations, and non-English speaking residents. Tailored engagement efforts will ensure these communities are actively involved.
2. **Culturally Relevant Engagement:** Develop culturally relevant engagement strategies that respect and incorporate the values, traditions, and knowledge of diverse communities. Collaborating with cultural leaders and organizations will help bridge gaps and build trust.

Uplift Anti-Racist Practices

1. **Equitable Resource Allocation:** Ensure that resources for climate resilience, such as funding, technical assistance, and educational materials, are distributed equitably. Priority will be given to communities most vulnerable to climate impacts.
2. **Building Local Capacity:** Invest in building the capacity of local organizations and leaders from underrepresented communities. Training and support will enable these groups to effectively participate in and lead resilience efforts.

Transparency and Accountability

1. **Open Decision-Making Processes:** Maintain transparency in decision-making processes by providing clear information about how decisions are made and how community input is used. Publicize meeting agendas, minutes, and outcomes to build trust and accountability.
2. **Regular Reporting and Feedback:** Establish mechanisms for regular reporting and feedback on engagement efforts and resilience initiatives. Community members should have the opportunity to provide feedback and see how their input influences outcomes.

As previously stated, it is imperative to fund, support, and leverage local, trusted CBOs/Ps to conduct outreach, communicate, and engage on various levels, from neighborhood to school to community. This information must be consistent, kept current, and communicated through a variety of media (in person, on social media, through WhatsApp, on television and radio, and at events, public gatherings, libraries, food banks, immigrant centers, health clinics, farmers' markets, industry trainings and events, job centers, etc.). Further, background information, agendas, meeting minutes, and other resources for public meetings will be made available in multiple languages. This is in addition to interpretation and translation services available in meetings.

Multiple interviewees and survey respondents emphasized the need to meet people where they already are. Community members noted that County of Sonoma meetings should be held outside the 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. time window, as this is when people are working. Some interviewees suggested that meetings be held on weekends, and some suggested that meetings be held in the evenings after work. Some interviewees emphasized that small organizations and individuals with limited resources need to be compensated for their time and expertise. As indicated through engagement with community members, best practice is to pay people for their time, and prioritize stipends, food, and childcare options.

C)

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Information Dissemination

Effective communication is critical to ensuring that all community members are informed about climate change and resilience efforts. The County will:

1. **Leverage Trusted Community Organizations:** Partner with local organizations that have established trust within the community to disseminate information. These organizations will serve as conduits for sharing updates on climate policies, resilience initiatives, and opportunities for public involvement.
2. **Utilize Diverse Communication Channels:** Employ a variety of communication methods, including social media, newsletters, community meetings, and local media outlets, to reach a broad audience. Ensuring information is accessible in multiple languages will also be a priority.
3. **Develop Clear and Concise Materials:** Create easy-to-understand informational materials that explain the County's climate resilience goals, strategies, and the role of community members. These materials will be distributed through partner organizations, public spaces, and online platforms.

Active Participation

Encouraging active participation from community members is essential for the success of climate resilience initiatives. The County will:

1. **Host Interactive Workshops and Town Halls:** Organize regular workshops and town halls that provide opportunities for residents to learn about climate resilience efforts, ask questions, and offer feedback. These events will be held in various locations throughout the County to ensure accessibility.
2. **Facilitate Focus Groups and Listening Sessions:** Conduct focus groups and listening sessions with diverse community segments, including underrepresented and vulnerable populations. These sessions will help identify specific needs and concerns, ensuring that resilience strategies are inclusive and equitable, while providing stipends for participation in the session.
3. **Establish Advisory Committees:** Form advisory committees that include representatives from different sectors of the community, and will receive stipends for their participation and engagement. These committees will provide ongoing input on climate resilience policies and programs, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability.

Ongoing Collaboration

Sustained collaboration with community members and organizations is crucial for building long-term resilience. The County will:

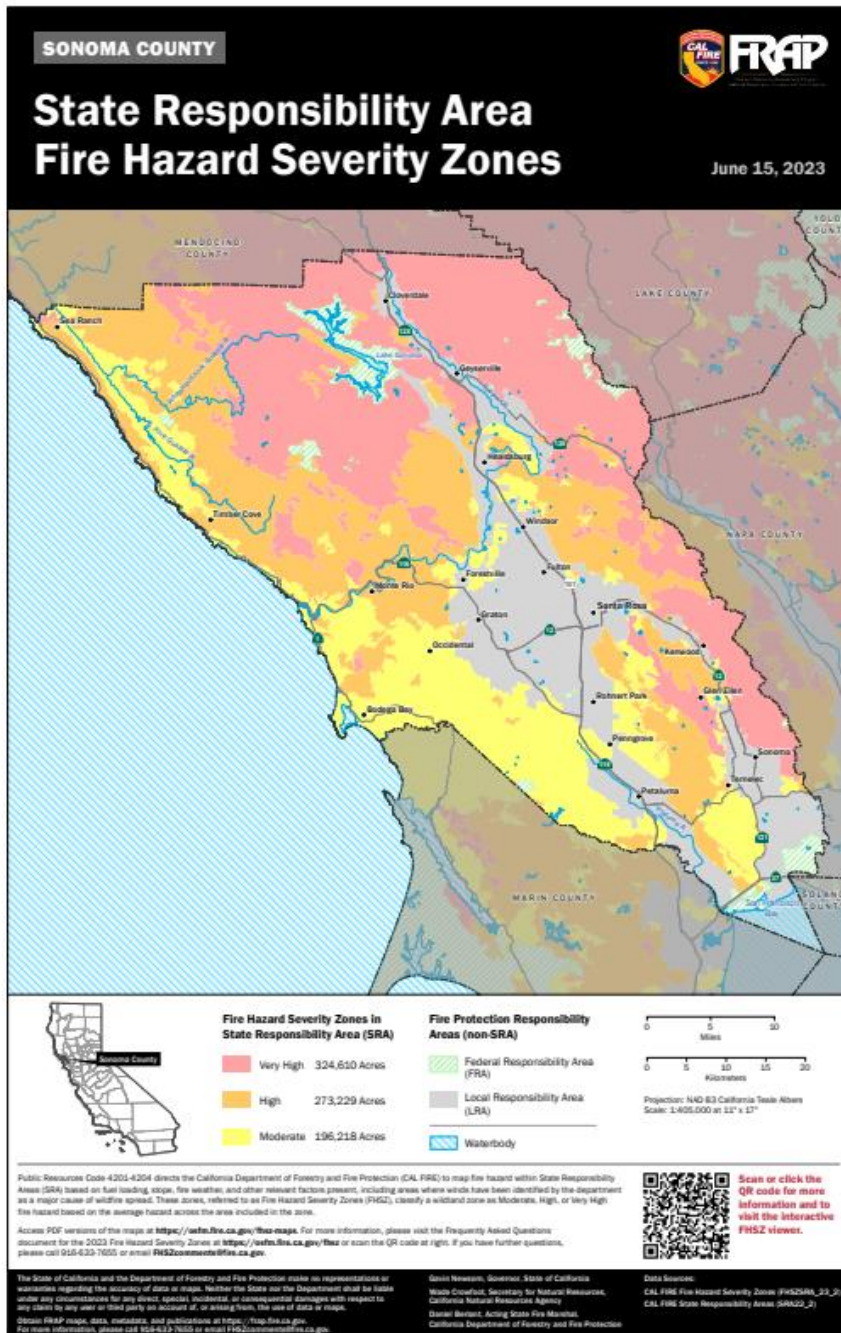
1. **Develop Community-Based Partnerships:** Strengthen partnerships with local organizations, businesses, schools, and other stakeholders. Collaborative projects, such as community gardens, energy efficiency programs, and emergency preparedness training, will enhance resilience and foster community cohesion.
2. **Support Grassroots Initiatives:** Provide funding and technical assistance to grassroots initiatives that promote climate resilience. By empowering local leaders and innovators, the County can support bottom-up approaches that complement broader strategies.

Monitor and Evaluate Engagement Efforts: Implement a system for monitoring and evaluating community engagement activities. Regular assessments will help identify successful

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approaches and areas for improvement, ensuring that engagement efforts remain effective and responsive to community needs.

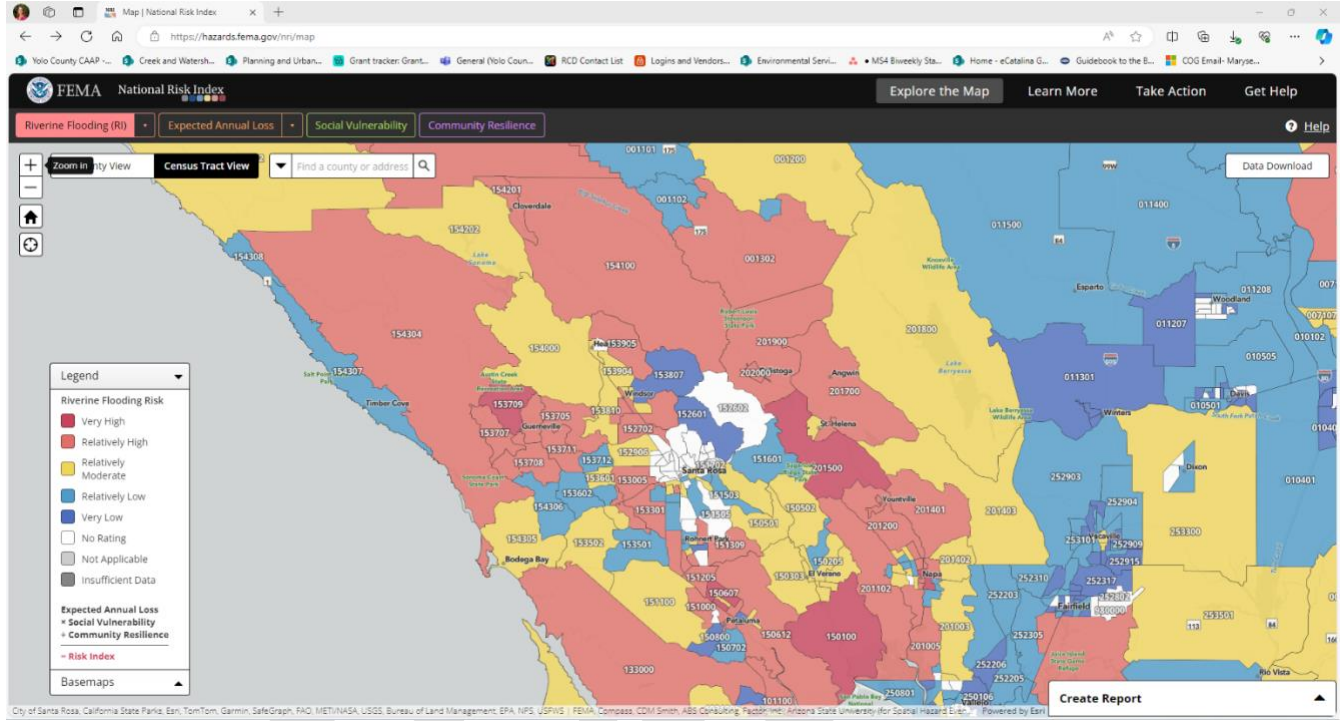
Figure 1: State Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones



*Note: Cloverdale and Santa Rosa are identified as Very High-Risk Local Responsibility Areas, but they are already mentioned as high-risk areas.

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Figure 2: FEMA National Risk Index, Riverine Flooding



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Appendix 1: Outreach Methodology and Data Sources

To engage the Sonoma County community in the development of the Action Plan, Climate Action and Resiliency Division (CARD), along with consultant partners, conducted a series of outreach efforts, including a survey, focus groups, town hall, tabled events, and series of interviews.

Outreach efforts are described below.

Staff Interviews, Town Halls, and Surveys: The County of Sonoma and consultants coordinated an engagement process to ensure interested parties were able to provide focused feedback regarding their ability to implement the tasks and processes required to meet the five goals under the County of Sonoma's Climate Action and Resiliency Pillar, as presented in the 5-Year Strategic Plan. In July and August of 2023, the project team met with individuals from County of Sonoma groups for one-on-one interviews over Zoom. These groups were identified for interview participation by CARD as having roles and responsibilities most associated with the efforts described under the Climate Action and Resiliency Pillar. Interviewees represented County of Sonoma departments such as Permit Sonoma, Sonoma County Public Infrastructure, Ag + Open Space, Sonoma Water, Human Services, and the County Administrator's Office. Select City of Santa Rosa and Regional Climate Protection Authority staff were also interviewed. In total, 16 one-on-one interviews with County of Sonoma staff, 2 one-on-one interviews with Regional Climate Protection Authority staff, and 2 one-on-one interviews with City of Santa Rosa staff were conducted. In addition, a group of 22 department directors and agency heads were interviewed in person, as a group, during their regularly scheduled Department and Agency Head Association meeting in August. Lastly, a survey was conducted, which all County of Sonoma staff were invited to complete. Five responses were collected.

In October and November of 2023, the project team conducted a public survey, made available online through CARD's webpage, where members of the public were invited to share their thoughts and feedback on how the Action Plan could be best prioritized and developed and what members of the public would need to further engage in the efforts described under each goal. The survey was shared via a link through various County of Sonoma partner listservs to encourage a wide-reaching pool of respondents. In total, 39 members of the public participated in the online survey. This was separate from the additional survey circulated in 2024, that generated 146 responses. These survey responses from both surveys were used to inform the Community Engagement section of the Action Plan.

In addition, Supervisor Susan Gorin and Supervisor Lynda Hopkins joined CARD staff to host a virtual town hall on November 1, 2023, at which the project team also presented. During their presentation, they solicited the audience for feedback using selected survey questions to garner more informative data related to the goals and what members of the public would need to further engage in the efforts described under each goal. This was done using the Zoom live-

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polling function. In total, 37 respondents participated in the town hall polling survey performed in the live setting.

Separately, there were 13 tabled events throughout 2024 in Sonoma County that CARD used as an opportunity to engage community members about the Action Plan. More than 700 people engaged with CARD staff during these events. During the community engagement events, CARD presented two interactive activities. The first asked participants to prioritize their concerns. Community members grabbed three gems and dropped them into different jars labeled with climate topics like water, waste, wildfire, etc., to answer the following question: “What three themes should be prioritized in the Comprehensive Action Plan?” The results of this exercise, with close to 400 participants, indicated the top priority was water, followed by natural and working lands and wildfire. The second activity asked participants to offer solutions. Community members wrote out ideas to address different climate topics by answering the question: “How can we support communities to become climate resilient?” From this exercise, with more than 200 participants, the category of waste received the most comments, followed by natural and working lands and transportation.

In addition to the further outreach described above, the Action Plan uplifts measures from other planning activities so it also relies on outreach and engagement done for those efforts and for foundational studies done in preparation for the Action Plan. As an example of this outreach, the Climate Resilient Lands Strategy had two advisory groups, held a public workshop, met with focus groups and local leaders including farmworkers, homeless advocates, advocates for underserved communities, youth advocates, and others. Other planning efforts with outreach and engagement that directly informed the Action Plan includes the Carbon Sequestration study, the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, the Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and a broad community survey for the General Plan Update.

Interviews with Community Members:

In total, 42 interviews were completed. Interviews were approximately 1 hour in length and consisted of 24 questions. At least 20 of the organizations/individuals contacted worked closely with the Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community and/or were members of the BIPOC community and/or Spanish-speaking populations within Sonoma County. Approximately seven organizations worked with Black populations within Sonoma County, and three organizations represented the Asian community. Two organizations worked specifically with individuals with disabilities. Other organizations with missions/projects adjacent to the needs of these communities (religious organizations, disaster preparedness groups, County of Sonoma employees, etc.) were also engaged through the survey, focus group, and interview processes. For each interview, a summary was produced and transmitted to CARD.

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Appendix 2: Consultant Recommendations for Successful, Community-Informed Implementation

The consultant supporting this effort synthesized information from staff and community engagement efforts and arrived at a set of recommendations for implementation, listed below:

- Host community meetings outside traditional working hours (8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday) to ensure the working population can participate. Provide childcare and food at public meetings. Food provided should be from communities that could benefit from the income (i.e., small, immigrant-owned restaurants) and should reflect the food choices of the people who are attending the meeting.
- Engage and fund community-based organizations and partners (CBOs/Ps) to conduct outreach, communicate, and engage with their specific communities, ensuring sustained efforts to meet their needs.
- Produce all materials (background documents, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, etc.) and training in more languages than just Spanish and English (languages such as Farsi, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, and Hmong/Lu Mien were specifically mentioned by interviewees) and provide them in a variety of media, such as printed, digital, audio, and visual, so that those with a variety of preferences and ability types are able to access them.
- Participate in events that communities already attend and utilize locations such as libraries, immigrant centers, schools, food banks, places of worship, farmers' markets, health centers, and clinics.
- Create a public-facing, simple, and accessible dashboard to track progress towards key climate resilience goals, with data disaggregated by race/ethnicity. This dashboard should also include socioeconomic metrics, such as income inequality, to ensure that social progress occurs alongside environmental progress.
- Consider hazard and disaster pay for workers who spend much of their day outdoors and may have to work in extreme weather conditions (e.g., extreme heat, wildfire smoke).
- Ensure that green infrastructure is accessible to those with physical disabilities and that educational materials, trainings, and information on rebates, tax credits, and other financial incentives are accessible to those with cognitive disabilities.
- Adopt collaborative, human-centered approaches to support the unhoused population, such as providing community heating and cooling centers and water fountains, rather than implementing punitive measures.
- To establish a list of relevant, respected local organizations, ask known local organizations for other individuals/groups that should be included on the list.
- Include community definitions related to Justice40 initiatives. This is another lens through which to address Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), frontline, and vulnerable communities and also tethers to Federal tracking, statistics, and funding opportunities.
- Provide compensation and/or incentives to people for taking time to share their expertise and/or personal experiences/stories.

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