

# **Houston Climate Action Plan**

# **DRAFT Outline of Recommendations**

**For Public Comment** 

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### **Background**

The City of Houston has a strong history of implementing effective and practical programs and policies that establish a competitive market advantage. The creation of the first community-wide Climate Action Plan (CAP) builds upon this legacy by solidifying the commitment made by Mayor Turner, co-chair of Climate Mayors, on June 24, 2017, to adopt, honor, and uphold the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. As of July, 427 Mayors in 48 States have pledged to uphold the Paris Agreement.

A CAP enables Houston to develop strategies and evidence-based measures that will not only help minimize the City's carbon footprint and the negative outcomes of climate change, but also create more resilient communities, reduce harmful pollution, cut energy waste, and boost the local economy. This roadmap for the City, businesses, residents, and communities will analyze current emission sources and evaluate the health, safety, and economic benefits of various development and policy options that could bring Houston closer to a carbon-neutral future. As sustainability and resiliency go hand in hand, the plan is also a critical component of the City's Resilience Strategy – currently in development – and recovery efforts after Hurricane Harvey.

Houston is one of the largest per capita greenhouse gas emissions in the country with 14.9 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per capita per year. A baseline of greenhouse gas emissions inventory was developed using 2014 data to guide the CAP strategies and track the implementation progress. In 2014, Houston residents and businesses generated nearly 35 million tons of greenhouse gases through carbon-fueled buildings, cars, and waste. As Houston gains population, jobs, and buildings each year, the associated projected emissions also grow; thus, Houston needs to define an ambitious agenda for the future.

### How to use this document

This document is an outline that the public is invited to review before the CAP is drafted. These draft strategies and actions have been recommended by community stakeholders brought together by the City over the past few months and were evaluated for technical feasibility by our partners (HARC and C40).

# Please submit your comments by August 31, 2019.

#### Online Form:

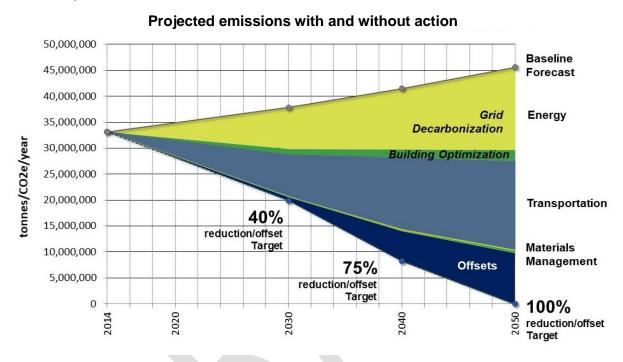
http://greenhoustontx.gov/climateactionplan/comment.html

### Mail or Drop off:

City of Houston - Office of Sustainability 611 Walker, 13th Floor, Houston, TX 77002

### **Emissions Reductions Goals**

Strategies and actions were recommended based on their potential to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and equitably benefit the community. Any initial actions that could negatively impact disadvantaged populations were either removed from consideration or revised to ensure positive, equitable outcomes for the whole community.



**Figure 1.** GHG emissions were projected without actions (baseline forecast) alongside the emission reduction potential of recommended actions. Emission reduction goals of 40%, 75%, and 100% of the baseline forecast were modeled for 2030, 2040, and 2050 respectively.

# GHG Reduction Potential (by 2050):

GHG Impact	Definition
Enabling	Indirect Impact/Supporting
Low	Less than 10,000 tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year
Medium	10,000 – 100,000 tCO₂e per year
High	More than 100,000 tCO₂e per year

### **Overview of Goals**

The following goals guide the strategies and actions that the City and community can take to reduce our GHG emissions and help prepare for a changing climate.

## **Transportation**

- **T1** Shift regional fleet to electric vehicles (EV) and alternative renewable fuels.
- **T2** Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita.
- **T3** Provide equitable mobility.

# **Energy Transition**

- E1 Increase local solar generation and storage.
- **E2** Increase renewable energy generated outside the city limits.
- E3 Invest in green infrastructure and carbon capture technology to offset emissions.

## **Building Optimization**

- **B1** Reduce building energy use and maximize savings.
- **B2** Expand investment in energy efficiency.
- **B3** Optimize building operations through investing in skilled local jobs.

## **Materials Management**

- M1 Improve public awareness of sustainable material consumption and disposal choices.
- M2 Reduce tonnage of landfilled waste.
- **M3** Protect public health and the environment through optimized waste operations/management.

In addition to having a more-stable climate, implementation of certain CAP activities may also produce the following co-benefits:

- Economy/Innovation
- Affordability
- Accessibility
- Cost-Savings

- Health and Well-being
- Community Resilience
- Environmental Quality
- Workforce Development

# **Leading By Example: Summary of City-Specific Actions**

Implementation of these actions by the City of Houston in the short term can build community capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve our 2050 carbon neutral goal.

Activity	Year Completed	
Transportation		
Increase public infrastructure for EV and alternative renewable fuels, installing EV charging stations at public-facing City buildings.	2025	
Convert non-emergency, light-duty municipal fleet to 100% EV.	2030	
Expand City's Transit Oriented Development and densification ordinance inside the Sam Houston Tollway.	2030	
Energy Transition		
Power municipal operations with 100% renewable energy and evaluate onsite solar.	2025	
Work with Texas cities to increase the state renewable portfolio standard.	2030	
Strengthen City of Houston's tree planting and greenspace protection policies.	2025	
Building Optimization		
Update and enforce building and energy codes leading to net-zero commercial buildings.	2025	
Require all new City of Houston owned/occupied buildings to be designed and operated as net-zero by 2030.	2030	
Update municipal benchmarking and energy audit policy.	2030	
Continue the City's leadership in engaging and enabling building owners, operators, and tenants to adopt efficient building practices.	ongoing	
Reduce drinking water operations and wastewater treatment plant energy consumption by 10% through optimization of facility operations and implement city-wide water conservation program.		
Materials Management		
Update and adopt more stringent Green Procurement Policy.	2022	
Implement a phased "universal" recycling ordinance to require businesses and multifamily residents to participate in recycling.	2025	
Phase in requirement for source-separated food waste collection from large, commercial food processors and manufacturers.	2025	

# Strategies and Actions by key area

Note: Action items in GREEN denote City of Houston actions.

Action items in BLACK denote community actions.

Transportation Strategies	Actions
Goal: Shift regional fleet to EV and alte	ernative renewable fuels.
T1.1 Increase infrastructure and incentives for EV and alternative renewable fuels use in commercial and private sector.	<ol> <li>Install EV charging stations at libraries, community centers, and other public-facing City buildings by 2025</li> <li>Adopt EV-ready building codes and streamline permitting for EV charging</li> </ol>
GHG Impact: Enabling-High	3. Commission EVolve Houston Coalition PPP to
Year Completed: 2030	establish conversion goals, plan system of
Lead: ARA Partners: CenterPoint, Private sector, Harris County, H-GAC, Port of Houston	charging infrastructure, and promote EV consumer education in all transportation sectors  4. Pursue state, federal, and local incentives for EV infrastructure
<b>T1.2</b> Convert 100% of the non- emergency, light-duty municipal fleet (cars and trucks) to EV technologies by 2030.	<ol> <li>Publish and implement recommendations from City Green Fleet Study</li> <li>Rebuild and Expand Green Fleet Share Program</li> <li>Adopt Green Fleet Procurement Policy</li> </ol>
GHG Impact: Medium	
Year Completed: 2030	
Lead: Fleet Management	
Goal: Reduce vehicle miles traveled (V	MT) per capita.
T2.1 Implement integrated multi-modal transportation systems GHG Impact: Enabling-High	<ol> <li>Expand shared/micro mobility options (e.g., bike sharing and car share)</li> <li>Extend METRO network, particularly BRT</li> <li>Expand focus of TIRZ and Management Districts</li> </ol>
Year Completed: 2030, 2040 METRONext	to champion multi-modal access and information 4. Coordinate regional transit operations and payment systems
Lead: Planning Partners: H-GAC, Harris County, METRO, TxDOT, Private sector	Prioritize funding mechanisms toward multi-modal transportations (especially MPO funds)

Transportation Strategies	Actions
T2.2 Build and retrofit complete, transit- oriented neighborhoods  GHG Impact: High  Year Completed: 2030  Lead: Planning, Housing, Mayor's Office of Complete Communities Partners: Private sector	<ol> <li>Expand City's Transit-Oriented Development and densification ordinance, Complete Neighborhood and Livable Cities Programs, Transit Corridor and Walkable Places Ordinance inside the Sam Houston Tollway</li> <li>Reduce parking requirements</li> <li>Implement pricing strategies for public parking</li> <li>Create incentives and prioritize public financing mechanisms to support infill development</li> </ol>
T2.3 Implement traffic demand reduction programs with governmental, institutional and commercial anchors.  GHG Impact: Enabling	<ol> <li>Provide real-time transit and traffic information</li> <li>Encourage employers to offer financial incentives for transit use, implement flex time, and expand bicycle parking/showers</li> </ol>
Year Completed: 2030	
Lead: H-GAC, Private sector, Special districts Partners: ARA	
Goal: Provide equitable mobility.	
T3.1 Reduce the costs of early adoption of transportation technologies and services for vulnerable populations  GHG Impact: Enabling	<ol> <li>Provide vulnerable populations with transit cost offsets</li> <li>Require transit partners to bridge technology gap and language barrier</li> <li>Promote second-hand EV market</li> </ol>
Year Completed: 2040	3. Fromote Second-Hand EV market
Public-Private Partnership: City of Houston, Harris County, METRO, Private sector	
T3.2 Improve interconnectedness and safety of pedestrian and transit networks	<ol> <li>Develop and implement a sidewalk plan</li> <li>Continue to implement Complete Streets initiative and expand investment in construction and repair of sidewalk and bike lanes</li> </ol>
GHG Impact: Enabling-High	Support and fully implement Houston Bike Plan
Year Completed: 2025  Lead: Planning, HPW  Partners: H-GAC, Harris County,  METRO, TxDOT, Private sector	and Bayou Greenways 2020 initiatives 4. Implement Vision Zero

<b>Energy Transition Strategies</b>	Actions
Goal: Increase local solar generation a	nd storage.
E1.1 Support installation of rooftop and community solar	Develop and enforce specific standards requiring that new commercial and industrial buildings accommodate solar and battery installation
Year Completed: 2025  Lead: ARA, GSD, HPW, CenterPoint,	<ol> <li>Assess potential for solar at City facilities</li> <li>Investigate development of distributed energy/microgrid of local community solar projects on City of Houston and Harris County surplus land</li> </ol>
Harris County Partners: Private sector	Utilize the electricity storage potential of electric vehicles to support renewable energy integration
E1.2 Advance investment and workforce development in renewable energy across business, financial, and transportation sectors	<ol> <li>Partner with local educational institutions, Hire Houston Youth to support distributed generation and electric vehicle charging infrastructure</li> <li>Support existing and new financing models to promote investment in renewable energy,</li> </ol>
GHG Impact: Enabling	including the existing Property Assessed Clean
Year Completed: 2025  Lead: Private sector, community colleges  Partners: ARA, CRO, Mayor's Office of Education	Energy (PACE) program  3. Assess opportunity to leverage Opportunity Zones to accelerate renewable energy investment
Goal: Increase renewable energy gene	rated outside the city limits.
<b>E2.1</b> Promote the purchase of retail renewable power by residents and businesses	<ol> <li>Power municipal operations with 100% renewable energy</li> <li>Purchase retail renewable power (i.e. Renewable</li> </ol>
GHG Impact: Enabling-Medium	Energy Credits acquisition)  3. Negotiate and sign individual Power Purchase
Year Completed: 2025  Lead: Private sector  Partners: ARA, Finance	Agreements to acquire renewable energy     Partner with retail electric providers to improve consumer awareness of renewable retail product options
E2.2 Advocate for renewable energy	1. Through Climate Mayors, lobby for federal policies
policies at the state and federal levels <b>GHG Impact:</b> High	that facilitate decarbonizing the U.S. power sector 2. Organize Texas mayors to lobby state legislature
Year Completed: 2030	to increase the Texas Renewable Portfolio Standard to 80% zero-carbon electricity by 2050
Lead: ARA	
Partners: Private sector, Nonprofit & Advocacy groups	

Energy Transition Strategies	Actions
Goal: Invest in green infrastructure and	d carbon capture technology to offset emissions.
<b>E3.1</b> Utilize Houston's abundant greenspace to capture and store carbon	Create a tree canopy plan to increase coverage     25% by 2040
GHG Impact: Enabling-Medium	Revise existing tree and shrub ordinance and provide incentives to landscape with native plants
Year Completed: 2030, 2040  Lead: Private sector; community colleges  Partners: ARA; CRO; Mayor's Office of Education	<ul> <li>3. Create a grassland management plan for the City of Houston</li> <li>4. Support development of regional and local ecosystem credit markets for carbon and storm water capture</li> </ul>
<b>E3.2</b> Offset municipal emissions (e.g. Fleet)	<ol> <li>Develop a plan to secure material quantities of low-cost emission offset credits, prioritizing Texas- based CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration projects</li> </ol>
GHG Impact: Enabling	based CO <sub>2</sub> sequestration projects
Year Completed: 2030	
Lead: Private sector; community colleges Partners: ARA; CRO; Mayor's Office of Education	
E3.3 Promote Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Sequestration (CCUS) from industrial processes	Encourage private sector and universities to build upon current CCUS research and development, initiatives, and pilot programs
GHG Impact: Enabling	
Year Completed: 2030	
Lead: Private sector; community colleges Partners: ARA; CRO; Mayor's Office of Education	

<b>Building Optimization Strategies</b>	Actions
Goal: Reduce building energy use and	maximize savings.
B1.1 Update energy code and increase compliance  GHG Impact: High	<ol> <li>Increase capacity and training for plan review and code inspection staff</li> <li>Evaluate, improve, and update municipal code</li> </ol>
Year Completed: 2025	enforcement procedures  3. Accelerate energy code adoption
Lead: HPW Partners: Private sector, Nonprofit/Advocacy groups	
<b>B1.2</b> Develop programs that improve building energy efficiency	Work with Building Owners and Managers     Association (BOMA) and building industry partners
GHG Impact: High	to develop benchmarking and audit programs for commercial, industrial, and residential buildings
Year Completed: 2030	Update municipal building benchmarking and     aparay audit palicy.
Lead: ARA, GSD, BOMA Partners: Private sector, Nonprofit/Advocacy groups	energy audit policy
<b>B1.3</b> Reduce water and wastewater energy consumption by 10% through optimization of facility operations and water conservation	<ol> <li>Implement water conservation education campaigns</li> <li>Consider water rates that encourage water conservation</li> </ol>
GHG Impact: Medium	Implement technologies and programs to reduce water loss and waste
Year Completed: 2025	4. Implement water reuse strategies to use non-
Lead: HPW Partners: Regional water providers, Municipal Utility Districts, Private sector, HOA's, Nonprofit/Advocacy groups	potable water where appropriate

<b>Building Optimization Strategies</b>	Actions
Goal: Expand investment in energy eff	iciency.
B2.1 Promote clean energy financing programs  GHG Impact: Enabling  Year Completed: 2025 (Commercial); 2030 (Residential)  Lead: Private sector  Partners: Economic Development, HPW, ARA, Nonprofit & Advocacy groups	<ol> <li>Provide training and education resources on building optimization and available finance mechanisms, such as PACE, green leases, on-bill financing, etc.</li> <li>Promote tools that identify financial incentives and assistance with efficiency programs, i.e. partnership with Incentifind</li> </ol>
B2.2 Expand utility energy efficiency programs  GHG Impact: High  Year Completed: 2025  Lead: CenterPoint, Electricity providers  Partners: ARA	<ol> <li>Implement city-wide weatherization program to reduce residential energy consumption and focus on reducing energy burden of low-income populations</li> <li>Update and align CenterPoint's rebate and incentive programs with City's goal to reduce energy consumption</li> </ol>
Goal: Optimize building operations thr	ough investing in skilled local jobs.
B3.1 Provide training in the operation, management and maintenance of relevant building systems  GHG Impact: High  Year Completed: 2025	<ol> <li>Promote existing building owner/operator trainings and certifications and identify programs that need to be developed</li> <li>Educate, engage and connect the community to create sustainability training programs and provide career pathway opportunities</li> </ol>
Public-Private Partnership: HPW, Private sector, Community Colleges, Nonprofit & Advocacy groups	<ul> <li>3. Provide training and education resources for single and multi-family residences</li> <li>4. Educate owners/operators on the Federal Rules governing refrigerant management</li> </ul>

Materials Management Strategies	Actions
Goal: Improve public awareness of sus	stainable material consumption and disposal
M1.1 Engage public on waste reduction solutions	Provide training and education resources to community leaders
GHG Impact: Enabling	Lead by example and promote initiatives that reduce consumption of high GHG-impact goods
Year Completed: 2025	(e.g. plastic-free July)
Lead: ARA, SWD, H-GAC Partners: Private sector	Develop robust multimedia campaign with local talent and promote existing private sector marketing initiatives
<b>M1.2</b> Develop, implement, and promote sustainable municipal procurement strategies	<ol> <li>Prioritize buying local, from small, minority-owned businesses</li> <li>Create procurement policy that requires City to</li> </ol>
GHG Impact: Enabling	purchase products that have a low life cycle GHG impact and contract with sustainable vendors
Year Completed: 2025	Support and incentivize producers and suppliers
Lead: ARA, SPD	who offer reduced-GHG goods
M1.3 Promote upstream solutions to reduce/manage disaster debris  GHG Impact: Enabling  Year Completed: 2025	<ol> <li>Require proper disposal of organic storm debris</li> <li>Promote spring cleaning of hazardous materials in advance of hurricane season</li> <li>Raise awareness of flood and hurricane resilient construction materials</li> </ol>
Lead: CRO, SWD, OEM Partners: Private sector	
Goal: Reduce tonnage of landfilled was	ste.
M2.1 Expand and innovate recycling opportunities to all Houston residents and businesses to increase diversion and recovery, while reducing contamination	<ol> <li>Implement a phased "universal" recycling ordinance for businesses and multi-family apartment buildings</li> <li>Encourage recycling building materials with permitting incentives</li> </ol>
GHG Impact: Medium	3. Increase the number of drop-off locations and pick up services, expanding materials accepted
Year Completed: 2030	Conduct cart audits to educate residents to
Lead: SWD, H-GAC Partners: Private sector	prevent contamination and maximize diversion 5. Measure contamination rates for all commercial, residential, and industrial recycling

Materials Management Strategies	Actions
M2.2 Strengthen and support efforts to reduce food waste and create infrastructure for food organics collection and composting  GHG Impact: High  Year Completed: 2025  Lead: Private sector  Partners: SWD, HHD	<ol> <li>Phase in requirement for source-separated foodwaste collection from large, commercial foodwaste generators</li> <li>Develop food organics residential collection pilot program and create infrastructure for collection</li> <li>Create a network platform for partnership between large food waste generators with local composting companies</li> <li>Facilitate food donation for human consumption and animal-feed production</li> <li>Facilitate the development of commercial composting facilities and food waste haulers</li> </ol>
M2.3 Support and expand market development and diversion infrastructure  GHG Impact: Enabling  Year Completed: 2025  Lead: Private sector	<ol> <li>Expand programs like Repair Café for appliance/electronics reuse and repair</li> <li>Promote awareness of end markets for commercial and consumer waste products and take-back programs</li> <li>Increase visibility of businesses and services that sell or repair used goods</li> </ol>
Goal: Protect public health and the encoperations/management.	
M3.1 Improve efficiency of all landfill, transfer stations and waste transportation.  GHG Impact: Medium  Year Completed: 2030  Lead: Private sector  Partners: SWD, TCEQ, EPA	<ol> <li>Require City of Houston-contracted landfills to capture landfill gas.</li> <li>Set enforceable environmental standards for all SWD facilities and require third party inspections</li> <li>City of Houston convert solid waste fleet to low emission vehicles by 2030</li> <li>Assess opportunities for waste conversion technologies (e.g. anaerobic digestion, pyrolysis, gasification, etc.) for economic and technical feasibility</li> </ol>
M3.2 Ensure long-term disposable capacity and solid waste infrastructure GHG Impact: Enabling Year Completed: 2030 Lead: Private sector Partners: SWD, H-GAC	<ol> <li>Provide sustainable funding for municipal solid waste services</li> <li>Improve capacity for managing and recovering disaster debris</li> <li>Monitor and track all City of Houston-generated waste volumes and their waste-types</li> <li>Require anonymous reporting of waste and recycling tonnages to an independent</li> </ol>

### **Acronyms**

ARA City of Houston Department of Administration and Regulatory Affairs **BOMA** Building Owners and Managers Association **BRT** Bus Rapid Transit CAP Climate Action Plan CCUS Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Sequestration CO<sub>2</sub> Carbon Dioxide tCO2e Tons of Carbon Dioxide Emitted CRO City of Houston Chief Resilience Officer EV Electric Vehicle **EPA** Environmental Protection Agency GHG Greenhouse Gases GSD City of Houston General Services Department H-GAC Houston-Galveston Area Council HHD Houston Health Department **HPW** Houston Public Works Department MPO Metropolitan Planning Organization OEM City of Houston Office of Emergency Management PACE Property Assessed Clean Energy PPP Public-Private Partnership SWD City of Houston Solid Waste Management Department TCEQ Texas Commission on Environmental Quality TIRZ Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone TxDOT Texas Department of Transportation VMT Vehicle Miles Traveled

## **List of Implementation Leads and Partners**

### City of Houston (COH) Departments:

- Administration and Regulatory Affairs
- Chief Resilience Officer
- Economic Development
- Finance
- Fleet Management
- General Services Department
- Housing
- Houston Health Department
- Houston Public Works
- Mayor's Office of Complete Communities
- Mayor's Office of Education
- Office of Emergency Management
- Parks and Recreation
- Planning
- Solid Waste Management

# **Complimentary Initiatives**

## Cross-Cutting:

- Climate Mayors
- Green Building Resource Center
- Hire Houston Youth
- Our Great Region (H-GAC)
- Plan Houston
- Resilient Houston
- Smart Cities

### Transportation:

- Active Living Plan
- Bayou Greenways 2020
- Complete Communities
- Houston Bike Plan
- Houston ConnectSmart (TxDOT)
- EVolve Houston
- Green Fleet Study
- Livable Centers (H-GAC)
- METRONext (METRO)
- Vision Zero
- Walkable Places Committee

### Community:

- BOMA
- CenterPoint Energy
- Electricity providers
- EPA
- Harris County
- H-GAC
- METRO
- Municipal Utility Districts
- Nonprofit & Advocacy groups
- Port of Houston
- Private sector
- Regional Water Providers
- Solar United Neighbors
- TCEQ
- TxDOT

## **Energy Transition:**

- Baker Institute and Mitchell Foundation CCUS Initiative
- Fast-track solar permitting
- Green Power Program
- Houston Parks Board
- Solarize Houston
- TREES Program
- 50-for-50 initiative

#### Materials Management:

Long Range Solid Waste Plan

### **Building Optimization:**

- City Energy Efficiency Policy
- Green Building Advisory Council
- Houston Green Office Challenge
- Residential Energy Efficiency Program
- Regional Water Plan
- TX-PACF