Lead by Example 2025-29 Work Program



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Acknowledgements

City Council

Mayor Erica Stewart Vice Mayor Michelle Shoresman Council Member Jan Marx Council Member Emily Francis Council Member Michael Boswell Council Member Andy Pease (former)

City Management

Whitney McDonald, City Manager Scott Collins, Assistant City Manager Greg Hermann, Deputy City Manager

Green Team Contributors

Adam Fukushima, Active Transportation Manager; Alejandro Hernandez, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor Alex Fuchs, Mobility Services Business Manager Amy Fletcher, Human Resources Analyst Basile Inman, City Ranger Bob Hill, Natural Resources Manager Brian Amoroso, Deputy Chief of Police Brian Lindsay, Facilities Maintenance Technician Brian Nelson, Deputy Director of Public Works/City Engineer Chris Lehman, Utilities Deputy Director, Wastewater Chris Read, Sustainability Manager Dan Clancy, Financial Analyst David Amini, Housing Coordinator Devin Hyfield, Recreation Manager Freddy Otte, City Biologist Greg Cruce, Deputy Director of Public Works, Maintenance Operations Jacqui Clark-Charlesworth, Tourism and Community **Promotions Manager** Jennifer Rice, Deputy Director of Mobility Services Jesse Stanley, Transit Coordinator Josh Erquiaga, Information Technology Manager Juanita Iriarte, Communications Coordinator Kiersten Anderson, Volunteer Coordinator Lucia Pohlman, Sustainability and Natural Resources Analyst

Luke Schwartz, Transportation Manager Madeline Kacsinta, Capital Improvement Program Administrative Manager Markie Kersten, Assistant City Attorney McKenzie Taffe, Economic Development Analyst Meg Buckingham, Solid Waste and Recycling Program Manager Michael Loew, Chief Building Official Natalie Harnett, Policy and Project Manager Nestor Veloz-Passalagua, Diversity Equity and Inclusion Manager Nick Teague, Water Resources Program Manager Nico Gurney, Utilities Engineering Technician Nicole Long, Natural Resources Fellow Patrick McGrath, Water Resource Recovery Facility Supervisor Rachelle Paris, Solid Waste and Recycling Coordinator Rilev Kuhn, Principal Budget Analyst Shawna Scott, Utilities Special Projects Manager Shelsie Moore, Supervising Civil Engineer Taline Arouchian, Sustainability and Natural **Resources Fellow** Teresa McClish, Principal Planner Walter Gault, Urban Forestry Program Coordinator/ City Arborist Jordan Smith, Green Buildings Fellow and many others.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Forecast	6
3. Lead by Example 2025-29 Work Program	9
3.1 Building & Facility Energy	10
3.2 Fleet	16
3.3 Employee Commute	22
3.4 Solid Waste	28
3.5 Water and Wastewater	33
3.6 Natural Solutions	37
3.7 Procurement, Budget, and Finance	42
3.8 Administrative Actions	46
4. Achieving Our Goals	47

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2020, City Council adopted a goal of communitywide carbon neutrality by 2035. As part of that goal, Council also adopted a goal of carbon neutral municipal operations by 2030. In 2021, Council adopted *Lead by Example: A Plan for Carbon Neutral Municipal Operations* (referred to in this document as, "2021 LBE"), which identifies goals, objectives, and actions for achieving the City's municipal operations climate goal.

The City has been implementing the 2021 LBE over the past four years and in that time has learned a lot about how to reduce pollution while providing the same great community services (for a full overview of implementation progress, see the <u>Lead by Example 2024 Progress Report</u>).

This Lead by Example 2025-29 Work Program (referred

A Tradition of Operational Efficiency

The City has a long history of managing its operations to minimize the environmental impact and costs associated with City energy use, fleet fuel consumption, solid waste generation, and employee commute. Since the adoption of the 2004 Conservation and Open Space Element General Plan, the City has had Council policy direction to be a "Model City" and to "manage its own operations to be as pollution free as possible."

to as "2025 LBE") takes the lessons learned from implementing the 2021 LBE and provides detail for how to continue to make significant progress towards the City's municipal operations climate goals during the 2025-27 and 2027-29 Financial Plans. At full implementation, the City estimates that the 2025 LBE plan would result in an 84% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 2022 (see Chapter 2 for more details).

Top Takeaways

The 2025 LBE provides a detailed road map for how the City can continue to make progress on its municipal operations climate action goals. Through implementing the 2021 LBE and developing the 2025 LBE, the City has identified three top takeaways:

- 1. The City is making significant progress towards its 2030 Goal. Despite a global pandemic, inflation, and multiple climate change induced disasters, the City has made a serious effort to achieve the ambitious 2030 goal and to date has brought in over \$15.5 million dollars in outside grants, rebates, and incentives for Lead by Example implementation. If the City were to fully implement the 2025 LBE, it is projected to achieve an 84% reduction in emissions by 2030 relative to 2022.
- 2. There are challenging obstacles to achieving carbon neutrality. These obstacles include recently purchased fossil fuel assets with a long

What are Municipal Operations?

While the Climate Action Plan for Community Recovery addresses greenhouse gas emissions from all actions that occur in the City limits, Lead by Example is focused on emissions caused by the day-to-day operations of the City of San Luis Obispo as an organization. In this context, the City organization can be thought of as a business that runs offices, employs staff, uses fleet vehicles, operates machinery, and maintains properties to carry out a variety of essential functions.

remaining operational life, limited market availability for certain types of electric vehicles and equipment, and challenges associated with voluntary behavior change related to commute and solid waste disposal.

3. Emerging technologies and funding sources are on the horizon. While the current projections based on full Lead by Example implementation push achievement of the carbon neutrality goal into the mid-2030s, rapid advances in technology and new funding sources may emerge that can allow the City to fast-track implementation. To uphold the City's commitment to its climate neutrality goals, City Council and staff from all departments will need to continue serving as a leaders and innovators though the end of the decade and beyond.





Lead by Example Sectors

The term "carbon neutrality" refers to a state where the total emissions of the City's operations (minus emissions captured through carbon sequestration) are zero or negative. The City's approach to carbon neutrality is built on access to clean electricity, reducing energy use where possible, replacing fossil fuel vehicles and equipment with electric alternatives, diverting organic waste away from the landfill, and growing the carbon storage potential of the City's forests, parks, and open spaces.

The City's approach to municipal carbon neutrality is organized into a total of seven sectors, as described below and shown in Figure 1. Five of the sectors are quantified sources of emissions, while "Natural Solutions" includes quantified emissions *reductions* and "Procurement, Budget, and Finance" provides non-inventoried actions that support reductions in the other sectors.



Figure 1. Lead by Example Emission Sectors and Goals.

The 2025 LBE has expanded its scope from the 2021 LBE to fully include the Utilities Department, thereby incorporating Utilities' fleet vehicles and energy used at the Water Treatment Plant, the Water Resource Recovery Facility, the Utilities Administration Building, and various pumping stations.¹ For the first time, the Plan also estimates some of the emissions created by the wastewater treatment process. It is important to note that as a public utility, the Utilities Department is also an "enterprise fund" department, meaning that it is a distinct business entity hosted inside the larger City organization. For the remainder of this report "Utilities" will refer to this enterprise fund department and "General Fund" will be used to refer to the other departments and funds in the City organization.

Update Process

Progress Report

The Lead by Example effort is in a constant cycle of planning, doing, and learning. The City has been implementing sustainability initiatives in its municipal operations for decades, and has been actively decarbonizing as directed by the 2021 LBE for nearly four years. In 2024, staff from each implementing department worked together to develop a summary of the progress achieved (Lead by Example 2024 Progress Report). The LBE 2024 Progress Report was presented to the City Council in May of 2024, and the technical analysis and Council feedback provided the foundation for the 2025 LBE. As described below, the 2025 LBE was created entirely by City staff, in-line with the City's goals, vision, and values.



¹ Lead by Example does not include water facilities shared with external agencies, such as Whale Rock Reservoir and Lake Nacimiento

Green Team

The 2025 LBE was developed and completed entirely by a group of staff members known as the "Green Team". The Green Team is a crossdepartmental collaborative body of over 36 staff members that guides the City's approach to achieving carbon neutral municipal operations. The Green Team allows staff from each department to participate in the planning and implementation of emissions reduction measures in order to achieve an all-City approach to municipal carbon neutrality.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are core values for the City of San Luis Obispo. As *Lead by Example* focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions related to municipal operations, some of the scope of *Lead by Example* (e.g. changing how water is heated, or how vehicles are powered) does not directly link to a DEI focus. However, there are impactful intersections regarding the implementation of Employee Commute and Natural Solutions actions. Examples include:



- Integrating equity and inclusion lens into the Employee Commute sector can ensure that every employee has access to resources that support a lower cost and lower pollution commute.
- Collaborating on Natural Solutions with San Luis Obispo's tribal entities, including the yak tit^yu tit^yu yak tiłhini Northern Chumash Tribe of San Luis Obispo County and Region, can revive ancestral lifeways and the use of traditional ecological knowledge on City-owned Open Space properties, including the use of Cultural Fire.

Additionally, there are City staff members that participate on both the DEI Employee Committee and the Green Team. This approach supports Green Team members in weaving an intersectional perspective into the City's Lead by Example planning efforts and implementation, and enables staff to carefully align multi-benefit projects that address the City's goals on carbon neutrality and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2. GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY AND FORECAST

A greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory is an accounting of the GHG emissions that have occurred as the result of activity in a calendar year. The GHG inventory for the 2025 LBE includes a 2022 municipal operations inventory and an update to the City's forecasted emissions assuming full 2025 LBE implementation for 2025 and 2030. The GHG emissions inventory and related emissions forecasts provide the foundational technical analysis to understand baseline conditions and identify necessary actions to make progress towards the City's 2030 municipal operations carbon neutrality goal.

The municipal operations GHG inventory and forecast includes emissions estimates for five sectors as outlined in Table 1. Each sector uses activity data from City operations to estimate or model GHG emissions:

- The "Building & Facility Energy" inventory focuses on emissions from energy (electricity and natural gas) used to power buildings, facilities, and stationary equipment owned and operated by the City.
- The "Fleet" inventory focuses on emissions from electricity and fossil fuel use (gasoline and diesel) used in fleet vehicles owned and operated by the City, including maintenance vehicles, buses, fire trucks, and police vehicles, as well as landscaping and maintenance equipment. The 2022 inventory and 2025 and 2030 forecasts have been updated to include Utility Department fleet vehicles which were previously excluded due to data accessibility issues.
- The "Employee Commute" inventory estimates emissions from vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by employees traveling to and from work.
- The "**Solid Waste**" inventory focuses on emissions from landfilled solid waste, including paper and food disposed in offices.
- The "**Natural Solutions**" inventory estimates the emissions removed from the atmosphere and stored in soil and plant tissues through natural processes that occur as the direct result of municipal tree planting, regenerative grazing and grassland restoration, and compost application.

Sector	2022	2025	2030	% Change, 2022-2030
Building & Facility Energy	2,750	540	200	-93%
Fleet	1,800	1,590	720	-60%
Employee Commute	890	710	430	-52%
Solid Waste	190	130	40	-79%
Natural Solutions	-290	-390	-510	76%
Total	5,340	2,580	880	-84%

Table 1. Municipal Operations 2022 GHG Emissions Inventory and Lead by Example
Forecast, 2025-2030 (MTCO ₂ e)





As seen in Table 1, the combined reductions from the *Lead by Example* sectors and their objectives, including sequestered emissions from the Natural Solutions sector, are expected to result in a total reduction of 4,460 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e) in 2030, or 84% below 2022 emissions. In 2030, including emissions savings from the Natural Solutions sector, a remaining gap of 880 MTCO₂e between forecast emissions and carbon neutrality is estimated. Key inventory findings include:

- The Building and Facility sector forecast projects a steep 93% reduction in emissions as the result of completing electrification projects in the City's biggest natural gas using facilities. For more detail, see Section 3.1.
- The Fleet sector forecast estimates a 64% emissions reduction as fossil fuel vehicles are replaced with electric vehicles. Many of the remaining vehicles will be transitioned to electric vehicles as they reach retirement age after 2030. For more detail see Section 3.2.
- The Employee Commute and Solid Waste sector both depend on voluntary employee behavior. Since there is direct ability to provide zero waste infrastructure in offices, the forecast projects a 79% reduction. The City has less ability to influence commuting habits and therefore the forecast projects a more modest, although still highly impactful 52% reduction. For more detail, see Sections 3.3 and 3.4.

Getting to Zero Emissions

Lead by Example's approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including sequestered emissions from the Natural Solutions sector, leaves approximately 880 MTCO₂e in annual emissions in 2030 to reduce to achieve carbon neutrality. Based on the emissions trajectory, The City is expected to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions around 2034, four years after the City's goal year of 2030. Both in achieving Council's goal and leading in the community, it is important to continue making progress and engaging in emerging decarbonization activities.

Looking Ahead

Any greenhouse gas emissions inventory is only a partial accounting of all the possible activities that could emit greenhouse gas emissions. The inventory and goals adopted as part of the 2021 Lead by Example Plan were guided by specific protocol and focused narrowly on building energy use, fleet and commute vehicle use, and solid waste.

Staff continues to expand its understanding of other emissions sources and recently completed an inventory of methane generated from treating wastewater. As the wastewater is broken down during the treatment process, methane is generated onsite, which is then captured and either burned for energy, or flared off. Staff estimate that an additional 1,250 MTCO₂e were emitted in 2022, and forecast 1,380 MTCO₂e to be emitted in 2030 from direct wastewater emissions. While these emissions were not part of the original goal, staff are including these figures here for transparency. If the direct wastewater emissions were to be included in the City's GHG inventory and goals, the Lead by Example Work Program would reduce emissions from 2022 to 2030 by 66% and leave a remainder of 2,260 MTCO₂e in 2030.

As emissions quantification protocols evolve over time and the City explores opportunities to further integrate additional emissions sectors² into future inventories and operations plans, a continued commitment to scaling decarbonization programs and projects will be critical to achieve carbon neutral City operations. As described in Administration Action 3, below, the *Lead by Example* plan recommends incorporating direct wastewater emissions and scope 3 emissions into the *Lead by Example* goals as part of the plan update scheduled for 2029.

² Additional sectors could include emissions resulting from the extraction and production of purchased materials and fuels, the emissions embedded in building materials like steel and concrete, and more. More information can be found at https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/cc/protocols/localgov/pubs/lgo_protocol_v1_1_2010-05-03.pdf.

3. Lead by Example 2025-29 Work Program

The 2025 LBE work program presents critical next steps in pursuing carbon neutral City operations by 2030. As described in Chapter 1, the Green Team has worked closely with departmental staff throughout the City to develop and refine the following work program actions to ensure feasibility and consistency with broader Council objectives.

This chapter provides a deep dive into each of the seven LBE sectors. Each sector subsection contains:

- Overview of the sector's goal, objectives, and overall approach to reducing emissions
- Detailed GHG inventory updates, including emissions from 2022
- Summary of completed 2021 LBE actions
- Emerging challenges and opportunities
- Specific actions to be initiated during the 2025-27 and 2027-29 Financial Plan periods
- GHG emissions forecast for 2025 and 2030

The 2025 LBE actions are organized by the Financial Plan period when they are proposed to be initiated in. This allows the plan to closely align LBE tasks with budgeted resources. The City's budget development occurs via a separate process and inclusion of any projects or programs in the City's budget are subject to Council approval. Tasks are presented below to support budget deliberations and do not preemptively approve or otherwise imply that they are automatically included in future budgets.

3.1 Building & Facility Energy

Strategy Overview

City-owned buildings and facility energy use was the largest contributing sector to annual municipal greenhouse gas emissions in 2022, accounting for approximately 49% of inventoried emissions.

City buildings and facilities use electricity for lighting, heating, and cooling; as well as to power a wide range of electrical devices including computers, phones, and other plug loads. The City uses natural gas to heat buildings and to heat water, alongside smaller uses such clothes as cooking and drving. Unlike most organizations, the City also uses electricity to provide clean drinking water and to transform wastewater into clean discharge water. The City also uses natural gas to heat a large swimming pool.³

GOAL: The City eliminates fossil fuel use in buildings and facilities.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. Construct only all-electric new buildings and facilities.
- 2. Eliminate fossil fuel use to the maximum extent possible in existing buildings and facilities.

Lead by Example provides a pathway to eliminate fossil fuel use in buildings and facilities. If the 2025 LBE is fully implemented, over the next four years the City will avoid investment in new fossil fuel appliances and mechanical equipment and will substantially reduce fossil fuel use in existing City facilities by retrofitting the largest users of natural gas. The City will also strategically replace other natural gas equipment at the end of its useful life or when it is otherwise cost-effective to do so.⁴

Progress

Emissions Reductions

It is important to note that since 2008, the City has successfully decreased energy use despite an increasing building footprint and number of employees. Table 2 provides energy activity data for 2019 and 2022 and includes subtotals for Utilities Department accounts and all other accounts. Between 2019 and 2022 the City saw a 3.2% decrease in electricity use and a 28% decrease in gas use.

³ The City also increasingly uses electricity to charge fleet vehicles, which is addressed in Section 3.2 (Fleet).

⁴ As mentioned above, It is important to note that as a public utility, the Utilities Department requires unique considerations that consider meeting operational and financial regulations.

	2019	2022	Percent Change
Electricity (kWh) Total	9,775,193	9,461,617	-3%
Electricity (General, Transit, and Parking)	3,576,585	3,240,374	-9%
Electricity (Utilities)	6,198,608	6,221,243	0%
Natural Gas (Therms) Total	154,125	111,297	-28%
Natural Gas (General, Transit, and Parking)	142,544	102,272	-28%
Natural Gas (Utilities)	11,581	9,025	-22%

Table 2. Electricity and Natural Gas Use, 2019-2022

The Water Treatment Plant and Water Resource Recovery Facility are electricity intensive and accordingly account for approximately two-thirds of the City's electricity consumption. The primary decrease in electricity use is likely from completed energy efficiency projects. However, as the

Water Resource Recovery Facility's new systems came online in 2023 and 2024, and as the City electrifies its natural gas systems and fleet vehicles, this number is expected to increase substantially through 2030. The increased electricity consumption at the Water Resource Recovery Facility, driven by new regulatory requirements, is coupled with a significant reduction in chemical usage, which has in turn reduced emissions associated with chemical production and transportation.

Natural gas is a much different story, with General Fund facilities using approximately ten times as much as Utilities. This is largely due to the natural gas use at the SLO Swim Center. It is important to note that the City has Utilities natural gas data for 2023, which reports a large spike in natural gas consumption at the Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF) as one of its biogas creating facilities was offline for repair. This has since been repaired, and the WRRF gas consumption has returned to levels approximating those seen in Figure 3 (below).

The sector's emissions are calculated by applying the estimated MTCO₂e per unit of energy, which is either provided by the utility (electricity) or is a standard calculation (natural gas). It is important to note that Central Coast (3CE) Community Energy adopted ambitious an procurement target in 2021 to achieve 100% renewable and carbon free energy through direct investment in projects by 2030. To do so, the agency sold many of its "carbon free attributes" which had previously allowed it to report very low emissions. Figure 3 (below) provides a historical estimate of emissions coefficients for electricity and includes the 3CE forecast as it achieves its 2030 goal.







Figure 3. Electricity GHG Emission Intensity, 2005-30 (MTCO2e per kWh)

Completed Actions

The reduction in electricity and natural gas consumption mentioned above comes from a wide range of actions, including implementation of the 2021 LBE. Highlights include:

- **LED Lighting:** The City installed LED lights at City Hall, Fire Station 1, and three Cityowned parking garages. There are only a small number of facilities with non-LED lights remaining, and those are being transitioned via routine maintenance as those lights reach the end of their useful life.
- **Solar:** The City is actively pursuing solar projects at Fire Station 1, SLO Swim Center, the Bus Yard, and the forthcoming Cultural Arts District Parking Structure. Solar project construction is expected to be initiated in 2025.
- **Battery Storage:** Through the statewide Self-Generation Incentive Program (SGIP), the City installed a 644 kWh Tesla battery pack at the Water Treatment Plant at no cost to the City. This project has been operating since October 2023 and provides low-carbon backup power for up to seven hours, reduces emissions, and has lowered the facility's energy costs.
- **Carbon Neutral Facilities Plan:** The City completed the Carbon Neutral City Facilities Plan in March 2022 with support from the consulting group Glumac. The plan has already been used to formulate Capital Improvement Project (CIP) requests and inform a potential decarbonization project across three priority City facilities, currently under development. Staff will continue using this plan to inform future facility decarbonization projects.
- **Facility Electrification:** Staff have begun implementation of the Carbon Neutral Facilities Plan by retrofitting eleven domestic water electric heat pump hot water heaters. Staff are continuing to identify and pursue funding options for larger building retrofits, including heat pump installations at SLO Swim Center, City Hall, Ludwick, and the Corp Yard.

Emerging Challenges and Opportunities

Municipal facility decarbonization can reduce greenhouse gas emissions while allowing the City to stabilize grid-based energy bills in a time of rising energy utility costs. With the addition of solar, battery storage, and coordinated demand management programs, municipal buildings can stabilize energy bills, shave peak demand in the local electricity market, and increase grid resiliency in times of emergency. These opportunities are made possible through external funding support, primarily from Central Coast Community Energy (3CE), Public Utilities Commission-approved decarbonization programs, and the Federal Direct-Pay Tax Rebate from the Inflation Reduction Act.

Challenges in this sector are related to cost and timing. The City's capital projects have experienced ongoing cost increases, and the energy sector is no exception. Coupled with increasing grid-based energy costs, there is an imperative to ensure that the transition is designed to capitalize on the cost- saving opportunities described above and to avoid cost-increasing impacts.

The second challenge, timing, is associated with existing fossil fuel equipment that is in working condition and not yet at the end of its useful life. Some facilities have fossil fuel equipment that is expected to operate beyond the 2030 carbon neutrality goal. The actions below propose an ambitious yet pragmatic path that acknowledges that replacing some equipment early would have unnecessary cost impacts, while also recognizing that some large users of fossil fuel may need to be retired early to make meaningful progress.

Energy Sector Actions

Table 3 provides the reduction measure actions developed by the Green Team for the Building and Facility Energy sector. The table includes ongoing and administrative tasks, 2025-27 actions, and 2027-29 actions. Some actions within the 2025-27 and 2027-29 Financial Plans represent additional work tasks and need to be budgeted as part of the City's biannual financial planning process.

Status	GHG Reduction Action
dmin	Energy 1.1 – Continue to strategically replace fossil fuel equipment across all City buildings and facilities (Public Works, Administration).
ing / Ac	Energy 1.2 – Continue ongoing efficiency improvements as part of routine maintenance across City facilities (Public Works).
Ongo	Energy 1.3 – Continue to leverage external funding including Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) rebates, federal tax incentives, and more to cost-effectively implement building energy projects that support the City's goals (Administration).
2025- 27 FP	Energy 2.1 – Complete priority electrification projects at the (1) Swim Center, (2) Ludwick Community Center, (3) Corporation Yard, and (4) City Hall, alongside the remaining energy saving lighting efficiency retrofits across all facilities through the PG&E Sustainable Solutions Turnkey (SST) Program (Administration, Public Works).

Table 3. Building and Facility energy GHG reduction actions.

Status	GHG Reduction Action
	Energy 2.2 – Add solar and battery storage, where feasible, to City facilities to increase the generation of local renewable electricity, reduce the City's energy demand, and save money (Administration, Public Works).
ial Plan	Energy 2.3 – Assess the feasibility of launching a facility-wide energy management software (See Water 2.9) (Administration, Public Works, Utilities).
nanc	Energy 2.4 – Consider "opting-up" to Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) Prime to receive 100% renewable energy (Administration, Utilities).
2025-27 Fir	Energy 2.5 – Develop a green municipal building and facility policy to require that: 1) new buildings and facilities are all-electric, 2) fossil fuel equipment at the end of its useful life is replaced with an electric alternative, 3) municipal facility construction and retrofit projects above a certain valuation remove fossil fuels in the facility, and 4) funding would be identified to help offset the cost of electric alternatives. As part of the policy development process, identify a process for approving reasonable exemptions (Administration, Public Works).
an	Energy 3.1 – Complete the priority electrification, solar, and battery storage projects identified in Energy 2.1 and 2.2 (Public Works, Administration).
2027-29 Financial Pk	Energy 3.2 – If the City pursues Energy 2.4, continue to "opt-up" to Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) Prime to receive 100% renewable energy (Administration, Utilities).
	Energy 3.3 – Design and implement hard-to-reach facility retrofits to strategically replace natural gas equipment across buildings and facilities (Public Works, Administration).
	Energy 3.4 – Analyze, and if feasible, coordinate City solar and battery assets as a "Virtual Power Plant" to save money on electricity and reduce peak demand (Administration).

Sector Emissions Forecast

Figure 4 provides a forecast of emissions based on implementation of the work program proposed above. The figure includes three scenarios: 1) *Business as Usual* models emissions if the City stopped efforts to decarbonize City facilities in 2024, 2) *Reduction Measure Forecast* models emissions if the City fully implements the 2025 LBE, and 3) *Reduction Measure Forecast (with 3CPrime)* models if the City fully implements the 2025 LBE, and 3) *Reduction Measure Forecast (with 3CPrime)* models if the City fully implements the 2025 LBE without "opting-up" to the 100% renewable 3CPrime product from 3CE. At full implementation of scenario 2, in 2025, Building and Facility Energy emissions are expected to decrease by 1,570 MTCO2e relative to "business as usual", or approximately 75%. In 2030, emissions are expected to decrease by 2,210 MTCO2e relative to "business as usual", or approximately 93%.



Figure 4. Building and Facility Energy Emissions Inventory and Forecast, 2019-2030

3.2 Fleet

Strategy Overview

Fleet is the second-largest contributor to annual municipal greenhouse gas emissions. The City's fleet generates approximately 32% of overall **GOAL:** The City eliminates fossil fuel emissions.

The fleet sector includes on-road vehicles like sedans, trucks, police cruisers, and fire trucks, as well as offroad or maintenance equipment like leaf blowers, lawn mowers, and backup generators.

The City's approach to eliminating emissions from this sector is to electrify every possible fossil fuel powered fleet asset. This will be achieved through the procurement of electric vehicles and equipment and the continued build out of charging infrastructure.

Progress

Emissions Reductions

use in vehicle and equipment fleet.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. Achieve 100% all-electric light duty vehicles, excluding longrange and certain public safety vehicles.
- 2. Achieve 50% zero emissions medium and heavy-duty vehicles.
- 3. Achieve 100% all-electric transit fleet.
- 4. Achieve 100% all-electric equipment, excluding certain heavy-duty equipment, pumps, and backup generators.

Table 4 provides fleet related activity data for 2019 and 2022 and includes subtotals for the Utilities Department and all other accounts. Between 2019 and 2022, the City saw a 27% decrease in diesel use and a 12% decrease in gasoline use.

Table 4. Fleet Activity Data, 2019 and 2022

	2019	2022	Percent Change
General Fund and Transit - Vehicles			
Diesel (Gallons)	141,590	103,970	-27%
Gasoline (Gallons)	75,570	66,660	-12%
New Sub-Sectors			
*new * Diesel - General Fund - Equipment (Gallons)		1,835	N/A
new Gas - General Fund - Equipment (Gallons)		333	N/A
new Diesel - Utilities Vehicles (Gallons)		5,338	N/A
new Gas - Utilities - Vehicles (Gallons)		11,205	N/A
new Diesel - Utilities - Equipment (Gallons)		1,046	N/A
new Gas - Utilities - Equipment (Gallons)		40	N/A

The sector's emissions are calculated by applying the estimated MTCO₂e per unit, which is provided by the *Local Government Operations* Protocol for gasoline, diesel, and renewable diesel.

Completed Actions

- Electric Fleet Vehicles: Since 2019, the City has purchased 28 electric fleet vehicles, two plug-in hybrid fleet vehicles, and two electric buses.
- Fleet Chargers: The City has installed 11 charging ports for fleet vehicles and an additional four ports for the transit fleet.
- Fleet Replacement Policy: In 2022, the City amended and adopted the Fleet Replacement Policy to enforce the replacement of fleet vehicles with either an electric car or an electric bike unless specifically approved by the City Manager.
- Fleet Electrification Study Vehicle Report: the City received grant funding from 3CE to complete a Fleet Electrification Study Vehicle Report and a Charging Infrastructure Report. The study was updated in 2024.





Emerging Challenges and Opportunities

The City has identified priority electrification opportunities across the fleet, has aligned its fleet replacement policy with its carbon neutrality goal, has assessed charging capacity and needs, and has identified external funding opportunities to support the transition. The key factors of fleet success come down to the basics: vehicles and chargers.

Vehicles

Some equipment is easier and cheaper to electrify than others – paired with \$13,500 in federal and 3CE rebates per vehicle, electric light duty vehicles are typically cheaper than their fossil fuel alternatives to purchase. Combined with lower fuel costs and maintenance requirements, this means light-duty fleet vehicles have a lower overall total cost of ownership than traditional fossil fuel alternatives while providing the same, if not better, operational capacity.

Reducing emissions in the Fleet sector is particularly challenging for medium and heavy-duty fleet vehicles. This is especially true in departments with custom purpose medium and heavy-duty vehicles, including Public Works (Streets), Utilities, Parks & Recreation, Police, and Fire. While there are many price and performance-comparable options for light-duty vehicles, there is not currently a robust market for large trucks and maintenance equipment powered by electricity, hydrogen, or other alternative zero-emissions fuels. The inventoried Fleet sector also includes diesel used to power backup generation systems. Diesel used for backup power generation

presents a particularly difficult fossil fuel source to decarbonize, as the need for reliable and accessible secondary power is essential to maintain critical services during times of crisis.

Despite these challenges, progress on hard to electrify equipment and vehicles is underway. For example, Police Department cruisers operate nearly 24 hours a day and have specific build requirements associated with them. The department has purchased two electric vehicles, one for administrative staff and one for patrol to test the operational characteristics of the vehicles. Paired with charging at the new Police building (1106 Walnut Street), the learnings from this pilot will inform how rapidly these vehicles can be transitioned to electric alternatives through 2030 and beyond.

Staff have designed the Fleet emissions reduction strategy to reflect market uncertainty, while also laying the foundation to transition hard-to-reach fleet vehicles as technology and cost-effectiveness allow.

Charging Infrastructure

Staff worked with Central Coast Community Energy's (3CE) "Plan Your Fleet" program to identify the charging needs for a fully electric fleet. Staff have used this work to develop a full project list for each fiscal year through 2030. The City has initial success with Level 2 charger installations and anticipates installing its first DC Fast Chargers in 2025.



Sector Actions

Table 5 provides the reduction measure actions developed by the Green Team for the Fleet sector. The table includes ongoing and administrative tasks, 2025-27 actions, and 2027-29 actions. Some actions within the 2025-27 and 2027-29 Financial Plans represent additional work tasks and need to be budgeted as part of the City's biannual financial planning process.

Similar to the Buildings Sector, the 2025-29 Fleet Sector work program continues the approach to decarbonizing where all-new vehicles and equipment are electric and fossil fuel vehicles will be allowed to remain in the fleet until the end of their useful life. Where cost effective vehicle replacements are not available due to market conditions or availability, vehicles will be expected to be obtained via short term leases, and only in instances of electric infeasibility will fossil fuel vehicles or equipment be allowed to be purchased. While this approach will allow fossil fuel consumption to occur past 2030, it makes substantial progress without unnecessarily replacing vehicles prior to the end of their useful life.

Status	GHG Reduction Action
Admin	Fleet 1.1 - Convene quarterly meetings of the Interdepartmental EV Fleet Charger Deployment Team to track and report progress on infrastructure build out (Administration).
joing /	Fleet 1.2 – Convene an initial meeting of regional fleet managers for purpose of sharing and learning best practices for fleet electrification (Administration).
Ong	Fleet 1.3 – Establish standard protocols for maximizing IRS elective pay, 3CE, and APCD grant funds and submit refunds for 2025-27 (Administration, Finance).
	Fleet 2.1 – Consistent with the City's fleet replacement policy, purchase only all- electric light duty vehicles and purchase at least half all-electric medium and heavy-duty vehicles as required by California's Advanced Clean Fleet regulation (Public Works, Fire, Utilities).
5-27 Financial Plan	Fleet 2.2 – Amend the City's fleet replacement policy to require that any new vehicle purchased after July 1, 2025, should be all-electric, with exemptions available for short-term leases and where there are no reasonable electric alternatives available on the market (Administration, Public Works).
	Fleet 2.3 – Deploy the 2025-27 fleet charging infrastructure projects as outlined in the City of SLO EV Infrastructure Project Schedule while also regularly evaluating opportunities for innovation and increased system efficiency (Public Works, Administration).
202	Fleet 2.4 - Initiate PG&E EV Fleet program participation at sites with anticipated heavy duty electric vehicles for purpose of upgrading "front of meter" site infrastructure at no cost to the City (Administration).
	Fleet 2.5 – Continue to only purchase electric transit fleet vehicles; only continue to operate diesel buses so long as they contribute to reduced community VMT (Public Works).

Table 5. Fleet GHG Reduction Actions

Status	GHG Reduction Action
ncial Plan	Fleet 2.6 – Replace fossil fuel landscape and maintenance equipment with all- electric alternatives on burn out/end of useful life, or sooner as resources allow (Public Works, Parks & Recreation).
	Fleet 2.7 – Revisit Lawn and Garden Request for Proposals (RFP) in 2026 to prioritize the use of electric battery-powered equipment and apply similar amendments to other contracted landscaping services RFPs as applicable (Public Works, Finance).
27 Fine	Fleet 2.8 – Conduct a telematics pilot to support efficient vehicle operation (Utilities).
2025-2	Fleet 2.9 - Monitor SGIP and other funding sources to identify potential low-cost battery storage opportunities to supplement diesel generators (Administration).
N	Fleet 2.10 – For employees who take fleet vehicles home, conduct research on take- home EV charging reimbursement program/policy, and if feasible, conduct an initial pilot (Administration).
	Fleet 3.1 – Amend the City's fleet replacement policy to require all new equipment purchases to be all-electric, with reasonable exemptions where electric alternatives are not practically available for purchase (Public Works, Fire, Utilities).
an	Fleet 3.2 – Deploy the 2027-29 fleet charging infrastructure projects as outlined in the City of SLO EV Infrastructure Project Schedule (Public Works, Administration).
2027-29 Financial Pl	Fleet 3.3 – Continue to only purchase electric transit fleet vehicles and identify resources to transition the remaining diesel-powered buses to electric by 2030 (Public Works).
	Fleet 3.4 – Continue to replace fossil fuel landscape and maintenance equipment with all-electric alternatives (Public Works, Parks & Recreation).
	Fleet 3.5 – Update contracted landscaping services RFPs to require electric battery- powered equipment (Public Works, Finance).
	Fleet 3.6 – If feasible and beneficial, scale telematics to support efficient vehicle operation across the fleet (Utilities, Public Works).
	Fleet 3.7 – If feasible and beneficial, implement take-home fleet vehicle policy that enables the transition to electric vehicles and supports household charging (Administration).

Sector Emissions Forecast

The Fleet sector focuses on emissions from fuel consumption (gasoline and diesel) used in vehicles and equipment owned and operated by the City. Figure 5 shows the emissions forecast through 2030. In 2030, emissions are expected to decrease by 1,650 MTCO2e relative to 2022, or approximately 64%.



Figure 5. Fleet Emissions Inventory and Forecast, 2019-2030

3.3 Employee Commute

Strategy Overview

City employees commuting to and from work generate the third largest source of inventoried emissions. Employee commute represents approximately 13% of the City of San Luis Obispo's annual operational emissions.

If the City reaches the LBE commute goals to substantially reduce driving alone and increase electric vehicle use, these programs and learnings could be directly transferable to local institutions, businesses, and other organizations in the community. This is especially important because single-occupancy transportation represents one of the largest community emissions sources in San Luis Obispo and the State of California.

As the City updated its most significant commute policies and programs in late 2024 and early 2025—including the **GOAL:** City employee commute is aligned with and substantially exceeds General Plan Mode Split Objectives by 2030.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. Reduce single-occupancy commute miles 25% by 2025, 50% by 2030.
- 2. Of the remaining singleoccupancy commute miles, achieve 25% via electric vehicle by 2025, 50% via electric vehicle by 2030.

Trip Reduction Incentive Program (TRIP), Telework Policy, and the SLO Transit Downtown Access Pass (DAP)—there is a timely opportunity to boost employee awareness and use of these programs. By providing information about these recently improved initiatives, alongside making targeted efforts to increase active transportation for City residents and carpools and vanpools for regional employees, the City can achieve substantial reductions in commute vehicle miles traveled and related emissions.



Progress

Emissions Reductions

Due to timing of the most recent City employee commute survey, 2023 is used as a proxy for 2022. Accordingly, the Table 6 provides employee commute activity and modeled emissions for 2019 and 2022. Between 2019 and 2022 the City saw a 65% increase in employee commute VMT and a corresponding 22% increase in greenhouse gas emissions, as shown in Figure 6. Employee commute is the only inventoried sector across municipal operations that saw an increase in climate emissions since the adoption of 2021 LBE. The impact from this increase is partially mitigated by an increase in private vehicle efficiency and an increase in electric vehicle ownership.

Table 6. Employee Commute VM7	, Emission Factors, and	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
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	2005	2016	2019	2022
Activity Data (annual VMT)	1,920,620	2,287,560	1,947,180	3,220,560
Emission Factors (MTCO2e/VMT)	0.000479	0.000394	0.000375	0.000276
GHG Emissions (MTCO2e)	920	940	730	890





The increase in vehicle miles traveled from employee commute is in large part due to a growing work force with employees increasingly commuting from Atascadero, Arroyo Grande, Los Osos, Paso Robles, and Grover Beach, as seen in Figure 7 (below). The 2024 City of SLO Commuter Survey found that 63% of employees live outside of the City of San Luis Obispo, and that the average two-way distance travelled by employees each day is 24 miles.



Figure 7. Percentage of Employees Commuting from Various SLO County Locations

As the City's goal for employee commute is to substantially exceed General Plan Mode Split Objectives by 2030, Figure 8 (below) shows how the 2024 Employee Commute Survey results compare with the City's 2030 goals for mode split. One encouraging data point from the survey was that 12% of respondents (approximately 54 out of 450 total staff members) use carpools as their primary mode of commuting. Figure 8 also shows where employee commutes have the greatest room for improvement – notably transit and bicycling.



Figure 8. 2024 Employee Commute Mode Split vs. 2030 Mode Split Objectives

Completed Actions

- **Updated TRIP Policy**: In fall of 2024 the City updated the employee Trip Reduction Incentive Program (TRIP) that provides additional hours of paid time off for employees that commute sustainably. The updated policy expands this benefit to contract employees and to employees who commute regionally using electric vehicles. In 2022, 69 employees qualified for TRIP program incentives, a 25% increase from 2019 numbers.
- **Updated Downtown Access Pass** As recommended by the Transit Innovation Study, Downtown Access Pass users only need to reapply on an annual basis (as compared to every three months), and applications can be processed digitally in addition to processing a physical application in person.
- Ongoing Program Implementation: The City has implemented ongoing trip reduction
 programs to reduce vehicle miles travelled from employee and staff commutes. These
 efforts mostly occurred through partnership with the San Luis Obispo Council of
 Governments (SLOCOG), including the promotion of irideshare.org. The City has also
 increased the amount of secure bike parking available to staff, continued offering the TRIP
 program with incentives for sustainable employee computes and emergency ride-home
 services, and continued to provide access to showers at the workplace.

Emerging Challenges and Opportunities

The Employee Commute sector is a challenging LBE sector as progress depends on individual behavior change, over which the City can only exercise limited policy and program influence.

Today, staff that live in and outside of San Luis Obispo overwhelmingly rely on single-occupancy vehicle travel to report to work. This pattern can be attributed to the relatively far distance between home and work for many out-of-town employees due to higher housing costs in San Luis Obispo, the convenience of driving compared to other modes, perceived safety compared to other modes, and cultural norms. Unfortunately, these factors have led to increased emissions as the number of employes (including part time and contract) has grown between 2019 and 2025.

Given the low employee awareness of existing sustainable commute options including TRIP, DAP, and iRideshare—the near-term priority is to increase communications, employee engagement and new employee training and onboarding about sustainable commute options and programs. To complement these educational efforts, the 2025 LBE also presents a suite of actions that will result in new supportive measures that will make it easier for staff to walk, bike, bus, and carpool to the office.

One area of progress in the employee commute sector is the increase in prevalence of electric vehicles and newer more fuel-efficient gas-powered cars. This increase in fuel efficiency reduces the average amount of climate emissions-per-mile from employee's cars, a downward trend that is critical for reaching the City's goal. This is especially true as the 2025 LBE plan anticipates that as much as half of all employees will still drive alone to work in 2030.

Commute Sector Actions

Table 7 shows the reduction measure actions developed by the Green Team for the Employee Commute sector. The table includes ongoing and administrative tasks, 2025-27 actions, and 2027-29 actions. Some actions within the 2025-27 and 2027-29 Financial Plans represent additional work tasks and need to be budgeted as part of the City's biannual financial planning process.

Status	GHG Reduction Action
Ongoing / Admin	Commute 1.1 – Create and maintain a centralized digital hub on SharePoint under employee benefits that hosts all information related to mobility, commuting programs, and the City's LBE goals (Human Resources, Public Works, Administration).
2025-27 Financial Plan	Commute 2.1 – Launch a year-long campaign focused on low-carbon employee commutes with the goal of 50% of total City employees logging at least one sustainable commute on iRideshare each month (Administration, Public Works). Commute 2.2 – Incorporate Employee Commute goals and supportive programs into the onboarding process and Day of Welcome (Human Resources). Commute 2.3 – Encourage employees to participate in sub-regional carpools and vanpools and provide supportive infrastructure for employee carpools (Human Resources, Administration, Public Works). Commute 2.4 – Update the Downtown Access Pass to better serve all City employees and enable transfers to SLO Regional Transit Authority buses for regional employees (Public Works, Administration). Commute 2.5 – Evaluate and if feasible provide discounted charging rates for employees at public-facing City-owned electric vehicle charging stations (Public Works, Administration). Commute 2.6 – Explore the feasibility of creating a parking pass cash out incentive for employees that opt-out of having a City-funded parking pass (Human Resources, Public Works, Administration).

Table 7. Employee Commute GHG Reduction Actions

127-29 Iancial Plan	Commute 3.1 – Organize another year-long campaign focused on low-carbon employee commutes in 2028 with the goal of 75% of total City employees logging at least one sustainable commute on iRideShare each month (Administration, Public Works).
20 Fir	Commute 3.2 – Evaluate staff commute habits and reevaluate strategic approach to achieving sector objectives (Administration, Public Works, Human Resources).

Sector Emissions Forecast

The Employee Commute sector focuses on emissions from vehicle miles traveled (VMT) used by City employees to travel to and from work. Figure 9 shows the business-as-usual scenario for employee commute emissions compared to forecasted emissions because of implementing the sector's 2025-2029 emission reduction actions, described above. In 2030, emissions are expected to decrease by 460 MTCO2e relative to 2022, or approximately 52%.



Figure 9. Employee Commute Emissions Inventory and Forecast, 2019-2030

Reduction Measure Forecast (MTCO2e) —Business as Usual Forecast (MTCO2e)

3.4 Solid Waste

Strategy Overview

The City's emissions from solid waste are primarily driven by organic waste that is incorrectly sorted by staff into the designated indoor container. When organic waste like food scraps, yard waste, and paper is sent to the landfill, it decomposes and emits methane, a potent greenhouse gas. To reduce this pollutant, CA Senate Bill 1383 was passed requiring the diversion of food scraps from the landfill by placing it in a "green bin". SB 1383 implementation was a major driver of action since the adoption of the 2021 LBE.

In 2024, the City completed its Municipal Waste Reduction Plan, with the goal of reducing waste generation and increasing landfill diversion to 90%. To be successful, the City will increase its efforts on education and outreach to support employee behavior change alongside completing strategic improvements to waste infrastructure across **GOAL:** Municipal operations at City facilities are zero waste as defined by the Zero Waste International Alliance (ZWIA).

OBJECTIVES:

1. Achieve 90% landfill diversion for waste generated from municipal operations.

2. Recover all methane-emitting waste (paper, food scraps, yard waste, wood, etc.) from the landfill and divert it to the appropriate recycling facility.

facilities. Similar to Employee Commute, the Solid Waste sector is driven by behavior change and presents an opportunity to lead by example and develop pilot waste reduction programs that can be duplicated by businesses, residents, and other organizations in the community.

Progress

Emissions Estimate

As part of the 2025 LBE, the City identified a more accurate way to inventory emissions than the method used in the 2021 LBE GHG inventory. The City completed this updated inventory for 2019 and 2022, but as a result of these updates, comparison to 2005 is no longer possible. In 2022, City business activities⁵ produced approximately 161 tons of landfilled waste resulting in the landfilling of 101 tons of organic waste, which generated approximately 180 MTCO₂e or 3% of total City operational emissions.

Completed Actions

• **Municipal Waste Reduction Plan:** In May 2024, the Utilities Department completed a Municipal Waste Reduction Plan, which showcases current waste reduction practices and identifies additional initiatives to achieve 90% landfill diversion by 2030.

⁵ Business activities include materials generated by City staff and sorted into indoor containers, moved to outdoor carts or bins by the custodial team, and then collected by San Luis Garbage. Materials in the landfill bin are taken to the Cold Canyon Landfill, materials in the recycling bin are taken to the Materials Recovery Facility, and materials in the organics bin are taken to the Kanadevia Inova anaerobic digestor.

- Waste Characterization and Generation Study: The Municipal Waste Reduction Plan includes findings from a Waste Characterization and Generation Study completed by a consultant in 2023. The study determined:
 - A benchmark of 30% landfill diversion for City business activities.
 - Diversion efforts that can be implemented immediately to increase diversion such as requiring proper material separation by custodial staff and providing threestream waste containers to City facilities.
 - Contamination was observed in all three waste streams, informing targeted outreach efforts.
- **Special Events Waste Reduction:** Staff developed Special Events Guidelines for Cityhosted events incorporating waste reduction tips and reusable food ware requirements.
- Office Waste Reduction: The City completed several office waste reduction measures including:
 - All printers and copiers default to double-sided printing to encourage employees to reduce printer use.
 - The City adopted Sustainable Purchasing and Paper Procurement Policies giving preference to recycled content, used, or refurbished goods and complies with SB1383's procurement requirements for recycled content paper.
 - The City's Surplus Policy is encouraged and unwanted items are being sold, donated, or given away before being discarded.
 - Where waste is necessary, City facilities have been outfitted with properly sized indoor and outdoor trash, recycling, and organics containers with instructional labeling compliant with SB1383.
- Landscaping: Grass clippings are left on the lawn when mowing ("grasscycling") and all yard waste generated at City facilities, such as tree trimmings, are placed in a green waste roll-off and diverted from the landfill.
- Outreach and Education: Ongoing training with staff and the custodial team is conducted in the form of newsletters, training videos, workshops, recycling guidelines, and site visits. Additionally, the City's website is current with accessible information to staff, residents, and businesses about City waste reduction programs, ordinances, and state legislation.
- Data Collection and Monitoring: Audits are conducted at indoor and outdoor trash, recycling, and organics containers at City facilities to identify fullness levels and contamination. Staff is using this data to create department-specific waste reduction and diversion outreach/recognition programs to motivate employees to participate in waste minimization. Staff have also created a tracking system for each waste stream to monitor waste reduction and diversion progress.





Emerging Challenges and Opportunities

Pursuing zero-waste operations poses various challenges and uncertainties. Notably, reducing office-based waste is largely dependent on individual employee behavior. Even after the infrastructure and policies are in place, employees must be aware of waste minimization and sorting best practices, dispose of waste in the correct bin, and develop new habits. This reality makes employee buy-in and education a critical component of achieving our waste objectives.

The City has historically implemented operations-based waste reduction policies consistent with state law and launched in-office programs that coincide with community programs, like the distribution of green waste bins across the organization. While any waste diverted from a landfill is a success, prioritizing reduced consumption is the best approach to minimize issues such as recycling contamination and green waste bin under-utilization. The next phase of waste reduction efforts will build upon efforts to divert landfilled waste and reduce consumption, and increasingly focus on the lifecycle impacts of materials as the City strives toward a more circular economy.

Waste Sector Actions

Table 8 provides the actions developed by the Green Team for the Solid Waste sector. The table includes ongoing and administrative tasks, 2025-27 actions, and 2027-29 actions. Some actions within the 2025-27 and 2027-29 Financial Plans represent additional work tasks and need to be budgeted as part of the City's biannual financial planning process.

Table 8.	Solid	Waste	GHG	Reduction	Actions
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Status	GHG Reduction Action
g/Admin	 Waste 1.1 – Use periodic surveys, employee networking, Green Team participation, and attendance at City committee meetings to cultivate support for waste reduction among City employees (Utilities). Waste 1.2 – Conduct periodic waste characterization studies and audits of City containers to monitor changes in waste composition, program success, and to identify new diversion opportunities (Utilities).
ngoir	Waste 1.3 – Promote and support regional and state legislation developing
O	Waste 1.4 – Encourage staff to utilize waste reduction programs such as the Reusable Foodware Program, Sustainable Meeting/Event Checklist, Paper Procurement Policy, Surplus Policy, and Sustainable Purchasing Policy (Utilities).
	Waste 2.1 – Reduce paper waste by eliminating paper filing systems and electronically receiving and reviewing building and demolition plans (Community Development).
	Waste 2.2 – Identify replicable waste reduction and diversion practices and promote best practices to businesses in the community (Utilities).
2025-27 Financial Plan	Waste 2.3 – Evaluate and amend City landscape maintenance, custodial, and tree trimming contracts to continue to require landfill diversion of City generated green waste and recyclable materials (Public Works, Utilities, Finance).
	Waste 2.4 – Identify recycling and/or reuse opportunities for items such as glass lab specimen bottles at the Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility, staplers, markers, compostable plastics, film plastics, latex gloves, and candy/snack wrappers (Utilities).
	Waste 2.5 – Continuously assess City facilities for waste stream contamination issues and implement relevant waste container and signage improvements. Update rental facility recycling guidelines to include detailed program instructions and downloadable temporary signage (Utilities).
	Waste 2.6 – Identify ways to recover clean paper towel waste generated in City restrooms (Utilities).
	Waste 2.7 – Utilize volunteers for recycling outreach at public events, social media content creation, videography, diversion data analysis, waste characterization studies, and municipal waste reduction initiatives (Utilities).
c	Waste 3.1 – Redesign office waste receptacle system to promote higher diversion and lower waste generation (Utilities).
cial Plar	Waste 3.2 – Advocate for and support statewide packaging and product design policies that encourage items to be repairable, reusable, fully recyclable/compostable, and less toxic (Utilities).
Tinan	Waste 3.3 – Create a "Waste Reduction Lifestyle" program for employee participation and attend networking/support meetings (Utilities).
2027-29 F	Waste 3.4 – Support and foster efforts to increase the types of materials recoverable at the Materials Recovery Facility and augment the source separated recycling program accordingly (Utilities).
	Waste 3.5 – Initiate the discussion on creating better recycling efforts and collection in City parks (Utilities, Public Works, Parks & Recreation).

Sector Emissions Forecast

The Solid Waste sector focuses on emissions from solid waste disposal as a result of City operations. Figure 10 shows the business-as-usual scenario for solid waste emissions compared to forecasted emissions because of implementing the sector's 2025-2029 emission reduction actions, described above. In 2030, emissions are expected to decrease by 150 MTCO2e relative to 2022, or approximately 79%.





3.5 Water and Wastewater

Strategy Overview

As described in Chapter 1 and 2, the emissions from Utilities buildings, facilities, and fleet are included in those respective sectors. This section provides information about the new emissions estimates for direct emissions from the Water Resource Recovery Facility and includes general actions to reduce operational emissions from the treatment of water and wastewater.

In 2022, emissions related to biogas created as part of the wastewater treatment process accounted for 1,250 MTCO₂e. As mentioned above, the 2025 LBE does not include these direct emissions in the official inventory, but rather includes them here for informational purposes. If the sector was included in the 2022 inventory, it would account for approximately 19% of total City emissions.

GOAL: The City minimizes direct emissions and net energy consumption from the treatment of water and wastewater to the maximum extent feasible.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. Encourage research and innovation into the reduction of direct emissions from the treatment of wastewater and related combustion of biogas.
- 2. Continue evaluating the full scope of greenhouse gas emissions produced by the treatment of wastewater.

Lead by Example includes a strategic pathway to identify

opportunities for emissions reduction actions within the existing regulatory framework in which the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF) operate.

Progress

Emissions Reductions

There are a wide range of direct emissions sources at a wastewater treatment plant. As part of the 2025 LBE, the City has conducted an initial inventory on the source of direct that has the clearest accounting protocol associated with it: direct emissions from biogas. Additional sectors, including Nitrous oxide (N₂O) off-gassing from WRRF effluent, may be considered in future inventory years. Table 9 provides the emissions by source and total emissions for WRRF biogas generation for 2019 and 2022.

Biogas is an unavoidable byproduct of the wastewater treatment process and is nearly entirely composed of the greenhouse gases carbon dioxide (CO_2) and methane (CH_4). At the WRRF, biogas is combusted in 1) a co-generation engine that produces electricity that is used on site, and 2) a flare. When CH_4 is combusted, it converts to the less impactful climate pollutant, CO_2 . Emissions from biogas include the following:

- 1. Fugitive emissions from incomplete combustion some amount of CH4 does not combust and leaks directly to the atmosphere.
- 2. Direct emissions from combustion release of CO₂ to the atmosphere due to complete combustion
- 3. Fugitive emissions from leakage leakage of biogas (CO₂ and CH₄) to the atmosphere due to pre-combustion system leaks.

Source	2019	2022
Fugitive emissions from incomplete combustion	830	890
Direct emissions from combustion	320	350
Fugitive emissions from system leakage	80	10
Total	1,230	1,250

Table 9. Emissions by Source, WRRF biogas, 2019 and 2022

Completed Actions

- Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF) **Upgrades**: The WRRF is finalizing an upgrade that allows it to maximize the utilization of onsite tanks to produce methane gas to run an engine that powers a generator. The existing generator, installed in 2015, is expected to produce more than 150 kW of power. These tanks will be used to provide power and reduce the need for off-site electricity generation. Studies are underway to evaluate the usage of surplus biogas production, which is expected to increase in 2025 when the project is completed. The WRRF also recently replaced chemical disinfection with UV technology, which reduces the negative environmental and embodied GHG emission impacts of industrial chemicals but has resulted in greater onsite electricity use. This change was driven by new regulatory requirements.
- Wastewater Collection System Improvements: Staff have replaced over 100 private sewer laterals since the adoption of the 2021 LBE, which has successfully prevented stormwater from infiltrating the sewer system, and thereby reduced the amount of water the WRRF must process and related emissions.





• Battery at the Water Treatment Plant: Through the statewide Self-Generation Incentive Program (SGIP), staff have successfully installed a 644 kWh Tesla battery pack at the Water Treatment Plant at no cost to the City. This project has been operating since

October 2023 and provides low-carbon backup power for up to seven hours, reduces emissions, and has lowered the facility's energy costs.

Emerging Challenges and Opportunities

Wastewater recovery is an essential function of the City and operates under strict regulatory standards. New regulatory standards are requiring the WRRF to phase out its chemical disinfection processes and construct a more effective and less environmentally impactful technology (UV disinfection) that requires greater on-site energy use. This transition from chemical-intensive to energy-intensive disinfection at the WRRF reduced offsite emissions from the transport of physical chemicals. The WRRF is currently partnered with PG&E and the U.S. Department of Energy to explore opportunities for additional efficiency measures, including the expansion of on-site energy production and optimization of existing and future facilities currently under construction. Staff are committed to considering feasible avenues for reducing emissions while maintaining high standards of operation.

Water & Wastewater Sector Actions

Table 10 provides the reduction measures developed by the Green Team for the Water and Wastewater sectors. The table includes ongoing and administrative tasks, 2025-27 actions, and 2027-29 actions. Some actions within the 2025-27 and 2027-29 Financial Plans represent additional work tasks and need to be budgeted as part of the City's biannual financial planning process.

Status	GHG Reduction Action
Ongoing / Admin	Water 1.1 – Continue to encourage a culture of innovation in the Utilities Department by integrating innovation into the staff goal setting and performance evaluation process (Utilities).
	Water 1.2 – Establish regular cross-division Water and Wastewater meetings to encourage better teamwork, innovation, and strategic planning (Utilities).
2025-27 Financial Plan	Water 2.1 – Continue to reduce inflow and infiltration into the wastewater collection system through capital replacement of gravity sewer mains and private sewer lateral programs, resulting in less wastewater to pump and treat (Utilities).
	Water 2.2 – Explore on-site energy generation opportunities at the Water Treatment Plant while continuing to invest in efficiency (Utilities).
	Water 2.3 – Complete the Water Treatment Plant Infrastructure Renewal Strategy, which shall include short-term (0-5 year) actions and capital projects to optimize facility operations and reduce average and peak energy demands (Utilities).
	Water 2.4 – Develop and utilize tools to optimize water resources to reduce capital expenditures and energy associated with the transmission and treatment of water (Utilities).
	Water 2.5 – Initiate a leak detection program to increase efficiency and reduce water loss using hydraulic modeling and implement a smart water meter program to detect and correct leaks (and reduce emissions from manual meter reading) (Utilities).

Table 10. Water and Wastewater GHG Reduction Actions

inancial Plan	 Water 2.6 – Continue to optimize and explore the expansion of onsite energy generation at the Water Resource Recovery Facility to reduce external energy demand and subsequent electricity purchases through an investment grade audit (IGA) or similar assessment program (Utilities). Water 2.7 – Study pretreatment options in the wastewater collections system to reduce energy demands at the Water Resource Recovery Facility (Utilities). Water 2.8 – Explore the potential for accepting additional waste streams at the WRRF to reduce regional transportation emissions and increase onsite energy production (Utilities). Water 2.9 – Collaborate across departments to develop a City-wide power
2025-27 F	monitoring platform to increase data collection and decision-making abilities (see Energy 2.3) (Utilities, Administration).
	Water 2.10 – Explore natural treatment solutions to augment treatment performance and reduce energy requirements in collaboration with California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (Utilities).
	Water 2.11 – Support a regional biosolids cooperative to enable beneficial uses of biosolids in local markets and landscapes (see Natural Solutions 2.11) (Utilities, Administration).
Financial Plan	Water 3.1 – Continue to optimize onsite energy generation at the Water Resource Recovery Facility to reduce external energy demand and subsequent electricity purchases (Utilities)
	Water 3.2 – Research commercially available technology that could reduce emissions from the combustion of biogas at the Water Resource Recovery Facility, and plan for implementation of a linear co-generator if feasible (Utilities).
-29	Water 3.3 – Continue to implement the Water Treatment Plant Infrastructure Renewal Strategy's short-term actions and capital projects (Utilities)
2027	Water 3.4 – Reduce the irrigation of non-functional turf to reduce the demand for potable water treatment (Utilities).

Sector Emissions Forecast

The Water and Wastewater sector focuses on emissions from the wastewater treatment process. The methane emissions from this sector are a direct product of the volume of biogas created during the treatment process. The City expects this volume of biogas to increase by at approximately 20% through 2030 resulting in an emissions increase of 250 MTCO₂e resulting in a 2030 total of 1,500 MTCO₂e.

3.6 Natural Solutions

Strategy Overview

The Open Space lands owned or managed by the City of San Luis Obispo present a significant opportunity to offset operational emissions by sequestering carbon in living ecosystems and soil. Strategic investments in the Urban Forest and the City's Greenbelt can store carbon while benefitting the community through the conservation of natural resources, maintenance of ecosystem services, access to passive recreational opportunities, and enhanced climate resilience.

Healthy and resilient living plants and soils reliably draw down carbon from the atmosphere. Many of the strategies for ecosystem-based carbon sequestration – tree planting, restoration of native perennial grasses, regenerative grazing, compost and biochar application, riparian restoration, targeted prescribed and cultural burning, and the installation of beaver dam analogs – can be implemented as part of a holistic management **GOAL:** The City optimizes carbon sequestration and the resilience of existing carbon stocks within the City's Greenbelt and Urban Forest system.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. The City has a healthy multibenefit Urban Forest system that increases local carbon sequestration.
- 2. City open spaces are managed with regenerative practices to sequester carbon and increase resilience.
- 3. The City's landscaping practices are climate friendly and utilize compost from the regional anaerobic digester.

framework. Through the actions in the Natural Solutions sector, the City can measurably offset local emissions, support climate resilience, and demonstrate leadership in this emerging field.

Progress

Sequestered Emissions

Each Natural Solutions activity included in the Lead by Example inventory has an associated modeled emissions sequestration factor per unit based on industry standard modeling tools, such as COMET-Planner⁶. However, given the heterogeneity of soils, weather, and ecosystem dynamics – it is important to note that these models point at a rough average across landscapes rather than an informed measurement of the amount of carbon sequestered through a particular tree planting or restoration project. To verify these calculations, the City is conducting scientific monitoring for projects to better understand whether actual carbon sequestered is aligning with the projections from landscape-scale models.

Further, as some of the restoration techniques being implemented by the City are less studied than others, such as the installation of beaver dam analogs, these Natural Solutions actions were not included in the inventory due to lack of industry standards for carbon modeling. The sequestered emissions from Natural Solutions shown in Table 11 (below) represents a

⁶ COMET-Planner can be found at: <u>https://comet-planner-cdfahsp.com/</u>.

conservative and defensible estimate of carbon stored in living systems due to City operations and programs.

Table 11. Carbon Sequestration Resultin	g from Natural Solutions Actions (MTCO2e)
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Activity	2022
Tree Planting	-20
Regenerative Grazing and Grassland Restoration	-10
Compost Application	-260
Total	-290

Completed Actions

- Successful Tree Plantings: The City has initiated an interdepartmental "Keys for Trees" program in partnership with ECOSLO. Through Keys for Trees the Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) allocates 1% of their assessment of all hotel revenue in the City towards planting trees in San Luis Obispo. Keys for Trees plants roughly 40 trees per year in City parks, open space, and other locations. As of December 2024, the official 10Tall website, created in partnership with Cal Poly, reports that nearly 3,000 new trees have been planted in both private and public spaces.
- **City's First Community Forest Plan:** City Council adopted the City's first Community Forest Master Plan in April 2023. It establishes goals to maintain and expand the urban forest, manage it for sustainability and climate resilience, foster a spirit of collaboration with other agencies and community groups, and educate and involve City residents and visitors. The plan also describes key tasks for improving data, ensuring the "right tree, right place" approach to plantings, strengthening maintenance practices, and reaching the City's goal of planting 10,000 new trees by 2035.
- Improved Urban Forestry Organizational Structure: The City conducted an Urban Forestry Organizational Assessment which provided recommendations to maximize organizational efficacy. Priority recommendations include establishing a pruning cycle performed by external contractors and reestablishing an in-house team that can answer service requests or workorders.
- Expanding the SLO Greenbelt and New Open Space Acquisitions: Staff have completed a suite of open space easements within the Froom Ranch Specific Plan area, which includes an area of wetlands, the "Upper Terrace" containing natural springs, wildlife habitat, and numerous rare plants, as well as the future alignment of Froom Creek itself. Staff continue to pursue additional conservation projects within the Greenbelt.
- **Completed Carbon Farm Plan:** With support from the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District, the City completed a Carbon Farm Plan in December 2022. The Carbon Farm Plan analyzes two properties: Johnson Ranch Open Space and City Farm SLO. Since completion of the plan the City has successfully implemented carbon farming practices at Johnson Ranch, and City Farm SLO continues to implement recommended practices on the land they lease from the City.
- Implementation of Carbon Sequestration and Resilience Open Space Restoration Projects: Staff have organized tree plantings in the urban core and on City open space, spread compost on rangeland, and restored riparian corridors throughout the watershed. Going forward, 2 grant-funded restoration projects at Johnson Ranch Open Space and

Bishop Peak will enable the City to continue researching innovative restoration techniques. These efforts on City Open Space will draw down carbon and help the SLO Greenbelt adapt to more frequent droughts, floods, and fires.

• Reducing Climate Impacts of Landscaping Activities: The City has applied compost from the regional anaerobic digester to parks, landscaping areas, and other City facilities. Specific applications include the Laguna Lake Golf Course, several community gardens, Emerson Park, as well as organized giveaways for the public. At locations like the golf course, compost application has reduced the City's dependence on nitrogen fertilizers. This procurement supports the City's compliance with SB 1383.

Emerging Challenges and Opportunities

Actions within the Natural Solutions sector need to be responsive to a changing climate. With the frequency and intensity of extreme heat days and wildfire risk expected to increase over time, many areas of San Luis Obispo will be left vulnerable. Due to these risks, the City will need to balance efforts to increase carbon sequestration as it simultaneously works to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire and other climate hazards that can release the existing carbon stored in Open Space ecosystems.

In many cases however, carbon sequestration activities offer co-benefits for resilience and community safety. For example, increasing the tree canopy can keep the urban core cooler amid rising extreme heat, and thus is incredibly important to public health and safety alongside other co-benefits. As the region anticipates more frequent extreme heat days, tree planting will be coordinated to maximize cooling and energy efficiency benefits for the areas of San Luis Obispo with the least tree cover and greatest expected heat intensity. The Urban Forest system expansion strategy also includes considerations for tree species which ensures long-term tree success in a changing climate.

Overall, staff are committed to being responsive to changing conditions and will continuously seek opportunities to enhance climate adaptation and resilience co-benefits while pursuing carbon sequestration activities.

Natural Solutions Sector Actions

Table 12 shows the reduction measure actions developed by the Green Team for the Natural Solutions sector. The table includes ongoing and administrative tasks, 2025-27 actions, and 2027-29 actions. Some actions in the 2025-27 and 2027-29 Financial Plans represent additional work tasks and need to be budgeted as part of the City's biannual financial planning process.

Status	GHG Reduction Action
j / Admin	Natural Solutions 1.1 – Convene an interdepartmental staff team to assess, strategize, and implement 10 Tall with representation from Office of Sustainability and Natural Resources, Community Development, Public Works Parks Maintenance, Ranger Services, and Utilities (Community Development).
Ongoing	Natural Solutions 1.2 – Assess open space maintenance and vegetation management needs amid changing climate hazards and allocate sufficient resources to enable community adaptation and ecosystem resilience (Administration, Parks & Recreation, Fire).
	Natural Solutions 2.1 – Actively pursue opportunities to purchase open space lands and permanent land conservation agreements in furtherance of the City's Greenbelt Protection Program (Administration).
	Natural Solutions 2.2 – Implement the Community Forest Plan and operate a robust tree planting and maintenance program (Community Development, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Administration).
	Natural Solutions 2.3 – Ensure that the City's tree inventory is accurate and integrates trees planted by key external stakeholders (Community Development, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Administration).
	Natural Solutions 2.4 – Work with community partners to reach the 10 Tall goal of planting 10,000 new trees by 2035. Coordinate 10 Tall community tree giveaways to support tree planting on private property (Community Development, Administration).
Plan	Natural Solutions 2.5 – Establish autonomous backcountry tree watering infrastructure to better support the establishments of newly planted trees in City Open Space (Parks & Recreation, Administration).
2025-27 Financial	Natural Solutions 2.6 – Analyze the lifecycle of urban street trees and explore the feasibility of an urban wood reuse program and a large woody biomass solution such as biochar (Community Development, Administration).
	Natural Solutions 2.7 – Continue to advance Open Space restoration efforts that sequester carbon among other co-benefits, including restoring wetlands, installing riparian beaver dam analogs, applying compost and biochar to grasslands, and reviving Traditional Ecological Knowledge (Administration).
	Natural Solutions 2.8 – Expand high-intensity short-duration grazing and evaluate the feasibility of establishing a year-round goat and sheep flock (Administration).
	Natural Solutions 2.9 – Implement the Vegetative Fuels Management Plan to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and preserve existing carbon stocks in the Greenbelt (Fire, Administration, Parks & Recreation).
	Natural Solutions 2.10 – Maximize the use of regional anaerobic digester compost for landscape management operations and other municipal uses (Public Works, Utilities).
	Natural Solutions 2.11 – In collaboration with the IWMA, expand the application of regional anaerobic digester compost and/or biosolids on private and agricultural lands (see Water 2.11) (Utilities, Administration).
	Natural Solutions 2.12 – Establish formal partnerships and processes to continue to bring rigorous evidence-based research, monitoring, and scientific study to Natural Solutions projects within the City and the Greenbelt (Administration).

Table 12. Natural Solutio	ns GHG Reduction Actions
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Status	GHG Reduction Action
2027-29 Financial Plan	Natural Solutions 3.1 – Purchase open space lands and permanent land conservation agreements in furtherance of the City's Greenbelt Protection Program (Administration).
	Natural Solutions 3.2 – Continue making progress on the 10 Tall goal (Community Development, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Administration).
	Natural Solutions 3.3 – Leverage best practices in satellite imagery technology to better track the status of the City's canopy coverage and develop specific metrics for measuring the health and growth of the urban forest (Community Development, Administration).
	Natural Solutions 3.4 –Continue to advance restoration efforts in City Open Space that sequester carbon and increase climate resilience, among other co-benefits (Administration).
	Natural Solution 3.5 – Implement and scale the Natural Solutions actions evaluated and studied in 2025-27 Financial Plan (Administration).

Sector Emissions Forecast

The Natural Solutions sector focuses on emissions reductions that stem from natural carbon sequestration on City-owned properties. Figure 10 shows the forecasted emissions reductions that result from implementing the sector's actions, described in the previous section. Table 13 shows the forecasted emissions reductions from different types of natural solutions actions: tree planting; regenerative grazing and grassland restoration; and compost application.





Activity	2022	2025	2030
Tree Planting	-20	-60	-110
Regenerative Grazing and Grassland Restoration	-10	-20	-30
Compost Application	-260	-310	-370
Total	-290	-390	-510

3.7 Procurement, Budget, and Finance

Strategy Overview

While activities related to Procurement, Purchasing, and Finance are not directly quantified in the City's municipal greenhouse gas inventory, this sector is of unique importance due to its influence on other sectors. The way the City spends and invests money has a direct relationship to greenhouse gas emissions. The City has historically integrated climate and sustainability considerations into financial policy on an ad hoc basis per Council direction, like the Municipal Code <u>Environmentally Preferred</u> <u>Purchasing Policy</u> adoption in 1990 (updated in 2015 and 2018).

Lead by Example includes a strategic pathway to identify opportunities to formally integrate climate considerations across procurement, budgeting, and finance activities and purchasing programs. Integrating climate considerations and priorities into the City's financial operations provides the foundation for the broader transition to carbon neutral City operations across all sectors. **GOAL:** The City supports and accelerates achieving the carbon neutrality goal through procurement, budget, investment, and finance processes.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. Establish sustainability criteria to guide vendor selection and other procurement activities.
- 2. Continue using Lead by Example criteria to guide budget development and selection of Capital Improvement Projects.
- 3. Continue implementing the City's Environmental Social Governance (ESG) and Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) policies.
- 4. Establish approach to enhancing circularity in City procurement and operations.

Progress

Completed Actions

Integrating Climate Considerations into Financial Decisions: On June 6, 2023, City Council adopted the <u>2023-25 Financial Plan</u>. The plan's sixth objective "*Integrate climate risk and climate action considerations throughout all financial decisions*" and Item C of the Long-term Financial Planning section (see below), provide budgeting guidance related to sustainability, resilience, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Item C. Consideration of Climate Risk and Climate Action: "*The City is aware of the increasingly severe and frequent natural, economic, and social disruptions presented by a rapidly changing climate. The City is also aware of the financial benefits (e.g., reduced operational costs, prudent asset management, access to green bonds, etc.) of managing climate risk and*

orienting towards a carbon neutral municipal operations and community. The City will include climate risk and climate action considerations in its long-term financial planning."

- Integrating Climate Considerations into the CIP Process: The City initiated an effort to quantify climate emissions and resilience impacts of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects. Given the wide variety of CIP projects, an effective quantification system was deemed infeasible and instead, staff created a qualitative section in the CIP project proposal template, requiring that internal project sponsors include information about how the project is aligned with the Lead by Example Plan. Additionally, sustainability staff participated on the CIP steering committee and successfully integrated sustainability and equity criteria into the CIP evaluative criteria to ensure that all decisions are made with climate and equity in mind.
- Updated RFP Template for Goods and Professional Services: Staff have updated the purchasing policy manual to include the Climate Action Plan in all City-issued Request for Proposals (RFP). The City's RFP process evaluates efforts bidders have taken to reduce emissions within their operations and asks how sustainability is considered during project implementation.

Emerging Challenges and Opportunities

Staff have begun integrating qualitative, high-level considerations and prompts into purchasing and budget approval processes to frame the LBE carbon neutrality target and sector goals in the context of financial activities. Further aligning purchasing decisions across departments with the City's climate goals will require employee education and accountability measures, including ongoing reporting on the City's environmentally preferrable purchasing activity.

One structural challenge facing the City is its decentralized purchasing structure, wherein a large number of staff across departments make uncoordinated purchases. While this type of purchasing structure is typical for a city the size of San Luis Obispo, there is a lack of strong case studies among peer cities for how to formally integrate quantitative climate and sustainability metrics into financial decision-making processes. This space is rapidly emerging, however, as more municipalities aim to align financial policies and procedures with climate goals. Staff are committed to evaluating new opportunities to integrate climate metrics broadly across financial activities as the 2025 LBE is implemented.

Procurement Sector Actions

Table 14 shows the reduction measure actions developed by the Green Team for the Procurement, Budget, and Finance sector. The table includes ongoing and administrative tasks, 2025-27 actions, and 2027-29 actions. Some actions within the 2025-27 and 2027-29 Financial Plans represent additional work tasks and need to be budgeted as part of the City's biannual financial planning process.

Status	GHG Reduction Action
Ongoing / Admin	 Procurement 1.1 – Pursue grant funding, government incentives, rebates, tax credits and other external funding to further Lead by Example actions. (Administration). Procurement 1.2 – Adhere to the Socially Responsible Investments (SRI) policy and integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into the City's investment portfolio and review the ESG risk rating of the portfolio on a quarterly basis (Finance). Procurement 1.3 – Support a forthcoming cross-departmental Purchasing Working Group by educating purchasing leads and standardizing sustainable purchasing decisions consistent with City policies (Finance, Administration). Procurement 1.4 – Participate in regional and state level networks to learn best
	applicable to decentralized purchasing organizations (Finance, Administration).
	align the City's Capital Improvement Program with Council-adopted climate goals (Administration, Public Works).
ncial Plan	Procurement 2.2 – Update and advance a climate and equity budgeting approach for the 2025-27 Financial Plan through the CIP steering committee. Amend the City's Standard Specifications and Engineering Standards and CIP manual to promote consistency with Council-adopted climate goals. Include standard language for apprenticeships for CIP projects that want to take advantage of Federal Tax Rebate adders (Administration, Public Works). Procurement 2.3 – Update the City's Purchasing Policy to establish spend categories for goods and professional services, directly align with high-impact Lead by Example actions, and incorporate third-party certifications supported by the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council (Finance, Administration). Procurement 2.4 – Establish a sustainable purchasing program that provides training to all employees about updates to the purchasing policy (Procurement 2.1,
27 Fir	and 2.3) and leverages best practices for accountability recommended by other decentralized purchasing operations (Finance, Administration).
2025-	procurement contracts to be directly aligned with Council's adopted Lead by Example goals (Finance, Administration).
	Procurement 2.6 – Provide clear guidance and training to City employees on how to incorporate Government Code 4217 into energy-efficient City projects and purchases (Administration, Public Works).
	Procurement 2.7 – Assess the feasibility of pursuing a municipal charter amendment to clarify the City's ability to take advantage of flexible procurement pathways available under state law, including design-build (City Attorney, Public Works, Administration).
	Procurement 2.8 – Establish standard processes for applying for grants, rebates, incentives, and tax credits, as well as for reserving revenues from these sources for reinvestment in Lead by Example actions (Administration, Public Works, Finance).

5-27 ncial an	Procurement 2.9 – Include an explicit reference to the City's standing Socially Responsible Investment Policy in the Investment Policy and Management Plan (Finance).
202 ina Pi	Procurement 2.10 – Analyze industry best practices for including Scope 3
	greenhouse gas emissions within the scope of a municipal greenhouse gas inventory (Administration).
2027-29 Financial Plan	Procurement 3.1 – Establish measurement performance reports of spend categories identified in Procurement Action 2.3 (Finance).
	Procurement 3.2 - Begin to evaluate, model, and track Scope 3 emissions to
	support decision-making in the subsequent Lead by Example planning document (Administration).

Procurement Sector Emissions

The Procurement, Budget, and Finance sector is associated with indirect emissions not quantified as part of the 2025 LBE. Any emission reductions that will occur via implementation of emission reduction actions will either be counted as part of another sector's quantified emissions, or they will fall under indirect emissions and are not currently quantified. The City recognizes the importance of taking action within the procurement, budget, and finance sector, especially given the opportunity to "lead by example" and implement highly replicable and scalable measures.

3.8 Administrative Actions

In addition to the sector specific actions in Chapter 3, the City commits to the following administrative actions to ensure active and effective implementation of Lead by Example.

- Administrative Action 1: Lead by Example Update The City will update Lead by Example every four years (concurrent with every other Financial Plan). The City will synch the update with the community Climate Action Plan so that each plan is updated in an alternating fashion concurrent with every Financial Plan.
- Administrative Action 2: Plan Monitoring and Reporting The City will monitor and report implementation to City Council on a regular basis.
- Administrative Action 3: Secondary Emissions The City will evaluate the feasibility of including direct emissions from the treatment of wastewater and Scope 3 emissions from City operations in the subsequent Lead by Example inventory and planning document.

Administrative Action 4: Sustainable Decision Making The City will continue integrating climate action into decision making processes including:

- Develop guidance for report writers to include Climate Action and Sustainability consistency sections in certain reports (e.g., Council Agenda Reports, City Manager Reports, etc.).
- Continuing and enhancing CIP evaluations processes to ensure Lead by Example alignment.

• Administrative Action 5: Statewide Advocacy

The City, through the legislative platform, participation in statewide city networks, and direct regulatory and legislative advocacy, among other things, will advocate for conditions under which Lead by Example can be successfully implemented.

4. ACHIEVING OUR GOALS

The table below provides the actions required to achieve the estimated 85% reduction in emissions by 2030 and to keep the City on a trajectory to carbon neutrality. The table includes the action number, action description, responsible departments, and the planned initiation period. Under the Responsible Department(s) column, departments that are bolded are the primary lead for implementation and those that are not bolded have been identified as having a supportive role. Tasks requiring more than staff time and that are scheduled for 2025–27 or 2027–29 will need City Council approval to be funded and/or included in their respective financial plans.

Action	Description	Responsible	Planned
_		Departments	Initiation
Energy		ſ	T
Energy 1.1	Continue to strategically replace fossil fuel equipment across all City buildings and facilities.	Public Works, Administration	Ongoing
Energy 1.2	Continue ongoing efficiency improvements as part of routine maintenance across City facilities.	Public Works	Ongoing
Energy 1.3	Continue to leverage external funding including Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) rebates, federal tax incentives, and more to cost-effectively implement building energy projects that support the City's goals.	Administration	Ongoing
Energy 2.1	Complete priority electrification projects at the (1) Swim Center, (2) Ludwick Community Center, (3) Corporation Yard, and (4) City Hall, alongside the remaining energy saving lighting efficiency retrofits across all facilities through the PG&E Sustainable Solutions Turnkey (SST) Program.	Administration, Public Works	2025-27
Energy 2.2	Add solar and battery storage, where feasible, to City facilities to increase the generation of local renewable electricity, reduce the City's energy demand, and save money.	Administration , Public Works	2025-27
Energy 2.3	Assess the feasibility of launching a facility-wide energy management software (See Water 2.9).	Administration, Public Works, Utilities	2025-27
Energy 2.4	Consider "opting up" to Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) Prime to receive 100% renewable energy.	Administration , Utilities	2025-27
Energy 2.5	Develop a green municipal building and facility policy to require that: 1) new buildings and facilities are all- electric, 2) fossil fuel equipment at the end of its useful life is replaced with an electric alternative, 3) municipal facility construction and retrofit projects above a certain valuation remove fossil fuels in the facility, and 4) funding would be identified to help offset the cost of electric alternatives. As part of the policy development process, identify a process for approving reasonable exemptions.	Administration , Public Works	2025-27

Action	Description	Responsible Departments	Planned Initiation
Energy 3.1	Complete the priority electrification, solar, and battery storage projects identified in Energy 2.1 and 2.2.	Public Works, Administration	2027-29
Energy 3.2	If the City pursues Energy 2.4, continue to "opt-up" to Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) Prime to receive 100% renewable energy.	Administration, Utilities	2027-29
Energy 3.3	Design and implement hard-to-reach facility retrofits to strategically replace natural gas equipment across buildings and facilities.	Public Works, Administration	2027-29
Energy 3.4	Analyze, and if feasible, coordinate City solar and battery assets as a "Virtual Power Plant" to save money on electricity and reduce peak demand.	Administration	2027-29
Fleet			•
Fleet 1.1	Convene quarterly meetings of the Interdepartmental EV Fleet Charger Deployment Team to track and report progress on infrastructure build out.	Administration	Ongoing
Fleet 1.2	Convene an initial meeting of regional fleet managers for purpose of sharing and learning best practices for fleet electrification.	Administration	Ongoing
Fleet 1.3	Establish standard protocols for maximizing IRS elective pay, 3CE, and APCD grant funds and submit refunds for 2025-27.	Administration, Finance	Ongoing
Fleet 2.1	Consistent with the City's fleet replacement policy, purchase only all-electric light duty vehicles and purchase at least half all-electric medium and heavy-duty vehicles as required by California's Advanced Clean Fleet regulation.	Public Works , Fire, Utilities	2025-27
Fleet 2.2	Amend the City's fleet replacement policy to require that any new vehicle purchased after July 1, 2025, should be all-electric, with exemptions available for short-term leases and where there are no reasonable electric alternatives available on the market.	Administration, Public Works	2025-27
Fleet 2.3	Deploy the 2025-27 fleet charging infrastructure projects as outlined in the City of SLO EV Infrastructure Project Schedule while also regularly evaluating opportunities for innovation and increased system efficiency.	Public Works, Administration	2025-27
Fleet 2.4	Initiate PG&E EV Fleet program participation at sites with anticipated heavy duty electric vehicles for purpose of upgrading "front of meter" site infrastructure at no cost to the City.	Administration	2025-27
Fleet 2.5	Continue to only purchase electric transit fleet vehicles; only continue to operate diesel buses so long as they contribute to reduced community VMT.	Public Works	2025-27
Fleet 2.6	Replace fossil fuel landscape and maintenance equipment with all-electric alternatives on burn out/end of useful life, or sooner as resources allow.	Public Works, Parks & Recreation	2025-27

Action	Description	Responsible Departments	Planned Initiation
Fleet 2.7	Revisit Lawn and Garden Request for Proposals in 2026 to prioritize the use of electric battery-powered equipment and apply similar amendments to other contracted landscaping services RFPs as applicable.	Public Works , Finance	2025-27
Fleet 2.8	Conduct a telematics pilot to support efficient vehicle operation.	Utilities	2025-27
Fleet 2.9	Monitor SGIP and other funding sources to identify potential low-cost battery storage opportunities to supplement diesel generators.	Administration	2025-27
Fleet 2.10	For employees who take fleet vehicles home, conduct research on take-home EV charging reimbursement program/policy and if feasible, conduct an initial pilot.	Administration	2025-27
Fleet 3.1	Amend the City's fleet replacement policy to require all new equipment purchases to be all-electric, with reasonable exemptions where electric alternatives are not practically available for purchase.	Public Works , Fire, Utilities	2027-29
Fleet 3.2	Deploy the 2027-29 fleet charging infrastructure projects as outlined in the City of SLO EV Infrastructure Project Schedule.	Public Works, Administration	2027-29
Fleet 3.3	Continue to only purchase electric transit fleet vehicles and identify resources to transition the remaining diesel-powered buses to electric by 2030.	Public Works	2027-29
Fleet 3.4	Continue to replace fossil fuel landscape and maintenance equipment with all-electric alternatives.	Public Works, Parks & Recreation	2027-29
Fleet 3.5	Update contracted landscaping services RFPs to require electric battery-powered equipment.	Public Works , Finance	2027-29
Fleet 3.6	If feasible and beneficial, scale telematics to support efficient vehicle operation across the fleet.	Utilities , Public Works	2027-29
Fleet 3.7	If feasible and beneficial, implement take-home fleet vehicle policy that enables the transition to electric vehicles and supports household charging.	Administration	2027-29
Commute			
Commute 1.1	Create and maintain a centralized digital hub on SharePoint under employee benefits that hosts all information related to mobility, programs, and the City's goals.	Human Resources, Public Works, Administration	Ongoing
Commute 2.1	Launch a year-long campaign focused on low-carbon employee commutes with the goal of 50% of total City employees logging at least one sustainable commute on iRideShare each month.	Administration, Public Works	2025-27
Commute 2.2	Incorporate Employee Commute goals and supportive programs into the onboarding process and Day of Welcome.	Human Resources	2025-27

Action	Description	Responsible Departments	Planned Initiation
Commute 2.3	Encourage employees to participate in sub-regional carpools and vanpools and provide supportive infrastructure for employee carpools.	Human Resources, Administration, Public Works	2025-27
Commute 2.4	Update the Downtown Access Pass to better serve all City employees and enable transfers to SLO Regional Transit Authority buses for regional employees.	Public Works, Administration	2025-27
Commute 2.5	Evaluate and if feasible provide discounted charging rates for employees at public-facing City-owned electric vehicle charging stations.	Public Works, Administration	2025-27
Commute 2.6	Explore the feasibility of creating a parking pass cash out incentive for employees that opt-out of having a City-funded parking pass.	Human Resources, Public Works, Administration	2025-27
Commute 3.1	Organize another year-long campaign focused on low-carbon employee commutes in 2028 with the goal of 75% of total City employees logging at least one sustainable commute on iRideShare each month.	Administration, Public Works	2027-29
Commute 3.2	Evaluate staff commute habits and reevaluate strategic approach to achieving sector objectives.	Administration, Public Works, Human Resources	2027-29
Waste			
Waste 1.1	Use periodic surveys, employee networking, Green Team participation, and attendance at City committee meetings to cultivate support for waste reduction among City employees.	Utilities	Ongoing
Waste 1.2	Conduct periodic waste characterization studies and audits of City containers to monitor changes in waste composition, program success, and to identify new diversion opportunities.	Utilities	Ongoing
Waste 1.3	Promote and support regional and state legislation developing infrastructure to increase resource recovery efforts.	Utilities	Ongoing
Waste 1.4	Encourage staff to utilize developed waste reduction programs such as the Reusable Food ware Program, Sustainable Meeting/Event Checklist, Paper Procurement Policy, Surplus Policy, and Sustainable Purchasing Policy.	Utilities	Ongoing
Waste 2.1	Reduce paper waste by eliminating paper filing systems and electronically receive and review building and demolition plans.	Community Development	2025-27
Waste 2.2	Identify replicable waste reduction and diversion practices and promote best practices to businesses in the community.	Utilities	2025-27
Waste 2.3	Evaluate and amend City landscape maintenance, custodial, and tree trimming contracts to continue to require landfill diversion of City generated green waste and recyclable materials.	Public Works , Utilities, Finance	2025-27

Action	Description	Responsible Departments	Planned Initiation
Waste 2.4	Identify recycling and/or reuse opportunities for items such as glass lab specimen bottles at the Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility, staplers, markers, compostable plastics, film plastics, latex gloves, and candy/snack wrappers.	Utilities	2025-27
Waste 2.5	Continuously assess City facilities for waste stream contamination issues and implement relevant waste container and signage improvements. Update rental facility recycling guidelines to include detailed program instructions and downloadable temporary signage.	Utilities	2025-27
Waste 2.6	Identify ways to recover clean paper towel waste generated in City restrooms.	Utilities	2025-27
Waste 2.7	Utilize volunteers for recycling outreach at public events, social media content creation, videography, diversion data analysis, waste characterization studies, and municipal waste reduction initiatives.	Utilities	2025-27
Waste 3.1	Redesign office waste receptacle system to promote higher diversion and lower waste generation.	Utilities	2027-29
Waste 3.2	Advocate and support statewide packaging and product design policies that encourage items to be repairable, reusable, fully recyclable/compostable, and less toxic.	Utilities	2027-29
Waste 3.3	Create a "Waste Reduction Lifestyle" program for employee participation and attend networking/support meetings.	Utilities	2027-29
Waste 3.4	Support and foster efforts to increase the types of materials recoverable at the Materials Recovery Facility and augment source separated recycling program accordingly.	Utilities	2027-29
Waste 3.5	Initiate the discussion on creating better recycling efforts and collection in City parks.	Utilities, Public Works, Parks & Recreation	2027-29
Water			
Water 1.1	Continue to encourage a culture of innovation in the Utilities Department by integrating innovation into the staff goal setting and performance evaluation process.	Utilities	Ongoing
Water 1.2	Establish regular cross-division Water and Wastewater meetings to encourage better teamwork, innovation, and strategic planning.	Utilities	Ongoing
Water 2.1	Continue to reduce inflow and infiltration into the wastewater collection system through capital replacement of gravity sewer mains and private sewer lateral programs, resulting in less wastewater to pump and treat.	Utilities	2025-27
Water 2.2	Explore on-site energy generation opportunities at the Water Treatment Plant while continuing to invest in efficiency.	Utilities	2025-27

Action	Description	Responsible Departments	Planned Initiation
Water 2.3	Complete the Water Treatment Plant Infrastructure Renewal Strategy, which shall include short-term (0-5 year) actions and capital projects to optimize facility operations and reduce average and peak energy demands.	Utilities	2025-27
Water 2.4	Develop and utilize tools to optimize water resources to reduce capital expenditures and energy associated with transmission and treatment.	Utilities	2025-27
Water 2.5	Initiate a leak detection program to increase efficiency and reduce water loss using hydraulic modeling and implement a smart water meter program to detect and correct leaks (and reduce emissions from manual meter reading.	Utilities	2025-27
Water 2.6	Continue to optimize and explore the expansion of onsite energy generation at the Water Resource Recovery Facility to reduce external energy demand and subsequent electricity purchases through an investment grade audit (IGA or similar assessment program).	Utilities	2025-27
Water 2.7	Study pretreatment options in the wastewater collections system to reduce energy demands at the Water Resource Recovery Facility.	Utilities	2025-27
Water 2.8	Explore the potential for accepting additional waste streams at the WRRF to reduce regional transportation emissions and increase onsite energy production.	Utilities	2025-27
Water 2.9	Collaborate across departments to develop a City-wide power monitoring platform to increase data collection and decision-making abilities (see Energy 2.3).	Utilities , Administration	2025-27
Water 2.10	Explore natural treatment solutions to augment treatment performance and reduce energy requirements in collaboration with California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.	Utilities	2025-27
Water 2.11	Support a regional biosolids cooperative to enable beneficial uses of biosolids in local markets and landscapes (see Natural Solutions 2.11).	Utilities , Administration	2027-29
Water 3.1	Continue to optimize onsite energy generation at the Water Resource Recovery Facility to reduce external energy demand and subsequent electricity purchases.	Utilities	2027-29
Water 3.2	Research commercially available technology that could reduce emissions from the combustion of biogas at the WRRF, and plan for implementation of a linear co-generator if feasible.	Utilities	2027-29
Water 3.3	Continue to implement the Water Treatment Plant Infrastructure Renewal Strategy's short-term actions and capital projects.	Utilities	2027-29
Water 3.4	Reduce the irrigation of non-functional turf to reduce the demand for potable water treatment.	Utilities	2027-29
Natural Solutions			

Action	Description	Responsible Departments	Planned Initiation
Natural Solutions 1.1	Convene an interdepartmental staff team to assess, strategize, and implement 10 Tall with representation from Office of Sustainability and Natural Resources, Community Development, Public Works Parks Maintenance, Ranger Services, and Utilities.	Administration, Community Development, Public Works, Parks & Recreation	Ongoing
Natural Solutions 1.2	Assess open space maintenance and vegetation management needs amid changing climate hazards and allocate sufficient resources to enable community adaptation and ecosystem resilience.	Administration, Parks & Recreation, Fire	Ongoing
Natural Solutions 2.1	Actively pursue opportunities to purchase open space lands and permanent land conservation agreements in furtherance of the City's Greenbelt Protection Program.	Administration	2025-27
Natural Solutions 2.2	Implement the Community Forest Plan and operate a robust tree planting and maintenance program.	Community Development , Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Administration	2025-27
Natural Solutions 2.3	Ensure that the City's tree inventory is accurate and integrates trees planted by key external stakeholders.	Community Development , Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Administration	2025-27
Natural Solutions 2.4	Work with community partners to reach the 10 Tall goal of planting 10,000 new trees by 2035. Coordinate 10 Tall community tree giveaways to support tree planting on private property.	Community Development , Administration	2025-27
Natural Solutions 2.5	Establish autonomous backcountry tree watering infrastructure to better support the establishments of newly planted trees in City Open Space.	Parks & Recreation, Administration	2025-27
Natural Solutions 2.6	Analyze the lifecycle of urban street trees and explore the feasibility of an urban wood reuse program and a large woody biomass solution such as biochar.	Community Development , Administration	2025-27
Natural Solutions 2.7	Continue to advance Open Space restoration efforts that sequester carbon among other co-benefits, including restoring wetlands, installing riparian beaver dam analogs, applying compost and biochar to grasslands, and reviving Traditional Ecological Knowledge.	Administration	2025-27
Natural Solutions 2.8	Expand high-intensity short-duration grazing and evaluate the feasibility of establishing a year-round goat and sheep flock.	Administration	2025-27
Natural Solutions 2.9	Implement the Vegetative Fuels Management Plan to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and preserve existing carbon stocks in the Greenbelt.	Fire , Administration, Parks & Recreation	2025-27

Action	Description	Responsible Departments	Planned Initiation
Natural Solutions 2.10	Maximize the use of regional anaerobic digester compost for landscape management operations and other municipal uses.	Public Works, Utilities	2025-27
Natural Solutions 2.11	In collaboration with the IWMA, expand the application of regional anaerobic digester compost and/or biosolids on private and agricultural lands (see Water 2.11).	Utilities , Administration	2025-27
Natural Solutions 2.12	Establish formal partnerships and processes to continue to bring rigorous evidence-based research, monitoring, and scientific study to Natural Solutions projects within the City and the Greenbelt.	Administration	2025-27
Natural Solutions 3.1	Purchase open space lands and permanent land conservation agreements in furtherance of the City's Greenbelt Protection Program.	Administration	2027-29
Natural Solutions 3.2	Continue making progress on the 10 Tall goals.	Community Development, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Administration	2027-29
Natural Solutions 3.3	Leverage best practices in satellite imagery technology to better track the status of the City's canopy coverage and develop specific metrics for measuring the health and growth of the urban forest.	Community Development, Administration	2027-29
Natural Solutions 3.4	Continue to advance restoration efforts in City Open Space that sequester carbon and increase climate resilience, among other co-benefits.	Administration	2027-29
Natural Solutions 3.5	Implement and scale the Natural Solutions actions evaluated and studied in 2025-27 Financial Plan.	Administration	2027-29
Procurement			
Procurement 1.1	Pursue grant funding, government incentives, rebates, tax credits and other external funding to further Lead by Example actions.	Administration	Ongoing
Procurement 1.2	Adhere to the Socially Responsible Investments policy and integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG factors into the City's investment portfolio and review the ESG risk rating of the portfolio on a quarterly basis.	Finance	Ongoing
Procurement 1.3	Support the forthcoming cross-departmental Purchasing Working Group to educate purchasing leads and institutionalize sustainable purchasing decisions consistent with City policies.	Finance , Administration	Ongoing
Procurement 1.4	Participate in regional and state level networks to learn best practices and collaborate on sustainable purchasing policies and programs applicable to decentralized purchasing organizations.	Finance , Administration	Ongoing
Procurement 2.1	Continue identifying, developing, and implementing ways to align the City's Capital Improvement Program with Council-adopted climate goals.	Administration, Public Works	2025-27

Action	Description	Responsible Departments	Planned Initiation
Procurement 2.2	Update and advance a climate and equity budgeting approach for the 2025-27 Financial Plan through the CIP steering committee. Amend the City's Standard Specifications and Engineering Standards and CIP manual to promote consistency with Council-adopted climate goals. Include standard language for apprenticeships for CIP projects that want to take advantage of Federal Tax Rebate adders.	Administration, Public Works	2025-27
Procurement 2.3	Update Section 202 of the City's Purchasing Policy through the Purchasing Working Group to establish spend categories for goods and professional services, directly align with high-impact Lead by Example actions, and incorporate third-party certifications supported by the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council.	Finance , Administration	2025-27
Procurement 2.4	Establish a sustainable purchasing program that provides training to all employees about updates to the purchasing policy (Procurement 2.1, and 2.3) and leverages best practices for accountability recommended by other decentralized purchasing operations.	Finance , Administration	2025-27
Procurement 2.5	Update the Council-adopted sustainability criteria for procurement contracts to be directly aligned with Council's adopted Lead by Example goals.	Finance , Administration	2025-27
Procurement 2.6	Provide clear guidance and training to City employees on how to incorporate Government Code 4217 into energy-efficient City projects and purchases.	Administration , Public Works	2025-27
Procurement 2.7	Assess the feasibility of pursuing a municipal charter amendment to clarify the City's ability to take advantage of flexible procurement pathways available under state law, including design-build.	City Attorney , Public Works, Administration	2025-27
Procurement 2.8	Establish standard processes for applying for grants, rebates, incentives, and tax credits, as well as for reserving revenues from these sources for reinvestment in Lead by Example actions.	Administration, Public Works, Finance	2025-27
Procurement 2.9	Include an explicit reference to the City's standing Socially Responsible Investment Policy in the Investment Policy and Management Plan.	Finance	2025-27
Procurement 2.10	Analyze industry best practices for including Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions within the scope of a municipal greenhouse gas inventory.	Administration	2025-27
Procurement 3.1	Establish measurement performance reports of spend categories identified in Procurement Action 2.3.	Finance	2027-29
Procurement 3.2	Begin to evaluate, model, and track Scope 3 emissions to support decision-making in the subsequent Lead by Example planning document.	Administration	2027-29