

ALBUQUERQUE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

PUBLIC COMMENT BACKGROUND GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

This document provides background, context, and rationale for the proposed policies drafted by the Albuquerque Climate Action Task Force and shared for public comment. Please use this guide to explore how the task force’s discussions informed the Climate Action Plan (CAP) draft strategies. Task force recommendations fell into the six distinct categories of sustainable buildings, renewable energy, transportation, waste, climate conscious neighborhoods, and governance and economic development. To see the full list of the task force’s recommended strategies, click [here](#).

This effort is a part of the update of the 2009 Albuquerque Climate Action Plan directed by [City Resolution R-19-187](#)’s declaration of a climate emergency. The aim of the 2021 CAP update is to center the experiences of Albuquerque’s frontline communities – those that will be impacted “first and worst” by the effects of climate change. These communities include Indigenous, Black, and other communities of color, as well as communities of low-income and other groups that face greater exposure to pollution and climate hazards with more limited resources to respond. Because of these communities’ experiences the City understands that they are in the best position to strategize on Albuquerque’s climate mitigation path. In addition to honoring the knowledge of frontline communities, other guiding principles of the task force include:

- Centering climate mitigating and economic development actions in local communities with an explicit commitment to equity, inclusion, and accessibility. This principle is intended to strengthen capacity to respond to climate change while co-creating jobs with family-supporting wages that work to restore the land, water, and air in frontline communities.
- Ensuring decisions and actions are taken in partnership with rather than for frontline communities.
- Recognizing climate issues are interconnected and that Albuquerque must strive for and implement high-impact solutions with coordinated strategies that address multiple challenges.
- Investing in public education campaigns about mitigating climate change in partnership with frontline communities on a wide range of climate issues including but not limited to: fossil fuels, carbon dioxide, waste, recycling, dying ecosystem in the 6th mass extinction, animal agriculture and the contributions of greenhouse gases and deforestation, and tainted water supplies.

To learn more about the CAP process, please visit www.cabq.gov/cap.

TRANSPORTATION

As the state's major transportation hub and most populated metro area, Albuquerque experiences significant levels of greenhouse gas emissions from transportation – forty percent of Albuquerque's total greenhouse gas emissions resulting in approximately 2,310,992 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions yearly. In addressing transportation emissions, the task force called for creative strategies that focus on public transit, clean vehicle adoption, and active transportation while also ensuring equity in transportation access and safety for all residents.

Actions recommended by the task force center on supporting the following goals:

- Promote access to affordable transit
- Address vehicle emissions
- Prioritize safety to increase walking, biking, and transit use
- Develop a public relations campaign for public transit that is linked to climate goals

The task force recognized the local need for improvements in public safety measures in order to effectively encourage [active transportation](#) such as walking, running, and cycling as described in the [Vision Zero project](#). Emerging themes from task force deliberations characterized public transit as an invaluable, affordable, and socially responsible service, especially for frontline communities. Accordingly, the task force agreed that greater public support and awareness are needed to increase transit funding and address COVID-19 safety concerns in order to expand ridership and access. Other transportation priorities include transitioning from gas-powered to low and no emissions vehicles, ensuring electric vehicle access for frontline communities, and using localized economic development to shorten commutes.

To learn more about climate-friendly transportation and reference additional task force resources, please use the following hyperlinks:

- [Transportation meeting recording](#)
- [Transportation meeting notes](#)
- [Active transportation one pager](#)
- [Electric vehicle one pager](#)

GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The task force recognizes that effective climate action uses political and economic infrastructure to inspire a widespread, accessible culture of sustainability. By calling upon the City to jointly focus on governance and economic development, the task force hopes Albuquerque can fight the climate crisis through action which also promotes localized economic- and civic-empowerment. Furthermore, this two-pronged approach encourages a synthesis of concurrent climate change awareness, greenhouse gas emission mitigation, and climate justice efforts. Community-based governance and climate conscious economic development were continually at the core of task force recommendations. Specifically, the task force emphasized the following goals:

- Create green jobs for and with frontline communities
- Invest in climate emergency mobilization efforts

Task force deliberations underscored the need to target greenhouse gas emissions through strategies which stress the severity of the climate crisis, strengthen local resilience, and address systems of inequity. Central to the task force’s work was an acknowledgment of the legacies of systemic underinvestment and divestment experienced disproportionately by Albuquerque’s frontline communities. [Equitable development](#) was seen as a potential means of increasing investment, connection, and resiliency in these communities. Task force strategies, such as promoting sharing economies and revitalizing vacant lots, are examples of how locally-informed governance and economic development can synchronize climate action and community building.

Since this section emerged as a general theme from a variety of task force deliberations, there are no specific reference resources for this section.

SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS

The energy generated to power Albuquerque’s buildings accounts for fifty five percent of all of Albuquerque’s greenhouse gas emissions every year, equivalent to 3,189,800 metric tons of carbon dioxide. By promoting sustainable building practices – namely, increasing energy efficiency – Albuquerque will realize a variety of benefits, including: reduced greenhouse gas emissions, lessened demand for energy generation, lowered household energy costs, and increased comfort and safety in homes. Energy efficiency adoption in rental properties and households of low-income also provides an avenue for addressing economic injustice – the lens through which the task force made the following recommendations:

- Provide energy efficiency programs for people of low-income
- Require [energy use disclosure statements](#) for rental units
- Advance a strong public education campaign for energy efficiency throughout Albuquerque
- Increase support for green building codes
- Support utility [decoupling](#)

Throughout deliberations, the task force wanted to ensure that community-wide adoption of energy efficiency prioritized frontline communities’ ability to access and benefit from these technologies. The task force called upon the City to enforce uniform energy efficiency adoption in the private sector by implementing laws that require [energy use disclosure statements](#), the adoption of green building codes, and local energy efficiency standards. Finally, the task force recognized the need to incentivize utility companies’ support of energy efficiency through [decoupling](#), a process which would separate utility companies’ profits from their energy consumption sales.

For additional task force resources on this topic, please reference the following hyperlinks:

- [Energy efficiency meeting recording](#)
- [Energy efficiency meeting notes](#)
- [Energy efficiency one pager](#)

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Renewable energy is energy generated from sources – such as solar, wind, geothermal, and hydropower – that do not deplete after use and offer an alternative to more carbon intensive fuels, such as coal, oil, and natural gas. With its 350 sunny days a year, Albuquerque has enormous renewable energy potential in the solar sector. Recent technological advancements have spurred the [rapid adoption of solar infrastructure](#) locally by both property owners and third party energy companies. To ensure that all residents of Albuquerque realize the cost savings and emissions reductions renewable energy can provide, the task force proposed the following actions for the Climate Action Plan:

- Create solar incentives for people of low-income
- Promote solar energy development

Acknowledging the anticipated influx in renewable energy availability, the task force emphasized the importance of electrifying energy consumption in order to realize the full benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In tandem with these infrastructure considerations, the task force noted larger concerns around the ownership and management of energy, currently regulated by the state Public Regulation Commission and managed by the Public Service Company of New Mexico. The task force emphasized the need to move towards [energy democracy](#) and called on the City to advocate for community ownership of energy. Finally, task force members noted that the [storage of electric energy](#) is key to effectively utilizing and localizing renewable energy.

For additional task force resources on this topic, please reference the following hyperlinks:

- [Renewable energy one pager](#)
- [PNM renewable energy presentation](#) Passcode: Th8AMCRM
- [Vote Solar renewable energy presentation](#) No Passcode
- [Renewable energy meeting notes](#)

ZERO WASTE AND RECYCLING

Waste, in its many forms, accounts for about four percent (243,627 metric tons of carbon dioxide) of Albuquerque's greenhouse gas emissions. Waste management systems are complex and globalized, however, there is great potential for the reduction, repurposing, and rethinking of locally generated waste. Climate-focused waste management offers opportunities for job creation and sustainable economic development. These issues led the task force to recommend actions that strengthen existing recycling, composting, and waste reduction.

Task force deliberations prioritized ideas like expanding the City’s waste management programs, increasing education efforts, and targeting corporate and institutional waste production. Organic waste, for example, was identified as a potential site of innovation. Landfilled-food is a significant source of methane emissions, and while the City works to capture this potent greenhouse gas from its waste management facilities, organic material presents an opportunity for creating valuable products (such as compost) from what would otherwise enter the waste stream. Ultimately, task force members identified community education campaigns which incorporate [the five R's of waste management](#) as powerful tools to improve local landfill diversion and waste management.

For additional task force resources on this topic, please reference the following hyperlinks:

- [Waste meeting recording](#)
- [Waste meeting notes](#)
- [Recycling one pager](#)

CLIMATE CONSCIOUS NEIGHBORHOODS

A vision of climate conscious neighborhoods is central to the task force’s goal of improving Albuquerque residents’ daily life through greenhouse gas mitigation and climate justice efforts. Embracing locally-appropriate green spaces and using education as a means of empowering intergenerational efforts to understand and fight the climate crisis were central themes of this section. Additionally, the task force emphasized uplifting Indigenous voices in order to better-align the community with the traditional knowledge which has long spearheaded effective climate conscious living. While all other issues discussed by the task force are undoubtedly a part of this vision of community, this section hones in on important climate related subjects unaddressed elsewhere. Task force recommendations specific to this vision included:

- Encourage water conservation and smart planning
- Prioritize the greening of the city in planning to mitigate heat island effect, especially in frontline communities
- Advance a strong public education campaign for local agriculture
- Promote sustainable development and land use planning

The task force recognized the need to couple grassroots and planning-based efforts in order to improve the climate consciousness of Albuquerque’s neighborhoods. Local food systems, for example, were seen as sites of great potential for environmental education opportunities, as well as for expanding green spaces and edible landscapes. Interest in increasing green spaces, agriculture, and tree planting reflected the task force’s concern over equitable access to recreation and outdoor spaces, as well as to healthy and community-appropriate foods. Furthermore, the task force stressed the need to pursue these changes in land use to align with Albuquerque-specific climate concerns such as the [urban heat island effect](#) and water conservation.

For additional task force resources on this topic, please reference the following hyperlinks:

- [Tree planting one pager](#)
- [Green space one pager](#)
- [Climate conscious neighborhoods part 2 one pager](#)
- [Climate conscious neighborhoods part 1 meeting minutes](#)
- [Climate conscious neighborhoods part 1 meeting recording](#)
- [Climate conscious neighborhoods part 2 meeting minutes](#)
- [Climate conscious neighborhoods part 2 meeting recording](#)