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Sterling Heights Climate Action Planning

What is a Climate Action Plan?

A Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a comprehensive strategy developed by a city to address climate change and its impacts. CAPs include a range of strategies and actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing resilience to climate change, and promoting sustainable development within a specified amount of time.

Climate Action Plans aim to create a road map for a sustainable, low-carbon future for the city, enhancing the quality of life for its residents, while contributing to global efforts to combat climate change.

How does Climate Action Relate to Land Use Planning?

Land use planning and climate action planning are closely intertwined. In almost every decision that is made about land use, there are opportunities to incorporate strategies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and improve resiliency to climate change. Main themes of integration include:

1) Efficient Use of Resources = Less GHG Emissions

Effective land use planning can result in more efficient buildings and transportation infrastructure, which contributes to reduced energy required for activities within the city.

2) Resilience to Climate Change

There are many ways in which land use planning boosts resilience to the impacts of climate change. This includes improving green spaces, tree canopy, and green infrastructure systems which help to mitigate the impacts of changing climatic patterns and extreme weather events. Climate change resiliency strategies have been shown to help reduce urban heat island effects and improve stormwater management, which can reduce the impacts of flooding events.

3) Equitable Planning

Climate change impacts everyone, but some community members are more impacted than others. Equitable and inclusive land use planning incorporates strategies that improve resiliency for residents most impacted by climate change by developing planning solutions that are meaningful and sustainable for all members of the community.

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What are the Key Components of a CAP?

1

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

Community-wide and municipal baseline greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventories provide the basis for understanding the sources of GHG emissions in the City and measuring emissions reductions over time. The City of Sterling Heights is completing its first GHG emissions inventory with 2023 as its baseline.

2

Reduction Targets

GHG emissions reduction targets guide strategies and actions in CAPs. These targets are often aligned with international climate commitments such as the Paris Agreement.

3

Vulnerability & Risk Assessment

Several aspects of community risk are considered. These include physical, social, and economic vulnerabilities to the impact of climate change.

4

Mitigation Strategies

Mitigation strategies aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reducing Sterling Heights' impact on climate change, while improving resource use efficiency.

5

Adaptation Strategies

Adaptation strategies create community resilience against the impacts of climate change, prioritizing community members who are most impacted.