Policy Implementation Approaches in the CAAP

Introduction

The below table provides a comparison of different policy implementation approaches based on level of prescriptiveness, flexibility, and administrative commitment. While the types of actions may appear similar, more prescriptive or enforceable mechanisms ensure accountability and sustained emissions reductions, whereas flexible policies rely more heavily on incentives, voluntary participation, and programmatic support.

City of Costa Mesa CAAP

Potential Top GHG Reduction Community-wide Objectives

Sector	Objective	Prescriptive Policy Example City Actions Available to Accomplish Objectives	How would a more flexible CAAP be different?

On-Road Transportation	Transition to Electric Vehicles	• Encourage the community to transition to electric vehicles (EVs):
		  ○ City-led initiatives to provide EV charging infrastructure in public areas
		  ○ Adopt an ordinance to require EV charging infrastructure above code for new development. Example: SFR: each DU equipped with dedicated 208/240-volt branch circuit or Level 2 EVSE/EVCS (EV charger);
			Instead of adopting an ordinance to require EV charging infrastructure above code, the City could encourage or incentivize new development to provide EV chargers, for example through permit streamlining, providing technical assistance and/or guides, etc.

	Reduce VMT	• Encourage the use of alternative modes of travel: facilitate micromobility programs, require end-of-trip bike facilities in new development, expand sidewalks, install new bike lanes, etc. • Reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips: require commute trip reduction programs for large companies, require rideshare/carpooling/vanpooling corporate programs for large companies, promote employer parking cash out • Optimize land use to minimize commute distances: update land use designations, zoning, or overlays to	Instead of requiring specific VMT reduction measures through ordinances or development standards, a non-qualified CAP would likely focus on encouraging or supporting these strategies rather than mandating them. For example, the City could promote micromobility and active transportation through outreach campaigns, provide voluntary guidance for employers on rideshare programs, or collaborate with transit agencies to explore service improvements without committing to enforceable actions. Land use

Sector	Objective	Prescriptive Policy Example City Actions Available to Accomplish Objectives	How would a more flexible CAAP be different?
		allow for higher density development to decrease travel distances • Incentivize use of public transit community-wide: City-led development of mobility hubs, City provides subsidized transit passes to city employees and community members, partner with transit organizations to expand transit coverage and improve transit service	changes might be framed as aspirational actions rather than codified requirements.
Energy and the Built Environment	Electrify Buildings	• For existing development, require the switch to appliances that utilize less emissions-intensive energy sources and/or the replacement of natural gas appliances with electric alternatives during renovations • Adopt an electrification/GHG performance standard ordinance for new development and large-scale renovations	Instead of requiring electrification through ordinances or performance standards for new development and major renovations, a non-qualified CAP would likely focus on voluntary measures and incentives. For example, the City could provide educational resources and technical assistance to building owners, and offer rebates or grants for electric appliance upgrades. The plan might encourage electrification during renovations rather than mandate it, and frame actions as recommendations rather than enforceable requirements.
	Increase Building Efficiency	• Facilitate energy audits for building owners to understand possible energy efficiency upgrade options • For renovations not requiring permits, incentivize retrofits with energy-efficient upgrades • Adopt an energy efficiency ordinance for new development and large-scale renovations. Examples: requirement of CALGreen voluntary measures as mandatory, achievement of energy performance target or energy budgets greater than statewide standards • Adopt an energy efficiency ordinance for existing buildings. Examples: requirement of owners of large buildings to track and report whole-building energy use, periodic energy audits to identify and implement	Instead of adopting mandatory energy efficiency ordinances or requiring building owners to track and report energy use, a non-qualified CAP would likely focus on voluntary programs and incentives. For example, the City could provide educational resources, promote energy audits, and offer rebates or grants for efficiency upgrades. Guidance on CALGreen standards or energy performance targets might be presented as recommendations rather than enforceable requirements. Programs like cool roof and pavement initiatives would still be encouraged through outreach and partnerships.

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		efficiency upgrades, and set targets to reduce energy consumption (e.g., 2% reduction annually). • Cool roof and pavement programs; City provides guides, toolkits, and/or technical assistance to support cool roof and pavement programs, partner with utilities to support with rebates (e.g., Cool Communities Project sponsored by CEC)	
	Decarbonize Energy Use	• Increase electricity generation from on-site renewable energy (e.g., solar photovoltaic systems): streamline permitting processes, provide technical assistance for PV and battery systems, potentially require installation of rooftop solar above code through ordinance • Automatically enroll community members in electricity options that provide 100% renewably sourced energy (enter into CCA agreement), with opt out options	Instead of requiring installation of rooftop solar above code or automatically enrolling community members in electricity options that provide 100% renewably sourced energy, a non-qualified CAP would likely focus on voluntary participation and supportive measures that encourage decarbonization. For example, the City could provide educational resources and technical assistance for solar and battery systems, promote streamlined permitting, and encourage residents to opt into renewable energy programs rather than automatic enrollment.
Off-Road Equipment	Electrify Off-Road Equipment	• Increase electric and zero-emission off-road and landscaping equipment adoption: adopt ZEV landscaping equipment ordinance, permit streamlining for contractors with ZEV fleets	Instead of adopting an ordinance requiring zero-emission landscaping equipment, a non-qualified CAP would likely focus on voluntary adoption and supportive measures that encourage the switch to electric equipment. For example, the City could provide educational resources, promote incentive programs or rebates for electric equipment, and encourage contractors to transition through outreach and recognition programs rather than enforceable requirements.
Water and Wastewater	Reduce Water Consumption	• Require use of low-flow appliances and drought-tolerant landscaping in new development and renovations • Encourage or require water reuse and recycling (e.g., graywater, rain barrels, recycled water)	Instead of requiring the use of low-flow appliances and drought-tolerant landscaping in new development or mandating water reuse and recycling systems, a non-qualified CAP would likely focus on voluntary adoption and incentives. For example, the City could provide educational

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			resources, promote water conservation through outreach campaigns, and offer rebates for installing low-flow fixtures or rainwater harvesting systems.
Solid Waste	Reduce Waste to Landfills	• Reduce the generation of waste (e.g., through reuse and repair programs) and diverting material (e.g., recycling and composting programs)	Similar or the same as qualified CAAP actions.
Natural and Urban Lands	Enhance Carbon Sequestration	• Require nature-based solutions in new and existing developments as appropriate (e.g., bioswales, tree-shaded parking, green roofs) • Adopt tree replacement ordinance • Install community gardens, rain gardens, urban farms, etc. by requiring large new developments (e.g., 200+ residential units and 250k+ SF non-residential) to participate and City-led efforts	Instead of requiring nature-based solutions in new and existing developments or mandating participation in tree replacement and community garden programs, a non-qualified CAP would likely focus on voluntary efforts and incentives. For example, the City could encourage developers to incorporate green infrastructure through design guidelines, promote tree planting and urban greening through outreach campaigns, and offer grants or recognition programs for projects that include bioswales, rain gardens, or green roofs.