

ANCHORAGE, AK

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN



Neighbors,

Anchorage, Alaska is the gateway to America's Arctic. Our diverse and dynamic city of 300,000 people sits on the homelands of the Dena'ina Athabascans. As Alaskans, change is our steady state – between seasons, the amount of daylight, past and future. Now, accelerated changes have affected our natural environment. The world around us is dramatically transforming -- everything from temperature and humidity levels to animal migration patterns and the length of fire seasons. Together, we can make the adjustments and adaptations required to live proactively in a changed and changing climate.

This Climate Action Plan builds on our traditions as a welcoming and resilient city. The plan places equity and inclusion at the heart of our social, environmental, and economic policies and practices. It affords us the opportunity to ensure that our people, our neighborhoods, and our businesses have the capacity to thrive as we respond to a changing climate and economy. It highlights deeply-rooted Alaskan traditions of innovation and collaboration.

Please join us as we work together to confront the challenge of climate change and take steps to reduce energy use, improve public health, promote energy independence, strengthen our economy and build a more livable and resilient community. As we show others that there is an Anchorage Way, our city can be a model and inspiration for good stewardship, good jobs, and stronger, healthier communities.

Sincerely,



Mayor Ethan Berkowitz

The Municipality of Anchorage acknowledges that our city sits on the traditional homelands of the Dena'ina Athabaskan peoples. The Municipality recognizes the governmental status of the Native Village of Eklutna and is committed to working with the Native Village of Eklutna as a government partner. The Municipality also acknowledges the vital role that the Eklutna Corporation has as the largest landowner in the Municipality. This Climate Action Plan is built on the recognition that Indigenous values and knowledge are foundational to our efforts to build community resilience.

Anchorage Climate Action Plan at a Glance

The Anchorage Climate Action Plan puts Anchorage on a path to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent from 2008 levels by 2050, with an interim goal of 40 percent by 2030.¹ This goal aligns with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and the Paris Agreement for emission reductions necessary to avoid severe impacts of climate change.^{2, 3} The objectives and actions in the plan also support resilience and adaptation planning in the Municipality.

To draft the Climate Action Plan, Municipal staff worked with a Steering Committee, an Advisory Committee, and nearly 100 technical advisors, including university faculty, staff and students, agency representatives, scientists, and community members. These groups helped identify the near-term actions most likely to result in the long-term changes necessary to achieve these ambitious climate action goals, while also advancing other community goals related to economic development, equity, resilience, and public health. Hundreds of Anchorage residents participated in community events and provided important ideas and feedback throughout the development of the plan.

In addition to the objectives and actions laid out in each of the sectors, the Climate Action Plan also has two overarching actions:

1. Complete a greenhouse gas inventory and update annually to assess progress towards climate goals.
2. Develop a framework for selecting, monitoring, and regularly disseminating indicators that track 1) environmental changes associated with climate change, 2) impacts of climate change and relevant socio-demographic and geographic information, and 3) adaptation measures and their effectiveness in Anchorage.

Why Create a Climate Action Plan?

Over the last 50 years, Alaska has warmed twice as fast as the global average.⁴ The scientific community has asserted that the world is warming due to the human emissions of greenhouse gases.⁵ Almost all human activities in our modern lives contribute to the release of greenhouse gases in some way. This can occur directly through the fuel we put in our cars or use to heat our homes, or indirectly, through the production and transportation of food and goods we use every day.⁶ The two main greenhouse gases addressed in this plan are carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄), with the majority of actions in this plan addressing CO₂ emissions.

Alaska has the opportunity to be a world leader in reducing emissions. Although every region matters, Alaska's high per capita emissions give us more opportunity - and more responsibility - to affect change. Anchorage is joining a community of cities, states and organizations around the world in an effort to lower its contributions to climate change and build local capacity to combat the unavoidable environmental changes the world faces.

¹ These goals are both ambitious and necessary, and while this plan puts us on the right path, alone and in its current state, it will not ensure that we meet them. The implementation steps at the end of the plan aim to institutionalize ongoing community dialogue and action and help us secure additional resources to allow us to reach these goals.

² <https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/>

³ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

⁴ <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/26/>

⁵ Huber and Knutti 2012, Anthropogenic and natural warming inferred from changes in Earth's energy balance, Nature, <https://www.nature.com/articles/ngeo1327>

⁶ https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-05/global_emissions_sector_2015.png

How is the Anchorage Climate Action Plan organized?

Highlights from each of the seven sectors are listed below with page numbers to direct you to the full chapter. In each sector chapter, you'll find a 2050 vision, objectives for 2030, and the action steps to achieve these objectives.

Buildings and Energy

- Expand local renewable energy generation and use
- Reduce energy use in existing and new buildings
- Use existing and innovative financing mechanisms and incentives to encourage renewable energy and energy efficiency
- Integrate long-term clean energy solutions into regional energy policy and planning

Read more on pages 32-38

Land Use and Transportation

- Improve transit options and non-motorized accessibility to major centers
- Encourage land use planning that reduces distance people have to travel by car and increases community resilience
- Transition to vehicles that are highly efficient and run on low-carbon and renewable energy fuels

Read more on pages 39-45

Consumption and Solid Waste

- Divert and reduce waste, extending the life of the landfill
- Capture more wasted energy in collected refuse
- Further educate and engage residents and businesses about waste reduction and diversion
- Create waste reduction targets across both Municipal operations and the Anchorage community
- Optimize refuse collection and disposal systems

Read more on pages 46-51

Health and Emergency Preparedness

- Develop strategies to enhance the health and safety of all Anchorage residents
- Collaborate and engage diverse groups of people across Anchorage in health and safety planning
- Build household, neighborhood, and community resilience and self-sufficiency for emergency situations
- Support creative and collaborative research to understand how climate change is impacting the health and safety of Anchorage residents

Read more on pages 52-60

Food Systems

- Expand opportunities and markets for Alaska Grown products
- Ensure that all Anchorage residents can access healthy, local foods
- Create opportunities for residents and businesses to reduce food waste

Read more on pages 61-66

Urban Forest and Watersheds

- Support wildfire mitigation and improve forest management to prepare for increased risk of wildfire
- Improve storm water management to mitigate flooding and promote better water quality
- Increase capacity to respond to invasive species outbreaks
- Monitor Eklutna watershed to ensure a resilient drinking water supply

Read more on pages 67-73

Outreach and Education

- Use effective and inclusive outreach methods to ensure that all Anchorage residents benefit throughout the implementation of the Climate Action Plan
- Motivate Anchorage residents, schools, businesses, community councils, and agencies to reduce their carbon footprint

Read more on pages 74-78

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