



Legislation Text

File #: 17-0273, **Version:** 1

TO:

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:

Mark Danaj, City Manager

FROM:

Nadine Nader, Assistant City Manager
George Gabriel, Management Analyst

SUBJECT:

Discussion of Potential Options City Council can Pursue Regarding the Paris Climate Accord (Mayor Lesser).

DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION

RECOMMENDATION:

At the request of Mayor Lesser, discuss and provide direction to staff on potential options City Council can pursue regarding the Paris Climate Accord.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

No fiscal implications associated with the recommended action.

BACKGROUND:

At the June 6, 2017 City Council meeting, Mayor Lesser requested and received City Council approval to agendize a discussion on the City of Manhattan Beach's response to the United States withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord known as the, "Paris Agreement."

Manhattan Beach has a long history of environmental sensitivity and activism, as a community and as a city government. The City offers various opportunities for local businesses and residents to be involved in taking action to protect our environment and has received numerous awards for those efforts.

In 2015, the City Council approved a City-wide Strategic Plan and included Environmental Stewardship as one of its pillars stating,

"The residents of Manhattan Beach place a high value on a healthy, outdoor, and recreational life style and are committed to protecting the environment of their beautiful coastal community. The City recognizes its leadership role in environmental stewardship and works to create a built environment that compliments the natural environment. Manhattan Beach is recognized for its progressive environmental stewardship and healthy community initiatives. A healthy and active lifestyle is accessible for residents because the City is safe, sustainable and resilient."

Previous to this, the City of Manhattan Beach developed an environmental plan titled, “Working Toward a Greater, Greener Manhattan Beach” report which documented the City’s environmentally friendly practices and identified other best management practices the City could adopt to enhance the City’s environmental programs. As a result of this report, the City created an Environmental Programs Manager to coordinate sustainability policies and the creation of an Environmental Task Force to analyze priority environmental issues and make recommendations to City Council.

The City has had a history of supporting environmental campaigns in the past. In 2007, the City adopted Resolution No. 6111 (attachment #1) supporting Manhattan Beach’s inclusion as a member in the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign (CCP), a program to promote local actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition, the City adopted Resolution No. 6077 (attachment #2) which endorsed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. This agreement is an outgrowth of the Kyoto Protocol to combat global warming and create a consensus among cities to implement greenhouse gas reduction principles as well as put political pressure on the Federal Government to agree to the Kyoto Protocol.

In April 2010, City Council adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP), incorporating measures identified by the former Environmental Task Force to reduce the city’s carbon footprint. The City also adopted a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction target to coincide with statewide goals to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions 15% below 2005 levels by 2020.

Through the South Bay Cities Council of Governments and in accordance with state legislation, GHG inventories were completed for 2005, 2007, 2010, and 2012. In 2015, City Council adopted Resolution No. 15-0061 to include energy efficiency measures in the City’s CAP, to ensure the City will achieve the GHG reductions that are called for in the State’s 2020 and 2050 targets.

DISCUSSION:

The Paris Climate Accord, known as the “Paris Agreement” by the United Nations, is an international agreement reached in 2015 aimed at reducing carbon emissions, slowing rising global temperatures and helping countries deal with the effects of climate change.

Specifically, Article 2 of the Paris Climate Accord states and requires nations to:

- a. “Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change;
- b. Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production;
- c. Making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilient development.”

On June 1, 2017 the current administration announced that the United States would withdraw and cease all implementation of the Paris Climate Accord citing “onerous energy restrictions it has placed on the United States” (see attachment #).

In response to the decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord, cities, counties and private

entities have stated their disagreement in a variety of ways stressing their commitment to combat climate change. As a result, staff has provided the City Council with a variety of options to direct staff and/or authorize the Mayor to execute all or specific options.

1) Authorize the Mayor to Sign “Climate Mayor’s Statement”

As of June 12, 2017, 298 U.S. Mayors representing 60 million Americans have signed onto a statement titled, the “Climate Mayor’s Statement” committing to “adopt, honor, and uphold the Paris Climate Agreement goals.” For City Council reference, staff has attached the complete statement and the Mayors that have signed on to the statement thus far (attachment #5).

The Climate Mayor’s Statement cites no specifics or requirements on how cities will uphold these goals but instead an open ended sign of support for the Paris Agreement.. In addition, the Paris Agreement is an international agreement and it is unclear how local governments plan to can abide by the agreement or what measures they plan to put in place.

2) Authorize the Mayor to Sign Michael Bloomberg’s Pledge, “We Are Still In”

On June 5, 2017, Michael Bloomberg, launched two initiatives in response to the Paris Climate Accord decision that included, “America’s Pledge,” a plan to work with U.S. subnational and non-state actors to quantify the United States collective resolve to combat climate change and fulfill the commitment made in the Paris Climate Accord.

In connection to the plan, Bloomberg launched an open letter to the international community titled, “We Are Still In” affirming mayors, governors, college and university leaders, businesses, and investor’s support of climate action to meet the Paris Agreement. The letter (attachment #8) welcomes those parties to add their name to the pledge. As of June 5, 2017 125 cities, 9 states, 902 businesses and investors, and 183 colleges and universities representing 120 million Americans have added their organizations to the open letter as signatories.

Both “America’s Pledge” and “We Are Still In” cite no specific requirements on how cities will uphold these goals, but instead an open ended sign of support for the Paris Agreement. In addition, there is currently no formal mechanism for entities that are not countries to be full parties to the Paris Climate Accord. Therefore, it is currently unclear how local governments plan to commit to the goals set forth in the Paris Climate Accord will be held accountable to the commitment or what measures they plan to put in place.

3) Open Letter to the Community

City Council can consider an open letter to the community. Similar to the City of Freemont (see attachment # 7), staff can prepare a letter to the community stating the City’s environmental sustainability efforts, disagreement with the Trump Administrations decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord, and announce the City’s decision to sign statements discussed in option #1 and option #2.

4) Prepare a Resolution

Upon City Council direction, staff can prepare a resolution for adoption expressing the City Council’s stance on the Paris Climate Accord. For reference, the City has included samples of draft resolutions from the City of Castigola and the City of Baldwin Park (attachment #6) to consider.

In summary, if City Council authorizes the Mayor to sign onto statements as a City or pursue options

#3 or #4, the incoming Environmental Programs Manager would assess the Paris Climate Accord and any obligations the City would be required to meet.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST:

After analysis, staff determined that public outreach was not required for this issue.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The City has reviewed the proposed activity for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that the activity is not a "Project" as defined under Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines; therefore, pursuant to Section 15060(c)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines the activity is not subject to CEQA. Thus, no environmental review is necessary.

LEGAL REVIEW

The City Attorney has reviewed this report and determined that no additional legal analysis is necessary.

Attachments:

1. Resolution No. 6111
2. Resolution No. 6077
3. Paris Agreement Summary
4. Statement from the White House on Paris Agreement
5. Climate Mayor's Statement
6. Sample Draft Resolutions from the Cities of Castigola and Baldwin Park
7. City of Fremont Open Letter to Community
8. "We Are Still In" Pledge