

# ClimatePlan

2019–2022

Strategic Direction





## Letter from the Executive Director

We can no longer ignore the inconvenient truth: climate change is here.

In 2018, California experienced a devastating series of wildfires, including the Camp Fire, which destroyed the city of Paradise and was the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history. A year before that, California was in one of the worst droughts on record. It took the wettest winter in a century to rescue the state.

These aren't isolated incidents. As climate change accelerates, we will experience more droughts, more wildfires, and more floods unless we change how we grow.

We can't ignore that California's housing crisis is contributing to climate change. Home prices continue to push low-income communities and communities of color further away from their jobs and social services, leading to longer commutes by car, increased pollution, and concentrated poverty. Communities where people can find homes that they can afford near well-paying jobs and good schools, that are connected by transportation choices and surrounded by protected farms and natural landscapes not only reduce climate pollution, but also create healthier people. How and where we build determines how long someone will live and how much greenhouse gas is emitted into the atmosphere.

The people with the fewest resources are the ones most at risk. Fact: California's most vulnerable communities already bear disproportionate burdens and health impacts from poor housing, land use, and transportation decisions that also contribute to climate change. Low-income

communities—and communities of color—are more likely to live near heavy-polluting industries, truck routes, and freeways. These communities face a daily struggle to breathe clean air and often have the highest hospitalization and mortality rates due to exposure to air pollution.

And despite California's progress on climate goals, greenhouse gas emissions from transportation—the largest source of emissions—are climbing. Switching to electric cars will help, but it is not enough; we must build and invest in communities where driving isn't our only option to get around.

We need change, and we need it now. We cannot afford to continue our current pattern of unchecked growth and investment in climate polluting transportation. We need to radically change how we plan, build, and invest in our communities to address the impacts of climate change and improve opportunity and access for all Californians.

Today, I am proud to share **ClimatePlan's 2019 Strategic Direction**: the path forward to transform how California plans and build its communities—and invests in its transportation system—to fight climate change and increase opportunity for all.

Building a movement that is broad, diverse, and powerful, ClimatePlan is harnessing the energy of more than 50 organizations toward creating a healthier, more vital California for everyone.

**I urge you to join us.**

# Acknowledgments

**Thank you** to ClimatePlan's Steering Committee members. Your leadership and guidance through this process has been invaluable.

- Tony Dang, California Walks
- Chione Flegal, PolicyLink
- Lisa Hershey, Housing California
- Adam Livingston, Sequoia Riverlands Trust
- Liz O'Donoghue, The Nature Conservancy
- Gloria Ohland, Move LA
- Andres Ramirez, Pacoima Beautiful
- Joshua Stark, TransForm
- Sam Tepperman-Gelfant, Public Advocates
- Matt Vander Sluis, Greenbelt Alliance

**Thank you** to our funders. Your support continues to make this work possible.

- (Anonymous)
- The California Endowment
- Lisa and Douglas Goldman Foundation
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

**Thank you** to Sara Daleiden for her thoughtful facilitation and invaluable guidance.

Most importantly, **thank you**, to our partners. You are the reason ClimatePlan exists. We are proud to stand with you and implement this plan to see a healthier, more equitable and sustainable California.

- 350 Bay Area
- American Farmland Trust
- American Lung Association in California
- Breakthrough Communities
- Breathe California
- Breathe California of Los Angeles County
- California Bicycle Coalition
- California Walks
- California League of Conservation Voters
- California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN)
- California ReLeaf
- California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
- Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Stockton
- Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCA EJ)
- Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment
- Central California Asthma Collaborative
- Central Valley Air Quality Coalition
- ChangeLab Solutions

- Circulate San Diego
- Climate Action Campaign
- Climate Resolve
- Coalition for Clean Air
- Endangered Habitats League
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Environment Now
- Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS)
- Fresno Metro Ministry
- Friends of Harbors, Beaches, and Parks
- Greenbelt Alliance
- Housing California
- Human Impact Partners
- Investing in Place
- The Kennedy Commission
- Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
- League of Women Voters of California
- Local Government Commission
- Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition
- Move LA
- Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
- Pacific Forest Trust
- Pacoima Beautiful
- Planning and Conservation League
- PolicyLink
- Prevention Institute
- Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles
- Public Advocates
- Public Health Institute
- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
- Sacramento Housing Alliance
- Safe Routes to School National Partnership
- Sequoia Riverlands Trust
- Sierra Business Council
- Sierra Club
- Sierra Nevada Alliance
- Smart Growth America
- Southern California Association of Non Profit Housing
- SPUR (San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association)
- Sunflower Alliance
- TransForm
- The Trust for Public Land
- The Nature Conservancy
- Urban Habitat
- Urban Land Institute San Francisco
- Valley Improvement Projects
- Walk Sacramento
- Western Center on Law and Poverty

# The Challenges in California

Since 2006, California has passed the strongest climate change legislation in the nation. In 2016, California set a goal to reduce its climate pollution 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. The state continues to set ambitious goals to curb the threats from climate change.

However, a 2018 report from the California Air Resources Board<sup>1</sup> showed that emissions from the transportation sector—the state’s largest source of greenhouse gas emissions—continue to grow because Californians are driving more, not less.

It’s clear California will not meet its climate goals unless dramatic change happens in **housing, land use, and transportation**.

**Housing:** Today, California is in the midst of an affordable housing crisis. People, especially those with low incomes, are being displaced to the urban fringe at alarming rates. As housing costs rise, a lack of tenant protections further accelerates displacement of entire communities. California is not producing enough affordable homes near transit and jobs to fulfill the need; and not enough existing affordable homes are

being preserved. Displacement combined with the lack of affordable homes is forcing people to live further from work and essential services, and this in turn is increasing driving and climate pollution—and deepening inequity.

**Land Use:** California’s history of redlining and segregation created sprawling subdivisions of single-family homes for wealthier, white communities, while low-income communities of color struggled with the challenges of urban renewal, disinvestment, and exclusion from more affluent spaces. Today, California’s metropolitan areas are re-segregating:<sup>2</sup> wealthier people are moving into urban areas while lower income people are being pushed further out. Re-segregation perpetuates the essential feature of segregation: unequal allocation of land, resources, and political will. Cities and towns in California’s rural areas continue to invest in sprawl development, building homes far from jobs, schools, stores, and parks. These far-flung developments are destroying natural and agricultural lands and forcing people to drive more.

**Transportation:** Today, transportation remains the state’s largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, or climate pollution. This is, in large part, the result of decades of investments that prioritized building thousands of lane miles of highways and roads over public transit. People are still

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1 California Air Resources Board. 2018. *2018 Progress Report: California’s Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act*. Retrieved here: <https://bit.ly/2zv2QFN>.

2 Urban Habitat. 2016. *Race, Inequality, and the Resegregation of the Bay Area*. Retrieved here: <https://bit.ly/2BAJW0i>.

*“Climate change is the defining issue of our day. The Hewlett Foundation is proud to support networks like ClimatePlan, who are working hard to ensure California avoids the worst effects of climate change.”*

**– ANAND GOPAL, WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION**





grappling with the legacy of past transportation decisions, including highways that divide neighborhoods, freight routes that pollute communities' air with diesel fumes, and a lack of good public transit which forces people to drive. The burdens from California's transportation system fall hardest on California's most vulnerable communities, who are more likely to live in communities with dangerous traffic intersections, without sidewalks and bicycle lanes, and near freeways that pollute the air and lead to asthma and other chronic illnesses. New technology like electric vehicles and ride-sharing can help, but it will not solve the problem. We need a dramatic shift in transportation investment away from driving.

These challenges intersect. Fortunately, so do their solutions. We can make powerful change on each of these fronts. We can not only meet climate goals, we can improve public health and make neighborhoods safer by investing in walking, biking, and good public transit. We can build affordable homes for all income levels, close to good jobs and multi-modal transportation options that are safe and convenient.

**We can change the system.  
But we can't do it alone.**

## Our Vision

We envision a healthier and more vital California that supports sustainable and equitable communities, preserves iconic landscapes, and significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

We recognize that California has been shaped by a history of inequity, racism, oppression, and disinvestment. Those most impacted by the economic, political, and health consequences of climate change—low-income communities and communities of color—must have their voices heard and their needs met in statewide, regional and local decision-making. Equity does not involve a particular set of policies; rather, it is about paying attention to the knowledge, needs, authority, autonomy, and power of the most vulnerable communities—and acting in ways that support these communities.

## How We Work

ClimatePlan is a learning network of over 50 organizations. ClimatePlan was founded around the reality that no one organization or entity can provide the solutions we seek. Together, we are an incubator for our partners and other networks to catalyze action at the local, regional, and state levels to create lasting change in housing, land use, and transportation. We provide a space where partners can invest in shared leadership, learn from one another's expertise, and build relationships with one another.

We embrace our role as an equity ally, engaging in ongoing learning across the ClimatePlan network; partnering and supporting the leadership of equity advocates; and championing policies and projects in ClimatePlan campaigns that create benefits for all. We use equity and justice as an important lens on our work.

ClimatePlan's approach has three components that support each other:



### **Drive Transformative Policy Change:**

We collaborate with partner organizations to advance equitable, healthy, and sustainable housing, land use, and transportation policy.



**Amplify Community Voices:** We build community power by offering technical assistance, trainings, and seed grants to elevate policies built upon our local and regional partners' priorities and direction.



### **Build Bridges across Issues and Geographies:**

We convene diverse non-profit organizations across the state to create sustainable, healthy, and equitable communities, and to build knowledge and create change.

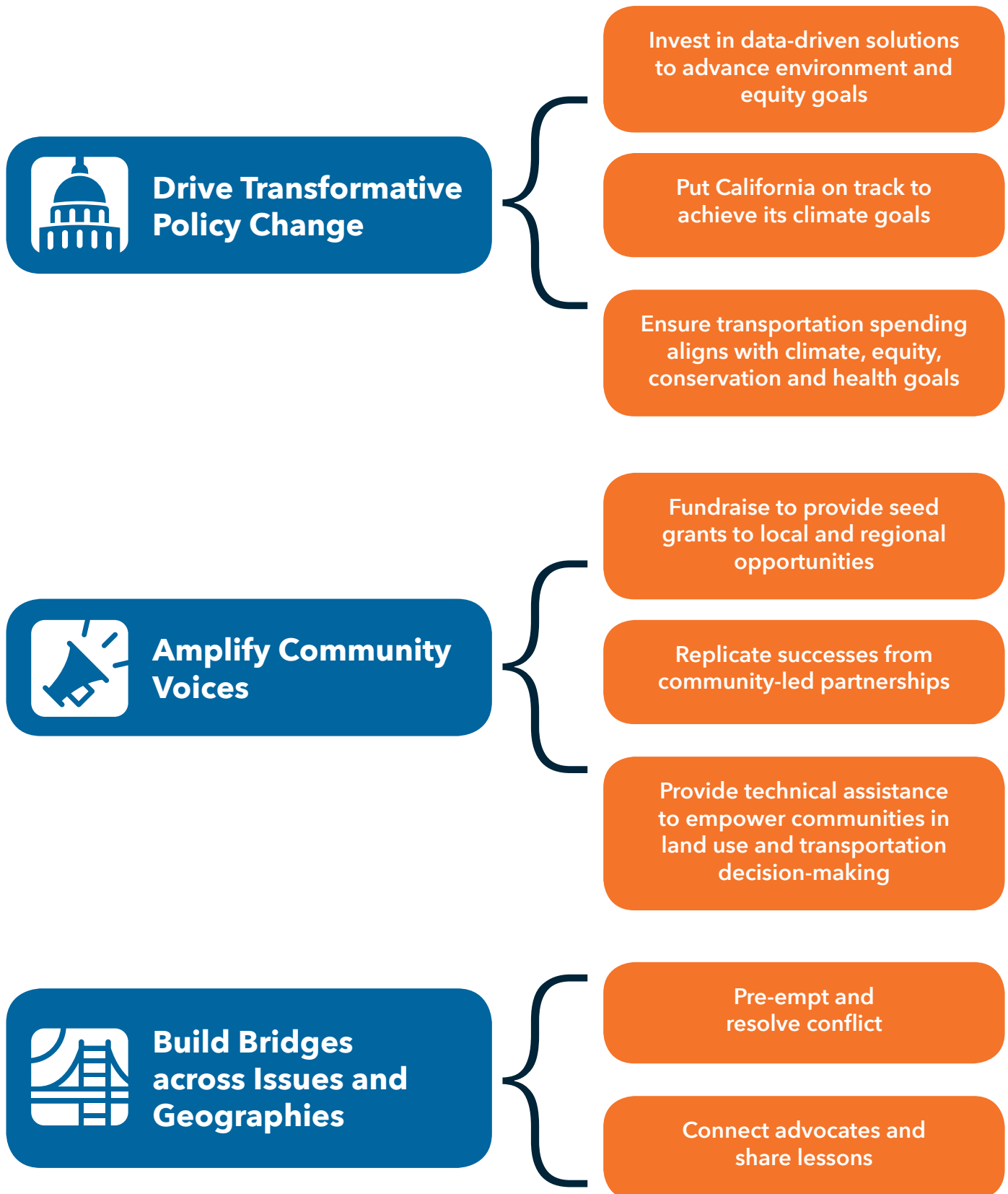
Our vision is to create a healthier, more sustainable California, where people of all backgrounds and incomes can thrive.

*"Our partnership with ClimatePlan is essential to direct state decision-makers to focus on policies that will create a more sustainable and resilient California. Working with ClimatePlan on how and where California builds is key if the state wants to achieve its climate and equity goals."*

**– HOWARD PENN, PLANNING AND CONSERVATION LEAGUE**

# Strategic Priorities

## Actions







# Our Strategic Priorities for 2019–2022

Starting in 2019, our work will focus on the following three key priorities:



## 1. Drive Transformative Policy Change

We will advance ambitious policies to reshape California's housing, land use, and transportation systems. These policies will address historic inequities, promote public health, advance sustainability, and conserve natural and agricultural lands.

### Actions:

- **Invest in data-driven solutions that advance environmental and equity goals on housing, transportation, and land use:** We will develop and circulate well-researched solutions that protect the environment, while increasing housing access and affordability near transit stations and jobs, especially for those who need it most: low-income communities and communities of color. Our research will show how California can both protect land by curbing sprawl and directing new growth into existing neighborhoods, as well as prevent displacement and preserve affordable homes.

- **Put California on track to achieve climate goals:** Ten years ago, California made a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through coordinated strategies addressing housing, land use, and transportation. However, the state and its regions are not making the necessary progress. Through coordinated advocacy, we will promote legislative and agency solutions that increase accountability. These may include tying state funding to progress on climate goals and strengthening the connection between local, regional, and state actions to reduce emissions. We will take care to ensure that strategies to address climate change do not place further burdens on low-income communities, e.g., contributing to displacement or community instability.
- **Ensure transportation spending aligns with climate, equity, conservation, and health goals:** In 2017, the state passed a \$54 billion transportation bill, SB 1; while this was a start toward change, over 80% of state transportation dollars still go toward roads and highways. Through coalition-building and policy development, we will work together to align state transportation dollars with climate, equity, conservation, and health goals. We will advocate for better performance measures, improved monitoring, strong champions of equity, climate, conservation and health on state decision-making boards like the California Transportation Commission, and community-led decision-making processes for transportation investments.





## 2. Amplify Community Voices

We will work at the local and regional levels to increase community engagement and power at the intersection of climate, housing, land use, and transportation. We will provide community-based organizations and resident leaders, especially those representing underserved populations, with tools and resources to shape their communities' future.

### Actions:

- **Provide technical assistance to empower communities in housing, land use and transportation decision-making:** A significant barrier to community leadership in land use and transportation planning is its technocratic nature, especially developing scenarios and travel modeling. To empower communities to shape decision-making, we will provide trainings, targeted technical assistance, and campaign support. These efforts will allow communities to develop their own scenarios for the future, with livable communities that integrate open space, affordable housing, and active transportation.
- **Fundraise to provide seed grants to community organizations to grow their own resources to engage in land use and transportation planning:** ClimatePlan is committed to increasing resources and power for local and regional organizations, so they can

shape their own communities. We recognize that a primary barrier to this work is lack of funding. We will seek funding to help these organizations expand and secure tools to tackle the challenges their communities face.

- **Focus on replicating successes from community-led partnerships in San Joaquin Valley and Southern California to address historic inequities:** Underserved communities in these regions bear the burdens of past inequitable land use and transportation decisions. These burdens include lack of basic transportation infrastructure, such as protected bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks. Homes are far from hospitals and necessary social services. Many community-based organizations and resident leaders have created meaningful change in their neighborhoods by shaping local and regional plans for growth and transportation. We will work with these community organizations to amplify their work so other community-led coalitions can learn and be effective change agents. We will support coalitions that request our help; we will make sure these coalitions use their communities' knowledge—as well as state laws—to develop and implement local and regional plans that advance environmental justice, fair housing, sustainable growth, and investment in transportation choices that reduces communities' dependence on automobiles.





### 3. Build Bridges Across Issues and Geographies

Since its inception, ClimatePlan has embraced its role as a learning network: a space where advocacy organizations and leaders from other sectors can come together to find common ground. By working across issue areas and geographies, partners amplify their work and achieve greater impacts on policy and systems change. We are building a thriving movement that connects housing, land use, and transportation, all the way from towns to cities to the state.

#### Actions:

- **Connect advocates across the state to share lessons and build a stronger, smarter movement:** ClimatePlan's partners have pioneered many innovative strategies. They helped create programs that tie transportation funding to climate, conservation, and housing goals, like the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) Program. They helped pass ballot measures like Measure R and M for Los Angeles County,

which raises over \$160 billion dollars over 40 years for transportation—with 70% of the total dedicated to transit. They helped pass state legislation in 2017 that provides much-needed funds to address California's housing crisis. ClimatePlan will continue convening partners regularly to share what is (and is not) working and to host trainings with technical experts to build partners' skills.

- **Address the hard issues to build a united coalition:** ClimatePlan's partners represent a wide variety of issue areas and geographies. With this level of diversity, conflict is expected, and in some cases necessary, as we seek better policies that achieve California's climate, health, and equity goals. Through facilitated retreats, day-long convenings, and network meetings, we will create space for our partners to share ideas and address concerns before they surface in public forums. As conflict arises, ClimatePlan will bring partners together to seek solutions that build trust and power among our partners.



# ClimatePlan's Sphere of Influence

Changing housing, land use, and transportation systems in California is ambitious work that goes beyond any one issue or coalition. To achieve change at the necessary scale, we must work with other coalitions to achieve our collective goal of a healthier, more vital California for all.

Our approach is strategic, so that our collective efforts are not redundant but instead take the work even further. We work in partnership with other coalitions across the state to fill gaps and create a robust advocacy landscape to achieve our shared goals for healthy, sustainable, equitable communities.

## Statewide Advocacy:

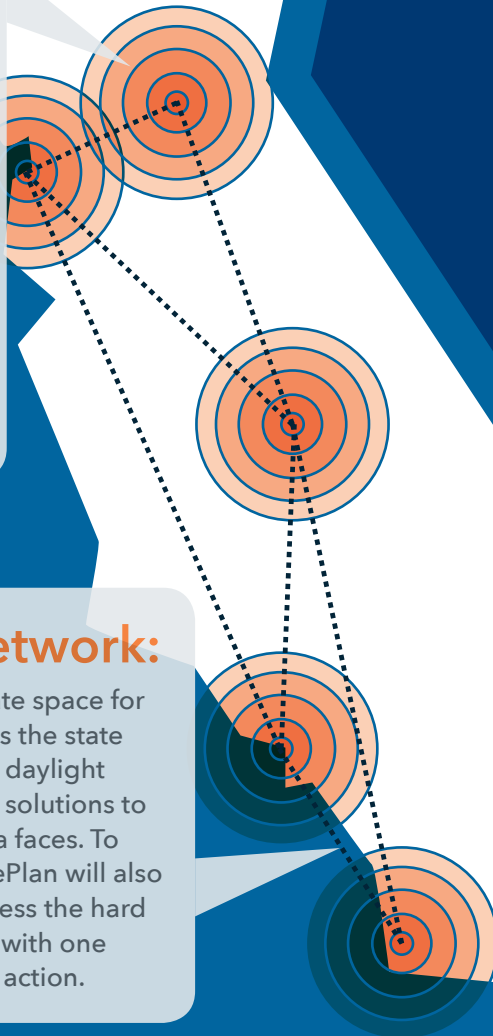
ClimatePlan will convene partner organizations to advance transformative policy in the Legislature as well as state agencies. Working collaboratively with partners, ClimatePlan will be a leading voice on land use, transportation, and housing by raising issues, sharing concerns, developing bold policy, and coordinating strategies to influence legislative and administrative policy outcomes.

## Regional Advocacy:

ClimatePlan has five priority regions: Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, the San Joaquin Valley, Southern California, and San Diego. Each of these regions has pioneered innovative strategies to advance sustainability, promote social equity, protect natural landscapes, and ensure healthy lifestyles. ClimatePlan will use digital tools such as videoconferencing and webinars to connect partners so these strategies can be shared and replicated across the state. ClimatePlan will also host in-person trainings and connect partners with technical experts so all regional partners have the tools to create change in their communities.

## Sustaining the Network:

ClimatePlan will continue to create space for partner organizations from across the state to come together to share ideas, daylight concerns, and craft strong policy solutions to address the challenges California faces. To ensure a strong network, ClimatePlan will also make sure there is space to address the hard issues so our network can speak with one voice and advance collaborative action.







## Our Mission

Advance policies and programs to address the relationship between land use policy and climate change, and leverage the resources and partnerships necessary to realize more sustainable and equitable development throughout California.

## Our Agreements

We believe in and act according to the following intentions:

- **To learn:** We commit to ongoing dialogue and education around these issues as a core component of our work. We each commit to listening attentively to each other's experience and learning from the stories we share about our work.
- **To strengthen our relationships:** We will assume the best intentions of one another as a key foundation. We commit to holding one another accountable and elevating issues to the Steering Committee if we cannot mediate the issue among ourselves.
- **To be transparent:** We commit to transparency about our perspectives and individual/collective strategies. We will not undermine or

manipulate any other member or member's position for any reason.

- **To recognize who we collectively are and are not:** We strive to amplify the agenda of our equity partners through the specific work we do around climate and land use, rather than leading on what we define as an equity agenda.
- **To value community voices and the expertise of equity-led groups:** We will honor community voices and leaders (and the understanding that local/regional advocates have developed via these relationships), as well as the expertise gained by equity-led networks and groups over decades of work.
- **To check ourselves:** We are dedicated to sharing power in an authentic way within our network and with those in communities most affected by the issues and policy decisions where we focus.
- **To get things done, and to do them better next time:** We are committed to reflect upon our experiences through discussions with partners and allies in order to continuously improve the practice of working with one another over time.

# Our Guiding Principles

- **Advance pragmatic policy solutions:** Policy solutions should be both visionary and pragmatic, advancing innovative ideas and best practices, while being grounded in the reality of existing trends.
- **Find common ground:** Focusing on shared priorities and areas of common ground is the best way to achieve our goals. We are committed to bringing diverse stakeholders together around policy solutions that will help all our partners advance their goals.
- **Build a long-lasting movement:** All communities and regions should have informed, engaged organizations that are working to monitor and shape growth over the long term. We work to build enduring capacity among local smart growth advocates.
- **Promote policies that protect and improve public health:** We advocate for policies that promote walking, bicycling, and reduced driving, resulting in more active lifestyles, better air quality, and safer streets.
- **Advance solutions that increase social equity and environmental justice:** All communities, particularly low-income communities, must have the opportunity to benefit from growth. We advance policies that address mobility, jobs, and affordability, and protect existing residents and local businesses from displacement.
- **Protect areas where development should not occur:** Rural and urban forests, agricultural areas, watershed areas, parks, and wildlife habitat should be protected. We promote policy tools that invest in and protect natural and working lands and the benefits that they provide to people and communities.
- **Increase community participation in planning:** Planning at both the local and regional levels is more effective when there is meaningful community participation throughout the process. In particular, under-represented communities need to be engaged in long-term planning.
- **Promote partnerships with local governments that embrace our collective goals:** Non-governmental organizations, cities, counties and Metropolitan Planning Organizations need financial support to effectively implement vehicle miles travelled reduction strategies and effective land use plans. We are committed to establishing, restoring, and expanding funding for these efforts for all stakeholders advancing this progressive model.
- **Amplify synergies:** We strive to connect smart growth campaigns to add value to the work of organizations at all levels, from the neighborhood to the national.

*"ClimatePlan's technical assistance and partnership helps empower our community coalitions in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties to promote land use policies, housing, and transportation infrastructure that supports the health and sustainability of our residents."*

– ELVIRA RAMIREZ, CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE DIOCESE OF STOCKTON





## Conclusion

Today, California's leadership on climate change is more necessary than ever. With decision-makers' increased focus on other strategies such as zero-emission vehicles, it is more important than ever that ClimatePlan continue its work to shape how California grows. As the California Air Resources Board stated, "Even if the share of new car sales that are ZEVs grows nearly 10-fold from today, California would still need to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita 25 percent to achieve the necessary reductions for 2030."<sup>3</sup>

California can show that it is possible to grow differently creating healthy communities, addressing historic inequities, and protecting scenic and iconic lands—all while meeting climate goals.

The world is watching California. The impacts of climate change are here: wildfires, droughts, and rising temperatures. We can show the world a different model and provide the direction for a more sustainable future.

Today, we see the opportunity and the need converging like never before. This is a moment we can seize to create a healthier, more vital California—and we will.

**We invite you to partner with ClimatePlan and help us make this movement even stronger.**

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3 California Air Resources Board. 2017. *California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan: The strategy for achieving California's 2030 greenhouse gas target*. Retrieved here: <https://bit.ly/2H8mCNw>

*"Everyone deserves a place to thrive. Since zip codes are as important as genetic codes, The California Endowment supports ClimatePlan because we understand that how and where people live determines how long they live. ClimatePlan is working hard to ensure that everyone can live longer and experience greater wellness in healthy, vibrant, and more equitable neighborhoods."*

**– CRAIG MARTINEZ, THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT**







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