Edmonds Climate Action Plan

Results from the Community Survey #1

The Edmonds Climate Action Plan (CAP) provides a roadmap for the City of Edmonds and its citizens to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve their climate goals—carbon neutrality by 2050—with community solutions and individual actions.

In 2020, the City of Edmonds began updating the CAP to better meet the needs and goals of the community. As part of this process, we asked Edmonds residents to complete a survey and provide feedback on the proposed strategies of the CAP, identify potential actions that individuals can take to support climate action, and identify potential barriers and challenges in implementing the CAP strategies to reduce Edmonds' carbon footprint.

This survey was open from March 29th to May 3rd, 2021. This survey was released on the Edmonds CAP webpage (www.edmondsclimate.com), was announced with a postcard sent to 4,000 randomly selected households, and 600 paper surveys were mailed to randomly selected houses in Edmonds.

Their responses are detailed below.

Summary

In total, we received a total of 415 responses. We received 320 web survey responses and 95 paper survey responses.[1] Some additional demographic information about the survey response are below:

- 285 survey respondents lived in Edmonds.
- 102 survey respondents lived and worked in Edmonds.
- 305 survey respondents provided optional gender demographics, and 354 survey respondents provided optional racial demographics.[2]

Race and Ethnicity	
White or Caucasian	254
Black or African American	7
Latino, Latina, or Latinx	9
Asian or Asian American	15
Native American, American Indian or Alaska Native	4
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	2
Multiracial	15
I prefer not to say	48

Gender	
Male	135
Female	170

[1] We conducted a sensitivity analysis between the paper surveys and web responses using three different survey questions. Our sensitivity analysis showed that there were not statistically significant differences between the responses from our paper survey and web survey. Therefore, we combined the responses from both versions into a single analysis.

[2] These respondents were racially representative of Edmonds.

Survey Results

The following sections summarize the results from the survey. These sections include:

- Concern about climate change
- Responsibility to act on climate change
- Level of support for CAP strategies related to:
  - Buildings and Energy
  - Transportation
  - Waste and Natural Resources
- Individual actions people are already doing
- Individual actions people are willing to do
- Barriers and challenges for climate action

Concern about climate change

Regional climate impacts

Regional climate impacts will affect all of Puget Sound. The following regional climate impacts ranked the highest for concerns amongst Edmonds survey respondents, based on the scale below.

4 Extremely concerned
3 Somewhat concerned
2 Neutral
1 Not concerned

Regional Climate Impact	Level of Concern (average)	Percent Distribution of Responses			
		Extremely concerned	Somewhat concerned	Neutral	Not concerned
Increased wildfires	**3.34**	64%	18%	6%	12%
Loss of habitat and species	**3.25**	58%	21%	9%	12%
Poor air quality	**3.21**	56%	23%	8%	13%
Increased insect pests that threaten crops and trees	**3.06**	45%	29%	13%	13%
Drought/water security	**3.04**	48%	24%	14%	15%
Loss of regional snowpack in winter	**3.03**	47%	26%	9%	18%
Sea level rise and coastal erosion	**3.02**	46%	27%	10%	17%
Flooding and mudslides	**3.02**	44%	28%	13%	14%
Increased temperatures and heat waves	**2.94**	45%	24%	11%	21%

Local climate impacts

Regional climate change will affect the lives of Edmonds' residents. The following climate impacts ranked the highest for concerns amongst Edmonds survey respondents, based on the scale below.

4 Extremely concerned

3 Somewhat concerned
2 Neutral
1 Not concerned

Local Climate Impact	Level of Concern (average)	Percent Distribution of Responses			
		Extremely concerned	Somewhat concerned	Neutral	Not concerned
Well-being of future generations	**3.20**	58%	17%	10%	15%
Local natural, open spaces	**3.03**	48%	23%	11%	18%
Public health	**2.96**	46%	23%	11%	20%
Urban trees and maintained landscapes	**2.84**	36%	30%	15%	19%
Seniors and vulnerable populations	**2.80**	37%	28%	14%	22%
Public infrastructure	**2.71**	30%	32%	17%	21%
Economic vitality of the Edmonds community	**2.62**	25%	35%	17%	23%
Homes and property values	**2.46**	18%	36%	22%	25%

Responsibility to act on climate change

There is strong consensus that Edmonds survey respondents believe all entities are responsible for acting on climate change. There is a slight preference for more action from individuals and federal government.

Who	Count
Individuals	302
Federal government	289
Large businesses and companies	287
State government	267
Small businesses	245
City government	240

Level of support for CAP strategies

69% of respondents feel that climate action is good for the health and livability of their community. 57% and 51% of respondents feel that climate action is good for businesses in Edmonds and climate action can help them save money and resources, respectively. However, a majority of respondents also said they believed it is important for the Edmonds CAP to address transportation, buildings and energy, and waste and natural resources. Many of the proposed strategies receive high amounts of support. Additional details on each of these focus areas are detailed below.

Buildings and Energy

Level of support for existing strategies

Level of support was ranked on the following scale: 5 = I strongly agree, 4 = I somewhat agree, 3 = I neither agree nor disagree, 2 = I somewhat disagree, 1 = I strongly disagree.

CAP Strategy	Level of Support (average)	Percent Distribution of Responses				
		I strongly agree	I somewhat agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I somewhat disagree	I strongly disagree
Replace fossil fuels with renewable energy resources for energy supplied to the community	**3.74**	56%	11%	6%	6%	21%
Improve efficiency of existing buildings and infrastructure	**3.97**	51%	23%	10%	3%	13%
Improve efficiency of new buildings	**4.31**	66%	16%	6%	4%	5%

Potential newly identified strategies

- Incentives/tax credits to public buildings, businesses, and homeowners to convert to renewables, electric heat pumps, etc.
- Regulations/building codes for new buildings, require new buildings to meet LEED certification standards
- Reduced charges for non-peak usage
- Education
- Replacing gas appliances
- Permeable pavement
- Plant trees
- Focus on water use efficiency
- Greenery in buildings (i.e. green roofs)
- Balance renewable energy use with fossil fuel use
- Housing policy – build more homes to prevent sprawl
- Reduce market regulations
- Targeted incentives for multi-family housing owners
- Conduct carbon emissions assessment of schools
- Community solar
- Allow for private sector innovation
- Move to nuclear energy
- Eliminate new commercial building construction
- Conduct marketing promotion for sustainable buildings
- Expand curbside recycling to include products accepted by Ridwell
- Reduce energy use/lighting
- Transition between fossil fuel and other resources
- Invest in hydroelectric power
- Invest in wind energy

Transportation

Level of support for existing strategies

Level of support was ranked on the following scale: 5 = I strongly agree, 4 = I somewhat agree, 3 = I neither agree nor disagree, 2 = I somewhat disagree, 1 = I strongly disagree.

CAP Strategy	Level of Support (average)	Percent Distribution of Responses				
		I strongly agree	I somewhat agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I somewhat disagree	I strongly disagree
Reduce VMT through more sustainable land use patterns (transit-oriented development, local efficiency)	**3.65**	43%	22%	11%	7%	17%
Reduce VMT by improving transit systems	**3.91**	51%	21%	9%	5%	14%
Reduce VMT by promoting active transportation	**3.57**	38%	21%	17%	8%	16%
Promote carpooling and vehicle sharing	**3.75**	36%	30%	16%	6%	11%
Promote electric vehicles and other low-carbon vehicles	**3.79**	51%	17%	11%	4%	17%

Potential newly identified strategies:

- Work from home/shorter work weeks
- Office SOV travel reduction
- Incentives for non-SOV travel
- Education
- Purchasing carbon offsets
- Mass transit, walking/biking trails
- Switch to electric engines in landscaping equipment
- Reducing car tab costs, subsidies for EVs and hybrids, EV charging infrastructure
- Rezoning Edmonds (denser housing, more housing, walkability)
- Improved bus service
- Parking by local businesses (to encourage shopping locally)
- Tackling truck, train, and ferry emissions
- Voluntary rationing programs
- Carbon capture
- Discourage SOVs (ie by raising parking rates)
- Address carbon emissions from agriculture
- Garbage to energy
- Carbon taxes
- Affordable green energy upgrades
- Tackle litter
- Land and tree preservation
- Promote reusing
- Develop local living-wage jobs
- “Golf cart community designation”
- Address emissions from air travel
- Eliminate water pollution
- Develop vehicle sharing programs
- Plant trees
- Last mile services and parking garage near transit hubs
- Electrify public transit

- Land management
- Encourage home businesses
- Promote micromobility
- Limit road expansion
- Develop renewable energy

Opposition Comments:

- Climate change is natural/good
- It isn't the government's job to regulate this
- This is a waste of money
- Climate change isn't real
- We should be focusing on China

Waste and Natural Resources

Level of support for existing strategies

Level of support was ranked on the following scale: 5 = I strongly agree, 4 = I somewhat agree, 3 = I neither agree nor disagree, 2 = I somewhat disagree, 1 = I strongly disagree.

CAP Strategy	Level of Support (average)	Percent Distribution of Responses				
		I strongly agree	I somewhat agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I somewhat disagree	I strongly disagree
Increase carbon sequestration	**3.90**	54%	16%	12%	3%	15%
Reduce material consumption, waste generation, and resource depletion	**4.02**	58%	15%	10%	4%	13%

Potential newly identified strategies

- Variable rates for energy consumption
- Renters to pay taxes
- Urban forests (and maintenance of)/remove emergency tree ordinance
- Requiring businesses to use compostable containers/tax businesses that use single-use materials
- Requiring building deconstruction over demolition
- Rain barrel and composting program
- Outreach and education
- No more bike lanes
- Team up with Ridwell to recycle waste
- Tax plastic manufacturers
- Charge for plastic bags
- Bioregenerative farming
- Make recycling easier
- Reduce water and sewer service costs while increasing costs of water usage
- Rebates/incentives for recycling
- Forest management
- Nuclear energy
- Fund healthy eel grass beds
- Raingarden s and bioswales
- Reduce development on undeveloped land
- Focus on maintaining rural forests
- Promote backyard composting
- There are also worries about the cost versus benefit of this.

Support for all strategies

Level of support was ranked on the following scale: 5 = Very important, 4 = Somewhat important, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Not important, 1 = Not important at all.

Strategy Area	Level of Support (average)	Percent Distribution of Responses				
		Very important	Somewhat important	Neutral	Not important	Not important at all
Buildings and Energy	**3.77**	45%	23%	9%	8%	14%
Transportation	**3.93**	48%	27%	7%	7%	12%
Waste and Natural Resources	**3.98**	53%	19%	10%	6%	11%

Individual actions

In addition to City-led strategies, the City understands that both City strategies and individual actions by residents will be necessary to achieve its climate action goals of carbon neutrality by 2050. In doing this, the City asked survey respondents two key questions: 1) What individual actions are they already doing that supports climate action goals?, and 2) What individual actions are they willing to do to support climate action goals? Summary of responses are detailed below.

Actions that residents are already doing

Popular actions that respondents are already undertaking include regularly recycling, shopping at local businesses, and using reusable and compostable containers and beverage bottles.

Action	Count
Regularly recycle	342
Save energy at home and work by turning off lights and water, using energy-saving light bulbs, etc.	337
Use reusable and compostable containers and beverage bottles, or bring my own	244
Shop at local businesses, in bulk, and/or at re-use or thrift stores	241
Invest in home energy improvements, such as installing insulation and efficient windows, heating, and/or appliances	233
Buy locally produced food and/or products	211
Regularly compost	205
Eat less meat and more vegetable protein	177
Wash my laundry in cold water	168
Combine trips in my car or carpool with others at least once a week	150
Drive a vehicle that gets more than 30 MPG in the city	150
Take public transit, walk, or ride a bike to a destination at least once a week	143
Air or line dry my laundry	63
Participate in a renewable energy program through my local utility	61
Purchase or drive an all-electric or zero-emissions vehicle	36
Invest in solar panels for my home or business	30

Other:

- Solar panels
- Native planes
- Ridwell
- EV charging stations
- Business with green investment companies
- Growing own food
- Getting politically involved
- Using public transit
- Walking/ driving less
- Working from home
- Owning efficient cars
- Lowering home thermostat
- Plant based diet
- Energy efficient appliances
- Avoiding delivery services

Actions that residents are willing to do

Respondents were most interested in purchasing or driving an EV and investing in solar panels for their home or business.

Action	Count
Purchase or drive an all-electric or zero-emissions vehicle	146
Invest in solar panels for my home or business	117
Participate in a renewable energy program through my local utility	87
Invest in home energy improvements, such as installing insulation and efficient windows, heating, and/or appliances	67
Drive a vehicle that gets more than 30 MPG in the city	59
Regularly recycle	54
Eat less meat and more vegetable protein	39
Take public transit, walk, or ride a bike to a destination at least once a week	36
Regularly compost	35
Buy locally produced food and/or products	33
Wash my laundry in cold water	30
Air or line dry my laundry	30
Use reusable and compostable containers and beverage bottles, or bring my own	29
Save energy at home and work by turning off lights and water, using energy-saving light bulbs, etc.	27
Shop at local businesses, in bulk, and/or at re-use or thrift stores	24
Combine trips in my car or carpool with others at least once a week	12

Challenges and barriers for climate action

Finally, the City wanted to identify what challenges and barriers were preventing Edmonds' residents from pursuing individual climate action.

Challenges and barriers	Count
Time, scale, and motivation	44
Cost of resources	140
Level of care and interest	39
Outside forces	60

Respondents identified costs or resources as being the largest barrier to climate action, both for the Edmonds CAP and their individual action.

Challenges and barriers	Count
Cost or Resources - I have other competing economic demands in my life that are more important to me and my family	144
Level of care and interest - I do not think there is enough of a crisis that I personally need to do anything to reduce the risks of climate change	91
Realizing benefits - I don't plan to live in my current home long enough to recover the costs of making changes to my home to reduce its carbon footprint. OR I live in and apartment and cannot make the types of changes that are needed to reduce my carbon footprint.	55
Time commitment - I do not have enough time to think about climate change	44