

To: City of San Jose
From: Emily Espinosa
Subject: Reducing Carbon Footprint
Date: April 29th, 2023

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to offer solutions on how to reduce environmental pollution in San Jose.

SUMMARY

This memo outlines ways the city of San Jose can improve programs made to reduce carbon emissions and expand them further to decrease the impact on the environment. This memo will discuss issues related to transportation, electricity usage, and residential and commercial greenhouse gas emissions.

DISCUSSION

Regarding greenhouse gasses, transportation accounts for 28% of these emissions. Despite how common electric cars are in the Bay Area, people who purchase a brand new electric car increase their carbon footprint when making the switch. In order to encourage people to switch to electric cars sustainably, Pacific Gas and Electric has created a rebate program that will allow people who pay for PG&E to receive up to \$4,000 for certified pre-owned hybrid or electric cars. While this is an excellent program that will assist in reducing carbon emissions, this program should be expanded to include people who do not pay for PG&E. The city of San Jose should allow all people who live in San Jose to be eligible for this program in order to create an incentive to buy used electric/hybrid cars rather than buying brand-new cars.

While electric cars are far better for the environment compared to gas cars, electricity makes up 30% of greenhouse gas emissions. One way to decrease electricity consumption through transportation is to promote the use of public transportation. From first-hand experience, I have noticed that grade school students cannot afford the daily clipper cost despite the price being reduced for youth. To combat this, these students will wait until their parents can pick them up which could take up to 3 hours. Clipper does offer programs that allow reduced prices for grade school students who are low income, however, grade school students should be able to have adequate transportation regardless of financial background, therefore SJUSD schools should be able to provide Clipper passes for students who require bus rides. Similarly, these low-income programs should not only exist for youth and seniors but should also apply to all low-income people who are eligible for a reduced clipper pass but do not meet the age requirements. This will encourage people who are low-income to use public transportation instead of driving.

While compared to transportation and electricity usage, residential and commercial greenhouse gas emissions seem minor producing 12% of emissions, decreasing these emissions is integral to reducing our carbon footprint. Some issues involving commercial and residential sectors include mismanaged water usage and electricity consumption. Firstly, issues such as leakages result in water overconsumption for both residential homes and commercial businesses. One way to combat this is for the city of San Jose to offer anti-leakage devices for free or at reduced cost in order to promote water conservation. Secondly, energy consumption is a major issue for the residential and commercial sectors. To fix this issue, the city of San Jose can promote solar panels by offering rebates or reduced-cost solar panels for homes and businesses that require electricity reduction the most.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that you use these suggestions because they can lead to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in San Jose. These solutions can also assist San Jose's most vulnerable communities that require assistance regarding transportation affordability.