

**CENTRAL
COAST
CLIMATE
COLLABORATIVE**



Strategic Vision

2021-2023



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LAND & PEOPLES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We, the Central Coast Climate Collaborative, acknowledge that our work is located on the stolen, unceded ancestral homelands of the Indigenous peoples who care for and have inhabited these lands for thousands of years.

We gratefully acknowledge, respect, and thank native nations along the Central Coast: Association of Ramaytush Ohlone, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, Esselen Tribe of Monterey County, Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation, Salinan Tribe of Monterey, San Benito, and San Luis Obispo Counties, Xolon-Salinan Tribe, Eshom Valley Band of Michahai and Wuksachi, Costanoan Ohlone Indian Council, Wuksachi Tribe, Owl Clan, Salinan-Chumash Nation, Indian Canyon Band of Costanoan/Mutsun Indians, Costanoan Tribe of Santa Cruz and San Juan Bautista Missions, Honey Lake Maidu, North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians of California, yak tiṭu tiṭu yak tiłhini – Northern Chumash Tribe, San Fernando Band of Mission Indians, San Luis Obispo County Chumash Council, Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians, Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation, and Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, and all others whose names we may not know, in whose homelands we are guests. We pay respect to native elders past, present, and emerging as they have stewarded this land throughout generations and will continue to do so into the future.

We recognize the negative impacts of settler colonialism on the first native stewards of this land as major contributions to the climate crisis we are in now. We cannot undo the past or the trauma that has occurred, but we offer this acknowledgment as the beginning of an ongoing commitment to reflect on our own complicity and to dismantle the lasting legacies of settler colonialism, racism, and white supremacy.

FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Center equity. Convene. Connect. Build capacity. For the Central Coast, these deceptively simple activities are essential building blocks to mobilizing durable, fair climate solutions that not only build climate resilience but create vibrant, thriving communities.

As members of the Central Coast Climate Collaborative (4C), we are pleased to share 4C's strategic direction as a platform to catalyze a range of equitable climate solutions.

We are also excited to pursue this work as a region. So many of the issues that intersect with climate change play out across existing boundaries, from drought, heat, and wildfire to sea level rise, flooding and storms; from transportation systems to workforce and housing markets. Working at the regional level can be challenging, with vexing variations in the scale of the issues and jurisdictional boundaries that compel us to look for new ways to collaborate. Yet this regional focus also highlights the Central Coast's greatest asset in building resilience — diversity of people, cultures, economy, and geography.

This three-year vision guides 4C's work but does not rigidly control it: we work in a changing world with a complex set of interrelated issues, organizations, and circumstances, and our work needs to evolve as quickly as the context around us. We value the clarity of purpose and direction set forth in this vision, and we also recognize the necessity of allowing our work to evolve in real time.

We look forward to the work ahead.

Adrienne Greve – Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, **Alex Yasbek** – City of Watsonville, **Ashley Paulsworth** – County of Monterey, **Garrett Wong** – County of Santa Barbara, **Heather Allen** – County of Ventura, VCREA, **Juliano Calil** – Middlebury Institute of International Studies, **Kirsten Liske** – Ecology Action, **Kristin Cushman** – Blue Strike Environmental, **Nancy Faulstich** – Regeneración Pajaro Valley, **Rachel Couch** – State Coastal Conservancy, **Sharyn Main** – Community Environmental Council, **Teresa Romero** – Santa Ynez Chumash Environmental Office, and **Tiffany Wise-West** – City of Santa Cruz

CONTEXT

A Region of Abundance

The Central Coast Region is a land of abundance: deep and diverse cultures, productive working lands, lively communities large and small. The region, home to more than 2.3 million people, stretches across six counties from northern Santa Cruz to southern Ventura and including San Benito. The region is predominantly rural and boasts some of the richest farmland and most spectacular scenery in California. Ranches, farms, and publicly-owned open space make up a significant portion of the land uses. Pristine beaches and estuaries, many framed by picturesque dunes and backed by rugged coastal mountains, are found along much of the region's coastline.

As an ecological transition zone between southern and northern California flora and fauna, the region is home to an extraordinary degree of biological diversity. Its scenic beauty and accessibility attract visitors to the Central Coast from all over the world, and tourists and residents alike enjoy accessible coastal areas, inland public lands and wilderness areas, and thriving cities and towns large and small.



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THE CLIMATE IMPERATIVE: INTERTWINED CHALLENGES

Against this bucolic backdrop, the Central Coast faces multiple, intertwined challenges of ecosystem degradation, economic inequality, and social divisions, exacerbated by climate threats. The CA Fourth California Climate Change Assessment has identified climate-induced threats for the central coast that range from sea level rise to heavy precipitation events, temperature increase, increased wildfire, drought, and decreasing snowpack and water supply.

Climate change is already driving more intense and prolonged drought, wildfires, and extreme storms and heatwaves in the state and region, sometimes in rapid succession with compounding and cascading impacts on our landscapes and communities. Climate change also acts as a threat multiplier to the existing societal stressors of poverty, racism, public health, housing crises, harsh working conditions, soaring costs of living, unsustainable resource use, and aging infrastructure. These challenges are intensified by ongoing population and land development pressures, as increasing numbers of people are drawn to the region's many amenities and appealing coastal lifestyle.



These myriad issues are straining our institutions and sparking a re-examination of our values. Taken together, these threats present unprecedented challenges as the region works to transition to a future that is simultaneously lower carbon and with more resilient and equitable communities, while preserving the natural and cultural resources found abundantly here. This new vision for the Central Coast necessitates new creative and collaborative approaches to solve our most intractable systemic problems.

THE CENTRAL COAST CLIMATE COLLABORATIVE (4C)



The Central Coast Climate Collaborative (4C) was established in 2016 as regional climate collaboratives were launching across California. For the first time, leaders from local governments, communities, non-profit organizations, business, and academia across the Central Coast came together to explore ways to address the complex maze of emerging carbon-reduction and adaptation issues. 4C is now an established membership organization and valued regional forum, gathering a broadening set of climate practitioners to share ideas, support projects and initiatives, and form new partnerships.

Over the past five years, 4C has evolved its organizational, technological, and network capacity, while supporting regional initiatives such as local climate resilience projects and planning, academic research, launching of new climate collaboratives, and development of collaboration and networking tools. A 2018 strategic planning workshop established a two-year action plan to formalize the collaborative's operations and expand its capabilities. 4C has worked collectively to:

- Create a regional disaster resilience guide with state and federal partner agencies
- Connect regional agency practitioners with state and federal agency initiatives, guidance, and resources
- Sponsor or co-sponsor numerous regional symposiums, webinars, and roundtables


- Convene committees to explore and address issues of agriculture; sea level rise; federal partnerships; justice, equity, diversity and inclusion; governance; and strategic planning
- Support grant proposals, projects, policy initiatives, and academic studies
- Expand its staff, membership, and organizational capacity

- Connect with other regional collaboratives both within and outside of California through the Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation (ARCCA)
- Merge with the Monterey Bay Climate Action Compact
- Develop a climate collaboration tool for members to locate other climate practitioners in the region

- Hold monthly steering and bimonthly or quarterly membership meetings
- Provide Sea Grant and CivicSpark Fellows with job experience as coordinators
- Share news and information via newsletter to over 1,000 subscribers

Current initiatives include: prioritizing the needs of environmental justice communities; expanding staff resources, communications capability, membership and fundraising; updating strategic and governance documents to center equity; relationship building across sectors and networks; and developing regional project and funding opportunities.

OUR WORK AHEAD



The climate change field has evolved significantly in the five years since 4C was established. In the Central Coast, local jurisdictions have made progress toward adopting policies and plans that reduce emissions, assess risk and vulnerability, and develop solutions. Several major catastrophic events have helped focus local leaders, agencies, and organizations on the stark realities we face. Recognition of the interconnectedness of social justice and equity, economic prosperity, and environmental quality is growing, as is the number, depth, and breadth of organizations and initiatives that address climate resilience broadly.

The expanding complexity of the landscape and growing urgency of climate justice call for new and stronger mechanisms for collaboration.

**We believe 4C has a key
contribution to make.**



PURPOSE & PROCESS

In response to this evolving landscape, 4C initiated a strategic planning effort in late 2020 to renew its direction, focus, and roles as it experienced an intense growth phase. This resulting vision articulates our core functions—what we do on an on-going basis— and also strategic priorities that will receive particular attention and investment in the next three years. This vision guides 4C’s work but does not rigidly control it: we work in a changing world with a complex set of interrelated issues, organizations, and circumstances, and our work needs to evolve as quickly as the context around us. We value the clarity of purpose and direction set forth in this plan, and we also recognize the necessity of allowing our work to evolve in real time.

We began the strategic planning effort with surveys of 4C’s membership and justice-oriented organizations in the region, with the intention of better understanding the climate resilience needs across the region and the roles 4C might play to support those needs. The results pointed to the growing recognition of the intersectionality of climate justice work and the lack of diversity among 4C’s active participants to date. Respondents noted the need for training and shared terminology and frameworks for engaging on justice and equity issues, a lack of a clear value proposition to environmental justice and community-based organizations, and the need for resources for additional capacity across organizations and networks. 4C also conducted interviews to probe the major issues facing the region and institutional landscape, which consistently surfaced issues of:

- **Wealth inequality and particularly racial inequities**
- **Housing affordability and access**
- **Environmental pressures, including drought, wildfire, extreme heat, sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, and flooding**
- **The role of agriculture as an economic engine and divergent visions around issues such as land management and working conditions**

A Steering Committee of thirteen 4C members reviewed the findings of the surveys and interviews and developed the core content of the strategy, which was circulated to all members for feedback.

OUR MISSION:

**4C IS AN ORGANIZING PLATFORM
THAT BRIDGES ACROSS SECTORS AND
SCALES TO CATALYZE AND ADVANCE
EQUITABLE CLIMATE SOLUTIONS
THROUGHOUT THE CENTRAL COAST**

WE BELIEVE



- Climate change is the greatest threat to the wellbeing of humanity and all living beings.

- Economic and racial disparities predispose some communities to experience a disproportionate share of the direct and indirect impacts of climate change.

- We are in this together. We face common problems, challenges, and opportunities. We depend on one another as a region and our approaches to building resilience must therefore span issues, sectors, and geographies.



- Our greatest opportunity is the diversity of the Central Coast people, cultures, economy, and geography.

- We do our best work through partnership and collaboration across organizations, communities, and issues.

- Transparency and the sharing of information and perspectives are essential to effective collaboration.

- While acknowledging the urgency of the climate crisis, we must work together at the speed of trust to overcome barriers and create new support systems.

- In the long run, the only viable solutions for society are just and equitable solutions.



WHAT WE DO

1

Convene and Connect

- Serve as an information hub for initiatives, opportunities, and lessons learned.
- Convene working groups to delve deeply into priority issues identified by members and explore implications, needs, and opportunities.
- Host annual symposium.
- Connect Central Coast communities, organizations, and practitioners with the wider universe of climate networks and policymakers.

2

Build Regional Capacity

- Track and provide information on funding opportunities to support access to resources for community-led projects, community-based organizations, and public agencies.
- Provide support and assistance in seeking funding.
- Host trainings, webinars, and workshops.

3

Provide a unified regional voice at the state level on climate equity issues specific to the Central Coast.

- Engage with members to track and understand priorities and needs.
- Monitor state developments and communicate Central Coast priorities.

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Center Justice and Equity

- Support organizations and other regional networks to advance climate solutions and expand their reach and influence.
- Seek resources to support the work of frontline organizations.

Broaden Participation

- Engage potential members from communities currently underrepresented in 4C, including tribal nations, social justice and agricultural organizations, smaller municipalities, and regional agencies and networks.
- Engage more members in 4C decisions, initiatives, and committees.



Build Organizational Capacity

- Establish independent staff support and update governance structures to support member priorities.
- Develop and implement a communications strategy to expand networking and give voice to 4C's perspective.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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