



### Creating a more livable city

Five years ago, the City of Sacramento created its first Climate Action Plan, with specific goals, strategies and actions to reduce emissions and prepare for climate change impacts. The plan created a domino effect that informed their 2035 General Plan, which lays out citywide goals spanning economic development, education, recreation, public health and safety, and more.

Sacramento City Councilman Steve Hansen shares that the city's comprehensive policies will allow their community to be bike friendly, walkable, and less dependent on cars. Hansen emphasizes, "We had to make our public

infrastructure accessible for people who can't drive, or don't want to drive. People need choices for how to get around and want choices that were usable and safe." Hansen also explains how equity has been identified as a key issue and challenge, and therefore will be rooted in the city's sustainability initiatives and planning.

### Bridging urban, rural and suburban

Hansen admits, "Beyond the urban core, we have done a poor job with some of our suburban and rural communities helping them understand the value of the sustainability programs." This issue became apparent as the city began plans for building affordable housing. They were trying to ensure

the housing was sustainable, convenient for transportation, and would help the city reduce their impact on climate by increasing walkability for all residents, especially low-income communities, which are disproportionately impacted. Hansen points out that in implementing many of these solutions, many of the projects, including the housing projects were "overlooked quite a lot" for funding because the communities are not located near the coast, where climate impacts are more severe and larger populations live.

Hansen offers a warning and a recommendation: "When we can't bring rural and suburban communities to the table, we deprive ourselves of the ability to make smart decisions and move forward

as a whole." Hansen explains they have learned to involve everyone in the conversation, even those that disagree, to collectively understand the challenges and move forward on solutions that benefit all parties.

### Finding best practices and funding

To address equity and ensure that those most vulnerable to climate impacts were accounted for in infrastructure and other planning, Sacramento used the *Dangerous by Design* report (Smart Growth America), which provides a variety of tools and resources to improve community infrastructure. Hansen urges, "Unless we begin to change some of the ways that we build public infrastructure—street by street, corner by corner—we're not going to make the progress we need for our own people, let alone for the rest of the world."

Hansen explains how city planners must get creative to gain financial support for the solutions. Hansen recalls, "Being really aggressive about competing for funds, being smart about our strategy and how to achieve investments has been one of our sources of success."

As the finances fell into place, the city carefully planned for the future by creating their 2035 general plan, which draws from environmental review reports and feedback from a host of stakeholders. Hansen explains, "There is no decision too small to be made well when it comes to preventing climate change. Plans need to include energy usage, water usage, land use patterns, and transit. We all play a role in the effort to create effective and equitable climate solutions."

### Recommendations

- Create a safe environment, not only for yourselves and the people around you, including children, but also for those who come after you because the decisions we make now will have an impact for generations.
- Take an intersectional approach to building a coalition. Bring in leaders from other efforts and issues to build coalitions that are successful.



### Key Metrics

- Sacramento, California
- Citywide efforts began 5 years ago
- Hosted an open street event attracting 4,500 residents to bike and walk 1.5 miles of blocked off city streets to visualize the area without cars
- Thousands have been engaged and the city continually aims to reach all 495,000 residents with resources on how to reduce their impact

**"Being really aggressive about competing for funds, being smart about our strategy and how to achieve investments has been one of our sources of success."**