

RESOLUTION NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OCEANSIDE ADOPTING GUIDELINES AND THRESHOLDS FOR DETERMINING SIGNIFICANCE OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

APPLICANT: City of Oceanside  
LOCATION: Citywide

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, as part of a Comprehensive General Plan Update, the City of Oceanside has concurrently prepared a Climate Action Plan Update that outlines measures and actions to reduce community-wide Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in alignment with State legislative climate goals defined in SB 32 (California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2016) and AB 1279 (California Climate Crisis Act); and

WHEREAS, the Climate Action Plan Update has been prepared consistent with growth projections in the General Plan Update related to land use, population, housing, employment and transportation, and proposes GHG emissions reduction measures in six key emissions sectors; and

WHEREAS, the Climate Action Plan Update has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.) Section 15183.5 as a qualified plan for the reduction of GHG emissions; and

WHEREAS, the City seeks to provide a streamlined regulatory framework for the analysis of GHG emissions for development projects pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064(h)(3), 15130(d) and 15183.5 by demonstrating consistency with applicable measures in the Climate Action Plan Update; and

WHEREAS, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7(b) encourages public agencies to adopt and publish locally-specific “thresholds of significance” in the determination of the significance of a project’s environmental effects; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7, the City has developed Guidelines for Determining Significance of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Exhibit A) that provide identifiable, qualitative and quantitative thresholds to assess the significance of GHG emissions at the project-level, and were developed through a public review process and supported by substantial evidence; and

1 WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, after giving the required notice, did on the 18<sup>th</sup> of  
2 May, 2026, conduct a public hearing where the Commission received a presentation from staff, heard  
3 public testimony on the matter, and voted 7-0 to recommend that the City Council adopt the  
4 Guidelines for Determining Significance of Greenhouse Gas Emissions; and

5 WHEREAS, the City Council, after giving the required notice and pursuant to CA Public  
6 Resources Code 21082, did on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, 2026, conduct a public hearing, heard and considered  
7 written evidence and oral testimony by all interested parties and the recommendation of the Planning  
8 Commission on this matter; and

9 WHEREAS, adoption of the aforementioned Guidelines and thresholds of significance  
10 therein have been determined to be categorically exempt from further environmental review under  
11 CEQA Guidelines Section 15308, as it constitutes an action taken by an agency to assure protection  
12 of the environment;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OCEANSIDE DOES  
14 RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

- 15 1. The City Council does hereby adopt the threshold of significance, as identified in the  
16 Guidelines for Determining Significance of Greenhouse Gas Emissions:
- 17 (a) A proposed project would have a less than significant cumulatively considerable  
18 contribution to climate change impacts if it is found to be consistent with the City's  
19 Climate Action Plan; and, would normally have a cumulatively considerable  
20 contribution to climate change impacts if it is found to be inconsistent with the  
21 City's Climate Action Plan; and
- 22 (b) Where consistency with the Climate Action Plan cannot be demonstrated, the  
23 following quantitative thresholds based on project annual GHG emissions must be  
24 achieved to conclude a less than significant GHG impact under CEQA:

<b>Project Operational Year</b>	<b>Project Annual GHG Emissions per Service Population (MTCO<sub>2e</sub>/yr/SP)</b>
2025 to 2030	3.54
2031 to 2035	1.86
2036 to 2040	0.90
2041 to 2045 and beyond	0.26

25 MTCO<sub>2e</sub> = metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, SP = service population, yr = year

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2. Notice is HEREBY GIVEN that the time within which judicial review must be sought on this decision is governed by the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a meeting of the City Council of the City of Oceanside, California, held on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2026 by the following vote, to wit:

AYES:  
NAYS:  
ABSENT:  
ABSTAIN:

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OCEANSIDE

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY ATTORNEY

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY CLERK

Exhibit A – Draft Guidelines for Determining GHG Significance of GHG Emissions

**DRAFT**  
**City of Oceanside**  
**Guidelines for Determining Significance**  
**of Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Prepared For:

**City of Oceanside**  
**Development Services Department**  
**300 N. Coast Highway**  
**Oceanside, CA 92054**

**May 2026**

# 1 BACKGROUND

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires public agencies to review the environmental impacts of proposed private and public projects and consider feasible alternatives and mitigation measures to reduce significant adverse environmental effects. As part of this analysis, agencies must consider potential adverse effects that may result from a proposed project's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The California Natural Resources Agency adopted amendments to the CEQA Guidelines to address GHG emissions, consistent with the Legislature's directive in Public Resources Code Section 21083.05 (enacted as part of Senate Bill (SB) 97 [Chapter 185, Statutes 2007]). These amendments took effect in 2010.

GHG emissions have the potential to adversely affect the environment because such emissions contribute, on a cumulative basis, to the significant cumulative impact of global climate change. Cumulative impacts are those that result from the combination of past, present, and probable future projects, producing related effects. The City of Oceanside Guidelines for Determining Significance of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG Guidelines) are to be used to determine whether individual projects in the City of Oceanside ("City") would have a considerable cumulative incremental contribution to the significant impact of global climate change.

Under CEQA, lead agencies such as the City must evaluate the potentially adverse impacts of GHG emissions and associated impacts of discretionary projects that are not exempt from CEQA. The analysis must explain how a project would affect existing environmental conditions, assess the significance of those effects using applicable thresholds of significance, and identify feasible mitigation measures as necessary if that threshold is exceeded. Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines provides a standardized environmental checklist used to evaluate whether a proposed project could result in significant environmental effects. The purpose of this document is to guide Project Applicants and City staff through an impact analysis for the following CEQA Guidelines Appendix G questions:

- a) Does the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?
- b) Does the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

The City's 2026 Climate Action Plan Update (2026 CAP Update) is a long-term programmatic plan that identifies measures and actions to reduce GHG emissions consistent with the City's targets for 2030, 2045, and 2050. The City's targets were developed in alignment with the State's *2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality*, legislative GHG reduction targets for SB 32 and Assembly Bill (AB) 1279, and the City's General Plan horizon year.

The 2026 CAP Update has been prepared in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5 and qualifies as a local plan adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064(h)(3) and 15183.5(b), a project's incremental contribution to a cumulative GHG emissions effect may be determined not to be cumulatively considerable if it complies with the applicable requirements of the 2026 CAP Update. The 2026 CAP Update, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5, includes the following components:

- ▶ Quantify greenhouse gas emissions, both existing and projected over a specified time period, resulting from activities within a defined geographic area (City of Oceanside);
- ▶ Establish a level, based on substantial evidence, below which the contribution to greenhouse gas emissions from activities covered by the plan would not be cumulatively considerable;
- ▶ Identify and analyze the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from specific actions or categories of actions anticipated within the geographic area;
- ▶ Specify measures or a group of measures, including performance standards, that substantial evidence demonstrates, if implemented on a project-by-project basis, would collectively achieve the specified emissions level;

- ▶ Establish a mechanism to monitor the plan's progress toward achieving the level and to require amendment if the plan is not achieving specified levels; and
- ▶ Be adopted in a public process following environmental review.

As a "qualified plan", the City's 2026 CAP Update is intended to be used for streamlining future project-specific GHG emissions analyses, consistent with Section 15183.5 of the CEQA Guidelines. The Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the City of Oceanside General Plan Update (GPU), Smart and Sustainable Corridors Specific Plan (SSCSP), and 2026 CAP Update provides the appropriate level of environmental review to allow future projects to tier from and streamline their analysis of GHG emissions pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b)(2). The 2026 CAP Update demonstrates a pathway to reduce the City's GHG emissions consistent with the statewide GHG reduction targets under SB 32. However, the CAP does not show a pathway to meeting local targets for the years 2045 and 2050 that align with the statewide GHG reduction targets under AB 1279. As such, only projects that are fully operational before the year 2031 would be eligible for streamlining their analysis of GHG emissions.

Section 5.3 of the 2026 CAP Update calls for:

- ▶ the development of GHG Guidelines that establish a threshold of significance,
- ▶ a Climate Action Plan Consistency Checklist (Checklist), and
- ▶ quantitative GHG emissions thresholds.

These GHG Guidelines are to be used for discretionary projects subject to CEQA to demonstrate consistency with the 2026 CAP Update through use of the Checklist and/or through the City's quantitative GHG thresholds.

## 2 THRESHOLD OF SIGNIFICANCE

City staff and Project Applicants will use these GHG Guidelines as part of the environmental review process to evaluate GHG emissions for individual discretionary projects. The GHG Guidelines incorporate the following "threshold of significance":

**A proposed project would have a less than significant cumulatively considerable contribution to climate change impacts if it is found to be consistent with the City's Climate Action Plan; and, would normally have a cumulatively considerable contribution to climate change impacts if it is found to be inconsistent with the City's Climate Action Plan.**

This constitutes the threshold of significance adopted by City Council for general use as part of the City's environmental review process. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7(b), the threshold of significance was developed through a public review process supported by substantial evidence, and was adopted by the City Council by separate resolution on June 24, 2026.

The City has developed two tools to support the evaluation of a project's consistency with the 2026 CAP Update:

- 1) A Climate Action Plan Consistency Checklist (Checklist) that evaluates a project with respect to its consistency with land use and zoning growth forecasts as well as implementation measures and actions of the 2026 CAP Update.
- 2) Quantitative GHG emissions thresholds that allow for a comparison of a project's GHG emissions with the 2026 CAP Update GHG reduction targets, on a per service population basis (i.e., the combined employment and population).

Instructions on how to use these tools to demonstrate a project's consistency with the 2026 CAP Update, and evaluate its significance of GHG emissions, are described in the following section.

### 3 PATHWAYS FOR DEMONSTRATING CLIMATE ACTION PLAN CONSISTENCY

This document is intended to assist Project Applicants and City staff in determining the significance of GHG emissions for projects undergoing discretionary review. There are two pathways for demonstrating consistency with the 2026 CAP Update and determination of the significance of impacts for GHG emissions:

- 1) streamlining from the analysis of the PEIR for the City of Oceanside GPU, SSCSP, and 2026 CAP Update through use of the Checklist; or,
- 2) evaluating project-level emissions through use of the quantitative GHG emissions thresholds *and* demonstrating consistency with the 2026 CAP Update through use of the Checklist.

The conditions under which each of these pathways may be applicable is demonstrated in Figure 1 and described further in the following text. Regardless of the pathway used, a completed Checklist that demonstrates substantial evidence of consistency with the measure and actions of the 2026 CAP Update must be provided (Step 2 of the Checklist). The 2026 CAP Update did not consider future projects that are subject to the State's Cap-and-Invest Program (formerly Cap and Trade) or Mandatory GHG Reporting Program, and as such, these types of projects cannot use either pathway for demonstrating consistency with the 2026 CAP Update.

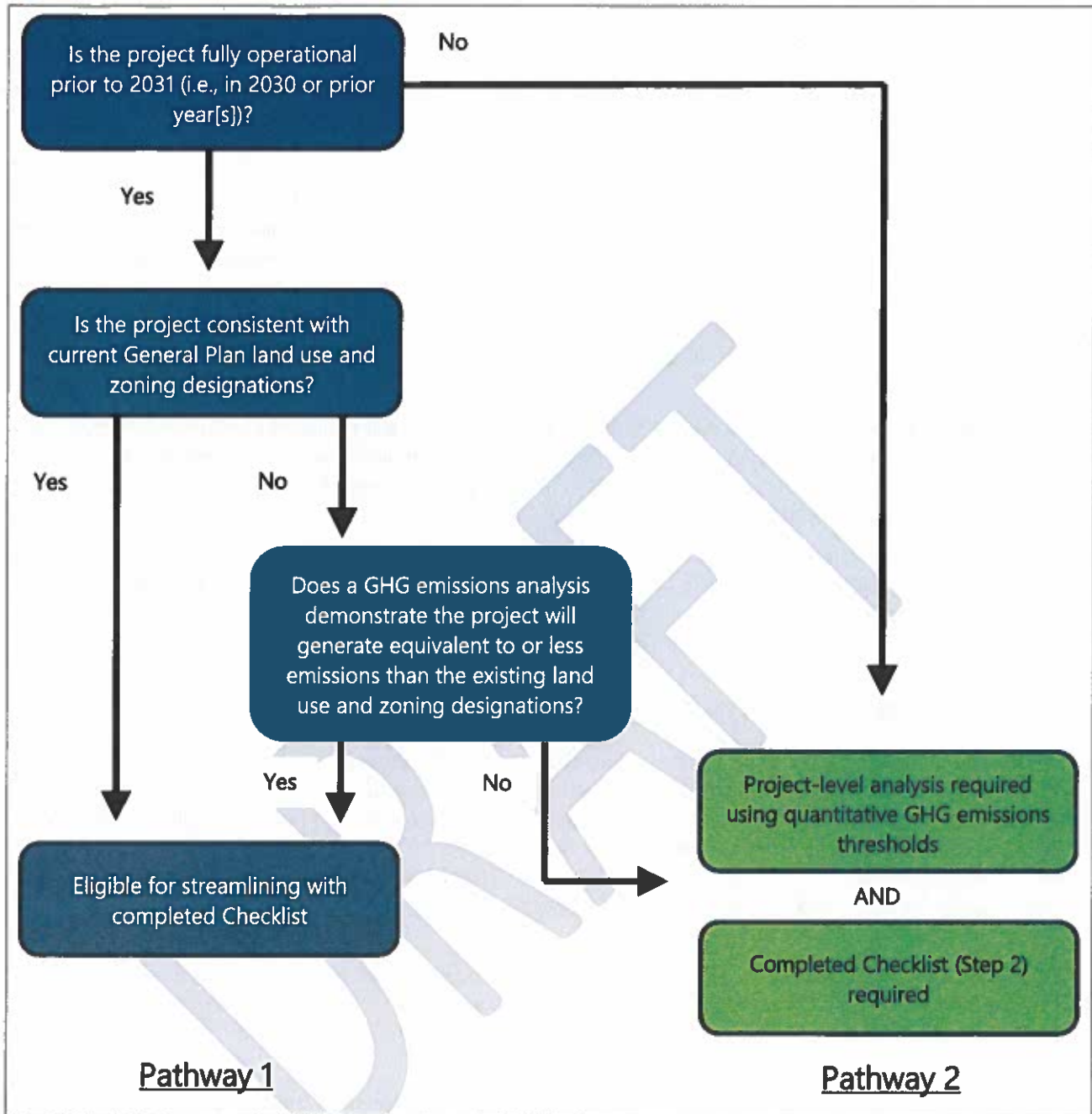


Figure 1 Pathways for Demonstrating Consistency with Climate Action Plan

**Pathway 1:**

For projects fully operational prior to 2031 and consistent with current land use and zoning designations, the Checklist provides a pathway for streamlined GHG emissions review for discretionary projects that are not exempt from CEQA. These projects can tier from the analysis completed in the 2026 CAP Update to demonstrate less than significant impacts for GHG emissions by demonstrating that all applicable Checklist items in the Checklist are answered as "Yes". There may be instances where a project is fully operational prior to 2031 but requires a General Plan amendment or proposes development intensities or uses that are not consistent with the Zoning Ordinance. In those cases, a project

may still be eligible for streamlining using the Checklist if it generates GHG emissions that are less than or equal to the existing land use and zoning designations.

Any project that does not meet the conditions required for Pathway 1, which includes answering "Yes" to all applicable Checklist items, must use Pathway 2 for demonstrating consistency with the 2026 CAP Update.

### **Pathway 2:**

**For projects fully operational in 2031 and beyond and/or not eligible for streamlining**, Project Applicants must complete a project-level GHG analysis and utilize the quantitative GHG emissions thresholds in Table 1 to determine consistency with the City's GHG reduction targets in the 2026 CAP Update. Applicants must also complete the Checklist to identify their project's applicable features required for consistency with the 2026 CAP Update.

Projects that are not consistent with the current land use and zoning designations and generate higher GHG emissions under proposed designations are not eligible to streamline the analysis of GHG emissions, because they are not included in the analysis of the PEIR.

**All discretionary projects that are not exempt from CEQA analysis must still complete the Checklist to demonstrate consistency with the measures and actions of the 2026 CAP Update**, regardless of consistency with the land and zoning designations or the project's operational year. The Checklist is a key mechanism for the City to implement the 2026 CAP Update and measure progress towards its GHG reduction targets.

Projects that cannot demonstrate consistency with the 2026 CAP Update through either of the two pathways outlined above would be inconsistent with the 2026 CAP Update and have a cumulatively considerable contribution to climate change impacts. Projects that exceed the quantitative GHG emissions thresholds would need to identify all feasible mitigation measures to reduce GHG emissions in the CEQA environmental document.

## **3.1 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN CONSISTENCY CHECKLIST**

The purpose of the Checklist is to ensure that future discretionary projects implement GHG reduction measures and actions in the 2026 CAP Update to address their project specific emissions accounted for in the growth projections of the 2026 CAP Update. These actions will be implemented through a combination of mandatory requirements and incentives. This Checklist specifically applies to discretionary projects that subject to CEQA review. Therefore, the Checklist represents one implementation tool in the City's overall strategy to implement the 2026 CAP Update. Implementation of applicable reduction measures and actions in discretionary projects will help the City achieve incremental reductions towards its targets.

The Checklist should be used during the development review process and will require applicable reduction measures to be incorporated as Conditions of Approval. The Checklist follows a two-step process to determine if projects can utilize the checklist for streamlining analysis of GHG emissions from the 2026 CAP Update and if projects are consistent with applicable measures and actions in the 2026 CAP Update.

**Step 1** of the Checklist assesses a project's consistency with the growth projections and land use assumptions made in the 2026 CAP Update, and the horizon year of 2030 for which the City can demonstrate less than significant impacts to GHG emissions. The 2026 CAP Update uses growth projections consistent with build out of the General Plan to estimate future GHG emissions from projects occurring in Oceanside. As such, to use the Checklist for streamlining, a project must demonstrate consistency with the existing General Plan Efficient and Compatible Land Use (ECLU) land use designations, and the uses and development density and intensity allowed under the Zoning Ordinance (land use and zoning designations). If a project is consistent with the General Plan, and is fully operational prior to 2031 (i.e., in 2030 or prior), its associated growth in terms of GHG emissions was accounted for in the 2026 CAP Update.

There may be instances where a project is fully operational prior to 2031, but requires a General Plan amendment or has development intensities or uses that are not consistent with the Zoning Ordinance. Such projects may still demonstrate consistency with the 2026 CAP Update if they generate GHG emissions that are less than or equal to the existing land use and zoning designations.

If a project is consistent with the General Plan land use and zoning designations, or demonstrates equal or less intensive GHG emissions, and is operational before 2031, it can be determined to be consistent with the 2026 CAP Update projections and can move forward to Step 2 of the Checklist. Otherwise, a project would be not consistent with the 2026 CAP Update projections and it shall not use the Checklist for CEQA streamlining.

Step 2 of the Checklist identifies applicable GHG reduction measures and actions from the 2026 CAP Update that would apply to the project and establish clear requirements to determine its consistency with 2026 CAP Update measures and actions. The specific applicable requirements outlined in the Checklist shall be required as Conditions of Approval. The Project Applicant must provide substantial evidence that demonstrates how the proposed project would implement each applicable Checklist requirement. If a question in the Checklist is deemed not applicable (N/A) to a project, substantial evidence must be provided. All applicable Checklist requirements must be completed and substantial evidence must be provided for City Planning staff to make a final determination.

If a project meets all eligibility requirements for streamlining under Step 1, but does not complete all applicable Checklist requirements under Step 2, the project will not be eligible for streamlining analysis of GHG emissions. The suitability of submitted answers and the sufficiency of supporting evidence for individual Checklist requirements are determined at the discretion of City staff.

Emissions from projects consistent with the General Plan would have been accounted for in the 2026 CAP Update and will contribute towards reducing GHG emissions in Oceanside. As a result, a project that is fully operational before 2031 and is found to be consistent with the 2026 CAP Update, as demonstrated through land use consistency under Step 1 and consistency with all applicable and feasible Checklist items under Step 2, would result in less than significant GHG emissions and would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a GHG impact under CEQA.

Projects that are not eligible for streamlining analysis of GHG emissions are required to prepare a project-specific GHG analysis as part of the CEQA document prepared for the project. The analysis must utilize the quantitative GHG emissions thresholds contained in Section 3.2 to evaluate the significance of a project's annual GHG emissions on a per service population basis. These projects must also demonstrate consistency with the 2026 CAP Update through completion of Step 2 of the Checklist.

## 3.2 QUANTITATIVE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS THRESHOLDS

The quantitative GHG emissions thresholds are intended to support the City in assessing GHG impacts of discretionary projects and mitigating GHG emissions in instances where significant impacts are anticipated and where projects are not eligible for streamlining through use of the Checklist. The quantitative thresholds identify a GHG emissions level, applicable at a project level, that new discretionary projects must achieve in order to conclude a less than significant GHG impact under CEQA. The quantitative GHG emissions thresholds are inclusive of both operational and construction emissions and should be used to evaluate annual GHG emissions generated by a project's operations at full buildout and construction emissions amortized over the life of the project. To amortize construction emissions, total construction emissions will be divided by the total number of operational years of the project (i.e., life of the project) which are then added to annual project operational emissions to obtain total annual project emissions. South Coast Air Quality Management District recommends that the life of project be defined as 30 years for the purpose of construction emissions amortization; however, the actual life of the project may vary and should be confirmed with City Planning staff.<sup>1</sup>

The quantitative GHG emissions thresholds were calculated based on the cumulative citywide emissions limit for new growth that would allow the City to meet locally-specific GHG reduction targets for the years 2030, 2045 and 2050, as established in the 2026 CAP Update. This emissions limit was normalized to an emissions per service population metric, which allows a comparison of the project's emissions to the new growth emissions limit. As such, projects that demonstrate emissions levels consistent with the quantitative GHG emissions thresholds may demonstrate that the project's emissions would not have a cumulatively considerable GHG impact. Projects that utilize the quantitative GHG emissions threshold must still demonstrate consistency with applicable measures and actions of the 2026 CAP Update

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<sup>1</sup> South Coast Air Quality Management District. 2008. Interim CEQA GHG Significance Threshold for Stationary Sources, Rules and Plans. Available: <https://www.aqmd.gov/home/rules-compliance/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/ghg-significance-thresholds>.

through use of Step 2 of the Checklist. Additional information can be found in the 2026 *City of Oceanside Greenhouse Gas Emissions Thresholds* document.

The City’s quantitative GHG emissions thresholds are benchmarked to a project’s operational year, which are provided in Table 1. The quantitative GHG emissions thresholds consider year ranges that align with the City’s GHG reduction targets. All projects that evaluate GHG emissions against the GHG emissions thresholds should quantify the project’s annual GHG emissions and service population for the project’s expected initial year of full operation, considering the GHG reduction impacts of State regulations and any applicable measures and actions in the 2026 CAP Update that are incorporated into the project. These measures must be explicitly identified as design features of the project or incorporated as mitigation measures in case of a significant impact. The GHG emissions thresholds do not consider entities or facilities that are subject to the State’s Cap-and-Invest Program (formerly Cap-and-Trade) or Mandatory GHG Reporting Program, and as such would not be appropriate for the review of these types of projects.

**Table 1 Quantitative Greenhouse Gas Emissions Thresholds**

Project Operational Year	Project Annual GHG Emissions per Service Population (MTCO <sub>2e</sub> /yr/SP)
2025 to 2030	3.54
2031 to 2035	1.86
2036 to 2040	0.90
2041 to 2045 and beyond	0.26

Notes: GHG = greenhouse gas; MTCO<sub>2e</sub> = metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent; SP = service population; yr = year.

Source: Ascent 2026.

## 4 MONITORING AND UPDATE MECHANISMS

The City will prepare a CAP update at least every five years in accordance with the timeline identified in Chapter 5 of the 2026 CAP Update. Subsequent updates to the 2026 CAP Update will include updated GHG inventories and adjustments to reduction measures and actions, as necessary. Comprehensive updates to these Guidelines and associated Checklist and GHG emissions thresholds will be coordinated with each CAP update. Future updates to the CAP and the adopted GHG threshold of significance for general use are subject to approval by City Council.

In addition to updates to the CAP; the Guidelines and Checklist may also be administratively updated in the interim by the City to comply with amendments to State laws or court directives, to update measures that may become mandatory through future updates to State or local codes, or to provide clarifying edits. These administrative revisions to the Guidelines and Checklist are not expected to require approval by City Council.