



CITY OF CAPE TOWN  
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA  
STAD KAAPSTAD

# Draft Climate Change Strategy

Summary for Public Participation Process

**Date:** August 2020

## 1. Purpose of the Strategy

Climate Change is a global threat and has already caused significant economic and social impacts in countries and cities around the world, including Cape Town. The City of Cape Town is located in a unique environmental context tied with existing socio-economic challenges that makes the city particularly vulnerable to a number of climate change related challenges. The climatic changes that Cape Town is facing include the following: a significant decrease in mean annual rainfall; changed seasonality of rainfall; a significant increase in mean annual temperature and increased maximum temperatures; more high heat days, and more frequent and intense heat waves; an increase in wind strength; and a rise in mean sea level and increased coastal erosion.

The City acknowledges that delaying or failing to take the necessary action to adapt to the predicted impacts of climate change and contribute to global efforts to mitigate climate change will lead to greater long term impacts as well as missed opportunities in a global green economy. Among others, these include food, water and job insecurity; ecosystem degradation; loss and damage to infrastructure and property; and the risk of sanctions or taxes being imposed by trade partners or loss of international market access due to the carbon intensity of our products and services.

Having a clear climate change strategy enables the City to take action to reduce and prepare for these risks (adaptation). The strategy also outlines how and why the City is pursuing increased ambition in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (mitigation), aiming for carbon neutrality by 2050.

The Strategy therefore aims to:

- provide a framework for the City to transform the way it plans and operates and to ensure alignment of key City policies, strategies, and plans with climate change concerns while guiding directorates and departments through this transition
- ensure that the co-benefits of climate change adaptation and mitigation - including job creation, improved health, reduced risk, improved energy and water security, and a range of other benefits – are maximised in the implementation of the strategy
- address identified impacts within the City's mandates and spheres of influence and to ensure that the City is able to address the challenges posed by climate change and avoid locking itself into unsustainable investments or development pathways

Furthermore, the strategy aims to enable the City to take an integrated approach to its climate change response and recognise that climate change is a key risk to the economy, society, and environment. While the impacts of climate change are expected to escalate, the current global health pandemic has exposed the systemic factors that similarly underlie Cape Town's vulnerability to climate change. A pro-active response to climate change also aligns with global calls for a green economic recovery stimulus which is essential for our enterprises to recover and trade competitively. This strategy is thus an important component of Cape Town's recovery from COVID-19.

## 2. Vision, Principles and Long-term Desired Outcomes

**Vision:** To become a city that is climate resilient, resource efficient and carbon neutral, in order to enable inclusive economic and social development and environmental sustainability.

This vision is supported by the following eight principles: Resilience, Economic inclusiveness, Embedded sustainability, Carbon Neutrality, Health and wellbeing, Collaboration and integration, Climate Responsive Urban Development, and Equitable service delivery.

In addition, the strategy envisions nine long-term desired outcomes that provide a more detailed vision for a future in which this Climate Change Strategy will have been fully implemented.

## 3. Approach to implementation

Theories of change for adaptation and mitigation are included in the Strategy to direct actions and programs. These should however be seen within an ongoing cycle of monitoring that re-informs planning and implementation. The respective theories of change and approaches to implementation include:

A conceptual approach is applied to climate adaptation, highlighting Governance, Planning, Infrastructure, and Behaviour as the categories of action required to put the City on a pathway to achieving climate resilience.

Planning for a transition to carbon neutrality in Cape Town is concentrated in three main sectors which are Renewable Energy; Transport, Buildings and Land-Use; and Waste and the Circular Economy. Actions in collaboration with partners will be applied through seven priority levers which will work to shift the value chains in these sectors.

## 4. Overview of Strategic Focus Areas and Cross-Cutting Work Areas: Adaptation and Mitigation

The strategy consists of 10 strategic focus areas and four cross-cutting work areas addressing both adaptation and mitigation. Associated goals under each strategic focus areas will ensure the implementation of the City's climate change vision and principles with support from the cross-cutting work areas. The implementing actions for each goal are outlined in the forthcoming City of Cape Town Action Plan.

### 4.1 Adaptation strategic focus areas

- Strategic Focus Area 1: Heat, heat waves, and high heat days
- Strategic Focus Area 2: Decreased rainfall, drought, and water scarcity
- Strategic Focus Area 3: Flooding, flood risk, and storm damage
- Strategic Focus Area 4: Coastal erosion and sea level rise
- Strategic Focus Area 5: Fire and fire risk

## 4.2 Mitigation strategic focus areas

- Strategic Focus Area 6: Clean Energy for Work Creation and Economic Development
- Strategic Focus Area 7: Zero Emission Buildings and Precincts
- Strategic Focus Area 8: Transport for Quality of Life & Livelihoods
- Strategic Focus Area 9: Spatial and Resource Inclusivity
- Strategic Focus Area 10: Circular Waste Economy

## 4.3 Cross-cutting Work Areas and Goals

In order to effectively address climate change, several cross-cutting work areas have also been identified. These cross-cutting work areas support the implementation of strategic focus areas and are necessary to ensure that the appropriate governance measures are in place to enable an effective and integrated climate change response by the City of Cape Town.

- Cross-cutting Work Area 1: Mainstreaming climate change
- Cross-cutting Work Area 2: Addressing economic impacts
- Cross-cutting Work Area 3: Financing and financial mechanisms for climate change response
- Cross-cutting Work Area 4: Communication and collaboration to support climate change response

## 5. Conclusion

This strategy is a key step in taking the City towards its vision of ramping up its climate change response but will require a long-term and phased approach to achieve this vision. The forthcoming City of Cape Town Climate Change Action Plan, which should be read alongside the strategy, outlines specific implementing actions and programmes to realise the intent of the strategy. In addition, a number of challenges for the implementation of this strategy have been identified and articulated into the implementing actions outlined in the forthcoming City of Cape Town Action Plan. A monitoring and evaluation plan will be developed to ensure that the City is able to track the implementation of this strategy and therefore apply amendments as needed.

The City also acknowledges that in order for this strategy to be effective, the City must work closely in partnership with citizens, business, NGOs, academia, other spheres of government, and other partners across Cape Town. In many cases the goals of the strategy are only partly within the control of local government or face regulatory barriers or the need for comprehensive sector reform. The City however recognises its responsibility to show climate leadership through vision, planning, engagement, regulatory innovation, infrastructure development, and the running of its utilities and internal operations.