

1-17-2023

Exploring Gaps in City Climate Planning in the Mountain West

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Repository Citation

Padilla, J., Saladino, C. J., Brown, W. E. (2023). Exploring Gaps in City Climate Planning in the Mountain West. *Environment Fact Sheet No. 11* 1-2.

Available at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/bmw_lincy_env/11

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**EXPLORING GAPS IN CITY CLIMATE PLANNING
IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST**

Environment Fact Sheet No. 11 | January 2023

Prepared by: Joshua Padilla, Caitlin J. Saladino, and William E. Brown, Jr.

PURPOSE:

This fact sheet explores data from the 2022 Brookings Institution report by Joseph W. Kane, Adie Tomer, Caroline George, and Jamal Russell Black called “Not according to plan: Exploring gaps in city climate planning and the need for regional action.”¹ The original report analyzes decarbonization plans for 50 of the largest U.S. cities and comparatively ranks each plan using a point system of 5 categories. This fact sheet focuses on Mountain West cities (Denver, CO; Phoenix, AZ; Las Vegas, NV; Salt Lake, UT; and Albuquerque, NM) included in the original study.

ABOUT THE DATA:

The original report examines decarbonization plans prepared by 50 of the largest U.S. cities and ranks them based on 5 categories, with various points available for criteria in each category. A total of 25 points are available.

CATEGORIES	“Overarching Plan Goal”	“Sector Strategies”	“Ownership”	“Funding and Finance”	“Equity”
POINTS POSSIBLE	6 points	5 points	6 points	4 points	4 points

Criteria for the “overarching plan goal” category are shown below as a reference. Additional details for each category and points assigned to criteria are available in the methodology appendix of the original report.²

Points	“Overarching Plan Goal” Criteria
1	Local GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions data are transparently reported on a public website or through the Climate Disclosure Project.
2	Plan’s GHG emissions reduction target meets or exceeds previously announced jurisdictional pledge.
3	Plan includes ways to consistently monitor and track progress.
4	Plan is regularly updated with new projections (or states it will be regularly updated if it is a new plan).
5	Plan identifies interim GHG emissions reduction goals.
6	Plan aims for net-zero GHG emissions by 2050 or earlier.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Denver, CO and Phoenix, AZ decarbonization plans rank highest in the Mountain West at 21 points each out of a possible 25 points.
2. The Salt Lake City, UT decarbonization plan (5 total points) scored the lowest among Mountain West metros.
3. Denver, CO is the only Mountain West metro to score a maximum 6 points in the “overarching plan goal” criteria, while Phoenix, AZ was the only Mountain West metro to score a maximum of 6 points in the “ownership” criteria.
4. No Mountain West metros scored the maximum number of points (4 points) in the “equity” criteria.
5. Albuquerque, NM and Salt Lake City, UT both had a score of 0 for “funding and finance” criteria; Salt Lake City, UT also received a score of 0 for “equity” and “sector strategies” criteria.

¹ Joseph W. Kane, Adie Tomer, Caroline George, and Jamal Russell Black, “Not according to plan: Exploring gaps in city climate planning and the need for regional action.” 2022. *Brookings*. www.brookings.edu/research/not-according-to-plan-exploring-gaps-in-city-climate-planning-and-the-need-for-regional-action/

² Joseph W. Kane, Adie Tomer, Caroline George, and Jamal Russell Black, “Methodological Appendix.” 2022. *Brookings*. www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Decarbonization-Long-Form-Methodology.pdf

Table 1 shows the scores for the decarbonization plans of the five Mountain West cities included in the original report. There is a maximum of 25 points that can be accumulated from the five different categories. Salt Lake City, UT scored lowest among Mountain West cities with 5 total points. Denver, CO and Phoenix, AZ scored highest among Mountain West cities, with 21 points each. Denver, CO scored highest in the “overarching plan goal” category with a maximum of 6 points, while Salt Lake City, UT scored lowest with 2 points.

Table 1: Decarbonization Plan Scores of Mountain West Cities

Metro	Overarching Plan Goal (0 - 6)	Sector Strategies (0 - 5)	Ownership (0 - 6)	Funding and Finance (0 - 4)	Equity (0 - 4)	Total (0 - 25)
Denver, CO	6	4	4	4	3	21
Phoenix, AZ	5	5	6	2	3	21
Las Vegas, NV	5	4	4	1	3	17
Albuquerque, NM	3	3	4	0	3	13
Salt Lake City, UT	2	0	3	0	0	5

*Adapted from “Not according to plan: Exploring gaps in city climate planning and the need for regional action.” 2022. *Brookings*. www.brookings.edu/research/not-according-to-plan-exploring-gaps-in-city-climate-planning-and-the-need-for-regional-action/