Clark County Climate Change Planning

Community Advisory Group Meeting #5

June 26, 2024, 5:30-8:30pm PT

Public Service Center in Vancouver, WA and Zoom Webinar

Meeting Summary

Attendees

Community Advisory Group members: Councilor Belkot, Jessica Brown, Gabriela Mendoza Ewing, Sharon Ferguson, Ann Foster, Janet Kenefsky, Noelle Lovern, Brent Marsden, Nick Massie, Sunrise O'Mahoney, Dave Rowe, Andrea Smith, Don Steinke, Terry Toland, Alana Tudela, Justin Wood, Monica Zazueta

County staff: Jose Alvarez, Jenna Kay, Amy Koski

Consultant team: Sylvia Ciborowski, Ariella Dahlin, Nicole Metildi (Kearns & West); Tracy Lunsford (Parametrix); Dana Hellman (CAPA Strategies)

Number of members of the public in attendance: 7

Welcome

Clark County and Kearns & West staff welcomed everyone to the meeting. Sylvia Ciborowski, Kearns & West, reviewed the agenda and outlined the purpose and desired outcome of the meeting, which is to discuss the revised Resilience Goals and Policy List and come to agreement on what to move forward for further analysis.

Jenna Kay, Clark County, introduced Jose Alvarez who is also with the county and will help answer questions that arise during the meeting.

Sylvia asked for any edits on the Meeting #3 and #4 Summaries. There were no edits to the summaries.

A CAG member shared an edit for the revised Resilience Goals and Policy List, which Sylvia asked the member to save for the Revised Resilience Goal and Policy List discussion that will happen later in the meeting.

Project Updates

Jenna thanked CAG members for reviewing the materials sent ahead of this meeting. She noted that Artificial Intelligence (AI) notetaking tools that automatically engage with a full advisory group may violate the Open Public Meeting Act (OPMA) and asked members to refrain from using AI notetaking tools during meetings and to not respond to autogenerated emails from AI notetaking tools. She added that Clark County has printed copies of an FAQ document about the climate project and summary sheet of the climate projections available if members would like them.

Context and Grounding

Sylvia began by setting context for the conversation to come and recognized that, in addition to feedback gathered from the CAG and the Vision Statement the group set at the beginning of this process, Clark County has been getting community feedback through surveys, in addition to feedback through public engagement activities from the Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC).

Sylvia encouraged the group to keep this in mind as they discussed the revised Resilience Goals and Policy list.

Jenna reviewed the CAG's Vision Statement, and noted the CAG agreed tentatively to this working version. She also shared some key findings from the Severe Weather Public Survey and community workshop and mentioned that county staff are preparing a full summary and identifying any gaps in the draft policy list to share with the CAG. She noted that the draft survey results were in the meeting packet. Smokey air was a top concern of impacts experienced recently by those who participated in the survey. She finished by sharing the final version of the Equity and Environmental Justice lens.

Revised Resilience Goal and Policy List

Sylvia began the discussion about the Resilience Goal and Policy list by reiterating that the goal is for the CAG to decide which goals and policies should move forward for further analysis and which should be removed.

- Question: Are there a specific number of goals and policies that can move forward?
  - *Answer: The target is 35 policies (or less), we are currently at 46.*

Dana Hellman, CAPA Strategies, reviewed what the project team has done since the last meeting, which included reviewing and incorporating comments and suggestions from CAG and EJC on two versions of the draft Resilience Goals and Policies. Requests to modify language were directly made in the second version of the Goal and Policy list. Strategic suggestions were added to the comment tracker, which includes comments received by EJC and CAG members through June 5.

As a result of the project team's work revising and incorporating EJC and CAG feedback, they have identified:

- Three policies and one goal that may be more suitable for the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) sub element.
- Seven policies that may be cross-referenced in the Resilience sub-element and not included as stand-alone policies as they are already covered in existing adopted county plans.
- Three new policies to add to the list.
- Four topics that require further research by the project team.

Sylvia reiterated that this meeting's goal is to discuss the revised Resilience Goals and Policy List and come to agreement on what to move forward for further analysis. The list that moves forward will be reviewed and refined by partner agency staff, the technical consultant team, the EJC, and county staff. She shared that the structure of the conversation will be separated into seven groups of policies and goals.

Jenna shared that narrowing down the goals and policies list will help with budget efficiency. After further analysis of the goals and policies that move forward, staff will share what they have found with the CAG. She added that there will also be internal county staff review and that the

CAG will get additional opportunities to review the goals and policies before the final recommendation.

Group One: Policies from Existing Plans and that Could be Cross-Referenced.

Sylvia led the group through a discussion of the Group One goals and policies.

CAG members had the following comments and questions:

- Question: Are there significant differences in the intent of any of these polices with what already exists within the Comprehensive Plan?
    - *Answer: All of these policies already exist in an adopted plan, the reason for referencing is that it could increase future funding opportunities by being included in the Climate Element and it helps the county show its work. The language is largely the same as what already exists in current policies. There are a few that have additional words or phrasing like "species composition and conservation" and "commuter rail and prioritizing electric rail."*
- Question: Will referencing these existing policies limit or enhance funding?
    - *Answer: If they are referenced in the Climate Element, it may be easier for grant applications to show how funding is applicable.*
- Question: If referenced, do these count towards the goal of 35 total policies?
    - *No, they will not count towards the 35 total, as we won't do the additional analysis as we will do on the other policies since they already exist as adopted county policies.*
- Question: Would the additional wording be added to the referenced location? I would not want those to disappear.
    - *Answer: Staff could possibly adjust wording in a different chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, but not in a separate plan like the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan. Staff will check.*
    - One member noted that if the term "species composition" was not included then they do not feel comfortable with *not* taking the policy off the list.
- Some members noted concern around referencing as it can be difficult to locate references across multiple documents and sections of documents.
- Some members indicated support for the addition of "prioritizing electric rail," and suggested including freight as part of the rail system.
- Another policy on this list that already exists is the stormwater program.

Sylvia asked the CAG if they are comfortable with cross-referencing the goals and policies listed in Group One, with the understanding that if the word or phrasing changes could not be included in the Resilience sub element, staff would return to the CAG.

CAG members indicated agreement.

Group Two: Policies to Consider Moving to the Greenhouse Gas Reduction List.

Sylvia led the group through a discussion of the Group Two goals and policies.

Dana shared that these goals and policies seem more appropriate for the GHG list rather than the Resilience list and suggested saving them for discussion when the group develops the GHG sub-element.

CAG members had the following comments and questions:

- Question: Is there room on the GHG list or is that group facing the same limit on the number of policies?
  - *Answer: Development of the GHG list has not begun, but that list will also have a constraint on the amount of goals and policies that can be included. If the CAG recommends removing these goals and policies from the Resilience list, staff will bring them back to the CAG for discussion during the GHG list development.*

Sylvia asked the CAG if they were comfortable with moving the goals and policies listed in Group Two to the GHG list, with the understanding that they would discuss them again during the GHG goals and policies development.

CAG members indicated agreement.

Group Three: High Priority for CAG Discussion

Sylvia led the group through a discussion of the Group Three goals and policies. CAG members had the following comments:

Goal Four, Policy One

- Suggestion to change language to "green and just hydrogen" or hydrogen as defined by additional research. This suggestion was later retracted.
- Suggestion to change language to "incentivizing placement of underground lines or power infrastructure."
- Ask for utilities to weigh in on the policy and learn about who would pay for infrastructure placement.
- A few CAG members suggested to only keep the first sentence and remove the rest.
- Being specific can increase cost and technology changes rapidly.
- A few CAG members suggested not including specifics and definitions.
- Suggestion for utilities to use vehicle electricity power as back-up.
- A member noted that the policies and goals that end up in the Climate Element within the Comprehensive Plan will be a policy guide, not laws or regulations.

Members agreed on the final policy language to move forward for further analysis: *Work with energy utilities to improve the safety and reliability of infrastructure vulnerable to climate change.*

Goal Five

- Concern about using the word "design" as it may imply a mandate. Suggestion to change to "incentivize" or "encourage."
  - A few CAG members supported the suggestion.
  - A few CAG members disagreed with the suggestion. There was concern about softening the language.

- - A few CAG members had concerns about mandating design and limiting creative freedom and conflation with land use and building codes.
    - Suggestion to change the language to "provide design guidelines"
    - Suggestion that the goal should be to have the most energy efficient homes rather than to provide guidelines.
    - Suggestion to change the language to "encourage design of energy efficient housing"
- EJC and community survey highlighted the importance of air conditioning. Portland has a program that gives air conditioning units to those with low-incomes and recently passed a tenant right of access to air conditioning.
- Encourage holistic approach that educates renters and homeowners on how to use equipment and be realistic about what is out of scope for us to meet the goals we are setting.
- Suggestion to include an education component.

Members agreed on the final goal language to move forward, with some reference to include an education component: *Provide assistance for maintenance and rehabilitation of housing for Clark County residents and encourage new housing designed with mechanical and/or passive cooling and heating capacity.*

Goal Five, Policy One

- Passive homes are 7-15% more expensive to build. In terms of affordability equity, can we provide info to the EJC.
    - Encourage keeping on the list for staff to analyze trade-offs for the CAG and EJC to consider.
    - An RMI study showed that for new construction, all electric homes are at cost parity for non-all electric homes.
- Comprehensive plans and their goals and policies differ from land use and building codes. Codes are legally required.
- Encourage creating the best system for maintenance and rehabilitation.

Members agreed on the final policy language to move forward, with some reference to the need for energy efficiency education: *Retrofit existing buildings for energy efficiency and weatherization, with an emphasis on passive and/or energy efficient home heating and cooling to protect residents from extreme temperatures. Incentivize the inclusion of passive and/or energy efficient mechanical cooling systems in all new housing developments.*

Goal 14

- Suggestion to add "identify, conserve, preserve, and rewild."
- Concern about deforestation and clear cutting for development.

Members agreed on the final goal language to move forward: *Identify, protect, preserve, and rewild environmentally critical areas; riparian areas, wetlands, prairies, and forests; and urban and rural open space.*

Goal 14, Policy One

- Question: If this is covered under the growth management plan, could this move to Group One?
  - *Answer: If we removed this goal, it would remove the policy. "Strive for net ecological gain" and "encourage habitat connectivity" may be new language, but staff will check.*
- Question: What data will staff analyze for this policy?
  - *Answer: Staff are working on an analysis plan and will follow-up with CAG to share.*
- Suggestion to include language about expansion of urban growth area capacity if more land in the urban growth area goes towards ecosystem and critical areas protection or to look into this during analysis.
- There was a discussion about combining language around tree canopy and critical habitat, but the group decided to keep those separate.

Members agreed on the final policy language to move forward for further analysis with the understanding that the project team would further refine the language and share with the CAG: *Ensure no net loss of ecosystem composition, structure, and functions, especially in Priority Habitats and Critical Areas, and strive for net ecological gain to enhance climate resilience. Ensure habitat connectivity and protect areas that provide for safe passage of migratory species.*

Goal 23

- Suggestion to change "promote" to "implement."
- Suggestion to move this policy over to the GHG list.
  - The project team provided context that this policy focuses on resilience and includes producer responsibility. Suggest realigning with post-major event clean up.
- Suggestion to change to "implement waste reduction, recycling, composting."

Members agreed on the following goal language to move forward: *Implement waste reduction, composting, and recycling.*

Goal 26

- Suggestion to include cluster production.
- Suggestion to change to "actual affordable" and define affordability.

Members agreed on the following goal language to move forward with the understanding that staff would work on including language that indicates the purpose of diverse housing options (which is to promote and support climate resilience): *Encourage and support diverse, affordable housing options throughout the county. Encourage and support equal access to housing for rental and homeowners and protect public health and safety.*

Goal 26, Policy One

- Members asked for definitions on public development covenants, climate smart housing, anti-displacement polices, and net ecological gain or loss.
  - The project team is researching these terms and will get back to the CAG with definitions.
- Concern about development conflicts with manufactured homes and ADUs in medium density zoned land.

- Suggestion to move to the housing element.
- Department of Commerce flagged housing as a resilience issue of interest. Safe, affordable housing leads to climate resilience.
- Suggestion to change wording to match that intent.

Sylvia reflected the number of different concerns and stated that analysis is where the CAG would learn about the impacts associated with this policy. Staff will work on rewording the policy language and will come back to the group with revised language.

Group Four – Medium Priority for CAG Discussion.

Sylvia led the group through a discussion of the Group Four goals and policies. CAG members had the following comments and questions:

Goal 12

- Suggestion to change "salmonids" to "all native aquatic species."

Members agreed on the following goal language to move forward: *Protect, conserve and recover salmonids and native aquatic species within Clark County.*

Goal 24

- Reminder that farms are included in the term businesses.

Members agreed to move the goal forward as written.

Goal 28

- Question: What is sustainable development and how is it balanced?
    - *Answer: Staff can provide examples on sustainable development, but the intention is to leave it open and flexible. It should be noted that HB 1181 requires planning for population growth.*
- Question: How is "new planning project" defined? Longer development timelines could be a cause for concern.
    - *Answer: The definition is open.*
- Agreement to reference the Unincorporated Growth Area (UGA).
- Ask to define hazard prone.
- Suggestion to include "encourage holistic development" which considers overall wellbeing of the building and occupants and includes environmental and social impacts.
- Suggestion to remove "existing unincorporated UGA" to encourage folks to live inside city limits.
    - Clark County does not have authority within the city.
    - Use of the word "existing" encourages promoting building in existing areas.
    - Concern about rural areas getting developed and loss of rural land use, epically for farming.
    - Suggestion to remove "existing unincorporated."

Members agreed on the following goal language to move forward: *Encourage holistic development within the unincorporated urban growth area and away from hazard-prone areas. Please note: the*

group was ok with either of the following language revisions related to describing the unincorporated urban growth area: "Encourage holistic development within the **existing at the time** *unincorporated urban growth area...." or "Encourage holistic development* **within the unincorporated** *urban growth area..."*

Goal 28, Policy One

- Suggestion to replace "defensible space" with "fire-wise practices."
- Some homeowner's insurance now require defensible space.

Members agreed on the following policy language to move forward: *Integrate natural hazard mitigation planning into land-use planning processes by identifying and mapping hazards, assessing vulnerability, and implementing measures to reduce risk, such as avoiding development in floodplains, wildfire-prone areas, and landslide zones, incentivizing climate-smart building practices, and supporting fire-wise practices.*

Members agreed that the other goals and policies listed in Group Four can move forward as is.

Group Five – Low Priority for CAG Discussion

Sylvia led the group through a discussion of the Group Five goals and policies. CAG members had the following comments and questions:

Goal Three, Policy One

- Suggestion to add "actual affordable" and replace "limited" use with "no" use of pesticides.

Members agreed to move the policy forward for further analysis as-is.

Goal Three, Policy Two

- Question: Do we know if agricultural land is being used under its current designation? How will economically viable agricultural land be assigned? It seems like these policies could possibly optimize land already designated before adding more land.
  - *Answer: Designated agricultural lands were described and identified by WA State and require protection under the Growth Management Act. All unincorporated land could be used for agriculture. And, some designated agricultural lands are not necessarily being used for agriculture. The County does not know how land is being used, the best information on that is if the land is in a current use program (a tax program run through the Assessor's Office).*
  - One member had a request to see an example agricultural land study to understand how it is being used and how to optimize it, and what the need and interest is.
- Support to understand what current agricultural land is being used for. One member shared a reflection that many farmers cannot use all of their land due to high overhead prices. Suggestion that once agricultural land is in use to not develop it. Reflection that this is critical for EJ and Spanish-speaking communities.
- Suggestion for a better option to increase affordability of farming.

- Note that Goal 1, Policy 1 in Group Seven is about conservation research, technical assistance, and ensuring land is used under best management practices.

Sylvia suggested that the members who disagreed on how to edit this policy meet in person to discuss.

Sylvia noted the CAG was out of time and asked the group how they would like to move forward. CAG members had the following comments and questions:

- Question: A member asked how many policies the CAG is at now.
  - *Answer: We have narrowed the policies down to 35, which staff have the capacity to analyze.*
- A member shared that most of their comments they prepared ahead of time were on other goals and policies and requested time to discuss those.
  - *Answer: Due to the project's pace (from its mandatory due date), the CAG needs to start discussing the GHG sub-element next month. If there is additional discussion needed on the Resilience goals and policies, that can occur when staff presents the results of the analysis, and the group further deliberates before making a final recommendation.*

Sylvia asked the CAG if they were comfortable moving the remaining goals and policies listed in Groups Five through Seven forward for analysis as written. The CAG indicated agreement.

Public Comment

Sylvia opened the public comment period.

> Jude Wait: I am co-representing the Food and Farm Justice Network on the Environmental Justice Coalition and it was great to be here and hear your wisdom and go through these goals and policies with you. I have one comment that goes back to the beginning of the meeting around the resilience sort of the nuts and bolts. There was something in there about food and food insecure folks, like people living on the street, but I didn't see anything around food access and food security. In a general way that is a very big risk to any of the climate impacts and in an emergency situation. I think that needs to be called out as a separate line item. I would also like to say that I am an environmental scientist and land use watershed analyst to some extent. I would like to call out the connectivity and the biodiversity, not just with forests, but in terms of open space and development in general. I don't really see that analyzed anywhere in terms of expansion and policies around what happens on the parcels that are basically clear cut to what I've seen is scraped to the bedrock. So there's just no infiltration no matter what you plant as lawns or anything. Migratory species and pollinators need dispersal and connectivity. In some way with all of your GIS magic, if you could analyze dispersal and remnants and whatever you can to build in to the system in terms of whether it's in the urban growth area or in the unincorporated area in general, that these principles sort of apply across the landscape whether we like it or not.

Sylvia reminded the public that there is a form on Clark County's website to submit comments at any time during the project at https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/comp-plan-comments and comments can be emailed to comp.plan@clark.wa.gov.

Next Steps

Sylvia reviewed the next steps and noted there were none for CAG members.

She also shared information about the next meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, July 25, 5:30-8:30p, and that they can find past meeting materials on the CAG website. Regular meetings will continue to be held on the fourth of the month going forward. Members can reach out to Jenna if they have questions and send additional feedback to her via email.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm PT.

Appendix A: Zoom Chat

Below is a verbatim, unedited transcript of the Zoom webinar chat.

00:53:08 From Ariella Dahlin (She/Her) to Everyone:

 For Zoom technical issues, email adahlin@kearnswest.com

01:24:04 From Gabriela Ewing CAG to Everyone:

 Yes

01:25:40 From Ariella Dahlin, Tech Support (She/Her) to Everyone:

 Here is the Revised Resilience Goal and Policy List grouped by the pre-meeting survey results: https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/176581

01:37:08 From Ariella Dahlin, Tech Support (She/Her) to Everyone:

 For Zoom technical issues, email adahlin@kearnswest.com

02:23:07 From Gabriela Ewing CAG to Everyone:

 I'm sorry my internet keeps kicking me out of the meeting

02:28:26 From Gabriela Ewing CAG to Everyone:

 yes

03:33:41 From Ariella Dahlin, Tech Support (She/Her) to Everyone:

 From Jessica's phone (2) to all panelists 07:08 PM: Yes

03:33:47 From Ariella Dahlin, Tech Support (She/Her) to Everyone:

 From Jessica's phone (2) to all panelists 08:10 PM: Just had a question on defendable space

03:51:55 From Ariella Dahlin, Tech Support (She/Her) to Everyone:

 From Jessica's phone (2) to all panelists 08:31 PM: Suggestion: Add to the agenda for next month.

03:53:07 From Gabriela Ewing CAG to Everyone:

 Thank you Jenna

03:53:23 Ariella Dahlin, Tech Support (She/Her) to Everyone:

 From Jessica's phone (2) to all panelists 08:33 PM: Is an extra meeting possible?