



# Clark County Climate Change Planning

## Community Advisory Group Meeting #6

July 24, 2024, 5:30-8:30pm PT

Public Service Center in Vancouver, WA and  
Zoom Webinar

*Meeting Summary*

FUNDED BY WASHINGTON'S



The WA Department of Commerce climate planning grant is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act. The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at [www.climate.wa.gov](http://www.climate.wa.gov).

## Attendees

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

**County staff:** Chris Cook, Harrison Husting, Amy Koski, Jenna Kay

**Consultant team:** Sylvia Ciborowski, Nicole Metildi (Kearns & West); Claudia, Denton, Tracy Lunsford, Joshua Proudfoot (Parametrix); Dana Hellman (CAPA Strategies)

Number of members of the public in attendance: 0

## Welcome

Clark County and Kearns & West staff welcomed everyone to the meeting. Sylvia Ciborowski, Kearns & West, provided an overview of the agenda and outlined the meeting's purpose and desired outcomes:

- Introduce the Greenhouse Gas sub-element.
- Share an overview of the prioritization criteria.
- Share an update about the Resilience goals and policies and seek confirmation on a few outstanding items.

Sylvia also reviewed meeting logistics, including the location of the meeting, the availability of materials online, and the process for public comments, which would be addressed at the end of the meeting.

Sylvia asked if members had corrections for the Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting Summary #5. There were no suggested corrections, and the summary was accepted as-is. A member mentioned that they had a comment on one of the Resilience sub-element policies. Sylvia asked them to bring up their comments during the Resilience Goals and Policies Update agenda item.

## Project Updates

Jenna Kay, Clark County, provided project updates. Jenna shared that due to ongoing construction, the CAG will meet in the smaller meeting room next month. Comments from CAG members and the public are posted on the CAG webpage. Jenna let the group know that an update about the project was shared with the County Council and the Planning Commission on July 10 and 18, respectively. Recordings from those meetings are posted online if members would like to watch. Jenna also welcomed Thilo Kluth back to the CAG, who will be the freight representative.

A member asked if the public and CAG member comments shared in the materials packet for this meeting include all comments collected. Jenna clarified that they only include comments submitted since the last meeting.

## Introduction to the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Sub-Element

Tracy Lunsford, Parametrix, introduced the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Sub-Element and emphasized the importance of understanding the sources of GHG emissions and effectively tracking reductions in emissions. Claudia Denton, Parametrix, presented on what a GHG inventory is and shared GHG inventory results for unincorporated Clark County.

The presentation highlighted the need for a robust approach to inventory management to support informed policy decisions and achieve climate resilience goals. Key points included the significance of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, refrigerant gases, and their global warming potentials. The presentation detailed the local emission sources in unincorporated Clark County: building energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry, industrial processes, and waste, as well as imported emissions from the consumption of goods, food, and energy. Claudia emphasized the importance of tracking both local and imported emissions.

The group had the following questions and comments:

- What is forest sequestration?
  - *Answer: Forest sequestration is the process by which trees take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen, in effect holding the carbon dioxide inside the tree itself (called sequestration).*
- Are there other forms of sequestration?
  - *Answer: All plants and living organic matter sequester carbon; however, trees sequester the most carbon for the longest time. The ocean also “breathes” in and releases oxygen throughout the year.*
- Are methane leaks in Clark County measured? Southwest Washington Clean Air Agency does not track these leaks.
  - *Answer: The inventory does take into account some methane leaks, as large emitters of GHG are required to report their emissions to the State of Washington Department of Ecology. Natural gas pipeline emissions are also included in the inventory (they are measured by Northwest Natural).*
- A member expressed concern about methane leaks in rural areas, where they are harder to address.
- A member commented on the timeframe by which carbon dioxide and methane remain in the atmosphere and the global warming potential for each. This should be included in the analysis.
  - *Response: Yes, methane is more potent in a shorter timeline. The GHG inventory for this project takes into account the timelines for carbon dioxide and methane and is based on 100-year values.*
- Are wildfires and backyard burnings included in the inventory?
  - *Answer: Wildfires are included as a source of emissions in the inventory. A 20-year average of wildfires is how they are accounted for.*

- What areas are included in the inventory – is this rural Clark County?
  - *Answer: The inventory is for unincorporated Clark County, which includes both rural areas and urban areas outside of the local cities.*
- Where can we find the GHG inventories for cities in Clark County?
  - *Answer: After this meeting the county will share the full GHG Inventory Report, which includes a snapshot of each city's GHG inventory results (note: HB 1181 requires GHG reduction planning for all cities greater than 6,000 people in Clark County). Each city will be able to share more details about their own inventory.*
- Clark Public Utilities has a gas-powered plant that is not in the city limits of Vancouver, and it is not in the county; however, a lot of the electricity generated there is used in the county. How is this accounted for in the GHG inventory?
  - *Answer: This is included in the Building and Energy emissions calculations.*
- What is the lifespan of greenhouse gases?
  - *Answer: The project team will share a resource with more information. However, in the GHG report, the lifespan of greenhouse gases studied are normalized against carbon dioxide so that they can be compared to one another.*
- Are the emissions of wood burning stoves, pellet stoves, and fireplaces included?
  - *Answer: They are not included because they are biogenic emissions, and therefore not considered human activity.*
- In rural areas, solid waste is sometimes burned. Is this included in the inventory?
  - *Answer: As there is not a way to track solid waste burning, nor is there a good way to estimate it, it is not included in the inventory.*
- Does “imported emissions” mean that when goods are not produced here, we are accounting for the emissions used to create them when we consume them in Clark County?
  - *Answer: Yes, that is correct.*
- Are the emissions of people who commute from adjacent counties into Clark County accounted for?
  - *Answer: Yes. These are based on Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) inside unincorporated Clark County.*
- How does the GHG inventory for unincorporated Clark County compare with other, similar counties throughout the US?
  - *Answer: We would need to do some research to know the answer to this question, but we would expect that the GHG emissions for Clark County are a little less than the US average.*
- What kind of emissions do electric vehicles emit?
  - *Answer: Instead of looking at tail pipe emissions, the inventory looks at the emissions released to produce the electricity that powers the vehicle.*
- How is VMT calculated?
  - *Answer: We used numbers provided by the Washington State Department of Transportation.*
- Is there a way to measure refrigerant leaks in Clark County?
  - *Answer: Refrigerants are difficult to track on a local level. The best way to track them is to know how many refrigerants are bought each year because you're buying them to*

*replace what was previously lost to the atmosphere. However, that's not the only way to track refrigerants. The project team used numbers from the State of Washington. The state tracks how much refrigerants were bought or sold, and the numbers included in the GHG inventory are per capita averages for Washington and applied for residential and commercial use in unincorporated Clark County.*

- The State of Washington is recommending different types of refrigerants that have a lower global warming potential.
- Emissions from the burning of biomass should be included in the GHG inventory.
- There was concern that the data being used for the inventory is from 2022, and thus not current.
- The natural gas production looks small in the graphic shown. Did the project team look at natural gas production holistically (for example, considering water contamination caused by fracking)?
  - *Answer: The imported emissions graph is just one way to look at GHG emissions in the county. The upstream emissions associated with natural gas production, such as fracking, are included in the inventory. It is small compared to the other sources of emissions. This inventory only shows GHG emissions. Other impacts are not reflected in this GHG inventory.*
- For the chart of transportation emissions, what vehicles are included in the “off-road diesel” piece of the pie chart, that makes them higher in urban areas rather than rural?
  - *Answer: Off road sources of diesel are mostly related to construction like large road construction vehicles, building construction excavators, generators, forklifts, and other vehicles that are not on the road.*
- Does the higher concentration of sulfur in off-road diesel impact carbon emission levels because they are higher and burn differently?
  - *Answer: Typically, off-road diesel uses all fossil fuel diesel. It is not mixed with anything, while a lot of on-road diesel at the pump is B5 diesel, meaning it's blended with five percent biodiesels, which is a bio component and not is included in the inventory.*
- If trains pass through both rural and urban railways, would they not be considered the same in the inventory?
  - *Answer: Rail lines are concentrated in the corridors where people live so the calculations are done on a per-capita basis based on state data.*

Tracy Lundsford, Parametrix, then went into part two of the presentation focusing on the Emissions Reduction Planning process required by the Department of Commerce and State legislation. Tracy emphasized that while the Resilience Sub-Element policies address the impacts of climate change on daily life, the GHG reduction policies will target the root causes of those climate impacts. Reducing emissions involves identifying and adopting effective actions based on the GHG inventory, with a focus on addressing primary emission sources in unincorporated Clark County to ensure effective emissions reductions.

While the process for coming up with Resilience Sub-Element policies began with the CAG brainstorming policy ideas, which were then consolidated into a set of policies and goals, the GHG Sub-Element will take a different approach that will emphasize the identification of the

most effective ways to reduce GHG emissions in the Clark County context. This aligns with the Department of Commerce's guidance to "[take] action to reduce or eliminate the emissions of GHGs in order to reduce the rate and extent of climate change damage."

Tracy outlined the steps for developing GHG policies, which begins with the GHG inventory and then moves on to identifying measures, particularly in high-impact sectors, and evaluating these measures using a multi-criteria analysis. The evaluation will include use of the Equity Lens to consider the impacts on different communities. The team will set emissions reduction targets aligned with Washington State's goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and integrate these measures into Clark County's Comprehensive Plan. The county will periodically update the GHG emissions inventory and track progress towards these targets.

Examples from another county were presented to illustrate the potential types of emissions reduction strategies, such as the adoption of electric vehicles, which had significant reduction potential compared to other measures like mass transit. Tracy emphasized the importance of considering the scale and variety of actions, as well as their co-benefits.

The group had the following questions and comments:

- The power and density of energy sources, as well as their greenhouse gas emissions, should be considered.
- A member expressed that they did not want to use the Menu of Measures to develop GHG policies for unincorporated Clark County. This project should develop policies and goals specific to unincorporated Clark County and not rely on measures provided by the Department of Commerce. Another member noted that they viewed the Menu of Measures as a list of policies the group could choose from that would work for unincorporated Clark County.
  - *Response: The project team noted that Menu of Measures includes highly effective, proven actions to reduce GHG emissions. If the CAG and project team were to brainstorm policies on their own, those policies would likely align with policies that are within the Menu of Measures.*
- Is there a requirement with the GHG Sub-Element to create metrics for GHG reduction goals and policies?
  - *Answer: The legislation driving this project has a monitoring and reporting requirement. The county will report on their progress towards the GHG policies and goals every five years.*
- Where is the Menu of Measures found?
  - *Answer: It is on the Department of Commerce website.*
- Not all renewable diesel is the same when it comes to carbon density and global warming potential. We cannot assume that renewable diesel is good for the environment.
- The US Department of Energy is convening stakeholders nationwide to develop standards for synergy between electric vehicles and electric utilities.
- The most important goal is to not increase emissions, but the county is approving projects that increase emissions, such as gravel mines.
- Would using local building materials, manufacturing goods locally, and growing food locally reduce GHG emissions?

- *Answer: In some cases. Generally speaking producing goods and foods locally reduces GHG emissions related to transportation. Food choices can be much more impactful for reducing emissions. For example, meat and dairy result in much higher emissions than plant-based foods.*
- Battery-powered passenger rail could operate on existing rail lines in the county going from Vancouver to Battleground. This could replace many automobile trips.
- It would be beneficial to have a “bike bus,” where kids are picked up from each bus stop on a bus route. This would get kids used to riding their bikes to get places.

Tracy shared information on the upcoming CAG meeting schedule. In the next several meetings, the group will discuss each key sector of GHG emissions and potential considerations for policies related to those sectors.

Several members expressed concern about the time between the CAG making their final recommendations for the Climate Element, and when County Council will vote on the Climate Element. Specially, there was concern that there will not be time for back and forth between the Council and the CAG, if council members have questions or concerns about the CAG's recommendation.

There was some concern that county staff would change the CAG's recommendations before it goes to Council and the Planning Commission. Jenna clarified that staff will share the final recommendations of the CAG with the Council and the Planning Commission. Jenna also noted that the group can schedule a discussion at a future CAG meeting about the decision-making process and role the CAG can play after the group finishes developing its recommendation.

## Prioritization Criteria

Tracy reviewed the purpose and process for prioritization of policies and goals of the Climate Element. The focus of prioritization will be to align the GHG and Resilience policies and goals with both state and community priorities.

The prioritization process involves confirming the prioritization criteria with the CAG and evaluating potential policies based on the criteria. This will result in a set of prioritized policies and will help determine which policies require further analysis. The Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC) will provide feedback on the prioritized policies as it relates to equity considerations.

The prioritization criteria will be the same for Resilience and GHG Emissions reduction policies and goals; however, each sub-element's goals and policies will be analyzed differently for some of the criteria. For instance, policies will be scored based on effectiveness in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving resilience to climate change, but how that is measured will be different for each sub-element.

There was a question about how scoring will work. An example was shared where actions can be categorized as low, medium, or high, based on their potential impact on reducing GHG emissions or improving resilience.

Once the policies are prioritized, further analysis will involve quantifying emissions reductions by researching emission sources and calculating potential reductions. This systematic approach ensures that the most impactful policies are identified and evaluated thoroughly. Tracy highlighted the importance of considering the effectiveness and cost of policies, and ensuring that solutions are both impactful and equitable. The project team and CAG will further refine the prioritization and analysis framework, with further discussion planned for the next CAG meeting.

## Resilience Goals and Policy Update

Dana Hellman, CAPA Strategies, reviewed four policies that were discussed at the last meeting and required double-checking that they could be cross-referenced in other plans or places in the Comprehensive Plan. Dana shared that the team's research confirmed that these policies can be cross-referenced and do not need to be included in the Resilience policy list for further analysis. These included Goal 7 Policy 1, Goal 15 Policy 3, Goal 24 Policy 3, and Goal 28 Policy 5.

Jenna then reviewed policies where project staff wanted to confirm the next steps with the CAG. Bold text within the policy indicates wording that the project team incorporated into the policy based on previous CAG and EJC meetings.

Goal 14, Policy 2: Restoration strategies should be developed and implemented such that **species composition, species conservation, and** ecosystem processes are sustainable in the long term.

- The project team proposed keeping this policy on the Resilience policy list and not cross-referencing it in other plans or places in the Comprehensive Plan, since the original policy is in the Shoreline Master Program chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and there are some complications and limitations with cross-referencing it.
- A member asked if putting the policy back on the list would mean there would be more than 35 policies on the list.
  - *Answer: No, the team has additional suggestions today that will keep us within the 35-policy limit.*
- There was a suggestion to add the phrasing "keystone species."
  - *Answer: The project team suggests not including that here as it would not change the overall policy purpose.*
- Decision: The group agreed that the policy should be kept on the Resilience policy list and not cross-referenced.

Goal 15 Policy 1. Strengthen and build redundancy into infrastructure, **including transportation infrastructure**, prioritizing areas that may be potentially isolated areas.

- The project team proposed that the language should be cross-referenced without the bold text, since it is not possible to amend the Natural Hazards Mitigation plan as part of this project.
- A member asked if the words "potentially isolated areas" meant remote areas.
  - *Answer: Project staff confirmed that this was the case.*
- Decision: The group agreed that the policy should be cross-referenced with the proposed edits from the project team.



Goal 21 Policy 2. The county shall support new and improved passenger and **commuter** rail transportation services between Clark County and the Portland metropolitan area and along the I-5 corridor from Vancouver, BC to Eugene, Oregon, **prioritizing electric rail when possible.**

- The project team shared that they were waiting for internal county review on cross-referencing this policy with the bold text in the Comprehensive Plan Transportation chapter. If they cannot cross-reference, it will remain on the list.
- The group discussed adding “regional” to describe rail; however, the group decided to not include that in the policy.
- There was some concern about rail cars idling within the county and producing emissions. Members would like any new rail to be “non-hazardous.”
- A member noted that they would like to see an increase in ridership on public transit before spending money to create new infrastructure.
- A member expressed that adding new infrastructure should make fiscal sense before it is built.
- A member suggested changing “passenger and commuter” to “passenger and freight.
- Decision: The group agreed that the policy should be amended to read “passenger and freight” instead of “passenger and commuter,” with a note added to the comment-tracker for the policy specifying that new rail should be “non-hazardous.” Jenna noted that the county is awaiting internal review on whether this policy will be cross-referenced in the transportation chapter or added to the climate chapter.

Goal 7 Policy 2: Encourage the use of northwest native plants in landscaping, particularly adjacent to critical areas and discourage the use of invasive non-natives (e.g., English ivy); **for example, work with partners to establish and sustain a native plant nursery and seed bank to support long-term restoration and carbon sequestration efforts.**

- The project team proposed cross-referencing the policy with the bolded text.
- Someone mentioned that water used for grass should be used to grow food.
- A member shared that education should be provided to the community about native plants and how to manage their yards and households to be more environmentally friendly.
- Decision: The group agreed that the policy should be cross-referenced with the proposed edits from the project team.

Goal 14 Policy 1: 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.

- The project team proposed keeping this policy on the Resilience policy list.
- There was a suggestion to double check that the policy does not duplicate policies at the state level.
- Decision: The group agreed that the policy should be kept on the Resilience policy list.

**Goal 19 Policy 1: Enhance and improve the region's air quality, strive to monitor PM 2.5 throughout Clark County, and partner with the Clark County Health Department to set specific targets related to air quality.**

- The project team proposed cross-referencing the policy.
- A member asked if the county currently monitors particulate matter.
  - *Answer: The state has air quality data. Particulate matter is monitored in the county. Southwest Clean Air Agency and the Public Health Department are involved. Jenna will consult with these agencies to confirm who tracks what.*
- Decision: The group agreed that the policy should be cross-referenced with the proposed edits from the project team.

Lastly, Sylvia moved onto the policies that CAG did not reach a consensus on at the last meeting. Below is a summary of the CAG's discussion about each policy.

Goal 3, Policy 1: Facilitate increased land access for local farmers, providing affordable agricultural land ownership or long-term, stable leases to prevent displacement. The project team was seeking consensus on keeping the wording as is or if there should be new wording suggested.

- A member said everyone who wants to be a farmer should be able to be one. Education should be provided to help people become farmers, and owning and working a farm should be accessible and affordable.
- A member said that it was important to preserve existing farmland to encourage local food production.
- Per the suggestion at the last CAG meeting, three group members met before the meeting and worked together to revise the policy language to the following: *Take steps to preserve existing agriculture and resource lands by prioritizing the infrastructure that keeps the existing agricultural economy viable, including education, research, and technology.*
- Decision: The group agreed that the policy should be amended with language suggested by the three CAG members and move forward for further analysis.

Goal 26, Policy 1: Ensure that policies and codes protect access to safe, affordable housing, especially in overburdened communities. Access to safe, stable housing provides protection during extreme weather events, while affordable housing leaves residents more resources to spend on resilience-building essentials such as air conditioning, air purification, food, and health care.

- The project team shared that they had significantly edited the wording since the last CAG meeting and are seeking consensus from the CAG on how to move forward.
- There was a suggestion to add "actual" before "affordable housing." Members discussed the accepted definition of "affordable housing" and how it is used in other policies and regulations. If the word "actual" is added, "actual affordable housing" would need to be defined. The group decided to keep the language around affordable housing as-is and note the comment about what is "actually" affordable housing in the comment tracker.

- The group discussed if spending 30% of household income was “actually” affordable for people or not. There was a suggestion to include this information in the policy itself, however, the group ultimately agreed not to include it.
- A member stated that income should be considered when determining if housing is affordable.
- Members requested adding “regulations” in the policy to encompass all regulations across the county. The group decided to add “regulations” after “policies and codes.”
- A member stated that the cost of regulations impacts home builders negatively.
- Decision: The group agreed that the policy should move forward for further analysis with suggested edits from the project team, and to amend “policies and codes” to “policies, codes, and regulations.”

## Public Comment

Sylvia opened the public comment period; however, there were no members of the public present at the meeting.

## Next Steps

Sylvia reviewed the next steps and noted there were none for CAG members. She noted the following action items for the project team:

- Seek feedback from the CAG on prioritization criteria. The project team will send a request for feedback in the coming weeks.
- Share additional resources about greenhouse gas emissions and global warming potentials.
- Add an agenda item to a future meeting to discuss the decision-making process for this project in more detail.
- Share a link to the full GHG report as a follow-up material.

She also shared information about the next meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, August 28, 5:30-8:30p.

## Adjourn

Sylvia adjourned the meeting and thanked everyone for their participation and contributions.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43pm PT.

## Appendix A: Zoom Chat

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

17:35:22 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone:

For Zoom technical issues, email nmetildi@kearnswest.com

18:20:12 From Andrea Smith, CAG to Hosts and panelists:

Not worthy of raising my hand - Burning wood would be a concern of public health (RE: air pollution)

18:21:41 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone:

Comment from Andrea Smith: Not worthy of raising my hand - Burning wood would be a concern of public health (RE: air pollution)

18:34:48 From Josh Proudfoot He/Him- Parametrix (formerly Good Company) to Everyone:

One could measure from total quantities of refrigerants sold in the state annually from distributors of refrigerants. Currently all California supermarkets must report quantities purchased per annum.

18:39:51 From Andrea Smith, CAG to Everyone:

Sorry my unmute isn't working

18:43:56 From Andrea Smith, CAG to Everyone:

Almost home and can switch to a computer 😊 thank you!

18:45:04 From Sylvia Ciborowski, Facilitator (she/her) to Everyone:

On break. We will reconvene at 6:55pm

19:33:20 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone:

Sorry I lost power and I couldn't rejoin right away

19:34:05 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone:

Sorry you lost power, Gabriela!

19:53:43 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone:

Resilience Goals and Policies Follow-Up sent ahead of meeting:  
<https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/178121>

19:53:54 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone:

This is what Sylvia just mentioned to those in person

19:54:10 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone:

Thank you

20:29:50 From Andrea Smith, CAG to Everyone:

Brilliant

20:30:54 From Justin Wood, CAG to Hosts and panelists:

I like it!

20:31:33 From Sylvia Ciborowski, Facilitator (she/her) to Everyone:

thanks all!

20:33:48 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone:

Justin Wood sent at 8:30: I like it!

20:42:22 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone:

Yes