



CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

[clark.wa.gov](http://clark.wa.gov)

1300 Franklin Street  
PO Box 5000  
Vancouver, WA 98666-5000  
564.397.2000

# Clark County Climate Change Planning

## Environmental Justice Coalition Meeting #6

July 1, 2024, 3:30-6:30pm PT

Public Service Center in Vancouver, WA and  
Zoom Webinar

*Meeting Summary*

FUNDED BY WASHINGTON'S

**CLIMATE**   
**COMMITMENT**  
**ACT** 

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

Environmental Justice Coalition members:

- Ana Bentancourt (Latino Leadership NW)
- Laura Ellsworth (Council for the Homeless)
- Gabriela Mendoza Ewing (Pasitos Gigantes)
- Yolanda Frazier (NAACP Vancouver)
- Josh Jones (Partners in Careers)
- Tavie Keo (iUrban Teen)
- Loveita Morrison (Odyssey World International Education Services)
- Rebecca O'Brien (Free Clinic of Southwest Washington)
- Minh Pham (Vietnamese Community of Clark County)
- Alana Tudela (Pacific Islander Health Board of Washington)
- Almendra Velazquez (Fourth Plain Forward)
- Angela Williams (Pacific Islander Community Association of Washington)
- Monica Zazueta (League of United Latin American Citizens #47013 - Vancouver Metro)

**Environmental Justice Coalition alternates:** Jude Wait (Farm and Food Justice Network)

**County staff:** Lauren Henricksen, Jenna Kay, Amy Koski

**Consultant team:** Ben Duncan, Nicole Metildi, Grant Simmons (Kearns & West); Claudia Denton, Tracy Lunsford (Parametrix)

Number of members of the public in attendance: 5

## Welcome

Clark County and Kearns & West staff welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, reviewed the agenda and outlined the purpose and desired outcomes of the meeting:

- Reflect on public engagement members have conducted to date.
- Introduce the Greenhouse Gas sub-element.

Additionally, Ben reviewed meeting logistics and greeted members of the public, noting that there would be a public comment opportunity at the end of the meeting. Jenna Kay, Clark County, noted that AI notetaking tools were being used in the meeting and asked members to not use those tools due to potential issues with their use and the Open Public Meetings Act. Ben then asked if members had corrections for Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC) Meeting Summary #5. There were no suggested corrections, and the summary was accepted as is.

## Project Updates

Jenna provided project updates. She noted that Phase 2 engagement questions are now available online in various formats through the EJC forms and template website. Members can reach out to Amy, Lauren or Jenna for help with customization of questions and response tracking options. Additionally, Jenna asked that feedback on the phase three engagement questions, especially on question one, be sent to the county by July 12, with the final questions in English expected around July 15 and translations by the week of July 22. New resources, including a climate project FAQ and a summary of climate projections for Clark County, are available online in

multiple languages. Jenna also noted that the Community Advisory Group recently agreed to move draft Resilience goals and policies forward for further analysis. These policies and goals will be reviewed in future EJC meetings with a focus on community engagement feedback and equity.

## EJC Announcements

EJC Members shared the following announcements:

- One member invited members to attend a July 20 event at Fourth Plain Forward Commons from 11:00 AM until 3:00 PM.
- Another member noted their organization is hosting a listening session for women to learn about their experiences in healthcare. They asked members to distribute a flyer for the event and asked them to share the event.
- One member noted that their organization participated in the recent Clark County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) scoping comment period.
- One member noted that there was a planned food distribution event in conjunction with Mercado Fresco at River City Church in Vancouver, WA on Saturday, July 6.
- One member noted that the theme of the 2024 Latino Leadership Northwest Latino Youth Leadership Conference is Environmental Justice. They also noted that the conference will be at WSU Vancouver on October 4 and that EJC members are welcome to attend.

## Reflection on Engagement

Ben then asked members to share reflections on their recent engagement work. Members shared the following reflections:

- Respondents have varying levels of understanding and historical context related to climate change, especially recent immigrants and refugee populations. Generally, younger respondents often need guidance to complete surveys.
- Members discussed different methods of getting respondents, such as one-on-one interviews, online surveys, and paper surveys. One member noted that active engagement, such as staff members going up to community members at events and initiating conversations, improves participation. Another member noted that engagement at events like Juneteenth have been effective, with staff adapting their approach to increase survey responses.
- Members noted that specific strategies should be tailored to different community needs. For instance, younger members tend to prefer electronic surveys whereas seniors sometimes struggle with surveys despite being translated.
- Multiple members noted that thorough steps should be taken to ensure that marginalized voices are heard and included in the decision-making process.

Jenna then went over the first draft report summarizing Phase 1 public engagement activities. She noted that the draft report only reflected EJC collected feedback and progress reports submitted to the county as of June 16. County staff are reviewing data EJC members are collecting and sharing with the county from their engagement activities (i.e. survey responses, notes from focus groups EJC member progress reports, and meeting notes from EJC meetings.) The county is then compiling all the feedback from Phase 1 engagement activities into the

report: there is a key takeaways section in the main report and all feedback is being compiled in the appendix of the report where specific details can be looked up. This report will not be finalized until Phase 1 engagement is completed by EJC members. Jenna asked members to look at the key takeaways and let the county know if something is missing based on what they are seeing and hearing through their engagement. There will be four reports by the end of the project, one for each of the four phases of engagement. These reports will help inform the EJC's review of draft Resilience and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) policies and goals. The feedback the EJC is collecting will also be a valuable tool to help answer questions about data in the Equity Lens.

The groups had the following questions and comments:

- Question: Does this report compile both CAG and EJC and public comments?
  - Answer: *It's all the feedback coming through public engagement that's not advisory group feedback. It includes the county survey, public feedback, and feedback received through the EJC's engagement.*
- Question: How are advisory group members supposed to comment?
  - Answer: *EJC members' primary charge is to design and implement community engagement activities to collect feedback from people in the community who are more vulnerable to climate impacts. That feedback then gets relayed back to the county in your work plan deliverables and progress reports and shared during EJC meetings. The EJC should elevate feedback they are hearing through their engagement during EJC meetings, in progress reports, and checking that the feedback they're collecting is reflected in the summary reports and draft policies.*
- Question: The CAG approves certain items. Will the EJC make decisions as a group?
  - Answer: *The primary task of the EJC is to conduct community engagement with community groups more vulnerable to climate impacts and help bring that feedback into the planning process. When we get to the point in the process where the EJC members are reviewing draft policies with the equity lens, that's a really key time to reflect on whether/how your community's feedback is reflected in the policies or not. Additionally, EJC recommendations on draft policies will be discussed by the group and your group's recommendations will be shared with county staff and the CAG before recommendations are finalized and shared with the Planning Commission and County Council.*
- One member shared an anonymous comment from a community member who said that Clark County is focused on growth and an economy based on extraction and consumption. The community member advocated for a shift towards sustainable well-being, emphasizing relationships, community, and mutual care over technological fixes.

Amy Koski, Clark County, noted that there were 28 EJC-led engagement events in May, 16 in June, and 22 planned in July, with more to come in the fall.

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

Tracy Lunsford, Parametrix, provided an introduction to the GHG Sub-Element. Claudia Denton, Parametrix, presented on what a GHG inventory is and shared GHG inventory results for unincorporated Clark County. Key points included the significance of carbon dioxide, methane, and 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:

- Question: These estimated figures of emissions are specific to Clark County, right?
  - Answer: Yes, for unincorporated Clark County.
- Question: Will these slides be available to use later?
  - Answer: Yes, we will post these on the County website likely tomorrow.
- Question: The figures in this presentation are based on unincorporated residents of Clark County, correct?
  - Answer: Yes, this data is based on unincorporated Clark County and does not include any of the cities in the county.
- Question: For these figures, how did you distinguish rural vs. urban?
  - Answer: Urban areas are those within the urban growth area but outside of a city. Rural areas are areas outside of urban growth areas.
- Question: Will there be an opportunity to compare scenarios, like imported food vs. local food economies (the latter of which have their own challenges)?
  - Answer: Local food is important, but no county should be expected to be totally self-sustaining. Particularly on the West Coast, we have better numbers than the rest of the country. We can provide a lot of the things needed in the community, but we won't be able to do everything. Also consider what we are growing, not necessarily where we are getting it from. Scenario analysis is not within our current scope. However, once we define the actions to study, we will assess their potential greenhouse gas emission reductions. This information may be included in our upcoming study. There are also a lot of existing studies regarding GHG impacts of food production that are available to the public.
- Question: For the trees, we see a huge increase in cutting which reduces our oxygen. How old or mature must a tree be to produce the same amount of oxygen as a mature tree that is cut down, and how long does it take for newly planted trees to reach that point?
  - Answer: Clark County produces 4 million tons of emissions each year. Clark County would need 10% of WA state covered fully in trees to offset its emissions. If the entirety of Washington state was covered in forest, which is not possible, Clark County alone would need 10% of that annual growth just to account for one year's worth of emissions.
- Question: This data is for 2022, but how does that compare to previous years and do you have estimates for future emissions projections?
  - Answer: We will eventually have emissions projections but that piece has not started yet. As part of the climate sub-element, this is the first GHG inventory that Clark County has done so we have no previous data to compare things to. As part of future comprehensive planning, Clark County will do a GHG inventory every five years.
- Multiple members noted that trees are beneficial for carbon sequestration and expressed concern about tree cutting.
- One member shared that a human-scale food system that can feed 10 billion people on 97% less land with higher quality food is technically possible but not thought of often due to misinformation about agriculture.

Tracy Lundsford, Parametrix, then went into part two of the presentation, Emissions Reduction Planning. Tracy noted that for the county, emissions reduction involves creating a greenhouse gas inventory, identifying high-impact actions, and setting reduction targets. The county plans on using proven strategies to develop the GHG sub-element goals and policies that have been tested in other communities and will look at resources like the Department of Commerce's menu of measures. The overall goal is for the county to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 consistent with the statewide goal to be net zero by 2050, integrating equity considerations throughout the process. Examples of strategies include promoting electric vehicles, energy efficiency, and alternative transportation methods.

The group had the following questions and comments:

- Question: Where do you see an overlap with improving access to affordable housing and greenhouse reduction?
  - Answer: *We have not yet explored affordable housing options in relation to greenhouse gas emissions in the county. However, one clear overlap is that affordable housing often includes apartments, which are generally more energy-efficient than single-family homes. This efficiency stems from shared walls, which help maintain temperatures. Increased density, such as through duplexes or quadplexes, can also reduce emissions from building energy, transportation, and land use. Although apartment living is a common example, home ownership within dense housing also offers substantial greenhouse gas benefits.*
- Question: Were construction materials/methods considered in these projections? Will houses be built in a greener manner moving forward?
  - Answer: *Yes, construction materials are a factor but density is the biggest factor in terms of emissions. Denser housing reduces the amount of goods you need to fill the house and the amount of materials needed to build the home. Whether the house is the same or not, more homes on a single acre will reduce emissions and also reduces a need for travel. Density has many GHG benefits.*
- Question: The current natural gas versus electrification debate seems pertinent to our climate planning. Specifically, could you clarify the assumptions in the modeling regarding future contributions of natural gas and associated infrastructure? Is this more about policy assumptions regarding the long-term use of natural gas?
  - Answer: *It's true that natural gas needs to be reduced to get to the net-zero emissions target. Washington's Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) says that Washington's electricity supply must be net-zero emissions by 2030 and 100% carbon-free by 2045, and it offers the most viable path for GHG reduction for building energy. However, transitioning to electrification requires careful consideration of legal and infrastructure readiness. This presents challenges, but electrification appears crucial for achieving net zero emissions in building energy by 2050.*
- One member noted environmental impacts of natural gas, including water contamination, toxic chemicals, and air pollution, disproportionately affect marginalized communities. They also stated that they support state and federal legislation for electrifying transportation and creating bicycle-friendly communities but are cautious about the environmental footprint of EV manufacturing, especially with lithium batteries.

Tracy noted the upcoming meeting schedule. She noted that this schedule included adjustments since the last one was shared, which had a previous end date of February 2025 for both

emissions reductions and resilience policies recommendations. The new anticipated end date for that work is March 2025. It was also noted that the EJC would not have a monthly meeting in September and that the final EJC meeting would be in February 2025.

## Public Comment

Ben opened the public comment period. There were no public comments.

Ben 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](mailto:comp.plan@clark.wa.gov).

## Next Steps

Ben and Clark County staff went over next steps for EJC members, which consisted of:

- **Complete by July 12:** Review and provide feedback on revised Phase 3 Engagement Questions.
- Review work plan tasks for the months of July and August and reach out to County with any questions. Phase 2 engagement questions are now available in Word, PDF, and SurveyMonkey formats on the [EJC forms and templates webpage](#). Contact Lauren/Amy/Jenna with any questions, requests for unique survey links, etc.
- Complete the [progress report form](#) for each individual task and include it with the [public engagement invoice](#). Please send progress reports and public engagement invoices to Jenna, Amy, and Lauren. Please also continue to send [invoices for meeting preparation and attendance](#) to Jenna, Amy, and Lauren.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, August 5, 3:30-6:30p.

## Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:30pm PT.

## Appendix A: Zoom Chat

Below is a verbatim transcript of the webinar Zoom chat.

Time	Sender	Message
15:46:08	From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West :	Message me here or email me at gsimmons@kearnswest.com for tech issues.
15:56:07	From Gabriela Ewing	Thank you Jenna
15:58:33	From Almendra Velazquez to Hosts and panelists :	I'll be there!
16:02:13	From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West :	Almendra Velazquez said "I'll be there!" at 3:58
16:02:40	From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West to Hosts and panelists :	Panelists: please send chat messages to "Everyone", not "Hosts and panelists."
16:03:49	From Almendra Velazquez :	❤️
16:10:38	From NAACP Vancouver :	Good afternoon everyone. NAACP Vancouver Washington President Yolanda Frazier
16:11:58	From Gabriela Ewing:	❤️
16:21:58	From Laura Ellsworth EJC (she/her) to Hosts and panelists :	BRB
16:24:03	From Laura Ellsworth EJC (she/her) to Hosts and panelists :	I'm back
16:27:03	From Almendra Velazquez :	Thank you for sharing Monica
17:11:58	From Jude - Farm & Food Justice Network to Hosts and panelists :	Food Forests as a + model :)
17:59:54	From Laura Ellsworth EJC (she/her) to Hosts and panelists :	This has been a great primer
18:08:21	From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West :	Jude - Farm & Food Network said 'Food Forests as a + model :)' at 5:11pm
18:08:51	From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West :	Laura Ellsworth said 'This has been a great primer' at 5:59pm
18:10:29	From Tavie Keo :	Thanks so much, everyone! ❤️