



CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

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Clark County Climate Change Planning

Community Advisory Group Meeting #8

September 25, 2024, 5:30-8:30pm PT

Public Service Center in Vancouver, WA and
Zoom Webinar

Meeting Summary



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.

Attendees

Community Advisory Group members: Sharon Ferguson, Ann Foster, Nelson Holmberg, Thilo Kluth, Noelle Lovern, Brent Marsden, Nick Massie, Gabriela Ewing, Sunrise O'Mahoney, Dave Rowe, Andrea Smith, Don Steinke, Terry Toland, and Justin Wood

County staff: Amy Koski, Harrison Husting, Jenna Kay, and Oliver Orjiako

Consultant team: Sylvia Ciborowski, Nicole Metildi, María Verano (Kearns & West); Tracy Lunsford, Joshua Proudfoot (Parametrix)

Number of members of the public in attendance: 5

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:

- Review and discuss the draft Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Reduction Policy List before it moves forward for the first level of analysis.
- Assign weights for the prioritization framework.

Sylvia reminded everyone of the Vision Statement for their work and emphasized that the process is collaborative and iterative. Sylvia asked members to focus on ideas and maintain constructive dialogue throughout the meeting.

Sylvia also reviewed meeting logistics, 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 CAG Meeting #7 summary. There were no suggested corrections and the summary was accepted.

Project Updates

Jenna Kay, Clark County, thanked Oliver Orjiako, the Community Planning Director, for attending the meeting and reintroduced Harrison Husting, a transportation planner for the county, as a team member.

Jenna then shared a reflection on the previous month's discussion on GHG reduction strategies, particularly in the building and energy sector. The staff acknowledged feedback received regarding the confusion surrounding the presentation and activity on GHG emissions during the last meeting. Jenna shared that the project team has shifted the approach for discussing GHG strategies, which is why we reset with brainstorming and gathering feedback via a survey to produce a draft GHG reduction policy list, which we will discuss today.

Jenna shared project updates, noting that CVTV is filming the meeting for a short piece about the climate project that will be airing in the coming months. Members were reminded that meeting

materials, including public comments, were included in the packet. Additionally, Jenna noted that there will be a community workshop on GHG reduction at Sarah J. Anderson Elementary School on October 19 and upcoming work sessions for the comprehensive plan with the Planning Commission and County Council held on October 3 and October 9, respectively.

Revisit Project Process

Jenna began by outlining the five phases of the climate project timeline and recapped earlier stages. Next, Jenna discussed the current focus of the project: refining the GHG reduction policy list and prioritization criteria. The goal for the October CAG meeting is to review the results of the first-level analysis and revisit the draft policy lists.

The group will take a break in November and December while the Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC) reviews the draft policies through an equity lens. County staff, partner agency staff, and the technical consulting team will also provide feedback and conduct further analysis, including identifying five-year GHG target options. When the CAG reconvenes in January, they will focus on finalizing their recommendations. After their March meeting, their formal service will conclude, and members may continue to advocate as members of the public.

The group had the following questions and comments:

- One member asked if the EJC would see the list after phase four.
 - *Answer: The EJC will see the outcomes in phase four, but their service will end at that point.*
- A member asked when the staff and consultants will be preparing the final list of policies.
 - *Answer: By March the CAG will have a list of policies, which will then be formatted and pasted into the new comprehensive plan climate chapter. The climate chapter will include background information, the CAG's proposed policy list, and county-wide policies that all of the city and county decision-makers will develop and need to agree on.*
- Will the planning commission be presented with the list in the summer? How long will they have to review the list?
 - *Answer: A work session with each the Planning Commission and County Council is planned for the summer, and a joint Planning Commission-County Council hearing is tentatively scheduled for October. The Planning Commission and County Council will both have a few months to review and dive deeper into the proposal before voting.*

Draft GHG Emissions Reduction Policy List

Sylvia explained that the purpose of the discussion today is not to narrow down the GHG reduction policy list, but to ensure that all CAG member ideas are included in the list before the consultant team conducts the first-level analysis.

Tracy Lunsford, Parametrix, provided an overview of the GHG emissions reduction planning process explaining that the current phase focuses on identifying actions and aligning them with emission sources. The next step will be to prioritize these actions, followed by an in-depth analysis and evaluation using the Environmental Justice Lens. Emissions reduction targets for each sector

will be developed to meet the target of net zero emissions by 2050. Afterward, the policies will be integrated into the county's Comprehensive Plan, and progress will be tracked periodically by updating the GHG inventory.

Tracy then reviewed the main contributors to emissions in unincorporated Clark County. The main sources include building energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry, land use, industrial processes and product use, and solid waste and wastewater.

Tracy provided an overview of the draft GHG Emissions Reduction goals and policies. She shared how CAG feedback was reviewed and then summarized into the goals and policies. Tracy outlined that there are five draft goals for each of the building energy and transportation sectors, the two largest emission sources in Clark County. Additionally, she mentioned that five goals have been established for agriculture, forestry, and land use. Her overview also covered four draft goals for other categories, including industrial processes, waste, wastewater, and consumption.

CAG members had the following comments and questions:

- Is there significant manufacturing activity in Clark County?
 - *Answer: The majority of the industry is within city limits, not in unincorporated Clark County.*
- Was the policy list created with input from other groups outside of the CAG?
 - *Answer: It was primarily created from CAG input but also with input from the EJC since July.*
- Where do the goals on this list come from?
 - *Answer: The comments received from the CAG were consolidated into the goals and policies.*

Tracy and Sylvia gave participants ten minutes to review the draft goal and policy list prior to the discussion.

Building Energy Goals and Policy Discussion

Sylvia led the group through a discussion of the Building Energy goals and policies.

CAG members had the following comments and questions:

- One participant questioned whether policies are effectively reducing emissions and suggested focusing on four key big picture steps for reducing emissions: avoid creating barriers to renewable energy, stop worsening the problem, maximize efficiency, and electrify everything possible. They also asked for clearer distinctions between building types, including policies focused on existing buildings and separate policies focused on new buildings, and distinct policies for residential and commercial buildings. They noted that new construction should be ready for a net-zero energy transition (Goal 5, Policy 2).
- Another CAG member asked about the promotion of the C-PACER program to property owners, noting its benefits for improving building efficiency by allowing liens to stay with the property rather than the individual. They also promoted supporting clean building performance standards (Goal 4, Policy 2).

- *Response: The project team noted that Goal 4, Policy 2 is inclusive of C-PACER and supporting the state's Clean Buildings Act.*
- Concerns were raised about the county's reliance on the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) hydroelectric power for energy, particularly in light of anticipated reductions in production due to reduced snowpack. Participants questioned how the county would meet energy goals under these conditions.
- One participant highlighted the increasing production of renewable energy, especially solar, and questioned how this might play into the county's strategy, while another pointed out that Clark County's lower sunlight compared to regions like Florida could be a limitation, while another highlighted the success Germany has had in solar energy production, and the similarity of Germany's solar resource to Clark County. Another participant noted potential for small nuclear reactors, but there are also a lot of concerns about considering nuclear as an option.
- The issue of land use for large-scale solar projects was also raised, with concerns about the availability of sufficient land.
- A participant asked for clarity about Goal 1, Policy 4, particularly around the use of renewable energy certificates (RECs). Another participant responded that RECs are tightly regulated and can be purchased to reduce emissions. One participant noted their preference for local monitoring being preferable to the use of RECs.
- Additionally, there was concern that Goal 3, Policy 1 about energy audits and energy performance standards might be viewed as a "taking," raising potential legal or regulatory issues.

Sylvia asked if the CAG felt that their ideas were reflected in the goals and policies related to building energy. CAG members indicated agreement in moving forward with the first level of analysis, with the understanding that the project team will look into potentially modifying Goal 1, Policy 4 and with further discussion on the pros and cons/adjustments to other policies at future CAG meetings.

Transportation Goals and Policy Discussion

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

CAG members had the following comments and questions:

- A participant pointed to the “passenger rail” language in Goal 9, Policy 2 and raised concerns about the focus on light rail in the Interstate Bridge Replacement Project, commenting that the project would increase car traffic into and out of Clark County, which contradicts the goal of reducing GHG emissions. They advocated for including regional rail on existing rail lines as a more effective solution.
 - *Response: The project team noted that passenger rail is meant to encompass "regional rail on existing lines," but wording can be adjusted.*

Sylvia asked if the CAG felt that their ideas were reflected in the goals and policies related to transportation. CAG members indicated agreement in moving forward with the first level of analysis with the understanding that the project team would look into adding the phrase “regional rail on existing lines” in Goal 9, Policy 2.

Agriculture, Forestry, and Land Use Goals and Policy Discussion

Sylvia led the group through a discussion of the Agriculture, Forestry, and Land Use goals and policies.

CAG members had the following comments and questions:

- One participant raised concerns about the difficulty of finding local Washington and Oregon produce in stores, suggesting that promoting local agriculture could reduce imported goods and support sustainability. Another participant supported including this concept under specific goals or policies related to food and agriculture.
 - *Response: Goal 13, Policies 3 and 4 are inclusive of this idea.*
- There was discussion about land subdivision laws and how they impact individuals' rights to sell their land.
- One participant mentioned state-owned forests and how the county could take over ownership of these forests to protect them and prevent clearcutting. They offered to share information on examples of this taking place in other counties in the state and recommended further investigation by the project team.
 - *Response: The project team will look into this.*
- Another participant asked about urban forestry and whether the wording of Goal 14 Policy 1 accurately reflects the county's current forestry work. The team discussed how urban forestry might be included in Goal 12, Policy 1, Goal 14, Policy 1, and Goal 15.
- Concerns were raised about the cutting of healthy trees, with some participants sharing experiences where trees were removed due to insurance concerns, despite being healthy.
- A suggestion was made to support natural fertilizers under existing policies related to agriculture and sustainability.
 - *Response: The project team will look into incorporating this into Goal 13, Policy 2.*
- One participant highlighted the challenges local farmers face in getting their products to market, despite multiple farmers' markets. They hoped that a Clark County agricultural commission would help bring these issues to policymakers' attention.
 - *Response: The project team will look into incorporating this into Goal 13, Policy 3 or 4.*
- A participant proposed including more about preserving the agricultural land that we have, and challenges with farming in the community being impacted by gentrification.
 - *Response: There are some existing agricultural policies in other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan about preserving land for agriculture, but county staff will look into options for either referencing these sections in the climate chapter to address this, or consider other ways to bring the desired emphasis into the climate chapter.*
- There was a discussion on agricultural exemptions, with participants debating whether regulations or incentives should be used to prevent land sales or promote farming practices, with a preference by some for incentives over strict regulations.

Sylvia asked if the CAG felt that their ideas were reflected in the goals and policies related to Agriculture, Forestry, and Land Use. CAG members indicated agreement in moving forward with the first level of analysis with the understanding that the project team will incorporate "natural fertilizer" in Goal 13, Policy 2, mention preservation of agricultural land in in Goal 13, and research state to county transfer of ownership of forests.

Industrial Process and Product Use (Refrigerants), Waste and Wastewater, and Consumption

Sylvia led the group through a discussion of the Industrial Process and Product Use, Waste and Wastewater, and Consumption goals and policies.

CAG members had the following comments and questions:

- One participant expressed a desire to see the phrase "use less" included in the policies, stating that recycling plastic is not as effective as commonly believed. They also noted that compostable utensils are often only compostable in industrial settings.
- Another comment was made about the need to educate the public about the inefficacy of recycling plastic and paper, with recycling being primarily useful for metals, and that glass recycling is hazardous.
 - *Response: That is included in Goal 16, Policy 2.*
- A participant suggested supporting the use of compostable packaging and single-use compostable items, asking the county to look into this further, as it is not explicitly covered in the current waste reduction policies.
 - *Response: Goal 17, Policy 1 can incorporate this concept into it.*

Sylvia asked if the CAG felt that their ideas were reflected in the goals and policies related to industrial process and product use. CAG members indicated agreement in moving forward with the first level of analysis, with the understanding that the project team will look into incorporating mention of compostable packaging and single-use compostable items into Goal 17, Policy 1 and will look into incorporating the idea of "using less" into a goal and/or policy in this section.

Weighting of the Prioritization Framework

Tracy began by reminding the group about the purpose and process of prioritization. She explained that the state guidance provided certain criteria for the team to use, and the prioritization criteria outlined in the framework are designed for additional analysis and align with both state and community priorities. These criteria will be applied to the resilience policies and the GHG emissions reduction policies that the group has agreed to move forward.

Tracy highlighted that the analysis will occur in two phases. The first phase will take a high-level approach, given the large number of policies to review. This phase will help identify top priority policies for deeper analysis in the second phase, based on the framework and weightings determined by the group.

Tracy introduced the group's next activity, which was weighing the prioritization criteria. Tracy clarified that weighting simply meant assigning a relative importance to each criterion, which will be used to calculate a final score for each policy. The more important a criterion, the more weight it will carry in the prioritization process. She then introduced the seven criteria: effectiveness, time frame, co-benefits, cost, unintended impacts, feasibility, and authority. Tracy emphasized that while equity is not listed as a separate criterion, it will be considered across all of the policies, ensuring that equity is integrated into all potential policies.

CAG members had the following comments and questions:

- Will the EJC look at equity in prioritizing policies, and who will decide which policies are more important through the EJ lens?
 - *Answer: The EJC will provide feedback using the equity lens, but the technical consultant team will handle the analysis of criteria.*
- Who determines the weighting percentage from an equity perspective?
 - *Answer: The group is encouraged to determine which criteria promote equity in Clark County and reflect that in their voting during the activity.*
- How do we weigh criteria with multiple components? Do we have the expertise to assess them?
 - *Answer: Criteria are weighed based on personal opinions and importance to CAG members.*
- How are certain criteria scored?
 - *Answer: The first level analysis component is scored to identify priority policies, and second level analysis component(s) will be analyzed for priority policies in more detail later.*
- What does “authority” mean in this context?
 - *Answer: Authority refers to how much control Clark County has over a policy. If the county has full control, the policy will score high in authority. If the county has limited control the score is lower.*
- One participant shared their concern about costs and funding, especially regarding future elections impacting policy and authority.
 - *Answer: While funding is important, the focus here is on setting policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Funding will be considered at the implementation stage.*
- Can a cost-benefit analysis be included in the process?
 - *Answer: The analysis will not include a full, formal cost-benefit study but will include a review of effectiveness and costs using available resources.*
- How do secondary indicators impact the “dot” voting exercise CAG members are about to do?
 - *Answer: Dots determine the relative importance of primary indicators. Once prioritized policies are selected, secondary indicators like cost of inaction will be evaluated.*

CAG members at the meeting then participated in weighting the prioritization criteria. For CAG members attending in person, they were given a sheet with each criteria listed on it and 10 sticky dots to allocate amongst the criteria. For CAG members attending online, they were given a link to a table with the criteria and asked to allocate 10 points amongst the criteria. Once CAG members finished with their individual weighting, they submitted their responses, and the project team tabulated the results and shared the outcome with the group. The results of the weighting exercise (rounded to the nearest whole number) were:

- Effectiveness = 26%,
- Cost = 21%
- Feasibility = 16%.
- Time Frame Benefits = 12%
- Authority = 11%

- Unintended Impacts = 9%
- Co-Benefits = 4%

Tracy shared that the weighting assigned to these criteria will be utilized for the first level of analysis moving forward, and participants can expect to see these priorities reflected in the scores presented at the next meeting.

Public Comment

Sylvia opened the public comment period.

Glen Young, County Council: “This is Glenn Young, councilor. And I wasn't going to say anything of a substance because I don't want to steer the conversation at all. But I just wanted to say I appreciate all of you being there at 8:13 at night, sacrificing time with your family and your personal life. I just wanted to thank you for it all. Have a good night, everyone.”

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.

Wrap-up and Next Steps

Jenna invited Oliver Orjiako, Community Planning Director, to share a few words. Oliver expressed his appreciation for the committee's work. He acknowledged the excellent efforts of both the group and the consultants, noting that the Association of Washington Counties invited his staff to present at an upcoming convention. Oliver thanked the committee for their commitment and voluntary service, stating that he would attend future meetings when his schedule allows

Jenna thanked Oliver and shared the upcoming project schedule, highlighting that the next meeting is set for October. Key topics at the next meeting will include further review and discussion of the draft GHG reduction list. Additionally, the results of the first analysis will be reviewed. Participants will also have a final opportunity to suggest additional policies to include in the resilience and GHG emissions lists.

CAG members had the following comments and questions:

- A participant inquired whether materials will be distributed before the meeting to provide initial input, as having them in advance is helpful for review.
 - *Answer: The team will continue providing materials ahead of time.*
- One participant expressed concerns about the net-zero goal set for 2050, stating that it lacks urgency since many may not be alive to see it. They emphasized the need for a more immediate target of 2030.
 - *Answer: This topic will be addressed later in the process.*

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

- Consultants incorporate CAG and EJC feedback into GHG policy list
- Consultants do first level analysis on Resilience and GHG Reduction policies.

She also shared information about the next meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, October 23, 5:30-8:30 pm.

Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm PT.

Appendix A: Zoom Chat

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

17:34:19 From Maria Verano, Kearns & West, she/her to Everyone:

For Zoom technical issues, email mverano@kearnswest.com

18:18:56 From Maria Verano, Kearns & West, she/her to Everyone:

The GHG reduction policies list can be found here:
<https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/183081>

18:45:57 From Andrea Smiley (Smith), CAG to Hosts and panelists:

Large scale solar and storage will take a lot of land that we already don't have because of the GMA

18:46:53 From Andrea Smiley (Smith), CAG to Everyone:

Large scale solar and storage will take a lot of land that we already don't have because of the GMA

19:00:50 From Sylvia Ciborowski to Everyone:

On break, meeting will resume at 7:10pm

19:29:55 From Andrea Smiley (Smith), CAG to Everyone:

We are cutting down trees in our HOA (about 70 trees) because our insurance told us there would be issues in the future and likely be higher premiums. Usually it's because the wrong tree is planted too close to a structure

19:30:57 From Andrea Smiley (Smith), CAG to Everyone:

Agree with Nick 100%

19:34:19 From Andrea Smiley (Smith), CAG to Everyone:



19:34:30 From Andrea Smiley (Smith), CAG to Everyone:



19:42:52 From Nelson Holmberg to Hosts and panelists:



19:43:12 From Andrea Smiley (Smith), CAG to Everyone:

I'm good

19:57:16 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone:

We are referring to the Prioritization criteria explanation charts sent in the meeting packets:

Resilience: <https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/182456>

Greenhouse gas reduction: <https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/182461>

19:57:58 From Maria Verano, Kearns & West, she/her to Hosts and panelists:

The online worksheet can be found here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gQgrh5u5HGNoaYBkZ1LpyvmSuS_r2-Cz?usp=sharing

20:03:23 From Andrea Smiley (Smith), CAG to Everyone:

Not if it allows to residential

20:03:32 From Andrea Smiley (Smith), CAG to Everyone:

Applies*

20:08:19 From Sylvia Ciborowski to Everyone:

Online folks - your total score should add up to 10

20:08:40 From Sylvia Ciborowski to Everyone:

So if you haven't used all of your "dots", please distribute 10 points/dots across the 7 criteria

20:09:12 From Andrea Smiley (Smith), CAG to Everyone:

Updated 👍

20:10:33 From Sylvia Ciborowski to Everyone:

Ann, Andrea and Nelson, it looks like we have your results. Thank you!

20:14:08 From Andrea Smiley (Smith), CAG to Everyone:

Thank you, Councilor Yung!

20:15:51 From Andrea Smiley (Smith), CAG to Everyone:

Clark County is leading the charge on climate change planning at the county level in a balanced manner ❤️ thank you to all involved

20:18:58 From Maria Verano, Kearns & West, she/her to Everyone:

CAG webpage: <https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/community-advisory-group>

Project webpage: clark.wa.gov/community-planning/climate-change-planning

Project contact: Jenna Kay, jenna.kay@clark.wa.gov