



Clark County Climate Change Planning

Environmental Justice Coalition Meeting #12

February 3, 2025, 3:30-6:00pm 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.

Attendees

Environmental Justice Coalition members:

- Alana Tudela (Pacific Islander Health Board of Washington)
- Ana Bentancourt (Latino Leadership NW)
- Gabriela Mendoza Ewing (Pasitos Gigantes)
- Minh Pham (Vietnamese Community of Clark County)
- Monica Zazueta (League of United Latin American Citizens # 47026 - Vancouver Metro)
- Rebecca O'Brien (Free Clinic of Southwest Washington)
- Tavie Keo (iUrban Teen)

Environmental Justice Coalition alternates: Abby Hollopeter (Odyssey World International Education Services), Alma Melchor Burgos (Latino Leadership NW), Erin Hamilton (iUrban Teen), Johanna Inoke (Pacific Islander Community Association of Washington), Jude Wait (Farm Food Justice Network), Lika Smith (Pacific Islander Health Board of Washington)

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

Consultant team: Ben Duncan, María Verano, Nicole Metildi (Kearns & West); Tracy Lunsford (Parametrix)

Number of members of the public in attendance: 1

Welcome (slides 1 – 10)

Clark County and Kearns & West staff welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, reviewed the agenda, outlined the purpose, and shared the desired outcomes of the meeting, which were to reflect on the work the Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC) has done over the past year and to close out the process.

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. Ben then asked if members had corrections to the EJC Meeting Summary #11. The meeting summary was approved with no comments.

Project Updates (slide 11)

Jenna Kay, Clark County, provided project updates, beginning with an overview of the meeting packet contents. She noted that the packet included comments submitted by EJC members and the public, along with a draft letter that will be discussed later in the meeting. Additionally, the packet contains an updated working draft of the policy list, reflecting feedback from the last EJC meeting and EJC member feedback provided following the Jan. EJC meeting, and an updated comment tracker documenting revisions based on member input. Jenna also highlighted the availability of the Phase One through Four community engagement reports, emphasizing the extensive work that went into their development.

She then addressed recent questions regarding federal decisions, clarifying that the county's climate project is mandated and funded by Washington State law and is not affected by recent federal executive orders.

Jenna provided updates on the broader 2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Review project, noting that the County Council would review an updated project timeline during a work session on February 5. She also mentioned that the Planning Commission would begin reviewing Comprehensive Plan policies, with their next meeting scheduled for February 6. She encouraged those interested to attend or access the meeting recordings online.

Process Closeout and Reflection (slides 12 – 21)

Project Closeout

Jenna provided updates on the Climate Element goals and policies, summarizing the feedback process and revisions made since the January EJC meeting. She noted that the team reviewed input from the last meeting and EJC input provided after the meeting and updated language for clarity, grammar, and inclusivity. Some suggestions were not incorporated due to jurisdictional limitations, scope constraints, or redundancy with existing policies. The revised list has been shared with the Community Advisory Group (CAG), which will continue reviewing policies at its upcoming meetings.

Members had the following comment:

- One member provided an overview of the CAG review process, explaining that members are assessing the 157 goals and policies through a ranking system. If a policy receives multiple requests for discussion, it will be revisited in upcoming CAG meetings in February and March. Otherwise, policies will be approved to move forward into the adoption process.

Jenna then transitioned the discussion to the EJC letter to the County Council and Planning Commission, recognizing Ana, Jude, and Monica for their contributions to drafting it. The letter highlights key findings, engagement efforts, and the impact of the EJC's work.

The Letter-Writing Committee had the following comments:

- A member explained the drafting process, noting that a Google document was used to collect input, and that Jenna and Amy provided summary statistics of the engagement EJC members conducted over the past year. They emphasized the importance of incorporating shared themes and inviting additional stories and quotes to strengthen the letter.
- Another member reinforced the goal of showcasing the collective effort of EJC members, highlighting the more than 75 engagement activities and nearly 2,000 participants. They encouraged members to take pride in their work and submit impactful quotes or stories for inclusion in the letter.

Ben invited members to share impactful stories or quotes that could be included in the letter. He emphasized the importance of highlighting personal experiences that illustrate the real-world implications of their work. **EJC members shared the following stories:**

- One member shared a story from an event at Fourth Plain Forward Commons, where children eagerly participated in an art activity. They expressed their desire for more community spaces, accessible information, and economic fairness. One child in particular engaged in a conversation about economics, reinforcing the idea that young people are observant and aware of the challenges their communities face. The EJC member reflected on the importance of policies that serve everyone equitably, as the next generation is watching and learning from current efforts.

- Another member shared an experience from the Environmental Justice radio show listening party, where discussions centered on the impacts of the Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub in Portland. Testimonies from community members, including those whose families had been displaced by the Vanport flood, underscored the ongoing consequences of environmental injustice, gentrification, and institutional harm. They found the discussion to be a powerful reminder of why their work is critical and how these decisions affect real people.

Ben acknowledged their stories and reiterated the importance of using these narratives to connect decision-makers with the realities faced by the community. He encouraged members to think about what they wanted to highlight for the County Council, recognizing that the letter serves as both a summary of their efforts and a call to action.

Members had the following questions and comments:

- One member suggested adding a question to the letter asking what recommendations from the EJC were omitted during the decision-making process.
 - *Response: The group discussed whether this should be included in the letter or addressed separately, given that the CAG has not yet finalized its recommendations. A suggestion was made to track changes through official records and that EJC member(s) could bring up this concern as a public comment at a later stage.*
- A member asked for clarification on how stories and examples would be selected for inclusion in the letter.
 - *Response: All engagement materials and reports are already part of the public record. The goal of the letter is to highlight a few compelling stories to ensure decision-makers understand the human impact behind the data. Members are encouraged to either submit key stories or reference past event notes for county staff to pull from.*
- Another member inquired whether the letter could reference which policies had been changed or removed.
 - *Response: While the letter should focus on amplifying community voices, tracking policy changes would be a separate effort. Staff will document version changes as the process continues, allowing for public scrutiny throughout the process.*

EJC members were also encouraged to review the list of members on page 2 of the draft letter to the Planning Commission and County Council and send any updates to Jenna.

Ben proposed a procedural approval of the letter, allowing members to add quotes or stories or EJC member list corrections after the meeting. EJC members agreed to approve the draft letter from the EJC to the Planning Commission and County Council with the understanding that staff will incorporate the discussed edits and additions after the meeting under the guidance of Ana, Monica, and Jude.

Ben closed the discussion by encouraging members to reflect on the significance of their work and how best to communicate that to the County Council. He emphasized that while the letter is a critical tool, continued public engagement will be essential in ensuring their recommendations are recognized.

Reflections and Lessons Learned

Jenna then opened the discussion to take a moment to reflect on the work accomplished over the past year. She walked through the project's timeline, highlighting key milestones, from the initial formation of work plans to the iterative engagement phases that shaped climate resilience and

greenhouse gas emissions reduction policies. She noted how the coalition navigated complex data, policy evaluations, and engagement rounds, ensuring that equity and environmental justice considerations were integrated throughout the policy framework. She also acknowledged the extensive contributions of the fifteen participating organizations, showcasing their outreach efforts through events, multilingual surveys, and creative engagement strategies.

Ben followed by expressing his appreciation for the group's dedication and the depth of their contributions. He reflected on the significance of their work, acknowledging the emotional investment and the sense of purpose that drove their engagement. He encouraged members to take a moment to share their personal reflections on what they were most proud of, what their experience in the coalition had meant to them, what they have learned as part of this process around ensuring their community is represented in these types of local government planning and policy processes, and what they would like the county to know in preparing for this type of work in the future.

- A member expressed gratitude and made comments on the project's importance for future generations. They felt seen by government staff and all other EJC members. Personally, they could not have imagined when they were younger participating in this type of work and they are proud of what they did and everything all EJC members, staff, and community members have done. It was a good experience for them.
- Another member appreciated the translation and organization support from staff, all EJC members' work, and community members who participated and provided feedback and used their voices, particularly from community members who often don't feel like they have a voice.
- A member noted they liked seeing the county's approach to engagement and the feedback to hear from other EJC members. They also learned more about environmental justice during the project and it has impacted the work of their organization.
- One member noted it was good to hear how other communities in the county face similar struggles as their own community. They appreciated the staff reminders throughout the project.
- One member noted it was the first time he had participated in a local government project that was this long, and it was the first time his community provided input directly into the process.
- A member appreciated that the group helped represent the voices of each of their communities and also the voices of community members without representation in the group.
- A member expressed gratitude to county staff for their efforts and acknowledged the challenges of working within a governmental structure. They highlighted the usefulness of assistance with invoices and billing, especially for nonprofits unfamiliar with fiscal processes. The member also appreciated the translation work county staff assisted with, noting that these efforts removed barriers for smaller organizations. Another member agreed with the previous comments on billing assistance. They shared that this was their first experience with policy work and found it eye-opening. The member hoped that similar community engagement efforts would continue in policymaking, rather than relying on impersonal methods like cold calling community members for awareness and engagement.
- One member thanked the team and emphasized that community-building must include the community. The member appreciated the inclusive engagement efforts and hoped county government would continue fostering positive interactions with communities.

- A member echoed the sentiment that community-building requires direct engagement. They encouraged the county to use gathered input to inform future policy decisions rather than repeatedly seeking feedback from the same groups. They mentioned that communities appreciate seeing their input applied to multiple initiatives.
- Another member described the experience of representing a marginalized community in the process. They highlighted the importance of outreach to communities that face language, financial, and legal barriers. Additionally, the member expressed deep emotion about the fear and challenges faced by their community, particularly in the current political climate and urged the county to continuously consider these communities in all planning and decision-making, even if they are not in the room.
- An additional member appreciated the opportunity for diverse, multicultural, and multi-sector collaboration. They stressed that the county should recognize this group as a resource for understanding community engagement and emphasized the need for repetition in government learning processes and encouraged continued support for these discussions.
- One member described the coalition as a think tank of diverse, multi-sector perspectives. They emphasized that the county should recognize the coalition as a valuable resource for understanding community engagement. They also expressed frustration that groups like the CAG ask about definitions of “marginalized” or “vulnerable” populations when those voices are clearly represented within the coalition itself.
- One member acknowledged initial uncertainty in engaging the Pacific Islander community but found that many were eager to participate despite personal struggles. They noted that community members valued being asked for their input, as it was the first time they had been engaged in this way, specifically regarding environmental and climate issues. The member expressed that they hoped to see continued community engagement efforts.
- A member shared that they learned a lot about their community through this process and noted differences in how various age groups engaged and emphasized the need for different approaches based on language and technology use. They suggested simplifying language in future engagement initiatives and having county staff attend community events to build relationships.
- Another member commented that it was impactful to learn more about their community, as these voices are often not included. They highlighted the success of bringing community organizations together and encouraged the county to continue leveraging existing community networks to enhance outreach.
- An additional member noted that providing translation services helped their community feel represented. They mentioned that certain languages, particularly Pacific Islander languages, are not easily translatable using common tools like Google Translate. The member suggested improving translation services in future engagements. The member also noted helping educate community members and organizations about county processes.
- A member stressed the importance of ensuring that the input gathered through this process informs future policy decisions. They cautioned against repeatedly asking the same communities for input without demonstrating how their feedback has been applied, as this can lead to disengagement over time.
- An additional member reflected on the broader impact of the coalition’s work, noting that many community members who were not officially recorded as survey respondents or event participants were still reached through outreach efforts. They emphasized that the true scope of engagement extended beyond formal metrics.

As the discussion transitioned to county reflections, Jenna, Amy, and Lauren shared their insights on what they had learned through the process. They acknowledged the innovative nature of this engagement model, the challenges of managing extensive feedback, and the importance of cross-departmental collaboration within the county. Jenna emphasized how this coalition demonstrated the need for long-term investment in environmental justice efforts, while Amy and Lauren reflected on the need to make engagement more sustainable and adaptable and commended the EJC organizations on their creative approaches to engaging their communities on a topic that was new to many of them.

Tracy then spoke to the importance of continuing this spirit of innovation as the Comprehensive Plan moves into implementation. She encouraged members to remain engaged and to approach future work with the same flexibility and willingness to adjust. She commended the coalition for their resilience, creativity, and commitment to ensuring that all communities had a voice in shaping the county's future.

Jenna closed the discussion by thanking participants for their thoughtful reflections. She emphasized that the insights shared would help shape future engagement strategies and underscored the importance of sustaining the momentum built through the coalition's work.

What's Next for the Climate Element (slides 23 – 25)

Jenna provided an overview of the next steps in the decision-making process, emphasizing that the EJC had completed its role by completing community engagement activities, applying an equity lens to draft policies, and providing feedback on draft policy recommendations. With their work concluded, responsibility now shifted to the CAG, which would finalize recommendations before passing them to staff. She explained that staff would incorporate these recommendations into the Climate Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, which would then be presented during the summer-fall months to the Planning Commission and County Council for review and approval.

While the EJC's work had concluded, Jenna encouraged members to stay engaged as private individuals. Without the constraints of public meeting laws, members are free to communicate and organize as they wish.

Looking ahead, Jenna outlined the timeline, noting that staff would finalize the Climate Chapter in the spring, followed by work sessions in the summer, and a public hearing in the fall. The hearing in the fall, covering the full Comprehensive Plan, will be the primary opportunity for members to provide testimony directly to the Planning Commission and County Council. She stressed that public input at this stage could influence final policy decisions. She then provided guidance on the public comment process, advising members on how to effectively present testimony. She encouraged them to be concise, clearly state their position, and avoid repetition.

Public Comment (slides 26 – 27)

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.

Wrap-up and Next Steps (slides 28 – 29)

Jenna thanked everyone for their time and contributions throughout the process, acknowledging the dedication and effort that went into shaping the recommendations. She reminded members that while their formal role had concluded, they were welcome to stay engaged as private individuals. Jenna encouraged those interested to sign up for project notifications to stay informed about upcoming hearings and opportunities for public comment.

Jenna then reviewed the next step, which was for members to submit all final invoices to Amy, Lauren, and Jenna by February 28. EJC members were encouraged to review the list of members on page 2 of the draft letter to the Planning Commission and County Council and send any updates to Jenna. They were also invited to contribute additional stories or quotes to further strengthen the letter.

Jenna and Ben thanked members once again for their work, emphasizing the impact of their contributions in shaping a more inclusive and equitable decision-making process.




Adjourn (slide 30)

The meeting adjourned at 5:56 pm PT.

Appendix A: Zoom Chat

Below is a verbatim transcript of the webinar Zoom chat.

- 15:27:15 From Tavie Keo, EJC, iUrban Teen (she/her) to Everyone:
Hello! I will be on until about 4:00 and Erin will be taking my place.
- 15:27:42 From Jenna Kay to Everyone:
Got it, thanks Tavie
- 15:30:58 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone:
Hello everyone
- 15:34:00 From Maria Verano, Kearns & West, she/her to Everyone:
For Zoom technical issues, email mverano@karnswest.com
- 15:35:22 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone:
I'm sorry my internet is having connectivity issues all day
- 15:38:21 From Maria Verano, Kearns & West, she/her to Everyone:
Email comments to comp.plan@clark.wa.gov or submit a comment online:
<https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/comp-plan-comments>
- 15:40:35 From Ana LLNW EJC to Hosts and panelists:
My co-worker Alma is on here already as an attendee. I'll be logging off at 3:55pm, thank you!
- 15:41:38 From Maria Verano, Kearns & West, she/her to Everyone:
EJC members - Before sending messages, please choose "Everyone" from the blue drop down.
- 15:43:07 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone:
Small typo on the slide - Please email Maria for Zoom technical issues, email mverano@karnswest.com (however you can also message me directly if you have tech issues)
- 15:54:30 From Ana LLNW EJC to Hosts and panelists:
I have to log off, but it has been a pleasure working with all of you! Thank you!
- 15:54:54 From Maria Verano, Kearns & West, she/her to Everyone:
The letter can be found at this link:
https://clark.wa.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/2025-02/draft-ejc-letter-to-council-2025-0203_0.pdf
- 16:01:15 From Tavie Keo, EJC, iUrban Teen (she/her) to Everyone:
I have to drop, but Erin will be taking my place here soon. Thank you so much for everything, it was lovely working with you all on this project!!! Thank you, Jude/Monica/Ana for the drafting the letter!! <3
- 16:12:15 From Lika Smith to Hosts and panelists:
A report back?
- 16:12:52 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone:
From Lika Smith: A report back?
- 16:15:35 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone:
I'm also member of the CAG
- 16:16:28 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone:
Sorry my connection is cutting a lot in between and it's hard for me to hear everything.
- 16:25:25 From Rebecca to Everyone:
Stepping away to collect my kiddos
- 16:31:39 From Rebecca to Everyone:

- I'm back
- 16:44:52 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone:
Thank you Ben
 - 17:05:38 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone:

 - 17:08:43 From Alana LG Tudela to Everyone:

 - 17:09:02 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone:
Big shout out to you all for all your help and support. Thank you Lauren for all your patience and all your help. 
 - 17:10:37 From Alana LG Tudela to Everyone:
Thank you all for your guidance and support throughout the process. Truly appreciate all you're doing for the coalition.
 - 17:30:29 From Erin Hamilton to Hosts and panelists:
How long will it take for the County / Gov't to put policies into the Counties mandates/laws so the Community members can see that EJC group work was a success?
 - 17:40:32 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone:
From Erin Hamilton at 05:30 PM
How long will it take for the County / Gov't to put policies into the Counties mandates/laws so the Community members can see that EJC group work was a success?
 - 17:40:38 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone:
Yummy!
 - 17:42:30 From Minh Pham(EJC,Vietnamese Comm) to Everyone:
I can see it.
 - 17:43:13 From Maria Verano, Kearns & West, she/her to Erin Hamilton(direct message):
Hi Erin, if you look at the top of your screen, in the middle left of it, there should be a tab that says Meeting Room's Screen. If you click on that, you may be able to see the PowerPoint.
 - 17:44:04 From Erin Hamilton to Hosts and panelists:
thanks Maria, that was it!!! :-)
 - 17:56:29 From Maria Verano, Kearns & West, she/her to Everyone:
Email comments to comp.plan@clark.wa.gov or submit a comment online:
<https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/comp-plan-comments>
 - 17:57:27 From Maria Verano, Kearns & West, she/her to Everyone:
EJC webpage: <https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/environmental-justice-coalition>
Project webpage: clark.wa.gov/community-planning/climate-change-planning
Project contact: Jenna Kay, jenna.kay@clark.wa.gov
 - 17:58:07 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone:
