



CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

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Clark County Climate Change Planning Equity-based Process and Engagement Plan

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Table of Contents

- Background and Purpose..... 3
- Role of Advisory Groups..... 4
- Meeting Principles and Suggested Guidelines 7
- Decision-Making Process 9
- Organizational Structure and Participation..... 11
- Meetings and Additional Community and Stakeholder Engagement..... 13
- Agendas and Notice 13
- Press and Other Public Forums 13
- Meeting Schedule and Workplan..... 14

Background and Purpose

With passage of ES2HB 1181 into law on May 3, 2023 (Chapter 228, 2023 Laws), Clark County is now required to add a Climate Change Element to its Comprehensive Plan by June 30, 2025. This work will need to integrate into the 2025 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan (Plan) periodic review, which is currently underway. ES2HB 1181 crosscuts multiple topics in the comprehensive plan, including: transportation, land use, parks, capital facilities and utilities, environmental, economic development, housing, rural and resource lands, and adds requirements related to health disparities and environmental justice.

The legislation mandates that a new Climate Element include a greenhouse gas reduction sub element and a resiliency sub element for the first time. This means greenhouse gas reduction and resiliency will need to be added into the county's comprehensive plan, including goals and policies for the county to implement during the 20-year planning period, 2025-2045.

The project area is unincorporated Clark County, including rural areas like Hockinson, Dollars Corner and Amboy, and urban areas outside of city limits, such as Hazel Dell, Salmon Creek, and Orchards.

This Equity-based Process and Engagement Plan describes the role and purpose of the three advisory groups involved in the Climate Element development process and how the groups will work with each other. It also lays out a decision-making process for how the Community Advisory Group will strive to reach consensus, incorporate feedback from the Environmental Justice Coalition and the public, and ultimately make policy and goal recommendations to the planning commission and Clark County Council.

This document builds on recommendations from the [Clark County Climate Stakeholder Assessment](#) completed in Fall 2023, as well as the on the council-approved [Public Participation Plan for the Climate Change & Resiliency Element](#) of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

Role of Advisory Groups

Community Advisory Group

Purpose

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) will form consensus-based recommendations on Climate Change and Resiliency Element goals and policies. Staff will forward the group's recommendations to the planning commission and ultimately the county council to consider and potentially to adopt. As such, this group should represent a wide range of interests within the community and from across the county amongst the group members.

Role

- Share a broad range of perspectives and experiences to ensure the Climate Element represents a wide range of community interests;
- Act as liaisons to specific constituencies or interest groups;
- Advise staff on priorities;
- Review and provide feedback on key deliverables;
- Develop goal and policy recommendations to meet the requirements of new state climate legislation for consideration by the planning commission and the county council using a consensus-based process;
- Promote public engagement activities;
- Consider public feedback at key decision points;
- Guide priorities and policy recommendations;
- Refer to the Equity Lens developed by the Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC) to develop policy recommendations.

Scope and Expectations

- County staff will write the Climate Element chapter for the comprehensive plan, incorporating 20-year county planning policies recommended by the CAG into the chapter.
- CAG is only focused on creating policy recommendations for unincorporated Clark County. Climate-related countywide planning policies are not within the scope of the CAG's responsibilities.

Desired Outcomes

- List of goals and policies to include in the Climate Element of the Comprehensive Plan that:
 - Meet the requirements of, and are consistent with, ES2HB 1181;
 - Equitably reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled;
 - Improve community resiliency to climate impacts; and,
 - Reflect the full range of interests represented on the CAG and through public engagement.

Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC)

Purpose

The county will contract with Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC) organizations to help the county engage with community groups who are most vulnerable to climate pollution and the impacts from

climate change such as extreme heat, flooding, and wildfire smoke, and to guide the Equity Lens used throughout this project. A few representatives of the EJC may also serve on the CAG and can help bridge connections between the two groups.

Role

- Represent interests of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities;
- Develop public engagement work plans for how they will engage their constituents regarding the Climate Element to meet legislative requirements, with the support of county staff;
- Conduct equity-centered community engagement activities as outlined in the workplans with the support of county staff. This will include gathering feedback from communities most vulnerable to climate impacts to inform the development of the Climate Element and ensure that their concerns and interests are incorporated into the Climate Element; and,
- Develop an Equity Lens to guide policy and goal recommendations, consistent with the equity goals in legislation and benefit those harmed by greenhouse gas pollution and communities most at risk of climate change impacts.

Scope and Expectations

- Public engagement activities should occur at or before key milestones so that public feedback effectively informs CAG recommendations and other key parts of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update process.
- The EJC is not charged with providing 20-year county planning policy recommendations to the planning commission and county council.
- The EJC may evaluate how well the proposed 20-year county planning policy recommendations from the CAG reflect feedback from vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. This feedback would be shared with the CAG.

Desired Outcomes

- Equity Lens to guide policy and goal recommendations for the Climate Element.
- The concerns, needs, and desires of community groups who are most vulnerable to climate pollution and the impacts from climate change are incorporated into the recommended policies and goals.
- Documentation of all public engagement work for the Climate Project in a summary report.

Partner Agency Team

Purpose

County staff will build a list of county, city, and partner agency staff who are technical experts in various areas related to the Climate Element. Members of this group will be expected to provide information and expertise, and help draft, review, and eventually implement Climate Element policies, as needed. Email communication will keep this group up to date on the project process. Individual and small group conversations will be scheduled as needed. Invitations to listen in or present at EJC or CAG meetings will be scheduled as needed.

Role

- Review periodic emails from the project team, where county staff provide project updates;
- Answer project team questions by email or video calls;

- Provide data/information as needed (i.e., to help the county complete a greenhouse gas inventory);
- Attend CAG and EJC meetings as needed to answer questions or present information; and
- Review and provide feedback on draft 20-year county planning policies and goals proposed by the CAG.

Scope and Expectations

- As needed, provide support to the county staff and consultant project team by providing data, answering questions, and/or attending EJC and CAG meetings to help present;
- Provide feedback on draft CAG 20-year county planning policy recommendations based on technical area of expertise;
- The PAT is not charged with providing 20-year county planning policy recommendations to the planning commission and county council; and
- After the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan periodic review project is complete, and a Climate Element has been adopted, many PAT members will be involved in implementing or supporting the implementation of 20-year county planning policies.

Desired Outcomes

- Information from professional technical experts is provided as background information for the project;
- Feedback from professional technical experts is considered and incorporated into CAG recommended 20-year county planning policies and goals;
- Multiple county departments and partner agencies help identify opportunities, barriers, and gaps in draft 20-year county planning policies and improve the feasibility of implementation of the final recommended policies and goals;
- Partner agencies are aware of proposed policies and will be better prepared for policy implementation once the adoption process is complete.

How Advisory Groups will interact and inform each other's work:

- EJC feedback on draft deliverables and project milestones will be shared with the CAG to inform policy development and decision making. Additionally, feedback gathered by EJC members from their constituents will be shared with the CAG.
- The CAG will share policy drafts and other draft deliverables with the EJC to ensure they were effectively analyzed using the Equity Lens. The CAG will incorporate feedback provided by the EJC to align final deliverables with equity criteria.
- PAT will attend CAG meetings and provide information as needed to inform policy development.
- PAT feedback on policy drafts will be shared with the CAG to inform policy development and decision making. It is expected that the PAT will provide feedback one time for each of the draft, sub-element policies; that is, once on the resiliency policies and once on the greenhouse gas reduction policies.

Meeting Principles and Suggested Guidelines

Good Faith

All members agree to act in good faith in all aspects of the EJC and CAG processes. As such, CAG and EJC members will consider the viewpoints of other participants and conduct themselves in a respectful manner that promotes collaboration.

Acting in good faith also requires:

- Specific proposals made in open and frank problem-solving conversation are not to be used against any other member in the future;
- Personal attacks and prejudiced statements are not acceptable;
- Individuals do not represent their personal or organization's views as views of the advisory group;
- Individuals express consistent views and opinions of the advisory group meetings in other forums, including contacts with the press; and,
- Individuals with process concerns will raise them in the advisory group.

CAG Member Agreements

CAG members agree to the following expectations for participation:

- Read materials in advance of meetings and come prepared for discussion;
- Make a good faith effort to attend all meetings. It is the responsibility of members to stay fully briefed on all CAG meeting discussions and deliberations;
- Work towards collaborative solutions using a consensus-based approach;
- Act in good faith in all aspects of the collaborative effort;
- Participate in a free, open, and mutually respectful exchange of ideas, views, and information;
- Articulate, to the best of their ability, the interests or values that underlie issues and concerns in an effort to resolve differences and find common ground among the members;
- Communicate concerns and suggestions at the earliest possible moment to avoid reopening topics later in the process
- Follow through on promises and commitments; and,
- Share all relevant information that will assist the group in achieving its goals.

During meetings, CAG members agree to the following discussion guidelines:

- Honor the agenda and strive to stay on topic;
- Keep discussions focused on development of a climate element;
- Speak one at a time;
- Allow for a balance of speaking time;
- Bring concerns and ideas up for discussion at the earliest point in the process;
- Address issues and questions, not people or organizations;
- Avoid reopening conversations that have already been had, unless the whole group agrees that it is worth revisiting;
- Listen with respect; and,
- Avoid side conversations;
- Share personal pronouns as part of name identifier in video calls as one is comfortable doing so.

CAG members understand that CAG meetings are open to the public. Members of the public will be provided an opportunity to make verbal public comment at CAG meetings and may also submit written comments on the work of the advisory group, which will then be distributed to all members in monthly meeting materials for their consideration.

EJC Member Agreements

EJC members agree to the following expectations for participation:

- Read materials in advance of meetings and come prepared for discussion;
- Make a good faith effort to attend all meetings. It is the responsibility of members to stay fully briefed on all EJC meeting discussions and deliberations;
- Act in good faith in all aspects of the collaborative effort;
- Participate in a free, open, and mutually respectful exchange of ideas, views, and information; and,
- Articulate, to the best of their ability, the interests or values that underlie issues and concerns in an effort to resolve differences and find common ground among the members.

During meetings, EJC members agree to the following discussion guidelines:

- Honor the agenda and strive to stay on topic;
- Keep discussions focused on development of a climate element;
- Speak one at a time;
- Allow for a balance of speaking time;
- Bring concerns and ideas up for discussion at the earliest point in the process;
- Address issues and questions, not people or organizations;
- Listen with respect;
- Avoid side conversations; and,
- Share personal pronouns as part of name identifier in video calls as one is comfortable doing so.

EJC members understand that EJC meetings are open to the public. Members of the public will be provided an opportunity to make verbal public comment at EJC meetings and may also submit written comments on the work of the advisory group, which will then be distributed to all members in monthly meeting materials for their consideration.

Decision-Making Process and CAG Involvement

Though the Community Advisory Group is not a voting body, the council's goal in convening this set of diverse and experienced stakeholders is to receive individual and group guidance on policies for the Climate Element. Final decision-making authority regarding policy recommendations for the Climate Element rests with the county council. The CAG is advisory to the planning commission and council and will work with Clark County staff to present a set of policy and goal recommendations for planning commission consideration and council adoption.

The CAG will make recommendations using a consensus-based process. Reaching consensus means:

- Getting as close to unanimous agreement as possible. Members can live with the outcome of the group's decision, and it is generally in alignment with their needs and interests.
- Meeting summaries will explain what was agreed to and any different perspectives that arose during the discussion. If consensus is not reached, the meeting summaries will outline where there is agreement, and where there are questions and/or different views.

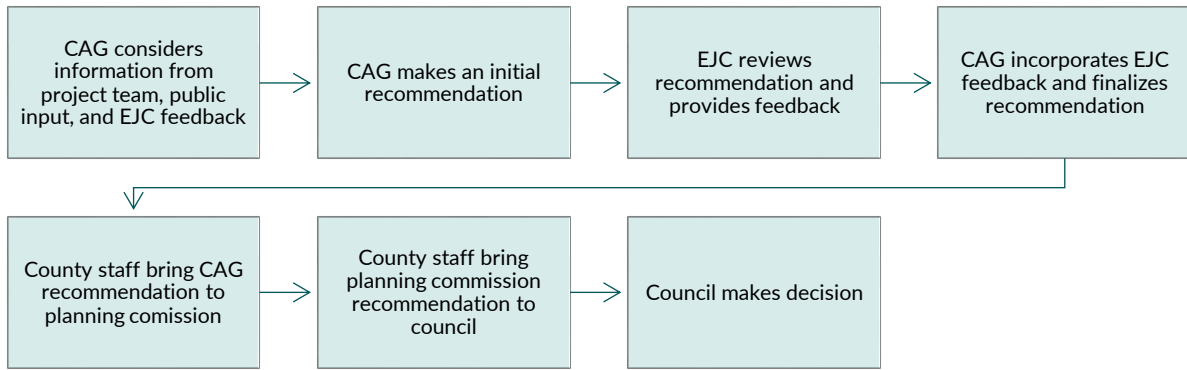
Process for coming to consensus:

- CAG members will likely be asked to signal their general alignment on pieces of the Climate Element policies and recommendations at key milestones of the process using informal temperature checks or straw polls. These will highlight where there are issues to discuss to help eventually lead to consensus.
- At early stages of the process, CAG members may be encouraged to make "tentative agreements" or "agreements in principle." The understanding is that these agreements may be reassessed later in the process after more information is known or the CAG is able to see a more full picture of the ultimate Climate Element goals and policies.
- At key points in the process, CAG members will be asked to indicate their formal level of support. If all members agree or are supportive, then consensus has been reached. If some members disagree, are unsupportive, or have substantial concerns, extensive effort will be made to discuss those concerns until agreement can be reached.

If CAG members reach consensus, their recommendations will be forwarded to the planning commission and county council for consideration. The inability to reach consensus on any one issue should not influence the effectiveness of the CAG's work on remaining issues and should not stop the process from moving forward. If the CAG cannot reach consensus on a recommendation, the outcome of the discussion will be documented, reflecting the diverse interests represented among members. County staff will carry forward the documented outcome to the planning commission and county council.

The high-level diagram on the next page depicts the decision-making process for adopting Climate Element policies.

Decision-making process for adopting Climate Element policies:



Ongoing public participation.
PAT to provide feedback as-needed.

Organizational Structure and Participation

Attendance and Alternates

Members are expected to make a good faith effort to attend all meetings until a final recommendation is made. Although the proposed schedule anticipates EJC and CAG meetings until December 2024, there may be a need for additional meetings that would extend to January or February 2025. It is important to have members attend every meeting so progress can be made. However, EJC members may name an alternate to attend in their place as needed. Time for one EJC member to attend each meeting may be invoiced to the county. Alternates are expected to meet the participation and engagement guidelines explained in this document. CAG members will not have alternates.

If CAG or EJC members miss a meeting, it is their responsibility to review the meeting recording and accompanying materials. Members are also responsible for bringing their comments by either providing their feedback in advance of the meeting, or no more than a week after the meeting, by email to Jenna Kay, at Jenna.Kay@clark.wa.gov.

Clark County Council

A designated County Councilor will participate in the CAG and serve as a liaison to Clark County Council. The council liaison will be a non-voting, ex-officio member. Their purpose will be to attend meetings, listen to discussions, raise any concerns the council may have about topics being discussed, and provide feedback regarding how the council may respond to recommendations from the CAG.

County staff will provide periodic updates to the council on the CAG's progress at regularly scheduled council meetings. The council liaison will be a resource for county staff, advising on when it is appropriate to share a project update with the full council.

Facilitator

The EJC and CAG meetings will be facilitated by third party objective facilitators. The facilitator will ensure all members' voices are heard and help the group have meaningful and productive conversations. The role of the facilitator is to:

- Support EJC and CAG members in providing their input and help ensure a balanced process;
- Ensure members adhere to the operating principles;
- Identify/communicate common themes, areas of disagreement, and decision points; and,
- Summarize and relay EJC and CAG member comments, questions, themes, and decision points to Clark County.

In-between regularly scheduled meetings, EJC and CAG members can engage with the group facilitator and/or county staff to ask questions and prepare for meetings.

Clark County staff

The EJC and CAG will have assistance from county staff who will attend all meetings. Select county staff, a council liaison, and select PAT members may sit at the table and advise as needed in meetings. Legal questions will be handled by county staff with the county's legal counsel.

At key milestones, county staff will share draft policies with the Community Planning Director and/or Prosecuting Attorney's Office for internal review.

Withdrawal

CAG members may withdraw from the CAG at any time. Communication about the reasons for withdrawing, if related to the process, would be appreciated. Good faith provisions apply to those who withdraw. CAG members should submit their resignation in writing to the County Manager, or to county staff to share with the County Manager.

EJC member withdrawal must be consistent with any agreements made per their contract with Clark County. Communication about the reasons for withdrawing, if related to the process, would be appreciated. Good faith provisions apply to those who withdraw.

Meetings and Additional Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The county expects a wide range of public and other stakeholder perspectives will be expressed through CAG and EJC members. County staff will seek additional public comment through community conversations, open houses, online surveys, and through the public hearing adoption process. Members of the public will also be able to submit written comments about the Climate Element via email or an online comment form on the Comprehensive Plan's webpage. Results of all these modes will be posted on the county's website and made available to CAG and EJC members for their consideration.

Public input will be shared with CAG members in their monthly meeting materials. County staff will present a summary of public input received at each meeting to help inform the CAG's work. Feedback from the EJC and input gathered by EJC members will also be shared at regular CAG meetings.

Meetings will be open to the public and follow Washington's Open Public Meetings Act.

Agendas and Notice

Proposed meeting agendas and materials will be shared with members at least one week in advance of meetings. Meeting agendas, materials, and information about how to observe the meetings will be posted to the relevant advisory group webpage in advance of meetings. Notice of meetings will be sent to an interested parties' email list, which members of the public can sign-up to receive on the advisory group webpages.

Press and Other Public Forums

CAG and EJC members agree to refrain from making negative comments about or characterizing the views of the other members in contacts with the press. They also agree not to knowingly mischaracterize the positions and views of any other party, nor their own, in public forums. If contacted by the media, please refer the media to Jenna Kay. Members shall make clear, when talking to the media, that the views they are expressing are their own, not those of the CAG or EJC.

Meeting Schedule and Workplan

Given the timeline for the county council to approve the updated Comprehensive Plan, the final input from the CAG should be reached by January 2025. Below is a high-level meeting schedule for both the CAG and EJC and may be subject to change.

	Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC)	Community Advisory Group (CAG)
Phase 1: Exploring Climate Impacts	Meeting #1 <i>Feb. 2024</i> Onboarding and Project Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce CAG and EJC members to one another. Review the project purpose and need, role of the advisory groups, and discuss the EJC public engagement workplans. 	
	Meeting #2 <i>Mar. 2024</i> Equity Lens + Resiliency Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss climate impacts and prep for initial public engagement. Begin developing an Equity Lens for the project. Check-in on public engagement work plans and confirm group agreements. 	Resiliency Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the Resiliency component of the Climate Element. Discuss climate impacts and confirm group agreements. Discuss the Vision Statement.
	Meeting #3 <i>Apr. 2024</i> Equity Lens + Resiliency Prioritization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize Equity Lens. Prep for public engagement about how climate change could impact Clark County and what community locations and resources should be prioritized. Check-in on public engagement conducted so far, what EJC members are hearing, and how to improve moving forward. 	Resiliency Prioritization + Equity Lens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss how climate change could impact Clark County and what community locations and resources should be prioritized. Discuss process for creating Resiliency goals and policies. Share Equity Lens developed by EJC. Review EJC and public input received to-date.
Phase 2: Develop Resiliency Policy List	Meeting #4 <i>May 2024</i> Resiliency Goals and Policies Part 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share consultant analysis of how climate change could impact Clark County. Prep for public engagement related to potential goals and policies for Resiliency component. Check-in on public engagement. 	Resiliency Goals and Policies Part 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share consultant analysis of how climate change could impact Clark County. Discuss potential goals and policies for Resiliency component. Review EJC and public input received to-date.
	Meeting #5 <i>Jun. 2024</i> Resiliency Goals and Policies Part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share vulnerability and risk assessment. Prep for public engagement to refine Resiliency goals and policies, as well as the criteria for prioritizing them. Review potential, additional benefits of the Resilience goals and policies (i.e., co-benefits). Check-in on public engagement. 	Resiliency Goals and Policies Part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share vulnerability and risk assessment. Discuss refined Resiliency goals and policies, as well as the criteria for prioritizing them. Review potential, additional benefits of the Resilience goals and policies (i.e., co-benefits). Review EJC and public input received to-date.

Environmental Justice Coalition

Community Advisory Group

Phase 2 Continued

<p>Meeting #6 Jul. 2024</p>	<p>Final Resiliency Goals and Policies + Intro GHG Component</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the final draft of Resiliency goals and policies and provide final input. Review the results of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory and prep for initial public engagement. Check-in on public engagement. 	<p>Finalize Resiliency Goals and Policies + Intro to GHG Component</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, and seek consensus on, the final Resiliency goals and policies. Review the results of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory. Review EJC and public input received to-date.
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<p>Meeting #7 Aug. 2024</p>	<p>Intro to GHG Reduction Measures and Prioritization Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share final Resiliency goals and policies recommended by CAG. Prep for public engagement on measures to reduce GHG emissions and criteria for prioritizing those measures. Check-in on public engagement. 	<p>Intro to GHG Reduction Measures and Prioritization Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share and discuss measures to reduce GHG emissions and criteria for prioritizing those measures. Review EJC and public input received to-date.
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Phase 3: Develop GHG Reduction Policy List

<p>Meeting #8 Sep. 2024</p>	<p>GHG Prioritization Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the draft list of criteria for prioritizing GHG emissions reduction measures and provide final input Discuss how reducing GHG emissions could provide additional benefits to community members (i.e., co-benefits). Check-in on public engagement. 	<p>GHG Prioritization Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, and seek consensus on, draft list of criteria for prioritizing GHG emissions reduction measures. Discuss how reducing GHG emissions could provide additional benefits to community members (i.e., co-benefits). Review EJC and public input received to-date.
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<p>Meeting #9 Oct. 2024</p>	<p>GHG Reduction Measures + Co-benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share final GHG Prioritization Criteria recommended by CAG. Review how each GHG reduction measure scored according to the final criteria. Review draft narrative about how reducing GHG emissions could provide additional benefits to the community. Check-in on public engagement. 	<p>GHG Reduction Measures + Co-benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review how each GHG reduction measure scored according to the final criteria and discuss which ones to move forward. Finalize draft narrative about how reducing GHG emissions could provide additional benefits to the community. Review EJC and public input received to-date.
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<p>Meeting #10 Nov. 2024</p>	<p>Final GHG Reduction Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share final narrative recommended by CAG about how reducing GHG emissions could benefit the community. Review and discuss draft list of GHG reduction measures. Check-in on public engagement. 	<p>Finalize GHG Reduction Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, and seek consensus on, the draft list of GHG reduction measures. Review EJC and public input received to-date.
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Phase 4: Finalize Policy Recommendations

Environmental Justice Coalition

Community Advisory Group

<p>Meeting #11 Dec. 2024</p>	<p>GHG Analysis + Resiliency Refresher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the full analysis of GHG reduction measures. • Review the CAG’s final list of goals and policies for the Climate Element, providing final feedback on areas potentially needing revision. • Discuss final documentation of public engagement work. 	<p>GHG Analysis + Resiliency Refresher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the full analysis of the GHG reduction measures. • Review and discuss the final list of goals and policies for the Climate Element. • Discuss next steps for sharing the goals and policies with the planning commission and council. • Review EJC and public input received to-date.
<p>Meeting #12 Jan. 2025</p>	<p>Final GHG and Resiliency Policies List</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share final list of Climate Element goals and policies recommended by CAG. • Reflect on the EJC’s engagement process and brainstorm areas for improvement. 	<p>Final GHG and Resiliency Policies List</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and seek consensus on the final list of policies for the Climate Element to be recommend for adoption by county council. • Review EJC and public input received to-date.