



CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

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Clark County Climate Change Planning

Environmental Justice Coalition Meeting #4

May 6, 2024, 3:30-6:30pm PT

Public Service Center in Vancouver, WA and
Zoom Webinar

Meeting Summary

FUNDED BY WASHINGTON'S

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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.

Attendees

Environmental Justice Coalition members:

- Ana Bentancourt (Latino Leadership NW)
- Laura Ellsworth (Council for the Homeless)
- Gabriela Mendoza Ewing (Pasitos Gigantes)
- Patricia Haggerty (Farm and Food Justice Network)
- Josh Jones (Partners in Careers)
- Tavie Keo (iUrban Teen)
- Loveita Morrison (Odyssey World International Education Services)
- Rebecca O'Brien (Free Clinic of Southwest Washington)
- Dania Otto (Sakura 39ers Youth Association)
- Minh Pham (Vietnamese Community of Clark County)
- Alana Tudela (Pacific Islander Health Board of Washington)
- Almendra Velazquez (Fourth Plain Forward)
- Monica Zazueta (League of United Latin American Citizens #47013 - Vancouver Metro)

Environmental Justice Coalition alternates: Abby Hollopeter (Odyssey World International Education Services), Paris Nelson (Fourth Plain Forward), Lika Smith (Pacific Islander Health Board of Washington), Jude Wait (Farm and Food Justice Network)

County staff: Lauren Henricksen, Harrison Hustung, Jenna Kay, Amy Koski

Consultant team: Ben Duncan, Nicole Metildi, Grant Simmons (Kearns & West); Tracy Lunsford (Parametrix); Dana Hellman (CAPA Strategies)

Number of members of the public in attendance: 6

Welcome and Updates

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:

- Begin developing a draft Equity Lens to guide policy development.
- Discuss and expand on initial brainstorm of Resilience sub-element goals.

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 went over protocol for approving meeting summaries. He then asked if there were suggested edits or questions for Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC) Meeting Summary #3. There were no suggested corrections, and the summary was approved.

Jenna Kay, Clark County, reminded members to complete the open government training if they haven't already done so. She also noted that advisory group comments received in between meetings would be included in meeting packets for this meeting and for future meetings. Additionally, Jenna informed members that the County's Comprehensive Plan that this project is a part of, will be having an open house on May 28, 29, and 30. Jenna also informed members that political initiatives or issues cannot be discussed in this forum.

One member asked how to bill for hours EJC members spend reading materials for this group and making suggestions. Jenna responded by saying that billing could be in the same category as other meeting prep hours.

EJC Announcements

Ben asked the group if any of them had announcements of interest to committee members. EJC members shared the following announcements and updates:

- One member noted that their organization plans to apply for the Commerce Washington Public Participation Grants and would be open to partnering with other organizations from this group.
- One member announced Fourth Plain Community Commons events hosted by LULAC occurring on May 25, July 20, and September 7 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM.
- One member noted that they shared the Phase 1 survey questions at a recent event and received 21 completed surveys from the attendees. They also mentioned a Juneteenth Freedom Celebration they are organizing with the City of Vancouver, which will be held on June 15 in Downtown Vancouver.
- One member noted that the Hispanic Disability Support of Southwest Washington is hosting a Mother's Day event, where they plan to pass out surveys.

Equity Lens

Ben went over the development of equity lenses, including the GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Equity) Racial Equity Toolkit.

Ben acknowledged the evolution of equity lenses piloted and utilized in local initiatives, to widespread utilization as a tool for advancing racial equity within governmental jurisdictions. Ben discussed core principles of equity lenses, such as embodying equity work, analyzing benefit and burden, and mitigating harm. Additionally, he noted that this approach focuses on impact, community situational analysis, and data analysis to inform decision-making processes to align with community priorities.

Ben proposed three fundamental questions informed by the GARE Toolkit, as a starting point for discussion of the Equity Lens for this project. The questions were as follows:

1. Who is most impacted by this issue or decision? (positively or negatively)
2. What does the data tell us? (consider qualitative and quantitative data)
3. What are the ways in which a policy recommendation could be modified to enhance positive impacts or reduce negative impacts?

He then asked the group if these questions would help account for impacts to vulnerable populations, avoid creating or worsening localized impacts to overburdened communities, and ensure that we have utilized community input and relevant data sources.

Below is a summary of the group's discussion. See [Appendix A: Zoom Chat](#) for comments submitted through the chat.

- Question: These questions are a lot to process. Can thoughts be sent via email?
 - Answer: Yes, emails are welcome, and people can respond how they see fit.

- One member noted that removing hierarchy is a key part of environmental justice work and was glad to see that reflected in this presentation.
- Another member noted that there is benefit to valuing professions in this discussion that historically have not always been valued, noting farmworkers as an example.
- One member noted that to value contributions from a diversity of people and origins, clear pathways have to be in place for them to engage. Additionally, there need to be opportunities in the future for more inclusion.
- One member suggested putting greater emphasis on the historical context surrounding the issue of climate change, which is especially relevant for topics like housing zoning. They emphasized transparently sourcing data and involving communities of color in data collection.
- Multiple members noted that for their communities, climate change is an emotional and sensitive issue. It will be important to consider how to avoid and mitigate further harm to communities throughout this process.
- Multiple members highlighted the themes of community healing and the need to address current and past harm.
- One member noted that for the Pacific Islander community, many members are becoming climate refugees or will be soon.
- One member noted that certain areas in Clark County face restrictions on installing window AC units. With climate change expected to increase the amount of hot days in Clark County, this will further impact people who rent.
- One member highlighted challenges faced by undocumented communities, including exclusion from public processes and fear of repercussions if they do voice their concerns.
- One member noted that this topic presents a complex challenge for the Hispanic community. The member mentioned cultural barriers or a reluctance to seek assistance when it is needed, reflecting a pervasive tendency towards self-reliance which makes these topics difficult to approach.
- Mental health will be adversely affected by climate impacts, and there will be financial repercussions due to the increased energy usage required to cope with climate impacts (such as more hot days).

Ben acknowledged the emotional weight of the discussion and expressed gratitude for members' input. He noted that financial impacts and the potential for re-traumatization can be included in a revised version of the Equity Lens.

Ben and Jenna thanked everybody for their contributions and openness and went over next steps for the Equity Lens and how it will be used. The Kearns & West team will revise the proposed fundamental questions based on this discussion and share a revised Equity Lens at the next meeting. Later in this process, proposed Resilience sub-element policies will be run through the final Equity Lens questions and considerations.

Resilience Goals

Dana Hellman, CAPA Strategies, presented on the current draft Resilience Goals. She recapped previous discussions and emphasized that the focus of these goals is to make Clark County communities more prepared and resilient to climate impacts.

Dana noted that seven climate hazards have been identified and that Resilience goals will be developed across 11 sectors. These goals will inform the Resilience sub-element policies, which

aim to build community resilience and minimize negative impacts. Dana also went over the iterative process of goal development, noting a continuous need for input from the advisory groups and ongoing community engagement.

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) began brainstorming initial Resilience goals at their last meeting. They considered key impacts to each of the 11 sectors listed in the [Impacts and Resilience Goals Table](#) to inform their brainstorm. Dana asked the group to spend five minutes reviewing the Impacts and Resilience Goals Table and the [CAG's initial brainstormed goals](#), after which the group discussed and expanded on the initial goals.

Below is a summary of the group's discussion. See [Appendix A: Zoom Chat](#) for comments submitted through the chat.

- Members discussed open spaces, agriculture, and land use.
 - One member noted the interplay between health and well-being and preserving open spaces. They emphasized the importance of restoring, maintaining, and conserving wetlands, wildlife refuges, and forested areas in the county, particularly in rapidly growing areas like North Clark County.
 - Restore native ecosystem characteristics in open space and Natural resource lands), including ecosystem connectivity.
 - Members noted the significance of providing access to nature in suburban areas for both mental and physical health benefits, highlighting the importance of ensuring equitable access to safe outdoor spaces for all populations. This is specifically important for children. Community agriculture and food forests in urban areas were also suggested.
 - Another member noted California's model of partnering with Tribes to manage lands using Indigenous practices, which could be viewed as a model for this process.
 - Another member stated they'd like to see more comprehensive data on open spaces to determine how much more space the county may need.
 - One member mentioned a need to increase water for agriculture and help farmers harvest rainwater. Sustainable use of water should be encouraged and incentivized.
 - Support for BIPOC farmers should be mentioned in the goals.
 - One member shared that Japanese communities use a natural swamp system to clean sewage, which could be implemented in Clark County.
 - One member also mentioned the potential of bamboo farms to sequester carbon and create materials like toilet paper and clothing.
 - Goals are needed around mitigating risks to forest (and range) and improving their resilience to climate change.
- Members discussed native plants and gardens.
 - One member noted that promoting native plants requires education and that materials detailing which plants are native to the area, and which are not, could be beneficial for the community.
 - One member noted that tree cover and canopy have been used in other areas as a heat reduction tool and that evidence states that this is the most effective way to mitigate heat impacts in urban areas.

- Members discussed emergency management. Specifically, emergency responders should be culturally competent and that emergency plans be hyperlocal and, when they are carried out, the language used should be accessible. There was a suggestion to create a hyper local neighborhood emergency hub to assist in the event of emergencies.
- Under transportation, there was a suggestion to add language so that the goals are inclusive of people who are not able to walk or drive. A member also suggested adding language or a goal for making transit easy and reliable and that gets people where they need to go.
- There was a desire to make the goals more specific (specifically in reference to the CAG's initial brainstormed goals).
- Goals should include language addressing energy justice and energy poverty.
- Another member stated they would like to see language explicitly referring to people experiencing homelessness.
- These goals should be changed to say, "support future local systems."
- Prioritizing accessibility in these goals is imperative to reaching equity goals.
- Members discussed pollution. One member noted that air quality is not explicitly addressed in these goals and should be. They also noted that there is concern in the community about the water treatment processes and its effect on air quality. Therefore, a goal to modernize water treatment processes and mitigate air pollution affecting communities of color should be explicitly included.
- Biochar was mentioned as a sustainable energy solution.
- Goats were mentioned as a possible fire prevention solution and as a means to reduce invasive plants.
- A member expressed the need for creating affordable housing, reducing rent, and/or creating community-owned units. Another mentioned that there should be restrictions on what housing is deemed "affordable."
- One member noted support of circular economy approaches, including recycling systems and upcycling.
- One member mentioned the importance of education, specifically the need to educate communities about climate change without overburdening them.
- There was a suggestion to create earth ship homes.

Public Comment

Ben opened the public comment period.

- Violet Kashewa: I approve of the diverse representation of this group, especially the presence of women in leadership roles. I want to note that offices such as the Washington Department of Commerce can offer valuable guidance for the initiatives being discussed in this forum. There are many state agencies in Washington that are willing to help, eliminating the need for excessive effort as subject matter expertise and departmental support are readily available.

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.

Next Steps

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

- Complete by Wednesday, May 22: [Open Government Training](#)
- Complete by Monday, May 20: Please send any additional ideas for the Equity Lens and Resilience goals to Jenna (jenna.kay@clark.wa.gov).

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

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:20pm PT.

Appendix A: Zoom Chat

Below is a verbatim transcript of the webinar Zoom chat.

15:32:19 From Almendra Velazquez to Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech)(direct message):

Today I only need to join as an Attendee. Thank you!!

15:33:06 From Tavie Keo, EJC (she/her) to Everyone:

FYI - My Zoom tends to freeze occasionally so I will be in and out of the meeting

15:35:15 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone:

Thanks for letting us know, Tavie!

15:45:02 From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech) to Everyone:

Get in touch with me here via DM or by emailing gsimmons@kearnswest.com if you have any tech issues.

15:49:42 From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech) to Everyone:

Email comments to comp.plan@clark.wa.gov or submit a comment online:
<https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/comp-plan-comments>

16:05:14 From Paris Nelson (she/her), Fourth Plain Forward- EJC to Hosts and panelists:

Pleasure to partner with OWIES <3

16:22:26 From Lika Smith, PIHBWA to Hosts and panelists:

Could thoughts be sent via email as it's so much to process?

16:33:50 From Lika Smith, PIHBWA to Hosts and panelists:

We're also trying to encourage community to grow food in the yards or planters, how does our inevitable smoky summers affect the food you grow.

16:39:54 From Ana, She/Her/Ella LLNW EJC to Hosts and panelists:

Monica, please read In Lak Ech!

16:41:49 From Paris Nelson (she/her), Fourth Plain Forward- EJC to Everyone:

Here are my thoughts in list form

16:43:14 From Lika Smith, PIHBWA to Hosts and panelists:

Amen sister

16:49:26 From Paris Nelson (she/her), Fourth Plain Forward- EJC to Everyone:

Shoutout Dania, Monica, Lika & Ana for what you've shared here today. <3

16:51:30 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Madeleine WolfeAnd all panelists:

Hi Madeline - we have noted your hand and will ask if you want to give a comment during the public comment period at 6:10p

16:51:50 From Laura Ellsworth (she/her) EJC to Hosts and panelists:



16:56:15 From Monica Zazueta, LULAC Vancouver Metro, she/her - EJC to Hosts and panelists:

I want our communities not to feel like they are a burden by asking for help. That we create a community that wants to help low income, all races all genders because what we do we do for the good of all.

17:02:23 From EJC Farm-Food Justice @ Jude Wellsave to Hosts and panelists:

Equity Lens input/reflection: 1- Valuing contributions from a diversity of people, origins, pathways to be here. Valuing "professions" not always valued (farmworkers as essential; growing food). Historic / origin ways of life to learn from. 2- Pathways out of vulnerability; 3- Are doors open for the future for more diversity, equity, inclusion? Elevating grassroots leadership. So the governing entities are more diverse.

17:03:24 From Ben Duncan, Kearns & West (he/him) to Everyone:

thank you Jude for these.

17:16:40 From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech) to Everyone:

I'm going to reshare some comments folks made earlier so that everyone in the audience can see.

17:17:16 From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech) to Everyone:

Monica said: I want our communities not to feel like they are a burden by asking for help. That we create a community that wants to help low income, all races all genders because what we do we do for the good of all.

17:18:16 From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech) to Everyone:

Jude with Farm-Food Justice said:

Equity Lens input/reflection: 1- Valuing contributions from a diversity of people, origins, pathways to be here. Valuing "professions" not always valued (farmworkers as essential; growing food). Historic / origin ways of life to learn from. 2- Pathways out of vulnerability; 3- Are doors open for the future for more diversity, equity, inclusion? Elevating grassroots leadership. So the governing entities are more diverse.

17:28:22 From EJC Farm-Food Justice @ Jude Wellsave to Hosts and panelists:

spreadsheet link?

17:28:31 From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech) to Everyone:

PDF of goals: <https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/172546>

17:34:34 From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech) to Everyone:

Sectors/impacts table: <https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/171676>

17:36:05 From Lika Smith, PIHBWA to Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech)(direct message):

Resilience goals?

17:36:43 From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech) to Lika Smith, PIHBWA(direct message):

PDF of goals: <https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/172546>

17:52:21 From Trish (Farm Food Justice Network) to Hosts and panelists:

this is why I have a hard time sharing.

17:52:55 From Trish (Farm Food Justice Network) to Hosts and panelists:

I'm sure I could just email my thoughts

17:54:18 From Lika Smith, PIHBWA to Hosts and panelists:

What is a circular economy

17:54:26 From Tavie Keo, EJC, iUrban Teen (she/her) to Everyone:

Education: What resources do we have to educate the communities that we serve about climate change if they do not know about it and/or understand it? If they don't realize they're being affected by climate change, how can we inform them and educate them without overburdening them?

17:55:42 From Lika Smith, PIHBWA to Hosts and panelists:

Hyper local neighborhood emergency hub would be great

17:58:45 From Lika Smith, PIHBWA to Hosts and panelists:

Yes thank you!

18:03:59 From Trish (Farm Food Justice Network) to Hosts and panelists:

how to use data to implement restrictions on how to term affordable houses is used IE affordable houses must be at this cost value to be called or marketed as affordable.

18:05:34 From Lika Smith, PIHBWA to Hosts and panelists:

Japanese communities use a natural swamp system to clean sewage

18:07:55 From Monica Zazueta, LULAC Vancouver Metro, she/her - EJC to Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech)(direct message):

We need more open unstructured spaces for kiddos to play. Climb trees, play without a man made play structure. Spaces for kiddos to learn.

18:08:00 From Monica Zazueta, LULAC Vancouver Metro, she/her - EJC to Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech)(direct message):

Bamboo farms

18:08:32 From Monica Zazueta, LULAC Vancouver Metro, she/her - EJC to Everyone:

We need more open unstructured spaces for kiddos to play. Climb trees, play without a man made play structure. Spaces for kiddos to learn.

18:08:36 From EJC Farm-Food Justice @ Jude Wellsave to Hosts and panelists:

Where are the forest (and range) risk and resilience goals? Ecosystems (connectivity etc) and/or Ag (animals). -->Restore Native ecosystem characteristics (in open space and Natural resource lands) practices that were resilient. ---> establish Food Forests in Urban areas! see Atlanta example.

18:09:42 From Monica Zazueta, LULAC Vancouver Metro, she/her - EJC to Everyone:

Bamboo farms. They sequester carbon and they provide a new way to make materials we need like toilet paper and clothing.

18:11:58 From Monica Zazueta, LULAC Vancouver Metro, she/her - EJC to Everyone:

Create Earth Ship homes

18:19:16 From Grant Simmons, Kearns & West (Tech) to Everyone:

As a reminder, anyone can always email comments to comp.plan@clark.wa.gov or submit a comment online: <https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/comp-plan-comments>

18:19:42 From Madeleine Wolfe to Hosts and panelists:

My handrails was inadvertent, and I apologize but I am impressed by this meeting and thank you all and request we look at food networks and how local farmer can service all communities represented.