



CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

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Clark County Climate Change Planning

Environmental Justice Coalition Meeting #9

November 4, 2024, 3:30-6:30pm PT

Public Service Center in Vancouver, WA, and
Zoom Webinar

Meeting Summary

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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)
- Almendra Velazquez-Perez (Fourth Plain Forward)
- Ana Bentancourt (Latino Leadership NW)
- Gabriela Mendoza Ewing (Pasitos Gigantes)
- Monica Zazueta (League of United Latin American Citizens # 47026 - Vancouver Metro)
- Minh Pham (Vietnamese Community of Clark County)
- Rebecca O'Brien (Free Clinic of Southwest Washington)
- Yolanda Frazier (NAACP Vancouver)

Environmental Justice Coalition alternates: Abby Hollopeter (Odyssey World International Education Services), Johanna Inoke (Pacific Islander Community Association of WA), Jude Wait (Farm Food Justice Network), Sunny Wonder (Council for the Homeless)

County staff: Jenna Kay, Amy Koski, Lauren Henricksen

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

Number of members of the public in attendance: 4

Welcome

Clark County and Kearns & West staff welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, reviewed the agenda, and outlined the purpose and desired outcome of the meeting to apply the Equity and Environmental Justice (EJ) Lens to draft Resilience policies.

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 for Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC) Meeting Summary #8. There were no suggested corrections, and the summary was accepted as is.

Project Updates

Jenna Kay, Clark County, provided several updates and discussed the meeting packet for the EJC meeting. The EJC #9 meeting packet included additional background materials such as the interactive Climate Hazards and Environmental Health Disparities dashboard and a draft summary of Phase 2 engagement findings. Jenna also outlined plans to summarize Phase 3 and 4 engagement work before the December meeting and reminded members to submit the community engagement feedback they have received by mid-November.

Looking ahead, Jenna announced that a greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction workshop was scheduled for November 16 at Sarah J Anderson Elementary School, with registration open until November 10. The Planning Commission and County Council will hold hearings on comprehensive plan land use alternatives, with the Planning Commission hearing scheduled for November 7.

Jenna also reviewed the project timeline, emphasizing that today's meeting marks the start of reviewing draft policies using the Equity and EJ Lens, with input from EJC members to be incorporated by the consultant team into the policies, which will ultimately be shared with the

Planning Commission and County Council. The goal is for the Community Advisory Group (CAG) to finalize policy recommendations in early 2025.

Resilience Policies Refresher

Dana Hellman, CAPA Strategies, provided a recap and update on the resilience goal and policy development process. The combined efforts of the EJC and CAG led to an initial draft of resilience goals and policies, with a “comment tracker” created to document detailed feedback. After further review, the CAG reached consensus on a revised draft list. The current version, which includes 25 goals and 34 policies, has undergone an initial feasibility analysis. The team is preparing to conduct an equity analysis of the policies, with EJC’s help, to ensure the language policy meets environmental justice standards as required by House Bill 1181.

Jenna provided further context by outlining key climate vulnerabilities and resilience measures. She referenced the climate change legislation, which underscores the importance of avoiding harm to vulnerable populations. Jenna then presented an overview of four resilience datasets that inform the policies: climate hazard projection maps, impacts from climate hazards, populations vulnerable to climate change impacts, and EJC and county community engagement feedback. Jenna then reviewed the community feedback from phase 1 and 2 engagement, organized by resilience policy themes to facilitate the discussion.

One member asked if extreme cold was included in extreme precipitation.

Response: Even though extreme cold has been highlighted as a concern by several community members, the climate hazard projections for Clark County that are based on best available science show that the county is expected to experience fewer days with ice, cold, and frost in the coming decades. Per WA Department of Commerce guidance, the county is not supposed to prioritize addressing climate hazards that are not projected to get worse. [Post-meeting note: project staff have discussed this topic with Department of Commerce staff, since there is some newer research that indicates there may be an increase in some types of cold weather events. Department of Commerce recommended using more broadly accepted overall trend data instead of emerging research. Policies that are helpful in many types of severe weather, that could have a co-benefit of helping community members when it is really cold outside, is one way to address a broader range of severe weather, including extreme cold, even if it isn't explicitly being prioritized in this project.]

Apply the Equity and EJ Lens to the Resilience Policies

Ben introduced the next topic, applying the Equity and EJ Lens to the resilience policies. The discussion aimed to identify whether the draft policy language provides adequate direction for implementation, while ensuring that the policies benefit vulnerable populations. Jenna clarified that once adopted into the comprehensive plan, these high-level policies will serve as long-term guides for implementation. The steps for implementing policies would be determined later by relevant county departments.

Jenna explained that today’s feedback would be integrated into the proposed resilience policies. She outlined the steps for this approach: gather EJC input today, apply the input to the policies next, then return to the EJC in 2025 with revised policies for EJC further review. A broader equity policy for the climate chapter will also be introduced for group discussion in 2025.

Ben shared two core equity-focused questions to guide the group’s discussion:

1. What are the ways in which these policies could be modified to enhance positive impacts or reduce negative impacts?
2. How can we strengthen or adapt these policies so that they give enough direction, at a high-level, to guide implementation to benefit vulnerable populations and overburdened communities?

Dana shared how the project team grouped the policies by six themes: public health and well-being, education and skill building, housing and energy, food and agriculture, prepared and livable communities, and natural areas and ecosystem services. Jenna shared community feedback for each policy grouping, highlighting common themes in the feedback like the need for mental health support, safe spaces during extreme weather, and resources for coping with environmental stressors. The group was encouraged to suggest modifications to enhance policies' effectiveness for vulnerable populations while maintaining high-level language appropriate for comprehensive planning.

Jenna outlined the next steps for reviewing the draft policies. She emphasized the importance of considering how these policies could be modified to enhance positive impacts and reduce negative impacts, particularly for vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. Jenna encouraged members to consider multiple ways concepts like mental health might intersect with other areas, and to provide feedback on whether the policies could be improved.

Ben opened the discussion to review the policy groupings, instructing members to review the policies and share any feedback they have, using the questions as guidance. Ben explained that members would have the opportunity to comment on all of the policies in the six themes, starting with Public Health & Wellbeing.

Public Health & Wellbeing Draft Policies

Jenna summarized feedback gathered by EJC members relevant to the first policy grouping: people face challenges staying safe and comfortable during extreme weather, especially those with existing health issues, housing insecurity, and financial struggles. Specific needs identified included prioritizing support for vulnerable community members, enhancing resource access, integrating climate adaptation with social equity and public health strategies, increasing mental health support, and providing safe spaces during extreme weather events.

Members shared the following feedback and asked clarifying questions about the policies:

Goal 15, Policy 2: Factor climate impacts into the planning of operations and coordination of preparedness, response, and recovery activities among first responders and partners, including public health, law enforcement, fire, school, and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel.

- A member suggested that this policy should include climate impacts like cold weather, including extreme cold, ice, and snow. They proposed adding language about requiring "street preparedness" for weather-related events, not only on main roads but also on feeder roads leading to main streets. Additionally, this member requested that "transportation" be added to the policy language.
 - *Response: Utilities and county Public Works transportation staff would be partners for operations and coordination of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.*
- Another member added that high rainfall, combined with fallen leaves, often clogs street gutters, resulting in flooding on roads and vehicle breakdowns. They suggested clarifying who holds responsibility for addressing these issues, such as the county transportation staff or other relevant agencies.

- One member shared a personal experience of receiving shelter and food at a church, underscoring the value of including faith-based institutions, food banks, and community organizations as part of the response plan in this policy.
 - *Response: We would like to avoid listing every partner but will leverage community assets as part of the recovery and response. We can ensure that there is language added about community assets.*

Goal 15, Policy 4: Assess and improve the adaptive capacity of people who are most vulnerable to climate change-exacerbated hazards (e.g., people who are homeless, elderly, socially isolated, or live in high-risk areas).

- A member expressed a desire for the policy to explicitly mention “undocumented individuals.” They noted that undocumented individuals often face barriers to accessing resources due to misinformation and exclusion, and explicit inclusion would help assure community members of available resources.
- Several additional members supported explicitly naming undocumented individuals and refugees
- A member asked whether information related to this policy would be available in languages other than English to ensure accessibility for non-English speakers. A member made a suggestion for emergency preparedness “backpacks” with the basics that cost money that people don’t have.

Goal 17, Policy 2: Promote compliance with existing Washington State (Labor & Industries) legislation to protect the health and wellbeing of outdoor workers exposed to extreme heat and other climate-exacerbated hazards.

- A member recommended that the policy consider adding the language “existing and improved” so that the policy would read: “promote compliance with existing and improved Washington State legislation” They pointed out recent efforts to protect farm workers and expressed concern about whether existing regulations were adequate.
 - *Response: CAG members advocated to reference the existing law, but the county will note this feedback. The county must comply with state law as an employer in the state, but all other employers in the state also need to comply with state law. The county will consider if the language could be reframed to focus more on proactive health and well-being protection for outdoor workers.*

Education & Skill Building Draft Policies

Jenna provided an overview of feedback gathered by EJC members relating to education and skill-building needs. There was strong support for improved access to information and education, especially for vulnerable populations. Suggestions included more environmental justice education in schools, targeted outreach through community-based organizations, and clear communication about emergency services in multiple languages.

Members shared the following feedback and asked clarifying questions about the policies:

Goal 8, Policy 1: Develop education programs targeting all communities and age groups, from youth to the elderly, that build resilience by increasing understanding of environmental processes, challenges, and stewardship strategies. Use multiple methods to share information, such as social media and billboards.

- A member shared that they supported the suggestion of having a BIPOC panel to provide feedback on county decisions but that panelists should be paid for their participation to ensure fair compensation. They also suggested the idea of citizens' assemblies, where randomly selected community members gather to learn about relevant topics and provide feedback, which would encourage diverse perspectives and engagement.
- A member highlighted the need that programs are linguistically and culturally appropriate and accessible and recommended including in specific policies, especially where education or materials are discussed, such as goal 8, policy 1.

Goal 9, Policy 1: Collaborate with tribal partners and culturally-specific groups to identify important sites and resources, and to develop culturally appropriate climate adaptation, community education, and emergency response strategies.

- One member emphasized the importance of acknowledging Tribal sovereignty when partnering with Tribal communities, rather than just collaborating with "Tribal partners." They noted that it is vital to consult as government-to-government with the Tribes.
- Another member provided an example from WSU Vancouver: "Residing in the homelands of Chinookan and Taidnapam peoples and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe"
- *Response: The project team can consider modifying the language to include terms like "consult" instead of "collaborate" when engaging with sovereign Tribal nations, distinguishing between recognized Tribes and other cultural groups. [Post-meeting note from project team: county staff plan to share draft policies with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, which they may choose to review and provide feedback on. County staff will also review the broader Comprehensive Plan regarding the suggested land acknowledgement example. There is another section of the Comprehensive Plan that speaks about the land and people with homelands here.]*

Goal 16, Policy 1: Establish a hazard mitigation communication program (i.e., retrofit information, fire-wise strategies, etc.) to support public outreach and education as well as other action items. Develop and implement notification alerts within the community to reduce the risk exposure to wildfire smoke and particulate matter.

- A member suggested that the notifications mentioned in this policy be expanded to include multiple platforms, as some community members may lack access to phones or technology.

Goal 18, Policy 1: Develop resilience hubs — community-serving facilities that are designed to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce carbon pollution while enhancing quality of life.

- A member asked for clarification on resilience hubs, especially regarding the aspect of reducing carbon pollution.
 - *Response: The resilience hubs are community centers designated as safe spaces for accessing resources during emergencies and can serve other needs year-round. These hubs often incorporate renewable energy systems to remain operational during power outages, which contributes to their carbon reduction role.*
- One member proposed that resilience hubs should include resources for community members to learn how to engage with organizations, potentially becoming a space where community groups could leave information and interact with the public. They also suggested that these hubs include facilities/programs that attract youth.
- Another member recommended highlighting the need for the facilities to support both elders and youth.

- Another member added that they would like to see the word “reciprocity” included in this policy as well as the phrase “community coming together”
- A member highlighted that word choice and translation of community event information should be considered when it comes to the information shared at the resiliency hubs. They emphasized the need for more of a commitment to sharing translated information in multiple languages (ex: information will be provided in X number of languages), since translated materials are often provided as an afterthought, if at all.
- One member noted the opportunity for local organizations helping provide translation services, since there have been issues with accurate translation provided by the county and other organizations.
- One member noted that mutual aid networks can be facilitated by resilience hubs.
- One member noted how helpful the community has been to her to help her stay housed when she was coping with a personal event, and she wishes for a paradigm shift where more community members help each other and there is more community caring.

Goal 10, Policy 1: Facilitate opportunities for "green jobs" -- including installing and maintaining green infrastructure or renewable/clean energy infrastructure, responding to severe weather events, providing ecosystem restoration and stewardship, providing outdoor education, and working in agriculture -- with a focus on job-creation within communities most impacted by climate hazards.

- A member questioned whether any policies would support ongoing local community organization initiatives aimed at building skills and job readiness among the youth.
 - *Response: Goal 10, Policy 1 mentions “green jobs” and job creation within climate-impacted communities. This could apply to this scenario. They noted that focusing on youth-specific skill-building could be included explicitly.*

Housing & Energy Draft Policies

Jenna provided a summary of feedback gathered by EJC members on housing and energy. The feedback received discussed the challenges communities face to stay safe during extreme weather, with concerns around rising energy bills, lack of access to affordable heating and cooling, and housing insecurity. Feedback also underscored the need for specific actions to address energy costs and improve housing maintenance. There was a strong interest in policies that would increase resilience by ensuring all households have access to reliable heating, cooling, and shelter options.

Members shared the following feedback and asked clarifying questions about the policies:

Goal 6, Policy 1: Support energy choice, including all available renewable energy technologies and innovations, such as utility-scale, community-scale and/or household scale wind and solar power, methane biodigesters, renewable natural gas, geothermal, and nuclear in the form of small modular reactors. Promote self-reliance and community capacity to respond to emergencies, such as with distributed energy resources and energy management systems, microgrids, and virtual power plants.

- A member emphasized the importance of keeping energy costs low, especially for vulnerable communities. They pointed out that it is essential not only to support energy choice but to maintain low costs for these communities, including all forms of power, such as natural gas and geothermal.

- Ben summarized themes from previous discussions with the group included considerations based on geography, financial impacts, and specific population needs. A member supported this summary, noting that considering these factors could help create a more comprehensive understanding of the housing energy landscape.
- One member shared a concern regarding the term “renewable natural gas,” noting that natural gas is often associated with fracking, which is harmful to the environment. They questioned the use of this term in the document, asking for clarity on what “renewable natural gas” means.
 - *Response: Renewable natural gas is natural gas from non-fracking sources and can be sourced from sustainable practices like composting or waste treatment. They suggested that the term be better defined to avoid misconceptions and make it clear that the gas in question is not linked to fracking.*

Goal 26, Policy 1: Ensure that policies, codes, and regulations protect access to safe, affordable housing, especially in overburdened communities. Access to safe, stable housing provides protection during extreme weather events, while affordable housing leaves residents more resources to spend on resilience-building essentials such as air conditioning, air purification, food, and health care.

- A member recommended adding “practices” is added to the first sentence and is a gap (ex: Ensure that policies, codes, regulations, and practices....”
- A member commented on the idea of bridging finance for shelter and affordable housing, pointing out that accessing subsidies for housing can be as difficult as applying for food stamps. They proposed finding easier pathways to housing support, especially for people facing challenges in accessing traditional forms of assistance.
- A member acknowledged the need for better clarity in how to navigate the complex process of obtaining affordable housing and agreed that more explicit language could help guide individuals through the system.
- A member brought up a suggestion regarding collaborative housing developments, mentioning community-driven models like Habitat for Humanity and community land trusts as potential examples. They encouraged others to think about how these models could fit into the policies, regulations, and codes, potentially becoming part of the policy.
- A member noted a family-sized “tiny home” is not limited to 400 square feet and that there are opportunities for the county to partner with local housing initiatives.
- One member raised a concern about the term “affordable housing,” stating that it means different things to different people, and there is currently a lack of affordable housing. They shared their perspective that when humans take from Mother Earth to build homes, they should also give back and ensure that laborers are fairly compensated.
- A member emphasized the importance of rethinking the current housing system, proposing a focus on creating “forever homes” that do not burden people with rent payments. They argued that a new system should be created where people can live without the constant worry of paying rent, which exhausts people and detracts from their ability to engage in community efforts or environmental work.
- Another member agreed that housing should be a source of stability rather than stress. They suggested that policies should not only address the need for affordable housing but also consider long-term sustainability and ways to make housing more accessible without creating financial strain.

Food & Agriculture Draft Policies

Jenna summarized feedback gathered by EJC members about food and agriculture, which included challenges in the food system, including impacts on food production, access, and security. Ideas for resilience included enhancing food security, improving food distribution, and providing refuge for livestock. Recommendations focused on addressing permit costs, supporting agricultural land access, and creating preservation programs. There was strong support for an equity-driven approach, including expanding local food security programs and ensuring access for frontline farmers. The feedback also emphasized workforce development, water storage, support for small farms, and reducing pesticide use.

Members shared the following feedback and asked clarifying questions about the policies:

Goal 3, Policy 1: Expand local food security and the food-related economy to address climate impacts and increase access to healthy, affordable foods that can be sustainably produced under projected future climate conditions and with limited use of pesticides.

- A member asked if the language should address the specifics of pesticide use more directly.
- A member shared that the term "limited use" versus "elimination" of pesticides was something that needed more clarity. They discussed the balance between sustainable food production under climate change and the environmental and health impacts of pesticides. They added that the policy should specifically state that people should avoid using harmful products due to their negative health impacts on both farmers and workers.
- One member shared an anecdote about a farmer explaining why they had not gone fully organic, mentioning the high costs and reliance on FDA-approved pesticides. They expressed concern about the downstream effects of pesticides and their contribution to climate change. They suggested using natural pesticides derived from nature and emphasized the importance of getting away from conventional pesticides altogether.
- A member reflected on possible wording/concepts such as: transition to organic certification approved substances; they noted toxic chemicals impact food, water, and pollinators; "bee friendly" approaches would eliminate toxic chemicals; organic pesticides are relatively okay; integrated pest management is an okay idea; they agreed a glossary would be needed whichever wording is selected.
- *Response: A previous draft of this policy included the term "integrated pest management," but such terminology was not a familiar term for some CAG members who preferred easier to understand word choice. One of the arguments to leave in the use of pesticides is that new pests are expected with climate change and there may be situations where it is difficult to address the pests without pesticides as an option. The project team can consider this suggestion to balance practical needs with environmental health concerns.*

Goal 3, Policy 2: Take steps to preserve existing agriculture and resource lands by prioritizing the infrastructure that keeps the existing agriculture economy viable, including education, research, and technology.

- A member noted that the language about preserving agriculture infrastructure felt like it was implicitly addressing urban sprawl, but it did not explicitly state that. They proposed making the language more direct by explicitly mentioning the need to protect farmland from urban development and sprawl.

- Another member suggested that the language in this policy was focused on broader aspects like water access and soil quality, and they questioned whether urban sprawl was the intended focus of this language.
 - *Response: This policy was a difficult point of consensus during the CAG discussions, and the current language resulted from a compromise between members who disagreed. The compromise focused on agricultural infrastructure rather than directly addressing urban sprawl.*
- The member clarified that while the current language of the policy seemed to be addressing agricultural infrastructure, they felt that explicitly naming urban sprawl would help protect farmland better, especially in areas where developers are increasingly encroaching on farmland.
- One member shared that current county agriculture policies are inadequate. There are some policies, but no centralized location for them, such as in an agriculture element in the comprehensive plan. Consolidating policies is important, but we need a better solution. Prioritizing soft skills and technology is essential, but without farmers and farmland, there will be no local food.
- One member noted the equity lens highlights the need to have access to places to grow food and participate in growing food.
- One member suggested that emphasizing the importance of urban farming and the role of gardens in urban areas, like those proposed in Goal 2, Policy 1, could complement Goal 3, Policy 2 by balancing the protection of agricultural land with the promotion of urban food production initiatives.
 - *Response: We have discussed terms like "integrated pest management," but such terminology was too technical for most people. They agreed that the language around pesticides and agriculture needed careful consideration to balance practical needs with environmental health concerns.*

Goal 2, Policy 1: Where appropriate, support relocation of food distribution nodes located in hazard-prone areas to protect from future damage, repetitive and severe repetitive loss. Support food-producing gardens at homes and apartments.

- A member proposed the idea of creating designated food-producing spaces in homes and neighborhoods where people could grow different types of food and trade or share them.
- There was a suggestion to incorporate trees into farms to support water management and improve farm productivity, as trees could help with water retention on farms.
- One member saw two issues within this policy: supporting food-producing gardens and food distribution nodes. They recommended splitting out the two ideas into separate policies. They're both good ideas, but it is confusing to combine them in the same policy. They also suggested terms should be clarified.
 - *Response: A "food distribution node" refers to major locations like warehouses where food is stored. This is based on a policy that addresses the broader food distribution system, but it could also include food pantries or stores. This can be revisited and clarified if needed.*

Prepared & Livable Communities Draft Policies

Jenna shared a summary of the feedback received by EJC members about prepared and livable communities, which included comments about severe weather impacts like property damage and transportation disruptions, and a need for better access to transportation, especially for

vulnerable groups. The feedback emphasized improving resilience through infrastructure, environmental protection, and enhanced safety measures. There was strong support for more green spaces, indoor recreation options, and better coordination between agencies for emergency planning. Concerns about gentrification and sprawl, along with the need to protect natural areas, were also highlighted.

Members shared the following feedback and asked clarifying questions about the policies:

Goal 27, Policy 1: Plan for 30-minute communities; plan for amenity-rich communities and dense, mixed-use urban development; and link housing strategies with the locations of work sites and jobs.

- One member expressed that the 30-minute timeframe in planning for 30-minute communities felt too long, suggesting a preference for a target of 20 or 25 minutes.
 - *Response:* The 30-minute concept in urban planning typically means having amenities within a 30-minute walk, bicycle ride, or public transit trip, rather than driving.
- A member noted that a nearby city initiative is working on a 15-minute walkable community plan, aimed at providing essential services within a 15-minute walk. Some other members liked this idea.
- The group reflected on a need for an approach that could work in as diverse an area as the county that includes both urban and rural areas.

Goal 28, Policy 1: Integrate natural hazard mitigation planning into land-use planning processes by identifying and mapping hazards, assessing vulnerability, and implementing measures to reduce risk, such as avoiding development in floodplains, wildfire-prone areas, and landslide zones, incentivizing climate-smart building practices, and supporting fire-wise practices.

- One member raised a question about including collaboration with neighboring areas, such as Portland, especially for issues like earthquake preparedness and critical infrastructure that could impact Clark County in an emergency. They highlighted the importance of considering regional risk management and cross-jurisdictional impacts on overburdened communities.
 - *Response:* Staff had been thinking about the current language focused on the county but will review the language further to clarify that the policy includes both county-level action and regional collaboration. This could involve coordination with nearby areas, like Portland, for risk reduction efforts that require cooperation across jurisdictions.

Goal 21, Policy 1: Improve street connectivity and walkability, including sidewalks and street crossings, to serve as potential evacuation routes and to create pathways so that active commuters do not need to cross traffic. The county supports the development of its bicycle and pedestrian network identified in the 2010 Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

- One member advocated for language checks to ensure "accessibility" was clearly mentioned in all policies, especially to avoid ableist language, such as "improve street connectivity and walkability." They stressed that accessibility should include features for people with disabilities, such as wheelchair-accessible pathways and provisions for the visually impaired, not just generic pathways or green spaces.
- A member shared a vision of a community that would be accessible to all, providing a space where everyone could enjoy outdoor and social spaces. They envisioned a community where amenities are close enough to promote walking and social engagement, making the

area a livable, inclusive space. While acknowledging it might be an idealized vision, they felt it was worth aiming for.

Natural Areas & Ecosystem Services Draft Policies

Jenna discussed the feedback EJC members received regarding community priorities for natural areas and ecosystem services. She noted strong community support for environmental protection, sustainable practices, and forest management improvements, especially to address severe weather impacts on vegetation and reduce fire risks. Education on climate-resilient plant species and opportunities for youth to engage in environmental projects were also highlighted. The feedback emphasized preserving green spaces, trees, and natural corridors while managing urban sprawl to prevent gentrification impacts on these areas.

Members shared the following feedback and asked clarifying questions about the policies:

Goal 13, Policy 1: Choose a diverse selection of native drought- and pest-resistant trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses in restoration efforts to support climate resilience; Increase tree canopy especially in urban areas to combat the urban heat island effect, stabilize soils, sequester carbon, and provide shade while providing opportunities for community engagement and stewardship around green space.

- One member raised a concern about this policy, which appears to promote using pest-resistant native plants. They suggested that the policy should also emphasize removing non-native, aggressive species that harm the ecosystem. They observed that these aggressive species are prevalent in the area, affecting native habitats.
- A member suggested that during implementation, this policy could be linked with topics like jobs, workforce, education and conservation. General feedback
- Another member expressed support for the policies but noted that their impact would depend on funding and proper implementation. They emphasized the need for these policies to be well-integrated across different initiatives like jobs, workforce, conservation corps, and education.
- A community member noted the need to include homeowner, landowner, and renter opportunities to create habitat for dispersal corridors and connectivity.
- A member highlighted the need for community education on achieving policy goals, suggesting that community engagement greatly increases project success and maintenance. They advocated for adding a community education component to the policies, which could help encourage long-term stewardship.
- Another member acknowledged the importance of fostering human-environment interactions. They stressed the opportunity for deeper relationships between people and their natural surroundings.

Ben thanked the members for their participation and suggestions. Ben recapped the high-level themes that the EJC would like to be integrated across policies. These included asking the project team to consider how undocumented persons can be named in the policies, building awareness and skills through education programs, reviewing how policies can be modified to be accessible and inclusive, enhancing local food resilience, promoting community involvement, and ensuring impactful, long-term results. Jenna then shared the next steps for the project team, which were:

- Project team develops approach to incorporate EJC equity feedback on resilience policies.
- Equity lens discussion of GHG Reduction policies at the December EJC meeting.

- Project team develops an approach to incorporate EJC equity feedback on GHG reduction policies.
- EJC reviews and provides feedback on incorporation of equity feedback for resilience and GHG reduction and discusses overarching equity policy for climate chapter at the January 2025 EJC meeting.
- Additional policy analysis is currently underway by technical consultants, county staff, and Partner Agency Team (PAT).
- Recommended changes are considered by CAG January – March 2025.
- Final recommendation is made to the Planning Commission and County Council in second half of 2025

Public Comment

Ben opened the public comment period. There was one public comment.

Member of the public: “I am Don Steinke, and I'll try to be brief. I have 5 quick comments. The natural gas that we usually have in our pipes in the county, that comes from fracking; most of it comes from British Columbia, 1,000 miles north of here. So renewable natural gas and renewable biofuels—that's a whole sketchy, iffy proposition. Some of them are good, and some of them are bad. Some of them put out more climate pollution than if you just burn fossil fuels straight up. And so, it needs to be clarified. It matters where it's used for energy. Like, you don't want to spend \$1,000,000 on a pipeline coming from a dairy farm to be burned in my house. It'd be better to burn it right there on-site and make electricity than to put it in a pipeline. So, it's very complicated. Secondly, regarding fertilizer and farms, we flush urine down the river every day, and then we pay money to make artificial fertilizer, which puts out a lot of methane just in the manufacturing of artificial fertilizer. And so, the more natural fertilizer we can use, the better. Third on my list is, I read the comments from the last meeting, and there were a number of people that said we need more incentives. Well, the incentives are in the Climate Commitment Act, and it was assumed that the Climate Commitment Act would still be viable today or tomorrow or the next day to provide those incentives. And we'll find out tomorrow during the election whether or not we have money for those incentives. Fourth on my list is, the question was mentioned about reducing sprawl, and it was just being hinted at. But it was actually in the law. The law says reduce sprawl—the law that made this committee happen. And lastly, regarding the critical energy infrastructure hub in Portland, we have our own right here. We have tank farms right here in Clark County, and so that's a threat. And they are located in a moderately hazardous subduction zone. Although the Portland critical energy infrastructure is a far, far greater threat to the Pacific Northwest than what we have in Vancouver. That's all I have to say. Thanks to everybody for participating.”

Ben thanked Don for their comment and 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 thanked everyone for participating in the meeting. Members were reminded to share any announcements for the EJC, complete engagement work, and submit reports and collected feedback for analysis.

Jenna reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule and reviewed the next steps, which consisted of:

- Project team to develop an approach to incorporate EJC equity feedback on resilience policies and will share back at the January EJC meeting.
- EJC members to send announcements to Jenna, who will share with the rest of the EJC.
- EJC members to wrap-up all engagement by the December EJC meeting
- December EJC Meeting: Equity lens discussion of GHG Reduction policies

Ben thanked the members for participating in the meeting and shared that the next meeting will be held on Monday, December 2, 3:30-6:30pm.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:29 pm PT.

Appendix A: Zoom Chat

Below is a verbatim transcript of the webinar Zoom chat.

Time	Sender	Message
15:31:58	Alana LG Tudela	Good Afternoon all. I'll be leaving early today. I have a school event today.
15:38:16	María Verano, Kearns & West	For Zoom technical issues, email mverano@kearnswest.com
15:43:30	María Verano, Kearns & West	Email comments to comp.plan@clark.wa.gov or submit a comment online: https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/comp-plan-comments
15:44:34	Alana LG Tudela	
15:44:40	Gabriela Ewing	yes
15:45:16	Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West	Hello EJC members, please remember to change your chat settings to go to "Everyone" instead of "Hosts and panelists"
15:45:29	Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West	From Alana LG Tudela to all panelists at 03:44 PM: 
15:51:46	Rebecca	so sorry if I just missed this...a coworker came into my office needing something. Is there a deadline to get feedback and report completed for the last engagement piece?
15:53:13	Amy Koski, Clark County Public Health	It would be helpful if EJC members could wrap up engagement as soon as possible to be included in the Phase 3 and Phase 4 draft summary reports shared before the December meeting.
15:55:17	Amy Koski, Clark County Public Health	By November 15th or so would be a helpful target date for engagement wrap-up.
16:03:56	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network,	Is Extreme Cold included in Extreme participation? Seems like earlier versions had "Extreme Temperatures" to be inclusive.
16:13:52	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network,	https://cpo.noaa.gov/research-links-extreme-cold-weather-in-the-united-states-to-arctic-warming/
16:23:53	Rebecca	I need to step away for a few minutes to grab my kids from daycare

16:24:22	Amy Koski, Clark County Public Health	Thank you Rebecca. See you when you return
16:25:43	Maria Verano, Kearns & West	Discussion questions: - What are the ways in which these policies could be modified to enhance positive impacts or reduce negative impacts? - How can we strengthen or adapt these policies so that they give enough direction, at a high-level, to guide implementation to benefit vulnerable populations and overburdened communities?
16:25:50	Maria Verano, Kearns & West,	Resilience policies: https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/186361
16:39:47	Monica Zazueta	Agree. Undocumented language needed.
16:40:06	Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West	From Monica Zazueta to all panelists at 04:39 PM Agree. Undocumented language needed.
16:47:35	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Agree with Undocumented. Often the outdoor workers (farm, field, forest, construction, maintenance, etc.) are some of the same people with limited protections and mitigations (and documentations and access to services). Thanks.
16:50:36	Gabriela Ewing	I agree with that Ben
16:51:38	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Name accessibility as much and as many times as possible. "Multiple methods..."
16:53:51	Monica Zazueta	Agree with adding 'refugees' to the language
16:55:24	Monica Zazueta	Agree.
16:57:25	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Tribal Sovereignty indicates government-to-government level relations. The County gov't should be dealing with the legal protocols. Yes, beyond "partnering" on policies and implementation. Thanks Yolanda for naming and clarification.
16:58:56	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	For example, WSU Vancouver "Residing in the homelands of Chinookan and Taidnapam peoples and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe
17:01:12	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Emergency preparedness "backpacks" with the basics that cost \$\$ people don't have.
17:01:16	President Yolanda Frazier	Thank you Jude for providing this ~ Very much appreciated.
17:01:47	Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West	From President Yolanda Frazier to all panelists at 05:01 PM Thank you Jude for providing this ~ Very much appreciated.

17:04:20	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Please consider including “culturally and linguistically” accessible in specific policies, especially where education, materials, are discussed. G8-P1, for example. In addition to overarching (Ben’s recommendation).
17:11:11	President Yolanda Frazier	My condolences to you Monica!! ❤️
17:11:22	Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West	From President Yolanda Frazier to all panelists 05:11 PM My condolences to you Monica!! ❤️
17:13:47	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Mutual Aid networks that can be facilitated by the Hubs. May reciprocity land you your next home, Monica.
17:15:24	Johanna Inoke - PICAWA	Thank you Ana. Yes and also using local organizations that provide those translation service within Clark County. We have seen using online translation services have not been translated correctly.
17:15:39	Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West	From Johanna Inoke - PICAWA to all panelists at 05:15 PM Thank you Ana. Yes and also using local organizations that provide those translation service within Clark County. We have seen using online translation services have not been translated correctly.
17:17:28	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	More emergency and transition and bridge-”financed” shelter and housing. Easier access to “subsidized” (extra from the County) housing because barriers to the regulated assistance are huge--especially for people we’ve been discussing (non-citizens, undocumented...
17:23:56	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Where’s Habitat for Humanity? Expanded Community Roots Collaborative housing developments.
17:39:36	Gabriela Ewing	Yes
17:39:45	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Family-sized “Tiny home” not limited to 400 square feet as L&I designates. Clark County could become a Partner with c-roots.org focused on transition from inadequately sheltered. G26\
17:48:51	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Transition to Organic Certification approved substances (pest and herbicides). Toxics get in to the food as well. And water. And upset the pollinators. “Bee friendly” approaches would eliminate toxics. Organic pesticides are relatively OK. IPM is not a bad idea. You need a glossary in any case.
17:54:23	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Agree with Abby. Need 2 policies. Yes it’s the developers. Economic viability re education, research, technology is one issue. Land conversion is another. Some of these policies are

		elsewhere in the Plan. Land use Element. Obviously, existing provisions are inadequate.
17:59:28	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Equity lens is access to places to grow food and participate
18:03:23	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	If you have not yet taken this unique survey. Lots of Ag-Farm-Food policies to comment on in here. https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7T9R7KN
18:05:57	Monica Zazueta	Thank you Gabriela
18:06:01	Dana Hellman	Walking, biking, or public transit access within 30 minutes*
18:06:12	Monica Zazueta	Yes 15 minute communities
18:06:25	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	thanks for defining new buzz word "Plan for 30-minute communities" versus walkable or compact. shorter walks for people carrying groceries etc. Carts available:)
18:07:08	Monica Zazueta	Maybe adding 15 minute 'walking' communities
18:09:29	President Yolanda Frazier	A truly equitable community provides accessibility to all
18:09:55	Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West	From President Yolanda Frazier to all panelists T 06:09 PM A truly equitable community provides accessibility to all
18:14:48	Monica Zazueta	Agree with Don on the natural gas
18:14:55	Monica Zazueta	Cow pee is a great fertilizer
18:15:31	Maria Verano, Kearns & West	Email comments to comp.plan@clark.wa.gov or submit a comment online: https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/comp-plan-comments
18:20:00	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Awesome policies. Cross-reference with jobs, workforce, conservation corps, education. Include homeowner, landowner, and renter opportunities to create habitat for dispersal corridors and connectivity. Human-ecosystem interactions.
18:24:22	Almendra	Great conservations this evening!
18:25:47	Maria Verano, Kearns & West	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
18:26:08	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Ag-Farm-Food-related policies to comment on in here. https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7T9R7KN
18:26:40	Gabriela Ewing	Thank you everyone!

18:26:51	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	Awesome support staff County Team:)
18:27:27	Jude: Farm & Food Justice Network	thanks, Ben