



CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

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Clark County Climate Change Planning

Environmental Justice Coalition Meeting #11

January 6, 2025, 3:30-6:00pm PT

Public Service Center in Vancouver, WA, and
Zoom Webinar

Meeting Summary

FUNDED BY WASHINGTON'S



The WA Department of Commerce climate planning grant is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act. The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at www.climate.wa.gov.

Attendees

Environmental Justice Coalition members:

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

Environmental Justice Coalition alternates: Abby Holloper (Odyssey World International Education Services), Johanna Inoke (Pacific Islander Community Association of Washington), Jude Wait (Farm Food Justice Network)

County staff: Amy Koski, Chris Cook, Jenna Kay, Jose Alvarez

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

Number of members of the public in attendance: 8

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 outcomes of the meeting:

- Share and discuss the draft Overarching Equity Goals.
- Share and discuss how the project team incorporated Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC) and engagement feedback into the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions reduction and 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 EJC Meeting Summary #10. One member suggested that the summary includes which slide of the presentation corresponds to each part of the summary for future reference. The meeting summary was approved with no additional comments.

Project Updates (slides 11 – 14)

Jenna Kay, Clark County, provided updates on meeting materials and the project timeline. She began by highlighting key items in the meeting packet, including comments from EJC members and the public, along with the revised draft policies reflecting recent feedback. The packet also contains a first draft of Overarching Equity Goals and Policies. Jenna explained that background materials include a side-by-side comparison of draft policy changes, and a feedback tracking table documenting input from EJC members, public engagement efforts, and partner agency staff. She noted that these documents aim to ensure transparency throughout the process.

Jenna then reviewed the project schedule, noting that the group is currently focused on refining policies using the Equity and Environmental Justice Lens. Once finalized, the recommendations will proceed to the Community Advisory Group (CAG), followed by review by the Planning Commission and County Council. She acknowledged the group's significant progress, emphasizing the new engagement approaches pursued during the past year.

Looking ahead, Jenna outlined the remaining tasks and noted that the final meeting will include a reflection on lessons learned. She also noted that EJC members could consider drafting a group letter to accompany their recommendations.

Draft Overarching Equity Goals (slides 15 – 23)

Jenna led a discussion on the development of Overarching Equity Goals and Policies. She explained that staff had been working over the past several weeks to draft an overarching equity policy based on key themes identified through EJC discussions, public engagement feedback, and recent meetings.

Jenna described how the team approached the drafting process, which resulted in two distinct equity goals. The first goal focuses on facilitating a just transition to net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions while equitably enhancing community and ecological resilience to climate impacts and has two policies under it. The second goal aims to advance environmental justice throughout the county's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and related policies, regulations, and strategies, with three policies under it. She noted that while the first goal is climate-specific, the second goal addresses broader environmental justice concerns beyond climate change, making it more appropriate for inclusion in the Environment Chapter of the comprehensive plan.

Members of the EJC had the following questions and comments:

- One member proposed adding the phrase "net positive for the planet" to the goal of achieving net-zero GHG emissions, emphasizing the need to strive beyond net zero.
- A member questioned whether the second goal's placement in the Environment Chapter implied that each element in the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan would have an equity statement or if the policy was intended to cover all elements broadly.
 - *Response: Placing Goal 2 in the Environment Chapter ensures it applies broadly to all long-term county planning efforts, whereas limiting it to the Climate Chapter would reduce its scope. This goal is intended to apply across all comprehensive plan topics.*
- Another member suggested including key concepts such as inclusivity, sustainability, measurable goals, and collaboration in the second policy, noting that these elements should be emphasized.
- A member asked about the difference between the Climate and Environment Chapters.
 - *Response: The chapters are primarily organizational tools for grouping related policies. Since the county lacks a dedicated climate action plan, a separate Climate Chapter is being created to consolidate all climate-related policies for clarity.*

Goal 1, Policy 1 (slide 17)

Jenna reviewed a proposed, new policy under the first goal, which aimed to align climate element policies with several overarching environmental justice guiding principles. The policy emphasizes the importance of evaluating impacts on vulnerable communities, prioritizing engagement, and ensuring that climate actions reduce harm while enhancing resilience. The policy also highlighted

the need for inclusive outreach, ensuring that programs are accessible and designed to meet community needs, particularly for those facing physical, financial, or logistical barriers.

Members of the EJC had the following initial comments and feedback on the policy:

- A member highlighted that they liked the statement about removing barriers
- A member suggested the addition of bringing back keystone species and addressing lawns as past harms.
- A member recommended changing the wording “as much as possible”
- A member suggested adding social capital hubs.
- A member recommended changing “participation and” to “participation by”
- Another member expressed a desire to include food, childcare, and transportation assistance during outreach and engagement with communities in addition to providing vouchers to local businesses where community members could purchase the proper gear needed to participate in climate projects.
- A member suggested changing “availability of childcare or transportation” to “and transportation”
- Another member suggested the addition of language on Native Tribes.
- A member suggested including ordinances and commissions in the discussion, mentioning public meetings and a new Agriculture Advisory Commission.
- One member suggested revising the metrics used to measure the impact of the proposed changes, indicating a need for more clear indicators. One member wanted to clarify who will keep track of implementation and that the time and input of overburdened communities is included.
 - *Response: Ben summarized what he heard, suggesting that EJC members continue to review these proposed policies from the perspective of: Is this reflective of your EJC engagement, where does the policy go from here, and how do we trust that it's done right?*
 - *Response: Jenna also explained there is mandatory reporting to the State Department of Commerce and a need for continued public involvement to help hold the county accountable.*
- A member questioned whether the current approach allows for flexibility to adjust as new data or information becomes available.
- Another member added that incorporating community feedback into the Comprehensive Plan could help strengthen the alignment with local needs and ensure broad support.
- A member raised concerns about the feasibility of certain implementation strategies, particularly in terms of resource allocation.
- Several members wanted to see more specificity around the use of the term community organizations to be inclusive of various providers (including mental health facilities, temp agencies, WorkSource, jails, etc.) and faith-based institutions. They highlighted that while they may interpret community organizations broadly, some more specific examples may better help guide future implementation.
- A member asked whether there were any plans to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of the initiatives included in the Comprehensive Plan.
 - *Response: Jenna explained that it is the county's job to evaluate Comprehensive Plan implementation progress; some of which is reported to the state Department of Commerce.*
- One member suggested adding more plant plugs, pollinators, and bird houses.

Jenna acknowledged the feedback and noted that further refinement of the policy language could help address these concerns.

Ben then opened the conversation to the group to discuss their thoughts on the rest of the policies under the two overarching equity goals presented. Members of the EJC had the following comments and questions.

Goal 1 (slides 17 – 18)

- A member suggested adding "the nine planetary boundaries" to Goal 1, Policy 1, citing recent science on environmental impacts and declining health due to toxins.
- Goal 1, Policy 2: A member asked if "climate change" should be changed to "warming" due to skepticism around the term.

Goal 2 (slides 19 – 21)

- A member asked if recommendations would come from different groups (youth, Black, Indigenous, and people of color, EJC, etc.) and how the policies would be tracked for impact.
 - Response: Recommendations can be advocated for by advisory group members during the *legislative process*. *The process involves going to the Planning Commission, which then makes a recommendation to the County Council. Accountability is tracked via mandatory reporting to the Department of Commerce.*
- One member asked if ordinances should be included in Goal 2 and if tracking money and other commissions should be added.
 - Response: *Ordinances are the mechanism by which long-range planning documents and regulation are approved by the County Council. As written, Goal 2, Policy 1 would include ordinances related to long-range planning, but ordinances related to other departments that do not connect to the Comprehensive Plan would be outside the scope of this goal.*
- An additional member noted the difference between "reducing" and "eliminating" environmental disparities, noting the difference in scope and goals. They noted both are important and should be included.
- A member suggested expanding the discussion on Goal 2 to include ordinances, commissions, and committees. They referenced public meetings, the Ending Community Homelessness Organization (ECHO), and proposed the inclusion of a new Agricultural Advisory Commission, as well as other county departments involved in areas like budgets, extension, and parks.
- Goal 2, Policy 1: A member recommended adding "advance and safeguard the health and well-being of our community and planet" in relation to sustainability.
- Goal 2, Policy 2: A member preferred use of the term "Enhance" instead of "Improve" and suggested adding Indigenous people.
- Goal 2, Policy 3: A member suggested deleting "or minimize"

Ben thanked everyone for their feedback and outlined the next steps:

- Send additional feedback to Jenna by Sunday, January 12.
- The project team will revise the goals and policies with the additional EJC feedback.
- The revised goals and policies will be shared with the CAG as a recommendation from the EJC.

- The EJC will review the revised Overarching Equity Goals and Policies at the last EJC meeting in February.

Proposed Revisions to GHG and Resilience Policies (slides 25 – 35)

Ben introduced the discussion about the proposed revisions to the GHG emission reduction and Resilience policies. Jenna provided context about the revisions, which were informed by extensive public engagement, including feedback gathered over the past year and summarized in reports. This feedback, along with input from the November and December EJC meetings, and feedback from Partner Agency staff, was reviewed to identify gaps or inconsistencies in the draft policies. The team also worked to address redundancy and ensure clarity, merging similar policies and consolidating content where needed.

Jenna shared that the building and energy policies are currently pending additional revision due to forthcoming state guidance related to Initiative 2066, which aims to protect access to natural gas in buildings. (Slide 29).

Jenna then shared examples of how the goals and policies were revised to take into account EJC, public, and partner agency feedback. She paused along the way for questions. Feedback and questions asked by EJC members are organized below by the goal and/or policy they pertain to.

Ben reiterated that while this meeting is an initial discussion about the proposed revisions, feedback from the EJC is key to refining the policies. Ben invited members to:

- Ask any immediate questions they have or share reactions to how these policies incorporate their comments and the feedback they gathered.
- Share comments or feedback about any specific policy(s) they want to talk about today.

Goal 3

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

- A member mentioned they would add “health and financial impacts” to goal 3.

Goal 3, Policy 1 (slide 30)

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

- A member mentioned that it was often assumed that people with disabilities were only those in wheelchairs, but it’s important to include invisible disabilities such as developmental disabilities. They asked for these to be specifically mentioned.
- One member noted that mental health conditions like ADHD, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and other similar conditions should also be acknowledged when discussing disabilities. They recommended including these types of conditions in the document.
- A member recommended adding “and indigenous tribes”

Goal 3, Policy 2

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

- A member suggested changing the term "landlord" to "rental management" in relation to housing management and pest control.

- One member advocated for banning harmful pesticides and focusing on healthy food access.

Goal 3, Policy 3

Members shared the following feedback and asked clarifying questions about the policy.

- A member proposed adding language around protecting outdoor workers' health by providing equipment and work clothing.
- One member recommended changing the word "promote" to "support," "assist," or "elevate."

Goal 3, Policy 5 (slide 31)

Members shared the following feedback and asked clarifying questions about the policy.

- Jenna checked with the group about whether safety concerns were being adequately considered when naming specific communities, particularly regarding undocumented individuals, and the balancing of safety with the EJC member interest in naming these communities.
- Several members expressed gratitude that the policies were updated to include "undocumented" communities in the language, which was important to them in ensuring these communities were properly acknowledged in the work. Another member added that they appreciated the inclusion of "undocumented" in the language, highlighting how naming communities explicitly is important for ensuring these groups are addressed.

Goal 3, Policy 6 (slide 32)

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

- A member asked if the resilience hubs would include funds for the development of a resource hub, specifically for places like churches wanting to become resilience hubs but need funding for infrastructure like sprinklers.
 - *Response: The approval of the policy would allow county staff to explore funding options for such projects.*
 - *Jenna also noted the importance of not overemphasizing funding commitments in policy language because some policies may not have guaranteed funding, or the funding may be outside of the county's control. Staff generally recommend focusing on how to make the policies more effective and more clear rather than assuming funding will be available.*
- Another member highlighted they liked the use of the term "reciprocity" and requested adding how to get involved with jobs and job connections.

Goal 4

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

- A member recommended changing "consult" to "take council from."

Goal 5

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

- A member recommended changing promote to something else such as elevate, upgrade, advance, assist, expand, or enhance.

Goal 5, Policy 1

Members shared the following feedback and asked clarifying questions about the policy.

- A member suggested changing “increase” to expand or enhance.
- A member emphasized the need to change wording to “ban use of harmful pesticides” and using bio-derived materials.

Goal 5, Policy 2

- A member suggested including the use of a chala system.

Goal 5, Policy 3

Members shared the following feedback and asked clarifying questions about the policy.

- One member proposed including additional systems for food distribution during climate disruptions, such as food kitchens and rooftop gardens in urban areas.

Goal 5, Policy 4

- One member requested consideration of adding “permaculture”

Goal 5, Policy 6

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

A member suggested changing the term "encourage" to "develop" or "support" when discussing public and private food gardens and including the use of empty car lots.

Goal 5, Policy 7

- A member suggested changing “Pursue” to “Implement”

Goal 5, Policy 8

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

- An additional member inquired why the policies refer specifically to "federally recognized Native American tribes" instead of just "Native tribes."
- A member emphasized the importance of collaboration with community-based organizations and indigenous tribes.
- Another member questioned the term "commodities" in reference to agricultural transportation, suggesting that food should be considered a basic right rather than a commodity.
- An additional member questioned the term "limiting" in relation to public services and how it applied to the policies.
- A member noted a typo in the word “policy”

Goal 6, Policy 3

Members shared the following feedback and asked clarifying questions about the policy

- A member proposed adding more information on the water system to address drought issues and local food production.
- One member raised concerns over the difference between agriculture and permaculture, recommending the inclusion of "permaculture" in relevant policies.

Jenna and Ben thanked the members for their participation and suggestions.

Public Comment (slides 36 – 37)

Ben opened the public comment period. There were two public comments.

Member of the public: "Hi, I'm Dave Rowe, and I live in Battleground.

This committee is tasked with creating policies to address global warming. However, any policies you develop won't be able to counteract the impact of the Interstate Bridge Replacement Project. If built by 2035, it will bring more cars and trucks into the county, worsening warming in Clark County.

I'm proposing an alternative to the Interstate Bridge Replacement, which is a \$7 billion highway project. Instead, we should improve the three rail corridors that were built 100 years ago in Clark County. These railroads could accommodate more than 25% of the 143,000 people who cross the Columbia River each day.

While I understand your focus is on policymaking, we need public outcry to stop this bridge project, as it won't help mitigate global warming.

Thank you."

Member of the public: "Hi, Meridian Green here.

I just want to say how much I appreciate everyone's contributions. I'm incredibly impressed by the work that's been done, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to catch up as we move into this next phase with a new County Council and begin implementing so many great suggestions.

I especially value Monica's feedback and the depth she brings to the discussion. I appreciate everyone's efforts on this important work.

Thank you."

Ben thanked the members of the public for their comments 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 (slides 38 – 41)

Jenna thanked everyone for participating in the meeting. Jenna asked members if they would like their final meeting to be in person or hybrid. The group expressed interest in a hybrid meeting. The project team will follow-up with logistical details closer to the final meeting date.

Jenna asked if there were EJC members who were interested in drafting a letter to the County Council and Planning Commission on behalf of the EJC, highlighting key points or recommendations from their work. Ana, Monica, and Jude volunteered to lead this effort. Jenna offered to support the subcommittee with coordination and drafting.

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

- EJC members to review the revised GHG emissions reduction and resilience policies including draft Overarching Equity Goals and Policies, sending feedback to Jenna by Sunday, January 12.
- EJC members to send announcements to Jenna, who will share with the rest of the EJC.

Ben thanked the members for participating in the meeting and shared that the next and final meeting will be held on Monday, February 3, 2025, 3:30-6:30p.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm PT.

Appendix A: Zoom Chat

Below is a verbatim transcript of the webinar Zoom chat.

- 15:35:31 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone: For Zoom technical issues, email nmetildi@karnswest.com
- 15:38:41 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone: EJC members - Before sending messages, please choose "Everyone" from the blue drop down.
- 15:39:22 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone: For Zoom technical issues, email nmetildi@karnswest.com
- 15:43:30 From Alana LG Tudela to Everyone: Can you promote Johanna Inoke? She's representing PICA Wa
- 15:43:42 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone: Can do!
- 15:43:52 From Alana LG Tudela to Everyone: Thank you.
- 15:53:11 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone: Link to draft overarching goals and policies: <https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/190771>
- 15:53:28 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone: The draft Overarching Equity Goals are contained in this document
- 15:56:43 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone: Hello everyone! Happy New Year
- 16:22:39 From Rebecca to Everyone: Stepping away for 5-10 minutes to pick up my kids
- 16:31:33 From Jude - Farm+Food Justice Network to Everyone: Re G-2. What about Ordinances? What about Commissions and Committees. For example, ECHO = Ending Community Homelessness Organization = County + municipalities = meetings are public. New Ag Advisory Commission? Other departments in the County, such as in the budget (Extension, Parks, ...)
- 16:51:23 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone: I'm here
- 16:51:39 From Tavie Keo, iUrban Teen (she/her) to Everyone: 👍
- 16:51:44 From Alana LG Tudela to Everyone: Here
- 16:52:07 From Johanna Inoke to Everyone: here
- 16:59:14 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone: Here is the link to the proposed revisions to the GHG and Resilience policies: <https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/190771>
- 17:02:43 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone: Here is the comment tracker Jenna mentioned: <https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/190786>
- 17:02:54 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone: Here is the side by side comparison: <https://clark.wa.gov/media/document/190776>
- 17:04:53 From Ana Betancourt She/Her LLNW/EJC to Everyone: Thank you!!
- 17:06:30 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone: People with developmental disabilities
- 17:20:38 From Gabriela Ewing to Everyone: Sorry I have to go to my appointment
- 17:22:12 From Jude - Farm+Food Justice Network to Everyone: Are comments on the PDF also acceptable feedback? That's where I'm currently tracking:)
- 17:32:38 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone: Email comments to comp.plan@clark.wa.gov or submit a comment online: <https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/comp-plan-comments>
- 17:38:42 From Ana Betancourt She/Her LLNW/EJC to Everyone: Yes please!! That would be really cool!
- 17:38:48 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone: For reference, the next meeting will be on Monday, Feb. 3

- 17:39:13 From Alana LG Tudela to Everyone: 👍
- 17:39:25 From Rebecca to Everyone: I like the in person idea but I have a hard time meeting at this time with kid pickup and would probably have to skip unless the date changed
- 17:39:37 From Johanna Inoke to Everyone: 👍 yes for me thank you
- 17:39:43 From Jude - Farm+Food Justice Network to Everyone: hybrid to be most inclusive, please
- 17:40:04 From Minh Pham(VCCC,EJC) to Everyone: Hybrid for me.
- 17:40:04 From Abby Hollopeter OWIES (EJC) to Everyone: 👍
- 17:43:08 From Ana Betancourt She/Her LLNW/EJC to Everyone: I would love to lead the efforts.
- 17:44:32 From Ana Betancourt She/Her LLNW/EJC to Everyone: I would love to lead with you, Monica!
- 17:46:16 From Nicole Metildi, Kearns & West (she/her) to Everyone: EJC webpage: <https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/environmental-justice-coalition> Project webpage: clark.wa.gov/community-planning/climate-change-planning Project contact: Jenna Kay, jenna.kay@clark.wa.gov
- 17:46:26 From Jude - Farm+Food Justice Network to Everyone: willing to participate in letter subcommittee if i'm not over the Quorum limitations:)
- 17:46:55 From Alana LG Tudela to Everyone: Thank you. See you all next month
- 17:47:01 From Tavie Keo, iUrban Teen (she/her) to Everyone: Thank you everyone <3
- 17:47:27 From Jude - Farm+Food Justice Network to Everyone: link to worksheet ASAP.