

Implementing New State Climate Change Planning Legislation in Clark County

Clark County Development & Engineering Advisory Board

Jenna Kay, Clark County Community Planning

June 5, 2025, Public Service Center Room 679 and Teams



Presentation plan

- Project background
- Definitions and key research findings
- Proposed policies
- What's next?
- Q&A



Project background



HB 1181

- Climate change and resiliency goal in Growth Management Act (GMA)
- Climate Element in Comprehensive Plan
 - **Resilience**
 - **Greenhouse gas reduction**
- Themes: Environmental Justice, Best Available Science, Commerce Guidance
- Due date: December 2025



Resilience sub-element

- Identify, protect, enhance natural areas
- Identify, protect, enhance community resiliency
- Address natural hazards
- Prioritize actions that benefit overburdened communities



Greenhouse Gas Reduction Sub-element

- Reduce GHG emissions
- Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per capita
- Prioritize reductions that benefit overburdened communities

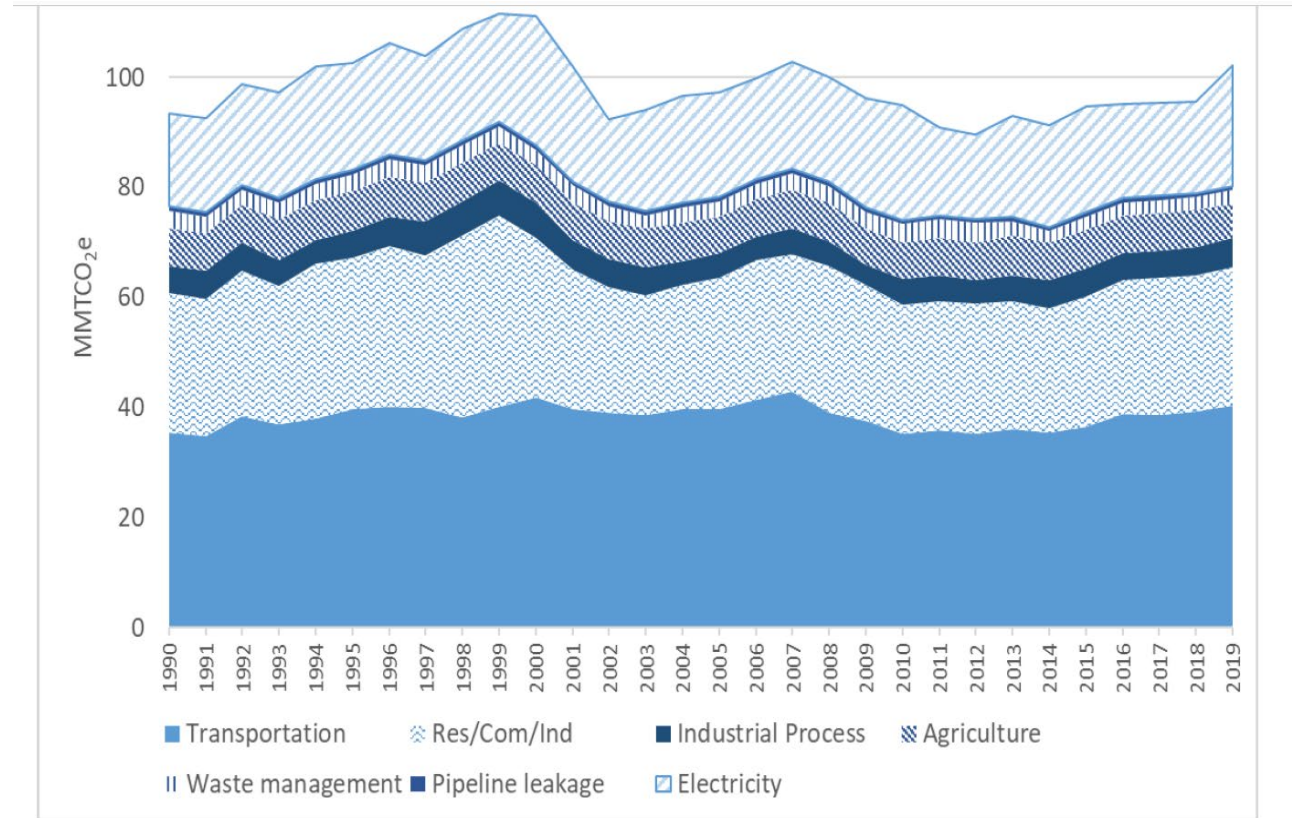


Figure 1. Washington's total GHG emissions 1990-2019 in MMT CO₂e

Timeline



Project advisory groups

- **Community Advisory Group (CAG)**
 - Recommended list of goals and policies for county to implement 2025-2045
 - Consistent with HB 1181
- **Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC)**
 - Collect feedback from overburdened communities and populations vulnerable to climate impacts and advise county and CAG how to address what hear
 - Guide development of equity lens for evaluating policies
- **Partner Agency Team (PAT)**
 - Technical review and support



Community Advisory Group (CAG)

Advisory Group Broad Categories	Advisory Group Positions	Members
Environment & Resource Land Stewardship (7)	Agriculture/Farming (1)	Ann Foster
	Environment (2)	Don Steinke Sunrise O’Mahoney
	Environmental justice advocates to represent those most vulnerable to climate change pollution and climate impacts (3)	Gabriela Mendoza Ewing Juan Monje Monica Zazueta
	Forestry (1)	Brent Marsden
Jobs & Growth (8)	Business (1)	Janet Kenefsky
	Economic & workforce development (1)	Nick Massie
	Freight (1)	Thilo Kluth
	Homebuilding (2)	Andrea Smith Justin Wood
	Industry (2)	Nelson Holmberg Terry Toland
	Land development (1)	Noelle Lovern
Community (5)	Commuters (1)	Sharon Ferguson
	Education (1)	Jessica Brown
	Healthcare (1)	Alana Tudela
	Transit users (1)	Dave Rowe
	Youth (1)	Kathy Miu
	Affordable housing	6 of above members
	Bicycle/Pedestrian	4 of above members
	Community activities (i.e. hiking, fishing, hunting, gardening)	10 of above members
Ex-Officio Member	County Council Liaison (non-voting member)	Councilor Michelle Belkot

Definitions and key research findings



Resilience

Climate resilience means the ongoing process of anticipating, preparing for, and adapting to changes in climate and minimizing negative impacts to our natural systems, infrastructure, and communities (RCW 70A.65.010).

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Climate Projections for Clark County

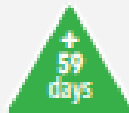


Extreme Heat

Annual days with a humidex** over 90°F



by 2050



by 2080



Drought

Late summer precipitation (Jul 15 - Sept 15)



by 2050



by 2080



Wildfires & Smoke

Annual days with high fire danger



by 2050



by 2080



Extreme Precipitation

Total annual precipitation



by 2050



by 2080



Flooding

Peak streamflow for streams and rivers



by 2050



by 2080



Landslides

Intensity of heavy precipitation events



by 2050



by 2080

Data source:
University of
Washington,
Climate Mapping
for a Resilient
Washington
webtool,
<https://data.cit.uw.edu/climatemapping/>

Projections are
based on a
“business as
usual” emissions
scenario called
RCP 8.5

Research and
graphics by:
CAPA Strategies



Exploring Climate Impacts

- Climate impacts serve as the basis for defining the “problem we’re trying to address” with comprehensive plan goals and policies for the resilience sub-element
- Summary of climate impacts
- Impact examples:

Buildings & Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Decreased demand for heating in the winter; Increased demand for cooling in summer (heat)- Increased energy use for air conditioning (heat)- Disruption of energy transmission lines and infrastructure; Service disruptions (wildfire; landslides; extreme precipitation + storms; flooding)- Reduced water supply for hydropower (drought)- Closures and limited access to schools, government buildings, and other critical services (wildfire; landslides; flooding)
Zoning & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Damage to commercial and residential property including temporary, public, and supportive housing (wildfire; landslides; extreme precipitation + storms; flooding)- High insurance costs resulting from repeated disasters (flooding; wildfire)- In high-risk areas, land may become unsuitable for development but more suitable for open space preservation (flooding; wildfire; landslides)- Disruptions to communication infrastructure including internet, cell, and mail service (wildfire; landslides; extreme precipitation + storms; flooding)



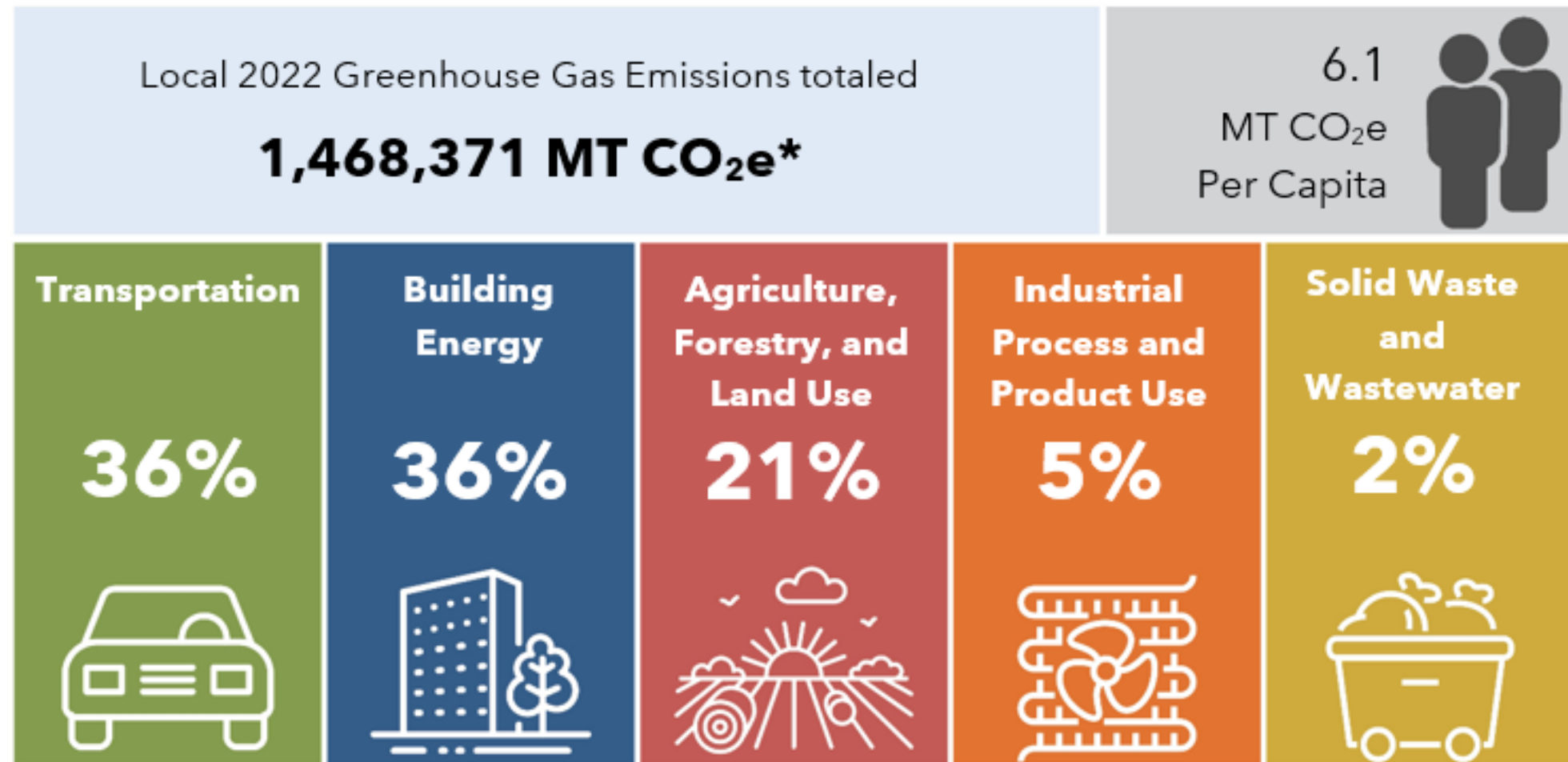
Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Greenhouse gas emissions reduction means actions taken to reduce or eliminate the emissions of greenhouse gases (present and future) in order to reduce the rate and extent of climate damage.

(WA Dept. of Commerce Climate Element Guidance)



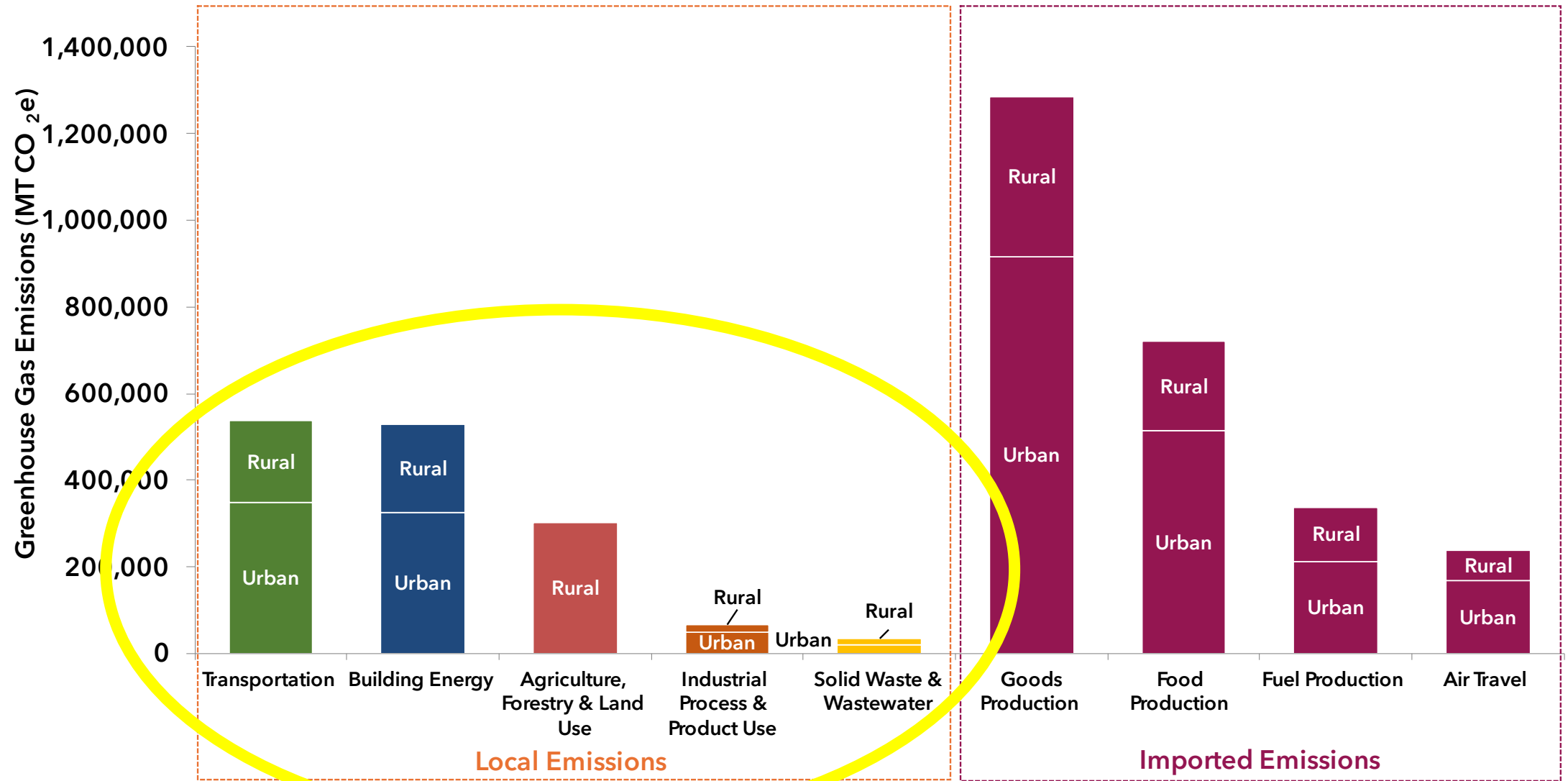
Unincorporated Clark County Local Emissions - 2022



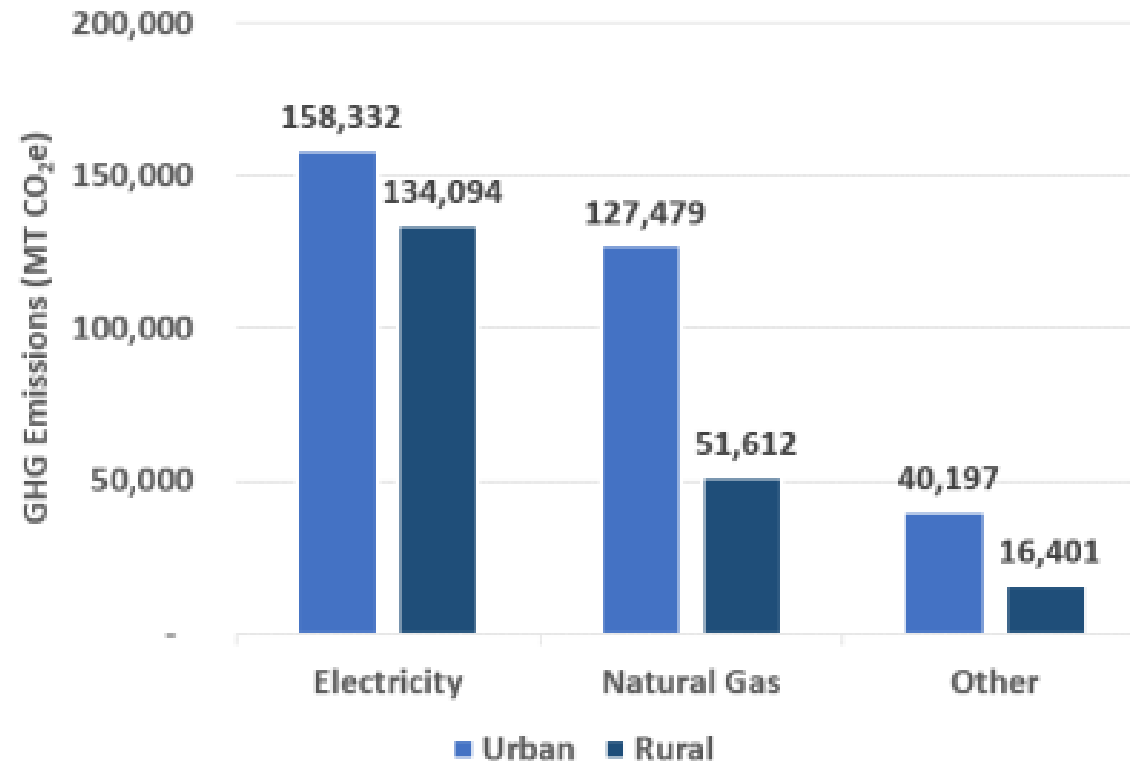
*MT CO₂e is a metric ton of CO₂ equivalent, a way to add up all greenhouse gasses
1 MT CO₂e is roughly equivalent to 113 gallons of gasoline burned
or the carbon sequestered by 1.2 acres of forest



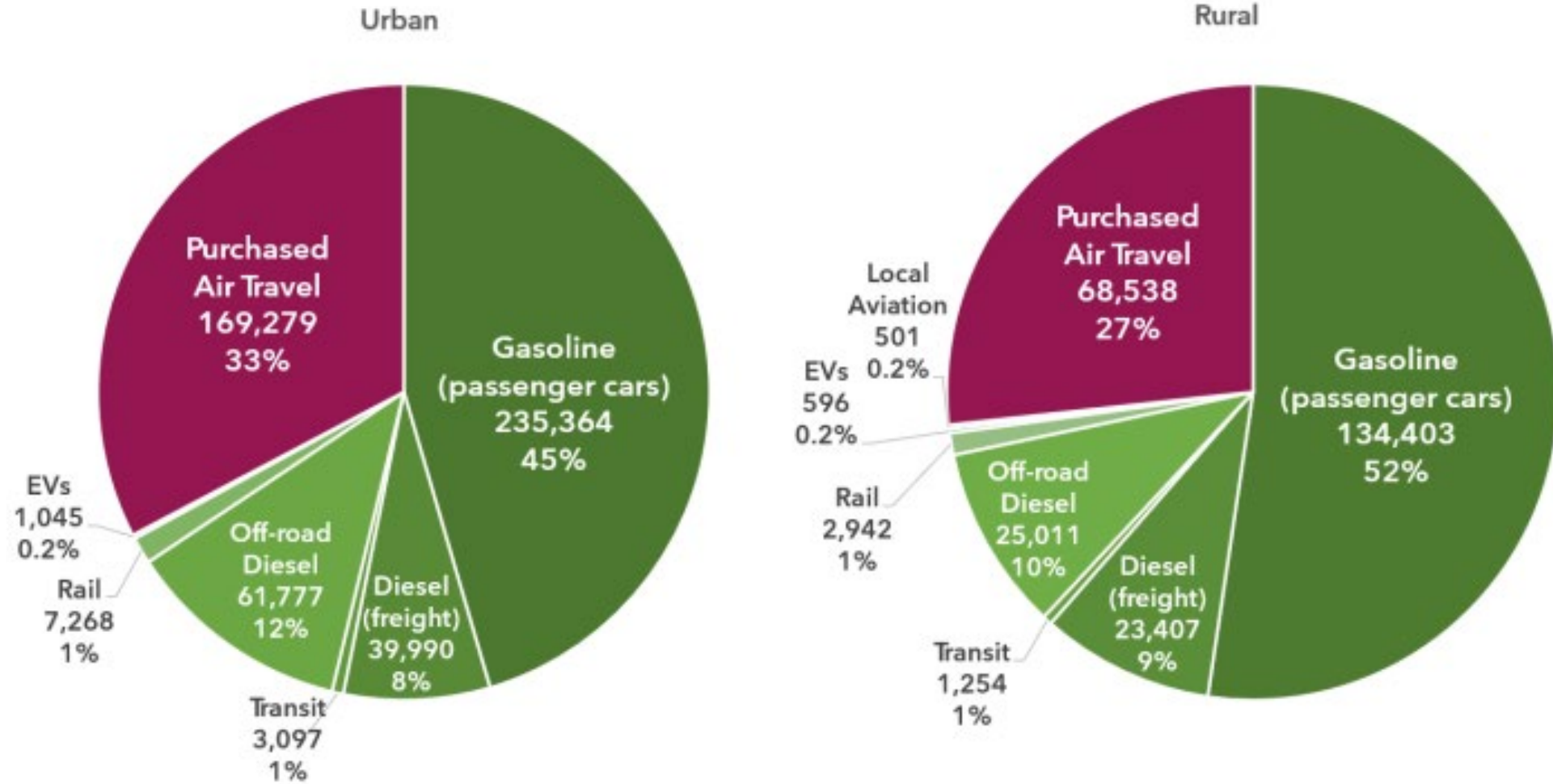
Unincorporated Clark County Emissions - 2022



Building Energy Emissions Breakdown



Transportation Emissions Breakdown



Environmental Justice

Vulnerable populations

Population groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms (RCW 36.70A.030)

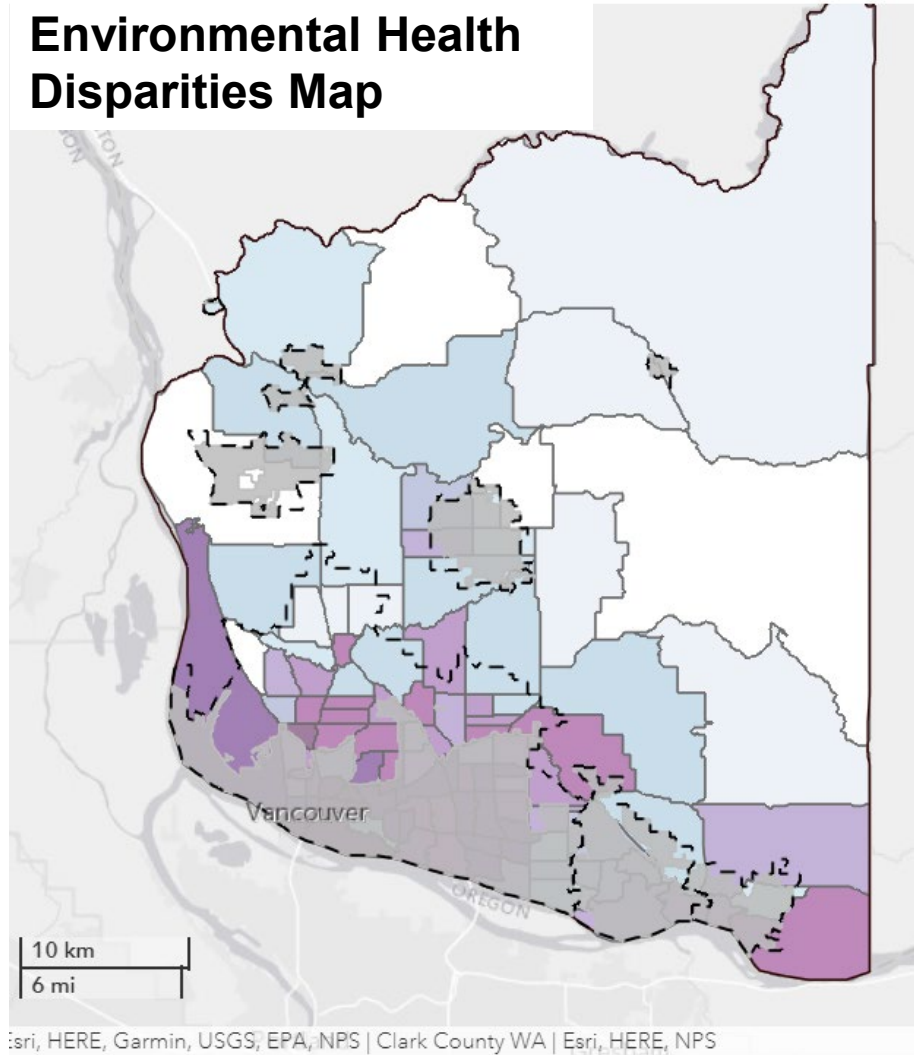
Overburdened community

A geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts (RCW 36.70A.030)

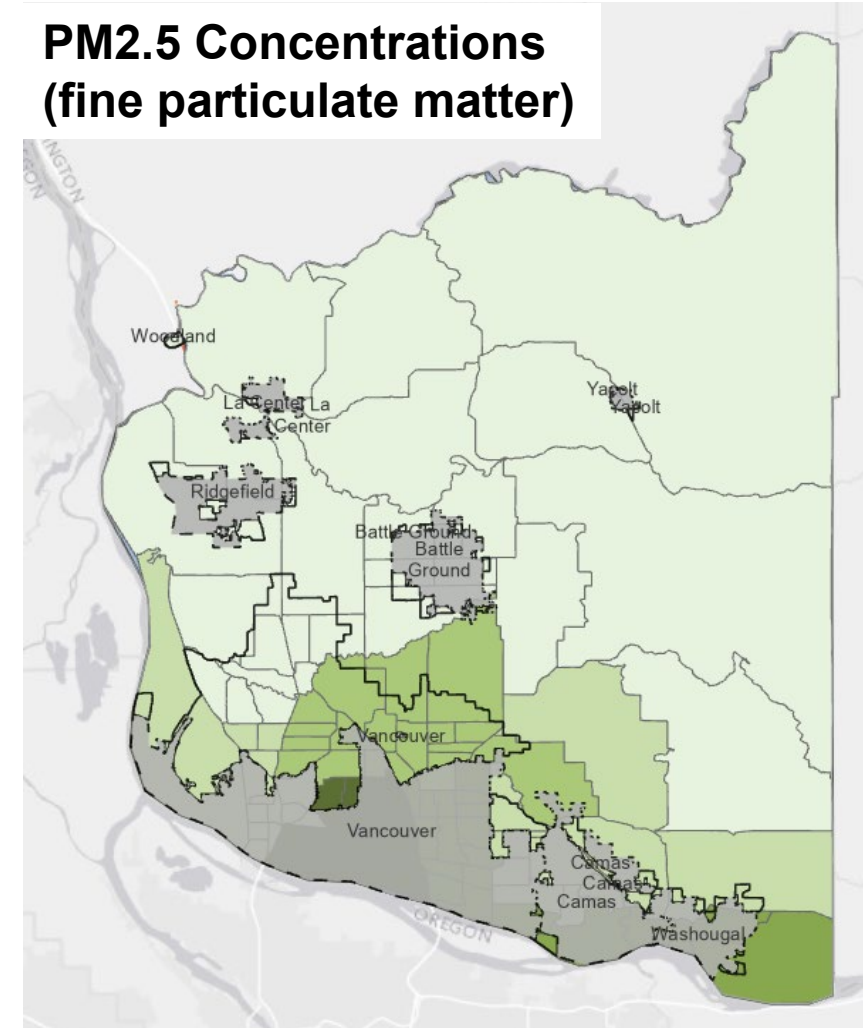


Overburdened Communities & Air Quality Data

Environmental Health Disparities Map



**PM2.5 Concentrations
(fine particulate matter)**



Proposed policies



Draft Climate Element - Goals & Policies

Countywide Planning Policies

- 10 policies
- Focus:
 - Legislative requirements
 - Coordination and collaboration

County 20-year Planning Policies (CAG recommendation)

- 32 goals
- 123 policies
- GHG, RES, BOTH
- 7 categories:
 - Health and well-being
 - Green jobs
 - Ecological stewardship
 - Transportation and land use
 - Buildings and energy
 - Waste management
 - County governance



Climate Element - Goal Topics At A Glance

Health & Well-being	Green Jobs	Ecological Stewardship	Transportation & Land Use	Building & Energy	Waste Management	County Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just transition • Advance environmental justice • Ensure most vulnerable communities don't bear disproportionate impacts • Consultation with Cowlitz Indian Tribe, regional Tribal governments, and culturally-specific groups • Food economies • Agriculture and landscaping • Housing • Air quality • Outdoor recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development and job generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees • County plantings and greenspaces • Environmentally critical areas and open space • Forestry • Salmonids • Water resources • Stormwater • Public education on environmental topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) • County vehicles • Electric vehicles (EVs) • Resilience of transportation system • Resilient development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy efficient buildings • Clean, renewable, and diverse building energy options • Emissions from county buildings and facilities • Green building and sustainable building practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste reduction, composting, recycling • Emissions from county purchases • Use less and support maintenance, repair, and resale economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy implementation • Resilience of county operations

Climate Element Integration into Comprehensive Plan:

- Most climate policies will live in the climate chapter
- Some climate policies will live in other chapters (ex. transportation)



Example Draft Climate Element Goals

- Proposed climate chapter policies
- Buildings & Energy:
 - 14.16: Promote energy efficient buildings. (CAG G24)
 - 14.17: Promote a just approach to increasing clean, renewable, and diverse building energy options in unincorporated Clark County to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions. (CAG G25)
 - 14.19: Promote green building and sustainable building practices. (CAG G28)



Example Draft Climate Element Goals (Cont'd)

- Transportation & Land Use:
 - 14.13: Reduce vehicle trips and miles viewed through an equity lens within the county through changes to land use, transportation infrastructure (transit, walking, bicycling, rolling), and commuting options/modes. (CAG G19)
 - 5.8: Promote equitable adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) to achieve greenhouse gas reduction target and improve air quality where it is worst. (CAG G21)
 - 14.15: Encourage resilient development within the unincorporated urban growth area and away from areas that are prone to climate-related hazards such as flooding and wildfire. (CAG G23)



What's next



Timeline



Questions?



Thank you!

Comments and questions



Project webpage: <https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/climate-change-planning>

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