



Date: October 13, 2023

To: Community Development Committee

RE: Climate Planning Strategy – Comp Plan Update 2025

HB1181, approved by the State legislature in 2023, requires the City to address the causes and impacts of climate change in the City's Comprehensive Plan. This will take place as part of the 2025 Comp Plan update. The City has been granted \$500,000 from the Dept of Commerce for this work. This is a significant amount of funding for planning and some implementation (urban tree plans, erosion control plans / designs, etc) but not for capital purchases.

Requirements: In general, HB1181 requires the City to address climate change throughout its Comp Plan in each of the Land Use, Capital Facilities, Utilities, and Transportation Elements. This will include a general review of these chapters and the appropriate updates that address climate risks and adaptation.

Secondly, it requires the City to add a new Climate Element to the Comp Plan. This will include an identification of city assets (infrastructure, buildings and public property, and natural resources), an evaluation of their vulnerability and risks, an assessment of impacts to vulnerable communities, the promotion of multimodal transportation networks, and the establishment of goals and policies that address this issue.

The new Climate Element shall include two specific sub-elements: 1) Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs); and 2) Climate Resilience.

- 1) The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Sub-element requires the City to include strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Work on this sub-element generally identifies sources of GHGs in the City and discussion of measures that can be taken to reduce those emissions city wide. In some cases, cities have conducted a greenhouse gas inventory – this can include both public emissions (from City fleets, public buildings, etc) and emissions generated by private industry, businesses, and residential uses. The Dept of Commerce has produced an extensive “Menu of Measures” to reduce GHGs of which could be discussed / implemented to reduce GHGs in Lynden. In the absence of an inventory, the focus of this sub-element could be these measures.
- 2) The Climate Resiliency Sub-element requires the City to include strategies for reducing the adverse impacts of climate change to residents, businesses, and natural resources in the City. This includes hazards identification (extreme heat, water supply, flooding, landslides, etc) and the development of natural hazards mitigation plans to prepare for these impacts. The Dept of Commerce's “Menu

of Measures” can also be discussed for specific resiliency measures. In addition, Whatcom County has a FEMA approved Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (2021) which includes Lynden, but mitigation strategies that are Lynden focused are warranted for this update.

Public Outreach: An important component of this update is to engage the public on this issue. This will take several forms. Planning Staff will develop an online survey with questions targeted toward getting a sense of how community members are thinking about climate change and its impacts – knowledge, awareness of the issue, and sense of what measures might be appropriate in Lynden for adaptation and resilience. In addition, the City with a selected consultant, will organize an open house / public meeting to inform and gather feedback from meeting attendees. If appropriate, the City will use electronic voting devices to record real time feedback at this meeting. As drafts of the climate related updates and the new chapter is developed, the City will organize an “advisory committee” made up of targeted community members. This committee will review and provide feedback on the updates. Finally, the proposed element updates for the full Comp Plan (including Climate updates) will go through the public noticing and hearing process with the City’s Planning Commission and City Council.

Next Steps: Planning staff are working on the next steps in this process which includes completing an application to the Department of Commerce for the allotted grant funds by the end of October. This application will include a proposal for scope of work and planned fund expenditures. Subsequently staff will be creating a draft scope of work, advertise for proposals, and move forward with consultant selection. Staff anticipates that the scope of work and deliverables will flex based on consultant feedback.