

# Climate Element Discussion

Spokane County, Millwood

October 2025



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**CLIMATE  
COMMITMENT  
ACT**



# Goal of Today

## Goals

- Understand Commerce requirements to integrate climate considerations in the comprehensive planning process
- Get your initial feedback on the draft Vulnerability Assessment
- Preview draft goals and policies for the Climate Element



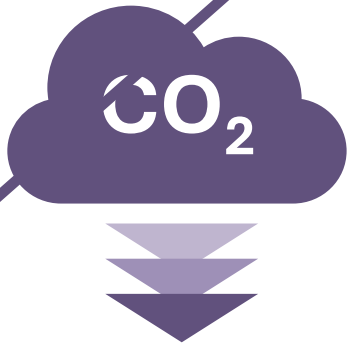
# Climate Element Requirements

An **emissions reduction sub-element** is required for 11 of the state's largest and fastest-growing counties and their cities, and includes:



A **resilience sub-element** is required for all jurisdictions planning fully under the Growth Management Act, and includes:

**Emissions Reduction Measures** to reduce GHG emissions and per-capita vehicle miles traveled. Must show progress towards state goal by 2050.



**Adaptation Measures** to improve resilience to climate impacts like flooding, heat, smoke, & wildfires, including with attention to natural areas and to 11 sectors.



**Attention to Vulnerable Populations** including but not limited to: racial or ethnic minorities; low-income populations; populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms; and populations of workers experiencing environmental harms.

[RCW 70A.02.010 \(14\)\(a\)\(b\)](#).

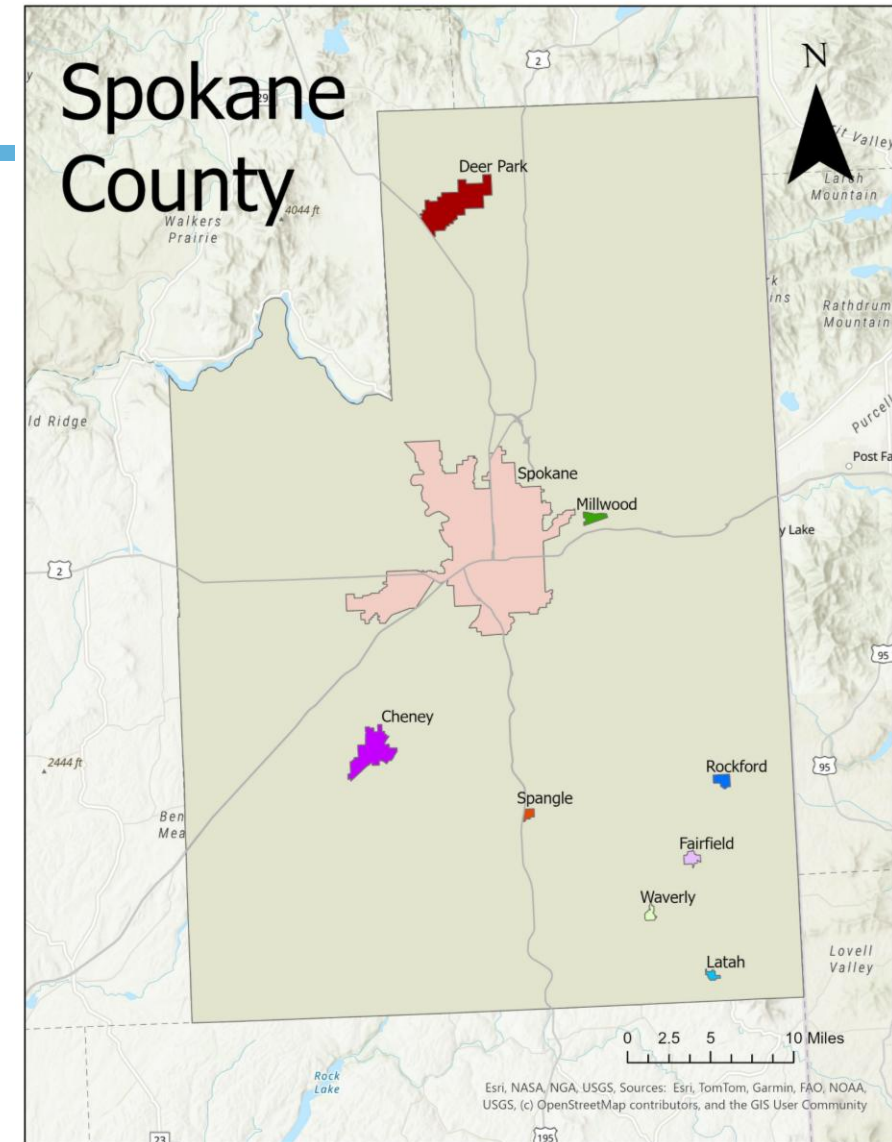


# Project Updates

Spokane County overall

# Progress to Date

<b>Policy Audit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Completed and shared with Planning Commission by email</li></ul>
<b>Climate Vulnerability Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Draft VA shared by email</li><li>Final VA and draft partner town VAs completed soon</li></ul>
<b>GHG Emissions Inventory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Completed</li></ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Climate Policy Technical Advisory Board</li><li>Broad workshops held in winter and spring 2025</li><li>Survey- nearly 450 responses</li></ul>
<b>Partner Town Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Had intro meetings with partner towns in summer</li><li>Scheduled discussions this fall with Planning Commissions/Councils</li></ul>



# Community Survey Highlights

- **Moderate to extreme concern** about wildfire (83%), wildfire smoke (80%), heat (66%), drought (66%), changes in streamflow and water quality (63%)
- **Most common impacts:** Changes to outdoor activities and events, having to stay indoors, mental or emotional stress, physical health, disruption to utilities
- **Top 3 resilience priorities:** protecting and enhancing the resilience of natural areas (43%), affordable and reliable energy (39%), and emergency preparedness (38%).
- **Top 3 GHG emission reduction priorities:** transitioning to renewable energy sources (33%), ensuring affordable housing (33%), and land use patterns that encourage compact development (32%)

# Example open-ended comments

“The **Spokane River ran dry** this summer. Our daily **AQI** has been higher than is comfortable. **Wildfires** every summer. Damaging **wind storms** nearly every fall. The reduced snow pack, etc. **Everything is connected, and the dominoes have started falling.**”

“As an **elder person with multiple severe health problems relating to heart lungs and stress** I'm extremely sensitive to smoke and stability in and around where I live. It is my hope that planners who allocate resources make errors on the side of being prepared for natural disasters.”

“Summertime and early fall **wildfire and smoke impact** is a big concern for me. I have witnessed wildfires from my home deck, and I have been **evacuated**. I have also had lifestyle impact from poor air quality. I work with **low-income residents** of Spokane County, and impacts to our **unhoused** community and lower income residents (who do not have air conditioning and/or air filtration) are also concerns.”

“Climate change is a made up excuse to implement **new regulation and laws**. It also lines the pockets of those implementing such regulation and laws.”

“I am very concerned about the **electrical grid**. As the needs for electricity grow, the grid has not kept up. We are headed towards the potential of some **major power outages** with the continued **rise in temperatures** joined by the increased need for electricity.”

“We are watching as more **development** happens without proper infrastructure, **fire danger** becomes greater, the **Spokane river runs dry, snowpack** is often diminished, **smoke** pollutes our air and prohibits outdoor activities, wildlife is threatened, etc.”



# Focus on Millwood

# Policy Audit- Existing Policies

- See Millwood's **Housing and Land Use Elements** for policies that promote affordable and accessible housing near transportation developments.
- See the **Essential Public Facilities and Utilities Elements** for policies that promote sustainable management of stormwater infrastructure to promote ecosystem and community health.
- See the **Land Use and Parks & Recreation Elements** for policies that promote the use of best available science and habitat restoration efforts.
- See the **Transportation Element** for policies that promote a safe, accessible, and reliable transportation network.



# Key extreme weather and climate impacts

- **Increased annual temperature:** Higher annual temperatures with an expected 9.5°F temperature increase by 2100 and more frequent extreme heat events.
- **Wildfire and wildfire smoke:** Increased wildfire activity and risk from extreme heat and heightened drought conditions, raising wildfire and wildfire smoke impacts.
- **Changing precipitation:** Changes to precipitation patterns, with more winter precipitation falling as rain rather than snow, increasing streamflow and risk of flooding.

# Impacts on Health and Well-Being



# Impacts on Infrastructure Community, and Natural Resources

- **Flood risk** to housing and commercial areas
- **Stress on infrastructure** from flooding, wildfire smoke, heat
- Wildfire smoke **degrades quality of life**
- Limited tree cover and extensive paved areas **intensify heat exposure.**



# Resilience Opportunities



## Resilience Opportunities

Millwood has several opportunities to strengthen resilience:

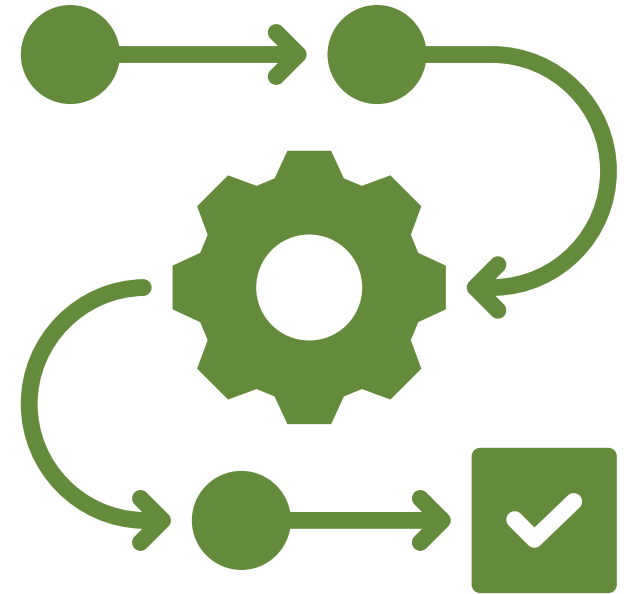
- ✓ **Transportation options:** As a busy commuter and freight corridor, Millwood can reduce risks by improving traffic management on Trent Avenue, expanding sidewalks and bike paths, improving public transit access, and planning detour routes to keep emergency response moving during floods or severe weather.
- ✓ **Spokane River stewardship:** Restoring riparian areas along the Spokane River with trees and native plants can both reduce flood and erosion risks and improve water quality.
- ✓ **Protecting health:** With many drivers and outdoor workers in Millwood, providing shaded rest areas, clean-air shelters, and hydration stations at community facilities could help residents cope with wildfire smoke and extreme heat.



# Goals and Policies

# Methodology

- Audited existing core, supportive, and reference document policies and identified gaps and opportunities. More details are available in the [Policy Audit Memo](#).
- Cross-walked draft policies with several sources:
  - Commerce Menu of Measures
  - Spokane Countywide Planning Policies (CPP)
  - Findings from Climate Vulnerability Assessment, GHG Inventory, and community survey.
- Assessed co-benefits and equity implications of policies.
- Integrate your feedback



# Resilience Sub-Element: Requirements



1. **Address natural hazards** created or aggravated by climate change, including sea level rise, landslides, flooding, drought, heat, smoke, wildfire, and other effects of changes to temperature and precipitation patterns;
2. Identify, protect, and enhance **natural areas** to foster climate resilience and **areas of vital habitat** for safe species migration;
3. Identify, protect, and enhance **community resilience** to climate impacts, including social, economic, and built-environment factors, which support adaptation to climate impacts consistent with **environmental justice**.

# Resilience Goals

## GOAL 1: Emergency Management

Strengthen Millwood's infrastructure and emergency response capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from extreme heat, wildfire, smoke, and flood events enhancing community safety, reliability, and resilience.

## GOAL 2: Ecosystems

Enhance Millwood's natural and built areas such as parks, streetscapes, and local waterways through tree planting, water conservation, and native landscaping to build resilience to climate hazards.

## GOAL 3: Partnership and Community

Strengthen partnerships and community capacity to prepare for and respond to climate-related hazards.



# Goal 1 Emergency Management and Public Health

**CE 1.1** Integrate climate hazard information, evacuation routes, shelter locations, and resources for vulnerable populations into emergency planning.

**CE 1.2** Coordinate with the County, local jurisdictions, first responders, schools, businesses, and community organizations to improve emergency alert systems, expand neighborhood preparedness programs, and ensure communication channels remain functional during power outages or other service disruptions.

**CE 1.3** Coordinate with Spokane County and other regional emergency management partners to strengthen housing and recovery support for residents displaced by climate-related disasters and expand safe, accessible, and affordable temporary housing, and by integrating mental and behavioral health services into disaster response and long-term recovery efforts.

**CE 1.4** Coordinate with the County and other partners and support programs that distribute and install cooling units and heat pumps, especially programs that prioritize subsidizing households with vulnerable residents (e.g., low-income seniors).

**CE 1.5** Support programs and resources to educate and protect residents during heat and wildfire smoke events, including resilience hubs, cooling centers, subsidies for in-home air conditioning, DIY air filters, and public outreach on heat safety and safe sheltering in place for residents who prefer to remain at home during emergencies.

**CE 1.6** Partner with agencies and support programs that mitigate risks from wildfire smoke particularly for at-risk community members (e.g., seniors and children), including providing personal protective equipment and filter fans or incentivizing infrastructure updates (e.g., HVAC updates and MERV 13 filters for air intake) for community facilities.

**CE 1.7** Partner with the County and Spokane Conservation District and other partners to expand free Firewise Risk Assessments for residents and increase education and outreach to homeowners, renters, and business owners about wildfire risk reduction and preparedness.



# Goal 2 Agriculture and Ecosystems

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# Goal 3 Community Infrastructure, Energy and Transportation

**CE 3.1** Expand energy resilience by supporting microgrids, renewable energy integration, and backup power systems for critical facilities. Partner with the County, utilities, and emergency management agencies to ensure that essential services (e.g. hospitals, emergency shelters, water systems) remain operational during outages.

**CE 3.2** Partner with local water purveyors and utilities to reduce water waste, improve operational resilience, and protect long-term access to clean water.

**CE 3.3** Enhance the resilience of the regional transportation system by addressing climate hazards in transportation planning, design, and maintenance to ensure safe, reliable, and sustainable access for residents, businesses, and emergency services.

**CE 3.4** Coordinate with the County and transportation authorities to strengthen roads, bridges, and drainage systems to withstand flooding from heavy rain events, rapid snowmelt, and changing freeze–thaw cycles.

**CE 3.5** Manage roadside vegetation and design road corridors to reduce wildfire ignition risks and maintain safe evacuation and emergency access routes.

**CE 3.6** Collaborate with regional partners to apply for grants that support local climate resilience projects.

**CE 3.7** Support programs that promote the weatherization of housing and buildings to protect residents against climate hazards and increase energy efficiency.





# Next Steps

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**Send additional feedback** to staff by 10/30

## Next steps:

- CPTAC on October 10/20
- Planning Commission (full)
- County Board of Commissioners
- Goal: Adoption and implementation

