



Community Development Department

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MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission
From: Emily Arteche, Director
Chris Green, Consulting Land Use Planning Manager, Otak
Date: June 3, 2024
Subject: Introduction to Comprehensive Plan Climate Element

INTRODUCTION

The Washington Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities planning under GMA to adopt a new comprehensive plan chapter (sometimes referred to as an “element”) addressing climate change and resilience. The Climate Element will be developed through a public process taking place through the remainder of 2024 into 2025.

BACKGROUND

Climate-related changes to the Growth Management Act (GMA) that are reflected in [HB 1181](#) (Chapter 228, Laws of 2023) include amendments to several mandatory elements with timeframes for applicability based on the periodic update schedule. The City must add a climate element that is comprised of a greenhouse gas emissions reduction sub-element as well as a resilience sub-element.

In January 2024, Commerce published [intermediate climate element planning guidance](#) and a list of more than 200 model climate goals and policies (Menu of Measures) that the City could integrate into the comprehensive plan as part of a 2025 amendment. The City Climate Change Element will take a separate form as a single new element. Existing elements such as housing, transportation, and land use that contain climate change related goals and policies will be identified and may be relocated to the new Element.

At the January 16, 2024, Planning Commission meeting the Commission decided that the draft Environmental Element should be developed without policies on climate change due to the release of State mandated Climate Change Element and the detailed guidance requiring more time to research and prepare for such goals and policies.

NEXT STEPS

At the June 3, 2024, meeting, staff and consultant Otak will present an overview of the GMA requirements for the Climate Element and planning process to develop this new comprehensive plan chapter.