

STAFF REPORT

Date: July 9, 2024

To: City Council and Planning Commission

From: Alyssa Jones Wood, Sustainability Coordinator



2025 Comprehensive Plan Update – Climate Element

On a ten-year cycle, the City is required to conduct a Growth Management Act periodic update of its Comprehensive Plan and related development regulations. In accordance with the Climate grant contract with the Washington Department of Commerce, the City must complete a draft of the new Climate Element by June 30, 2025.

The updated Comprehensive Plan will address diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the Plan and incorporate a large number of state-required changes addressing housing, climate change, and other topics.

The intent of the joint City Council and Planning Commission work session on July 9, 2024, is to discuss the City's approach to developing the new Climate Element as part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update.

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1 – New Requirements

On May 3, 2023, Governor Inslee signed into law HB 1181, which added a new climate change and resiliency goal to the Growth Management Act. The City will need to adopt a new Climate Element as part of 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update by December 31, 2025, to meet the state deadline.

The legislation includes the following key changes:

- Adds as climate mitigation sub-element to address greenhouse gas emissions reduction as part of a Climate Element that is mandatory for the City and would require actions to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled. The City is required to use 2022 as their emissions baseline year and set incremental targets that lead to achieving net zero emissions in 2050, consistent with Washington's statewide target.
- Adds a climate resilience sub-element as part of a Climate Element that is mandatory for the City. The Thurston Hazards Mitigation Plan, which was updated and adopted by the City in 2024, can be adopted, by reference, to satisfy the climate resilience sub-element requirements.
- Requires consideration of environmental justice as part of the development of a Climate Element to avoid worsening environmental health disparities.

2 – Growth Management Act – Climate Change and Resiliency Goal

The state Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW) requires that the City demonstrate that each Element in its Comprehensive Plan meets the relevant fifteen planning goals contained within the Act. The fifteen goals guide the development and adoption of the City's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.

The following is a summary of how the new Climate Element will need to meet the goal related to climate change and resiliency. The state legislature added this goal in 2023.

14. ***Climate change and resiliency.*** *Ensure that comprehensive plans, development regulations, and regional policies, plans, and strategies under RCW 36.70A.210 and chapter 47.80 RCW adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate; support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advance environmental justice.*

The Conservation Element, Land Use Element, and Transportation Plan of the Comprehensive Plan will need to address this as a new goal in coordination with the new Climate Element. A

new overarching Comprehensive Plan goal will address increasing climate resiliency by promoting sustainability, reducing pollution, promoting health habitats, and supporting clean air and water.

3 – Sub-Elements

The Climate Element will need to incorporate two sub-elements: climate mitigation, which addresses greenhouse gas reduction, and climate resilience.

A. Climate Mitigation

Climate mitigation addresses greenhouse gas emission reductions that involve actions taken to reduce or eliminate the emissions of greenhouse gases to reduce the rate and extent of climate change damage.

Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and any other gas or gases designated by the State Department of Ecology.

Increasing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are changing City's climate in ways that will impact both human and natural systems. In general, we can expect to experience hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters. These changes are anticipated to worsen existing hazards—like floods, landslides, and wildfires—and introduce new threats—like invasive plants, insects, and infectious diseases.

To ensure that the City significantly reduces local contributions to climate change, the Thurston Regional Planning Council, Thurston County, and the cities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater adopted the following greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets in 2021 as part of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (TCMP):

- Forty-five percent reduction below 2015 levels by 2030; and
- Eighty-five percent below 2015 levels by 2050.

The City adopted the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan in 2021, the actions of which will be updated and incorporated into the climate mitigation sub-element of the City's new Climate Element. Note that the Plan's goals and baseline are not consistent with the new statewide requirements for a 2022 baseline year and net-zero by 2050 goal.

The figures below are from the 2022 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory for Thurston County, completed in 2024. They show current greenhouse gas emissions, the emissions targets, and the breakdown of emissions by sector.

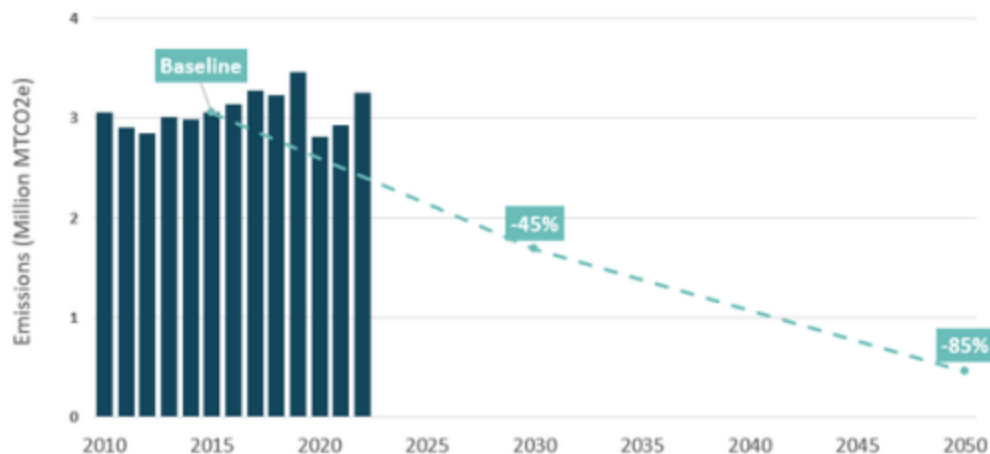


Figure 1. Total Emissions and Thurston County Climate Mitigation Plan Emission Reduction Targets.

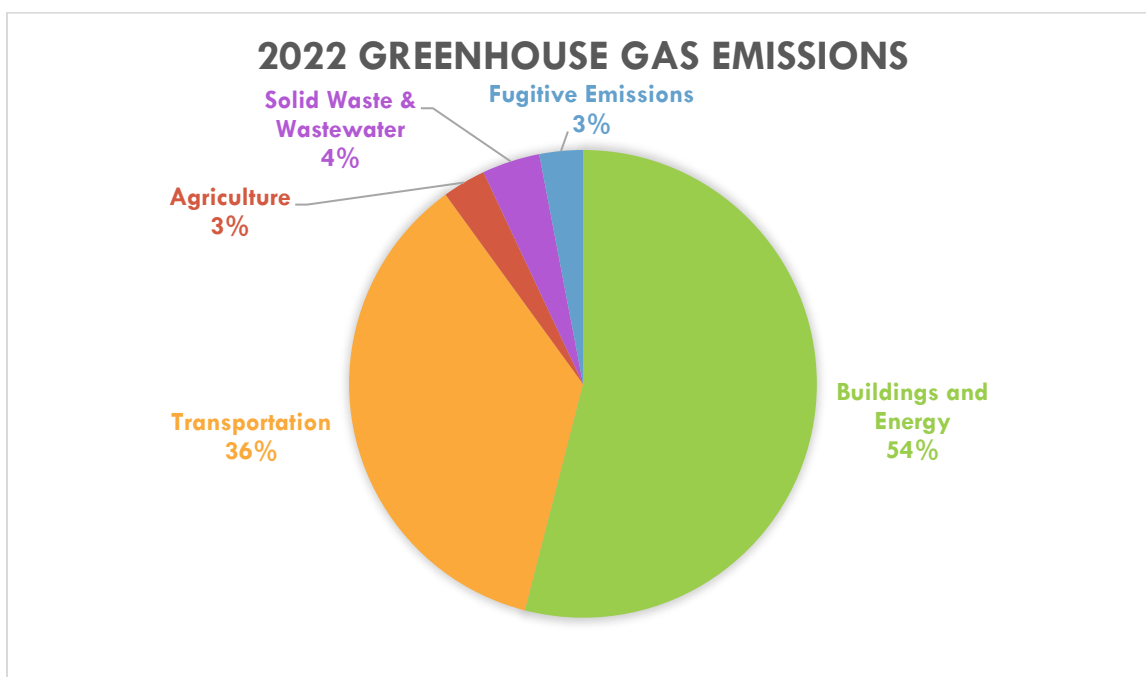


Figure 2. 2022 Emissions by Sector.

The State Department of Commerce has identified the following three pathways to meet the new state requirement for a climate mitigation sub-element.

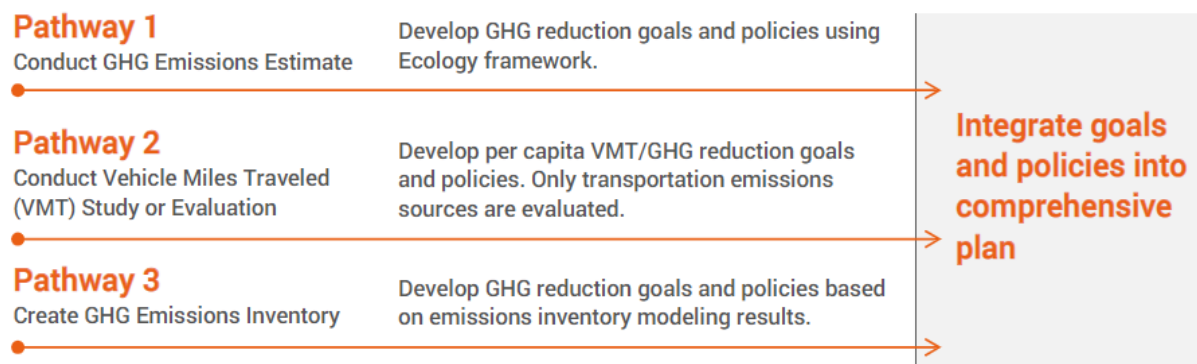


Figure 3. Pathway summary for GHG sub-element.

Staff will pursue pathway one and supplement the Tumwater GHG estimate with the 2022 Thurston County GHG Emissions Inventory recently completed by the Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative (TCMC). Department of Commerce staff have confirmed that method is acceptable for meeting requirements.

B. Climate Resilience

RCW 70A.65.010 defines climate resilience as:

“...the ongoing process of anticipating, preparing for, and adapting to changes in climate and minimizing negative impacts to our natural systems, infrastructure, and communities. For natural systems, increasing climate resilience involves restoring and increasing the health, function, and integrity of our ecosystems and improving their ability to absorb and recover from climate-affected disturbances. For communities, increasing climate resilience means enhancing their ability to understand, prevent, adapt, and recover from climate impacts to people and infrastructure.”

The State Department of Commerce has identified the following five step process to meet the new state requirement for a climate resilience sub-element.



Figure 4. Steps and pathways to integrate resilience into Comprehensive Plan.

The Thurston Hazards Mitigation Plan with the City of Tumwater annex was adopted by the City Council in 2024. The Thurston Hazards Mitigation Plan to date addressed Steps 1 through 3. The Thurston Hazards Mitigation Plan is in substantial conformance with the state guidance, so in Step 4, the City will be adopting the Plan, by reference, to satisfy the state climate resilience sub-element requirements.

In addition, the Thurston Regional Planning Council adopted the Thurston Climate Adaption Plan in 2018, the actions of which will be updated and incorporated into the climate resilience sub-element of the City's new Climate Element.

Staff and consultants will also utilize the Department of Commerce Climate Element Workbook to ensure any gaps between state requirements and previously developed content from the Thurston Hazards Mitigation Plan and/or Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan will be investigated and addressed.

4. Environmental Justice

The new state legislation requires that the Climate Element must:

- Prioritize greenhouse gas reductions in overburdened communities.
- Prioritize climate resilience in communities that will disproportionately suffer from compounding environmental impacts.

In addition, HB 1181 requires that as part of the required Comprehensive Plan periodic update process that:

- The Land Use Element avoids worsening environmental health disparities.
- The Transportation Plan ensures multimodal levels achieve environmental justice goals.

5. Transportation and Land Use Changes

In addition, the new state legislation requires other transportation and land use changes such as:

- Requiring that the Washington State Department of Transportation maintain a summary of the per capita vehicle miles traveled for cities and the unincorporated portions of counties. This resource will in turn support the required updates to the Transportation Plan and the new Climate Element.
- Adds multimodal concurrency.
- Must accommodate all users "safely, reliably and efficiently."

6. Progress Update

A. Consultant

On April 29, 2024, the City entered into a Service Provider Agreement with EXP, Inc. to engage the community, develop a Climate Element and related Development Code amendments, and assist with the adoption and state acceptance process. EXP was selected from a competitive bid process. City staff and EXP are meeting on a bi-weekly basis to manage the project.

B. Community Engagement Strategy

On May 30, 2024, EXP produced a first draft of a Climate Element Engagement Strategy, intended as an addendum to the overall Comprehensive Plan Engagement Strategy. Goals for this engagement strategy include:

- Understand why and how residents think services and processes need to change and develop to increase GHG reduction and climate resilience.
- Engage the broader community, ensuring sufficient representation from diverse groups through in-person, virtual, or hybrid outreach and both digital and printed resources.
- Meet people where they are and ensure that all engagement efforts are accessible and equitable. This means not excluding anyone with certain health, physical, or working conditions, and it requires that needs around language, mobility, or family care are thoughtfully addressed.
- Keep the energy positive and focus on success stories, while also stressing the need for action and potential risks.
- Support clear and consistent messaging to current and potential stakeholders that communicates the importance of the Climate Element.
- Be responsive to community insights and allow for shared influence between communities and the organizations that serve them.
- Focus on reducing inequalities and fostering greater community ownership of the Climate Element which will lead to equitable outcomes to benefit frontline communities.
- Seek how best to intentionally allocate resources to overcome the cumulative impacts of institutional racism on historically underserved and under-represented people.
- Articulate Tumwater's role as a climate leader, aligning with County and State priorities and harnessing local experience and expertise.
- Position Tumwater City staff and residents to make better-informed decisions, driving smarter investments so that the City develops safely in a healthier environment, even with growing climate impacts.

The draft Climate Element Public Engagement Strategy Addendum is included as Attachment B.

C. Climate Policy Advisory Team

The Department of Commerce Intermediate guidance suggests forming a Climate Policy Advisory Team (CPAT) composed of community volunteers and other stakeholders as the primary advisory committee for the Climate Element. To develop the recruitment list for the CPAT, staff focused on bringing four categories of stakeholders to the table. Staff initially developed a list of forty-six potential CPAT candidates and reached out to an initial group of fifteen via invitation email or phone call on May 9, 2024.

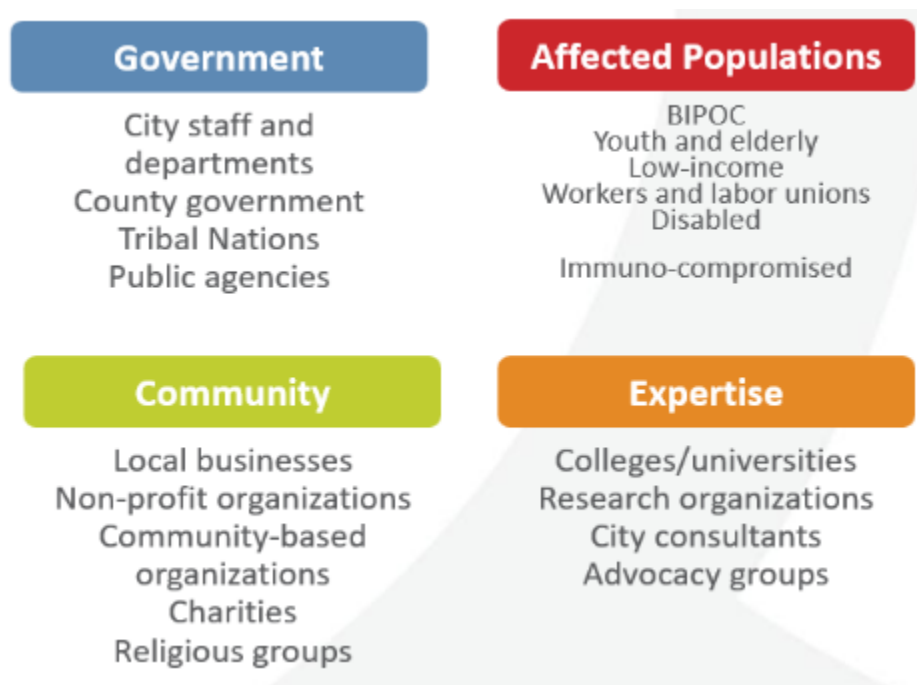


Figure 5. Categories of stakeholders for CPAT.

Thirteen CPAT invitees accepted the invitation to join the CPAT. Current CPAT members include:

CPAT Member	Category	Affiliation (if any)
Anna Stusser	Affected Populations	SEIU775 Service Employees International Union
Anthony Levenda	Expertise	Evergreen Center for Climate Action & Sustainability
Bernie Gertje	Government	City of Tumwater Transportation Engineer
Clint Bryson	Affected Populations	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) 76 Leadership
Gordon Wheat	Expertise	Physicians for Social Responsibility
Graham Clumpner	Community	Oil Gas Action Network; Tumwater Resident

CPAT Member	Category	Affiliation (if any)
Janine Linsey	Expertise	Thurston Climate Action Team; Tumwater Property Owner
Jessie Simmons	Community	Olympia Master Builders
Kerri Wilson	Government	Intercity Transit Walk N Roll; Tumwater Resident
Lynn Fitz-Hugh	Expertise	Restoring Earth Connections; Friends of Trees
Morris McKellery	Affected Populations	Tumwater Resident
Rachael Childs	Affected Populations	Homes First
Taylor Wener	Affected Populations	IBEU 46 Rank and File Member

The CPAT held its first meetings on June 11 and June 18, 2024. The first CPAT meeting focused on introductions of the group, the Climate Element requirements, feedback on the Climate Element Public Engagement Strategy Addendum draft and planning an upcoming Open House.

Some of the feedback provided by the CPAT in this first meeting and how staff are working to include those suggestions include:

CPAT Feedback	Staff Intentions
The open house needs to feel welcoming - advertise that food will be provided for attendees and hold the open house at a location other than an official City building.	Staff are committed to providing food at the Open House and advertising that food will be provided. Staff is looking into alternative locations to host the Open House that are not government buildings.
Engagement needs to be more than one open house. Examples: table at parks, table at the Department of Social and Health Services, and/or door-knock in neighborhoods that are more disadvantaged and/or overburdened.	Staff and CPAT members will work together to identify opportunities for tabling and/or door-knocking and will work on that outreach together. WRS Staff has a tabling event scheduled in the summer at the Tumwater satellite location of the Thurston County Food Bank.
Focus more on the urban forests of Tumwater as part of both mitigation and adaptation to climate change.	The contributions of urban forests will be included at Open House tables on mitigation and adaptation.
Include Youth.	Staff has reached out to the Thurston Youth Climate Coalition about attending/facilitating a special youth caucus at the Open House.

CPAT Feedback	Staff Intentions
Distribute a save the date flyer that clearly communicates how people will be expected to participate and how the City will be accountable to what they hear.	Staff and the consultant team are working to develop a save the date flyer with this information. Staff and CPAT members will distribute the flyer early throughout the community once it is finalized.
Provide space both for table activities and a large group listening session. Provide options for people to engage who may be less likely to speak aloud.	Staff and the consultant team will incorporate a large group listening session at the end of the open house agenda. Boxes with paper/pen will be available for community members to engage with without speaking if that is their preference. The online open house will also be advertised as an option for sharing feedback outside of the one-night Open House event.

D. Climate Element Open House

Staff will develop two options for participating in the Climate Element Open House: one virtual and one in-person. The in-person Open House will be held on August 14, 2024, from 7 to 9 p.m. The location is yet to be determined at this time, given feedback from the CPAT. Staff will be creating an online registration for the in-person event to get an accurate headcount for supplies and food. The online Open House will be launched on August 14, 2024, and will remain accessible until at least August 31, 2024. Both open houses will contain the same content and opportunities to engage.

7 – Schedule

The Climate Element is now engaged in the third stop along the pathway pictured below (Figure 6). Work is underway to implement the equity-driven public engagement Addendum and produce engagement results. Concurrently, EXP is working on document review and the development of a Gap Analysis which will be complete by the end of September 2024.

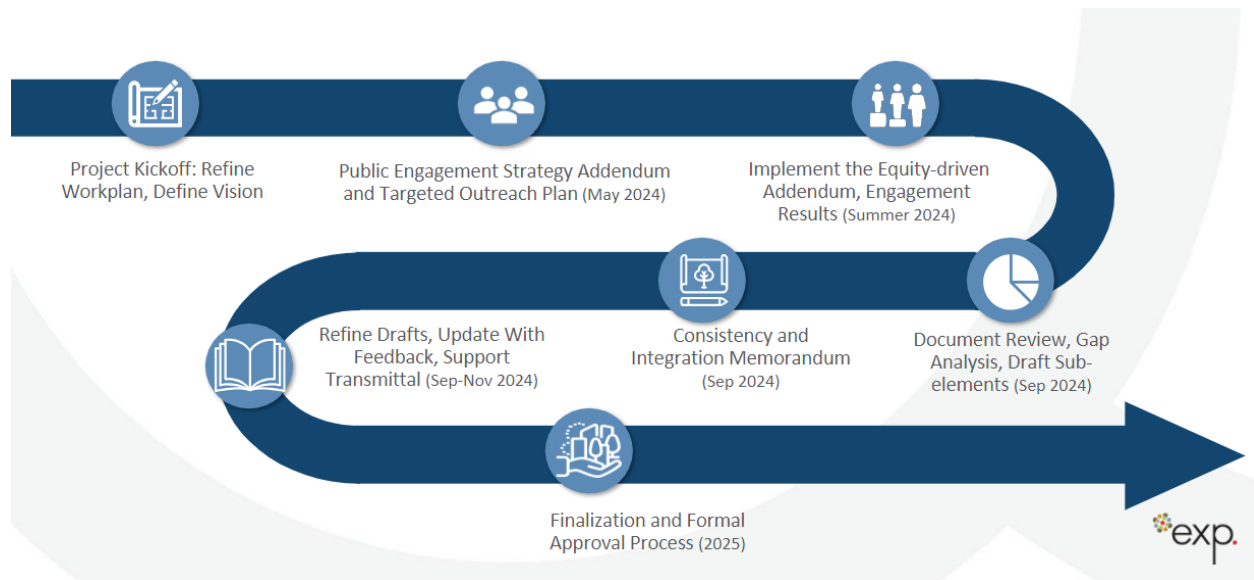


Figure 6. Timeline of Climate Element

Staff will engage the City Council and the Planning Commission again in November 2024 with the draft Element. Time has been set aside on the General Government Committee meeting agenda for July 10, 2024, for any immediate follow up on the City Council and Planning Commission discussion of the Climate Element at their joint work session.

Appendix A – Guidance

The State Department of Commerce has provided guidance specific to the periodic update on their Periodic Update webpage.

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/periodic-update/>

www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/growth-management-topics

The State Department of Commerce has a webpage for Climate Element guidance.

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/growth-management-topics/climate-change-2/>

In addition, the Puget Sound Regional Council is conducting a series of workshops on a variety of topics related to the periodic update.

www.psrc.org/our-work/passport-2044-comprehensive-plan-workshop-series

The Municipal Research Services Center has a Comprehensive Planning webpage as well as webpage addressing the new legislative requirements.

<https://mrsc.org/getdoc/d7964de5-4821-4c4d-8284-488ec30f8605/Comprehensive-Planning.aspx>

[MRSC - New Legislation Related to Climate and the Natural Environment](#)