

Climate Impact Advisory Committee
APPROVED Meeting Minutes



Date: April 1st, 2021
Location: Zoom

QUORUM	Y
Members Present	
William Bethel	x
Ginny Broadhurst	x
Kaylee Galloway	x
Sue Gunn	x
Steve Harrell	x
David Kershner	x
Katherine Kissinger	x
Ellyn Murphy	x
Imran Sheikh	x
Phil Thompson	x
Eddy Ury	x
STAFF Chris Elder	x

1) Call to Order/Roll Call

2) Public Comment

Adrienne Hegedus: Port of Bellingham
Jon Hutchings: Public Works Director
Jack Wellman: PSE, Public Policy
Lethal Coe: Senior Planner
Dave Hostetler: Committee volunteer
Mark Buford: Northwest Clean Air Agency
Izzie Lund

**3) Vulnerability Assessments (& discussion on inclusion in Climate Action Plan) –
Chris Elder**

(slide 4) Cascadia provided vulnerability assessments on 4 topics.

- Transportation
- Fresh Water
- Ecosystems & Species
- Land Use and Agriculture

(slide 5) function of the sensitivity from exposure to changes and ability to adapt to those changes

(slide 6) each area is ranked in the exposure. What amount is in harms way, what portion is at risk, what is the value of assets at risk

(slide 7) sensitivity how resilient is the asset, what is the consequence

(slide 8) adaptive capacity, what is the capacity for the county to prepare for impacts, what is the cost, time? Horizon

(slide 9) Vulnerability assessment process Exposure + sensitivity – capacity = vulnerability

(slide 10) each of the categories came back with a medium or high rating indicating that the impacts from climate change in our county will be significant.

Ellyn Asked how we should incorporate these overviews in our CAP? She suggested the vulnerability assessments might be a great tool for community engagement.

Steve Suggested it should be in a separate section, but he cited concerns about the length of the report. He said if we do include that information from the sheets in the main text, that we should include the methodology.

Phil said that we should identify the thresholds for high vs medium vulnerability. He said that they could add info from the transportation vulnerability assessment in their chapter

Katie said that she liked the suggestion of adding the information from the vulnerability assessments into their respective sections. She mentioned that while the report is getting long, in reality, most people will not read the entire report cover to cover, but skip to the sections most relevant to them or their businesses. She suggested a good location within the chapters to add in information from the vulnerability assessments would be in the beginning in the background section.

Steve mentioned that the coloring on the graphic might be easier to understand if we altered it. Suggesting that we use colors like green for higher adaptive capacity. He also said that we need to explain the methodology behind determining the terminology in the graphics to make the report clearer

Ellyn Suggested adding in methodology in the appendices

Sue said that this would be useful information to help guide county staff.

Ellyn said that if anyone writing a chapter thinks that the results of the VA are worth mentioning in your section feel free to add it. We will write up the methodology to put in the appendix

Steve said that in regards to mitigation and adaptation that could be information that could be useful in the Implementation section to help tie it all together.

Dave offered to help with section one and motioned to approve the March meeting minutes from the meeting on the 4th. Suggested a revision on page three and zoning vs purchasing easements and changing the wording to industrial farming.

Kaylee sent a clarifying comment on the meeting minutes via email relating to the budget.

Dave on Page 9 reference to SME asked for the definition

Chris Subject Matter Expert

Sue Seconded

Katie mentioned that the minutes from the Special meeting will be sent out this weekend for review.

4) Discussion of Climate Action Plan Outline & Schedule – Ellyn Murphy

Ellyn stressed that implementation is going to have to be swift and that we will need to shift to supporting the implementation plan asap.

- Focus on industry transformation because they have the highest emissions and largest impact on the local economy
- PUD broadband effort

Phil said that the broadband initiative was mentioned in the transportation section, but acknowledged that there is some overlap in the electricity and buildings section

Ellyn said that mentioning it in multiple areas can help to stress its importance

Steve mentioned sections of the roadmap relating to funding and communication, he asked for input from anyone on funding sources, communication and education ideas.

Suggested monitoring what is happening in legislation, specifically citing President Biden's new infrastructure plan and following the Washington State Legislature.

Eddy in Zoom Chat: I'd be happy to join a subcommittee meeting to discuss Steve's questions next week

Imran in Zoom Chat: I keep an eye on this occasionally for DOE funding opportunities: <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/>

Phil said this should be included in the climate office's job description. He also said that in regards to the state legislature, that we will know the fate of many of the proposed bills by the end of the month.

Ellyn said that congress might vote on the infrastructure plan in July. She said we should look into Biden's infrastructure plan and how it would support climate actions that we are proposing. She mentioned some from the Electricity and Buildings section that are being proposed.

Ellyn reviewed the planned schedule

April 9th deliverables to Steve

April 16th draft chapters to text editor

April 30th Rough draft to county leadership for review, workshop for chapter leads on short presentations of each chapter

June 1st presentation to council as a whole

Steve in zoom chat: Thanks to both of you @eddy and @imran. Maybe we can set up a time tonight, so we don't let this slip. At least the two of you are not directly involved with the report sections, so you might have little more time than some of the people who are polishing drafts :-)

Ellyn suggested reaching out to council members to brief them on updates to the plan to help familiarize them with what we are proposing.

Katie asked about timing of the presentation

Chris said that is typically between 9am and 4pm

Dave asked about how we will make sure comments from public are heard and implemented.

Ellyn said there would be a system to send comments directly to relevant section writers.

Phil said that the major unknown factor at this time is not knowing how many comments we will receive, and that directing relevant comments as they come in would definitely help.

Dave said that we should have a response process for each comment to ensure the members of the public feel heard.

Phil said that depending on how many comments we receive it may not be necessary to respond to each one individually

Dave suggested grouping substantively similar comments

Ellyn said she will ask the dept. of commerce how they responded to the state energy strategy, she mentioned that all of their comments were publicly posted

Ginny said that this is time consuming and that it is usually done by professional paid staff

Eddy in Zoom Chat: I don't see a problem with responding to all comments in some form

Mark Buford in Zoom Chat: I'm happy to talk about how NWCAA addresses public comments.

Dave in Zoom chat: Sounds good.

Katie asked where these comments will be posted.

Chris said they would be on the county website. He also mentioned we could set it up via Google Survey.

Lethal mentioned moving the comment period to give us more time for commenting

Chris said that a good timeline would be between May 25 – June 23rd

Dave mentioned Mark's zoom comment

Mark said that they respond to every public comment and they do group comments

Steve asked if we intend to update the report based on comments that we receive?

Ellyn said yes we are open to changing the document if there is a great suggestion

Chris said that this is not a state mandated plan so we are not required to have a public comment period. We are choosing to have one because we value the opinion of the public.

a) Section 1, Climate Change in Whatcom County (outline of topics) – Ellyn

b) Section 2, Built Environment Introduction – Ellyn

Dave in Zoom Chat: The Guiding Principles section talks about equity

Steve in Zoom Chat: Equity, transparency, and accountability

Dave in Zoom Chat: Right. Thanks, Steve.

i) Electricity & Buildings – Ellyn

Introduction

Goals and strategies

Top-down discussion of strategies and key approaches

-Section on buildings as grid assets

-Moving to net zero buildings

-electricity & buildings projects

From Mark Buford to Everyone: 06:45 PM

EPA also has a Gas Star program to reduce methane emissions from pipelines. (Williams has large natural gas pipelines and a compressor station in Whatcom)

ii) **Industry – Sue Gunn**

Sue made a lot of adjustments to her section after receiving feedback on her previous suggestions which heavily relied on green hydrogen.

Intro. (current state of things)

References to the State ghg regulator authority

County leadership including emissions by source and facility

How the state energy strategy ties into our report

Goals & strategies

- holding bp to their promises to mitigate climate change impacts
- switching industries to using renewable energy from the PUD
- workforce dev and support
- R&D at the county level

Conclusion

Steve asked if the PUD had enough energy to supply the industries?

Sue said that the PUD uses BPA

Eddy

Phil said that we will likely have a cap-and-trade approach in regards to industries, or the carbon tax which would put a price on carbon. He said that by the end of the month we will know what has passed so we should wait and address that in this section.

Kaylee: said that she is more familiar with WA strong there are exemptions for EITEs (Energy intensive trade exposed), ag, and timber
Eddy Alcoa is a local example of an EITE

iii) **Transportation – Phil Thompson**

Intro. (current state of things)

Goals, strategies, actions (table and discussion)

Appendix

Phil commented about setting a standard for how each chapter should be structured.

Ellyn said that our priority should be in the main section rather than the appendix

Phil asked if the discussion of the strategy approaches should be in the main body of the chapter

Ellyn said it should

Phil asked if we should discuss each individual action item

Ellyn said no, since many actions are self-explanatory

Phil said that he has tried to explain the value of each action and asked for feed back if he wrote too much

Ellyn suggested bringing out important information in the main body of the chapter, specifically we should be referencing the health and safety aspect of these in our chapters

Steve said that he supports the idea of incorporating health and safety in each chapter

Ellyn discussed some of the provisions of health and safety from the electricity and buildings chapter.

Phil said that he just updated his chapter today

Sue ran into the problem of insufficient data in her section in regards to health and safety in the area specifically relating to toxic air pollutants

Eddy asked if she referred to CO2 or toxic emissions

Sue said toxic emissions

Phil said in relation to transport. About emissions in regards to health and safety relating to climate change. He said there is an EJ aspect to transportation health effects as well due to higher quantities of low-income communities of color living near heavily trafficked areas

Sue said that it is unlikely that there would be support for a study on industrial air pollution

Eddy said we shouldn't assume that there wouldn't be support for a study on industrial emissions

iv) Waste – Ellyn

Intro (current system, clear path

Goal

-strategies

Katie offered to help with the waste section if time allows

v) Land Use – Kaylee Galloway

Intro

Goals

Summarized strategy table

Strategy discussion & key actions

-built & natural environments

Conclusion

Appendix

Ellyn asked about how Kaylee is prioritizing the key actions

Kaylee said that she is not prioritizing them yet

Ellyn said that the council might appreciate if we prioritized it

Ellyn mentioned graphics development

c) Section 3, Natural Environment Introduction – Chris & Katie

Intro

Overarching goals

Co-benefits

Discussion of goals & strategies

-description of specific actions

Steve said that we will have the high priority actions in the timeline for the implementation

d) Section 4, Implementation Roadmap – Steve Harrell

office of climate action

role of CIAC

financing the climate actions

timelines

conclusion

Phil in Zoom Chat: In the transportation section discussion of individual actions, we have mentioned that the Office of Climate Action would be the instrument for accomplishing or coordinating several of the actions.

5) Text Editing and Graphics Scope of Work – Chris

Chris said that we have approval for a contract with a graphics designer, and an editing service.

6) Adjourn

Meeting ended at 7:42pm

Next meeting scheduled for May 6, 2021

Recorded By: Katherine Kissinger, contact kissinger.katherine@gmail.com for edits to the draft.

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