



# Climate Action Planning & Effective Strategies Across Washington State

APA WA 2023 Conference Presentation

Image source: Karsten Winegart, Unsplash

Presented by:





# Agenda

- Overview & Introductions (10 min)
- Moderated panel discussions:
  - Speed Round (20 min)
  - Panel Discussion (20 min)
- Audience Q and A (25 min)



Image source: Caleb Riston, Unsplash

# Objectives



Overview climate planning in the state and effective strategies.



Discuss creation of the Commerce Guidebook especially high performing strategies (Menu of Measures).



Share examples from a westside and eastside city including benefits and hurdles.



Share notes from the field and key messages for communities of all sizes.

# Introductions

## Our Panel



Department of Commerce

Sarah Fox



City of Pullman

RJ Lott



City of Vancouver

Rebecca Small

## Our Moderators



BERK Consulting

Lisa Grueter, AICP



Cascadia Consulting

Nicole Gutierrez

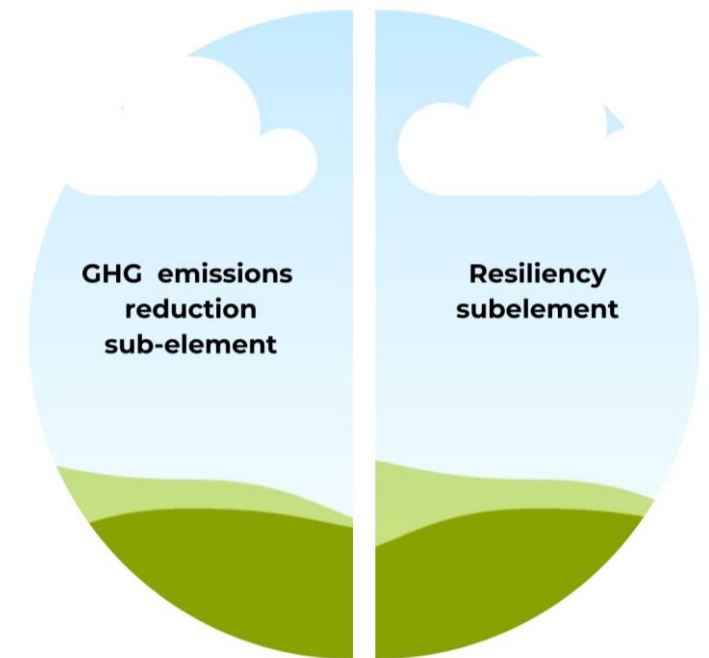
# Climate Change and Resiliency Element

## GHG Reduction subelement:

- Result in reductions in overall greenhouse gas emissions generated by transportation and land use;
- Result in reductions in per capita vehicle miles traveled; and
- Prioritize reductions **that benefit overburdened communities** to maximize the co-benefits of reduced air pollution and environmental justice.

## Resilience subelement:

- Identify, protect, and enhance natural areas to foster resiliency;
- Identify, protect, and enhance community resiliency;
- Address natural hazards created or aggravated by climate change; and
- Prioritize actions that **benefit overburdened communities** most impacted by natural hazards due to climate change.



**For more:** Climate Change Planning - Responding to the GMA's New Requirements  
Session 7D | Friday | 9:30 - 10:45 AM



# Creating the WA State's Climate Planning Guide

## Collaboration

- Six state agencies
- Three consultant contracts
- 82 planners from cities, counties, non-profits and consultant firms
- WWU Student Project
- Pilot Program to test and vet the resilience guidance

## Early Guidance

- Multiple options
- Prioritization
- Environmental justice
- Effectiveness of a climate measure differs by jurisdiction



# Pullman & Climate Resiliency Policy Development

- Pullman was a **pilot jurisdiction** testing the Climate Resilience sub-element framework.
- Pullman's foundations for climate change started in the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2021.
- Focused on a climate vulnerability framework regarding extreme heat (e.g. health, shade/trees, and transit).
- Worked with consultants to develop draft goals and policies by sector. City is in progress with revisions, adoption, and implementation.



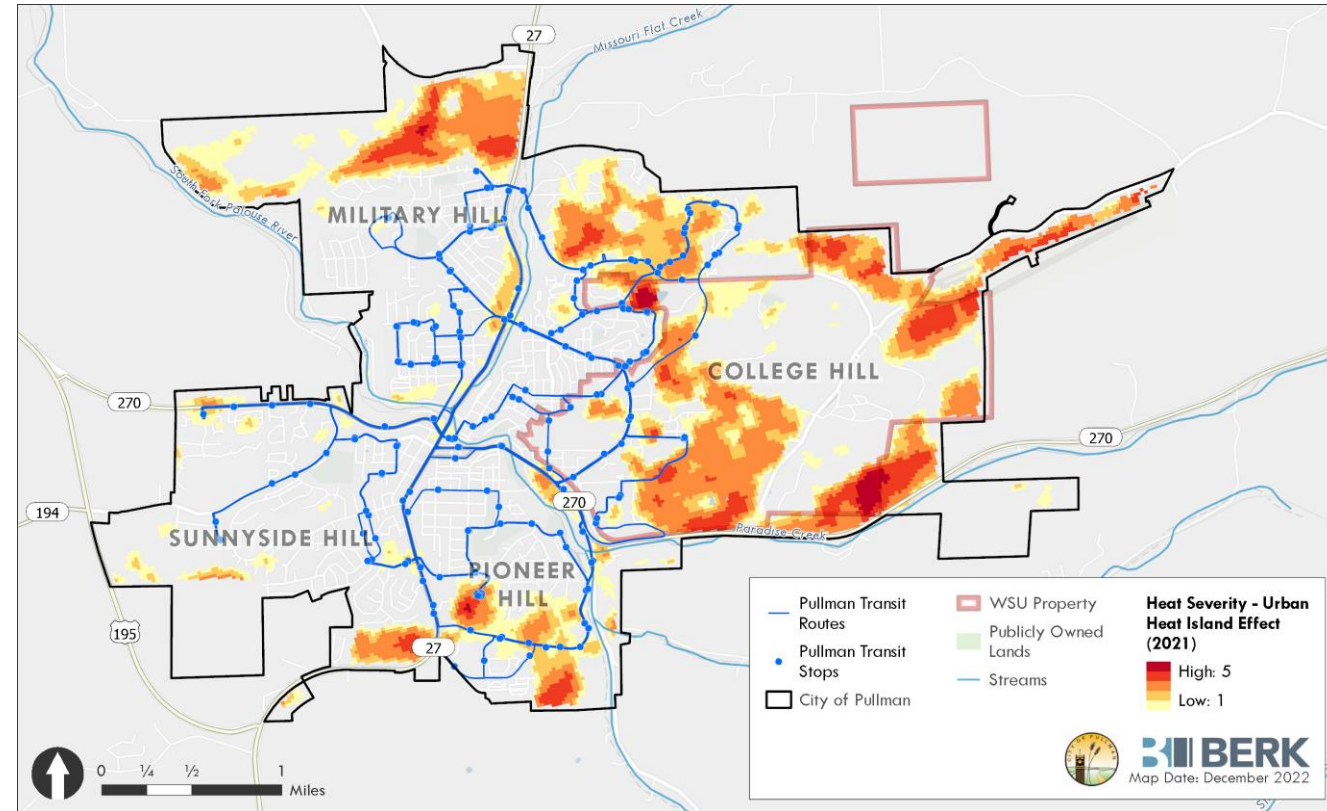
# Vulnerability: Heat Islands and Transit Routes

## ▪ **Baseline:**

- Comprehensive Plan
  - Vision: City needs to act on climate change.
  - Plan has some relevant policies.
- Have a natural hazards plan.
- Pilot reviewed Comp Plan and other system plans.

## ▪ **Draft Policy Example with Model Guidance**

- **Policy LU 15.9** Establish programs to plant and maintain trees throughout the city to promote a well-managed and healthy urban forest. Prioritize plantings in rights of way, parks, parking lots, and other areas subject to urban heat island effects with populations vulnerable to extreme heat (see LU 14.7).





# Vancouver's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals



## GHG Reduction Targets

**2025:** 80% reduction in municipal GHG emissions

**2030 :** 80% reduction in GHG emissions by the Vancouver community

**2040:** Carbon neutrality by both municipal operations and the Vancouver community

\*Relative to baseline year 2007

# Vancouver's early climate action priorities

As directed by Council:

- Aggressively cut GHGs
- Protect vulnerable residents
- Demonstrate City leadership
- Ensure a just transition to a carbon-free future







## Areas of agreement

- Trees

## Areas of lively community discussion

- Power sources for buildings
- Green building policies
- Land use changes
- Changes to parking policy
- Changing roadway design
- Turf lawns
- EV infrastructure
- Alternative fuels
- Two-stroke engine transition

# Moving forward - Vancouver's next steps

- Growth Management Grants
- Integrating CAF into Comp Plan and Transportation System Plan
- Green Building Policy
- Early compliance with WA Clean Building Standards
- Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan update
- City-wide EV strategy
- Climate Youth Leadership Program





# Consultant Notes from the Field

## Early Policy Development

- Determine capacity and needs for developing a Climate Element
- Create a shared understanding of climate mitigation and adaptation policy and community priorities
- Identify stakeholders (both internal and external) to engage throughout the planning process

## During Policy Development

- Tailor messaging to fit each community's unique characteristics and needs
- Ensure inclusive and equitable engagement to build buy-in and understanding
- Emphasize the importance of a long-term vision to create resilient communities



# Consultant Notes from the Field

## Looking Forward

- Continued public engagement
- Collaboration across departments
- Budget considerations, financial planning, and capacity building
- Adaptive management





# The Continuum



- Hazard Planning
- Some Community Interest Groups

- Some Assessments (Climate Vulnerability or GHG)
- Some Engagement

- Climate & Resiliency Element
- Climate Action Plan or Sustainability Plan
- Program Staff & Resources

# Unsure about Climate Change

...but agree there's a need to do something about it.

## Woodland, a Pilot City

“Where does the data come from?”

Concern about basis and scale of data.



## **Productive Discussions and Questions**

“Why we need to evacuate irrelevant...is the City prepared?”

*Community members agreed city is not prepared.*

**Risks of Flooding:** “There was a flood, and the wall didn’t work. ...52% of population live on the other side of that flood wall.”

**Ideas:** “Scott Hill Road – that can be a good example of connectivity issue. Can walk that road or drive on that road to evacuate.”



# Unsure about Climate Change

## ...what will be required?

### Woodland, Planning Commission Audience

**Question:** What does "encourage and promote" mean? Is there pressure? Incentives?

**Staff Response:** City can incentivize ... like make some permits free or half off. Reduce bureaucracy to make things more feasible.

### Woodland, Planning Commission Audience

**Concern:** ...we're seeing green energy fail. If we are going to have a backup, we should have something that is reliable.

**Staff Response:** Will see good proof of concept with the new library being built.



### **Policy Approach**

- Build on existing 2016 Comp Plan policies.
- Target changes to amend or add 2-4 goals and policies per sector - not a "big city" approach.
- Align with other City planning efforts, e.g. housing, flooding, etc.

# Climate Change is happening ...and we are not moving fast enough.

## City of Kenmore

“Can we accelerate the [greenhouse gas emissions reduction] timeline?” - *Commissioner*  
“50% Greenhouse Gas reduction by 2030, with Net Zero by 2050 is too little, too late.” - *Community Member. Many Commissioners agreed targets are not aggressive enough.*



## Response

- Incorporated commissioner recommendations that achieving net zero emissions should be **accelerated** and reflected in a future Climate Action Plan.
- Recommended policies that seek to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions "as soon as feasible".
- Prioritized policies that would have the biggest impact on community GHG emissions.



# Climate Change is happening

...and community engagement and environmental justice are policy priorities.

## City of Kenmore

“Education [related to climate action] is key for engaging future generations” - *Commissioner*

“I love bringing our community in, and giving meaningful opportunities to dialogue and be involved in important decisions” -

*Commissioner*



## Response

- Included policies that prioritize community engagement and create equitable opportunities for all community members to learn about climate impacts, influence policy decisions, and take action.
- Conducted an Equity Assessment on policies included in the draft Climate Action Element that examined the intended and unintended impacts on people in overburdened communities.
- Arrived at a list of equity considerations for the City’s review and incorporated into the final policies.

# Early Climate Element Planning Grants



## Vulnerability Assessments

- Bainbridge Island
- Bellevue
- Burien
- Covington
- Enumclaw
- Issaquah
- Maple Valley
- Marysville
- Pierce County
- Puyallup
- Seattle



## GHG & VMT Reduction

- Bothell
- Federal Way
- Gig Harbor
- Kenmore
- King County
- Kitsap County
- Lake Stevens
- Lakewood
- Mercer Island
- Redmond
- Renton
- Sammamish
- Snohomish County
- Woodinville



## Vulnerability Assessment + GHG & VMT Reduction

- Eatonville
- Tacoma

## Pilot Programs

- Port Angeles
- Pullman
- Woodland



# Audience Participation

## Poll-Everywhere PLACEHOLDER

What is your favorite climate action?

For climate planning with your community:

- What are looking forward to learning?
- Who are you planning to engage?
- What are you most concerned about?



# Panelist Follow-Up



# Audience Q & A



# Contact List

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