

Olympia 2045: Climate Element Phase 3 City Committee Feedback Summary

April 2025 – December 2025

Introduction

In 2023, the Washington State Legislature passed HB118, which added a climate goal to the Growth Management Act (GMA) and established a requirement for local jurisdictions to include a Climate Element within their comprehensive plans starting in 2025. The climate element must address both climate mitigation (the reduction of greenhouse gases) and resilience (the ability to prepare for, recover from, and adapt to climate change impacts). The first draft of the Climate Element goals and policies was published on February 18, 2025.

City Committee Briefings

As part of the Comprehensive Plan process, the Climate Element is reviewed and discussed by City Council Advisory Committees. Below are the Committees that reviewed and provided feedback to the Climate Element.

Committee Name	Date	Draft Version Reviewed
Youth Council	4/16/2025	Public Comment Draft – Published 02/18/2025

Summary of Feedback

Youth Council

Holding institutions, businesses, and industry accountable

The Youth Council wanted to see stronger and stricter standards in holding institutions accountable for climate action. Their suggestions focused on reducing solid waste generation and greenhouse gas emissions.

Staff response: The City has few regulatory mechanisms to require institutions, businesses, and industries to reduce their solid waste and greenhouse gas emissions. However, the State’s Climate Commitment Act caps and reduces greenhouse gas emissions from Washington’s largest emitting sources and industries, allowing businesses to find the most efficient path to lower carbon emissions.

For solid waste, the Climate Element includes goals and policies that promote a circular economy, which minimizes material use, redesigns materials and products to be less resource intensive, and recaptures “waste” as a resource to manufacture new materials and products. This includes implementing programs and policies to reduce waste generation for businesses and individuals, while increasing capacity for waste diversion through material reuse, recycling and composting

programs. Addressing emissions from waste is an important part of local climate action and reflects the Youth Council's priorities.

Developing a values-driven economy

The Youth Council expressed that they want to pursue professional opportunities that do not compromise their values. They suggested developing school curriculums that explore and prepare students for jobs that contribute to climate action.

Staff response: From the feedback, we have expanded the definition of what constitutes a “green job” in the Element. In previous drafts, the goals and policies narrowly defined green jobs as those contributing to decarbonization; the Youth Council’s feedback showed that the City should pursue workforce development that contributes more broadly to climate action. The Climate Element already included working with schools at all levels for workforce development. The Climate Element Implementation Plan will provide further refinement of these actions to align with Youth Council suggestions.

Fostering community belonging and connection to nature

The Youth Council shared support for actions related to fostering a connection to nature and cultivating local identity and culture, by citing the Procession of Species and mentioning positive volunteer opportunities with the Parks Department.

Staff response: As part of the Climate Element, we have existing goals and policies from the Natural Environment, Economy, and Parks, Arts, & Recreation chapters supporting volunteer opportunities and adaptation planning actions for community events. The chapter narrative further emphasizes the importance of community connection and environmental stewardship as a form of climate resilience.

Overcoming hopelessness and promoting affordability in climate action

The Youth Council expressed concern about the increasing hopelessness in combatting climate change and the overall apathy of large institutions in contributing to meaningful action. One member discussed how expensive and costly actions lead to a sense of frustration and impede their ability to positively contribute to change. The Youth Council as a whole highlighted the need for affordability when pursuing climate action.

Staff response: The Climate Element includes a variety of policy mechanisms, including incentive programs, to ensure affordability for individuals in implementing climate solutions. We have also included additional narrative language, goals, and policies focused solely on environmental justice to guarantee all Olympians can access climate mitigation and adaptation solutions. From the feedback, we also included additional language about specifically engaging with youth during climate outreach and policy development.

Supporting EV adoption

The Youth Council shared support for actions related to supporting EV adoption.

Staff response: Goals and policies cross-listed from the Transportation and Land Use and Urban Design chapter within the existing Climate Element thoroughly capture their recommendations.

Reducing vehicle miles traveled and encouraging walkability

The Youth Council shared support for actions related to reducing vehicle miles traveled and encouraging walkability. They expressed a need to collaborate closely with Intercity Transit in marketing public transportation and increasing ridership.

Staff response: Goals and policies cross-listed from the Transportation and Land Use and Urban Design chapter within the existing Climate Element thoroughly capture their recommendations. The City maintains close collaboration with Intercity Transit. The Transportation chapter reflects the City's goal to continue working closely with Intercity Transit over the next 20 years. In response to the feedback, we added strategies to the Implementation Plan to the Climate Element that focuses on working with Intercity Transit on marketing campaigns to increase public transit ridership.

Retrofitting existing buildings and adaptive reuse

The Youth Council shared support for actions related to adaptive reuse and retrofitting existing buildings to increase energy efficiency and resiliency.

Staff response: Goals and policies cross-listed from the Land Use and Urban Design related to retrofits for resiliency and energy efficiency as well as adaptive reuse are already included in the existing Climate Element. We added policies to the Housing chapter related to retrofitting housing for climate hazards and to include energy affordability into the full cost of housing based on the Youth Council's recommendation.