



City Council

Approval of a Resolution Declaring a Climate Emergency

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Title

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Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve a Resolution declaring a climate emergency.

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve a Resolution declaring a climate emergency in conjunction with acceptance of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan and approval of a Phase III Interlocal Agreement focused on Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan implementation.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Rich Hoey, P.E., Public Works Director

Susan Clark, Engineering and Planning Supervisor

Background and Analysis:

In April 2018, Thurston County, Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater and Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) signed an Interlocal Agreement to complete Phase I of a regional climate mitigation plan, with TRPC leading the effort. Phase I work resulted in the following regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets:

- 45% below 2015 levels by 2030
- 85% below 2015 levels by 2050

In November 2018, Olympia and the other regional jurisdictions approved a Phase II Interlocal

Agreement addressing the development of a regional climate mitigation plan. Following a two-year planning process that involved community stakeholders and subject matter experts and included public outreach, the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (Plan) was completed.

The vision for the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan is: *“Thurston County, Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater, and neighboring tribes recognize the urgent threat and opportunity that climate change poses to our community’s economy, public health, public safety, and environment. We will work together to identify and boldly implement the most effective, efficient, and equitable actions to reduce locally generated greenhouse gas emissions to protect current and future generations from the most severe impacts of climate change.”*

This vision begins with the principle that it is our responsibility to do our part to protect vulnerable communities by reducing our local contributions to climate change. Though climate change affects everyone, not all people are impacted equally. Communities of color, immigrants, lower-income populations, and the elderly are often more vulnerable to climate impacts like increased heat, flooding, food insecurity, and air quality impacts.

Climate change exacerbates the causes and impacts of social inequality, including homelessness, equity and social justice. To call out climate change as an emergency equal to these other community issues brings into focus how they all intersect. By doing so in conjunction with Plan acceptance further emphasizes the City’s acknowledgement of the climate crisis and its commitment to mitigate for it. This also acknowledges the need to take a more holistic response to all of our community’s issues.

This climate emergency resolution declares that the climate crisis poses an urgent threat to the health and well-being of our city, country, and planet and that mitigating climate change requires immediate action and long-term commitment. To further support climate action and the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan, this resolution also requests that the City develop and apply a lens of climate change and climate equity to all aspects of planning, policy, and decision-making and asks the community to partner with the City in taking action.

By passing this emergency resolution, Olympia will join other municipalities, including the Washington State cities of Tumwater, Tacoma, Everett and Redmond, in acknowledging that action on the causes and impacts of climate change is required. Showing a seriousness of commitment in this way, while also having a Plan in place, may place Olympia and our region higher to receive future state and federal funding opportunities.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

For the past several years, local high school students, community members and climate action advocates have requested that the City declare a climate emergency. Washington tribes have also called for a declaration of climate emergency. Councilmember Parshley has worked extensively with stakeholders and neighboring jurisdictions on the development of this emergency declaration.

Options:

1. Approve a Resolution declaring a climate emergency. The City will signal to the community that the request to declare a climate emergency was heard, action on the causes and impacts of climate change will be taken and will be coordinated with other issues of concern such as

homelessness, equity and social justice.

2. Modify the Resolution declaring a climate emergency to better address City Council concerns.
3. Do not approve the Resolution declaring a climate emergency.

Financial Impact:

Continued participation with Thurston County and the cities of Tumwater and Lacey to implement the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan for the next year will range from \$44,025 to \$47,184 per jurisdiction depending on the number of Steering Committee and other meetings held under the Scope of Work. Sufficient funds are contained in the 2021 budget for work on climate change. Long-term costs of TCMP implementation are expected to be significant over time and will be determined in more detail through the next phases of work.

Attachment:

Resolution