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City Council

Approval of a Resolution to Establish a 2030 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Target

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Type: resolution   **Version:** 1   **Status:** Passed

Title
Approval of a Resolution to Establish a 2030 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Target

Recommended Action
Committee Recommendation:
Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:
Move to approve a resolution to establish a 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target.

Report
Issue:
Whether to approve a resolution to establish a 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target.

Staff Contact:
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Presenter(s):
Pamela Braff, PhD, Climate Program Manager

Background and Analysis:
Previous Emissions Targets
In April 2018, Thurston County, Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and Thurston Regional Planning Council began the first phase of work to develop a regional climate mitigation plan. Phase I resulted in the following regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets:
- 45% below 2015 levels by 2030
- 85% below 2015 levels by 2050

Over the next two years, the partner jurisdictions worked together to develop a regional climate mitigation plan. In February 2021, all partners accepted the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (TCMP) as a common framework to achieve the regionally adopted emissions reduction targets

In addition to working on the regional TCMP, in 2019, Olympia City Council also passed a Youth Climate Inheritance Resolution (No. M-2045). The resolution was developed in collaboration with

Olympia High School Students and committed the City to work with the youth of Olympia to achieve a goal of net-zero emissions by 2040.

Why Update Olympia's Emissions Targets?
The regional greenhouse gas emissions targets developed in Phase I of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan are no longer consistent with the best available science on the action necessary to avoid the worst consequences of climate change.

Adopting an interim 2030 science-based target is also a requirement of the Cities Race to Zero Campaign, which Olympia joined in 2021. Cities Race to Zero is a global campaign to inspire action from cities around the work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050. The Cities Race to Zero campaign requires participating cities to adopt a 2030 science-based target in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C. Science-based climate targets must be in line with the latest climate science and represent a community's fair share of the global ambition necessary to limit warming to 1.5°C.
The Paris Agreement is an international treaty, adopted in 2015, to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and address the negative impacts of climate change. Under the agreement, countries agreed to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.

In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), released a Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The report showed that 2°C of warming posed much greater risks than previously understood, and that these risks could be substantially reduced by limiting warming to 1.5°C. To have the best chance at limiting warming to 1.5°C, the world must reduce greenhouse gas emissions 45% below 2010 levels by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050.

Proposed Updates to Emissions Targets
The proposed update to Olympia's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets would:
- Reaffirm Olympia's pledge to reach net-zero by 2040
- Establish an interim 2030 science-based target that reflects Olympia's fair share of a 50% reduction in global emissions (59% below 2019 levels by 2030).

The interim 2030 science-based target was developed by ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, based on Olympia's 2019 community-wide greenhouse gas inventory. To meet its fair share of the 50% global reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, Olympia must reduce absolute emissions 59% below 2019 levels by 2030.

The proposed updates to Olympia's emissions reduction targets do not establish a new climate plan separate from the TCMP. The high impact actions necessary to achieve Olympia's 2030 interim target (i.e., decarbonizing the electric grid, reducing vehicle miles travelled, shifting to electric vehicles, and decarbonizing buildings through electrification and energy efficiency) are also identified as key actions in the TCMP. However, achieving Olympia's more ambitious targets, will likely also require more ambitious implementation of these actions.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Since the Acceptance of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan in February 2021, community members have continued to urge the City to take immediate and ambitious action to address climate change.

Options:
1. Approve the Resolution to establish a 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target that reflects Olympia's fair share of a 50% reduction in global emissions, and pledge to reduce community-wide emissions 59% below 2019 levels by 2030.
2. Modify the Resolution to establish a 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target to better address City Council Concerns.
3. Do not approve the Resolution to establish a 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target.

Financial Impact:
There are no direct financial impacts of adopting a 2030 emissions reduction target. Future funding will be needed to develop and implement programs and policies to meet this target.

By adopting a 2030 emissions reduction target, community organizations in Olympia will be eligible to apply for a $1,000,000 Action Fund from ICLEI USA. Adopting a 2030 target will also ensure that Olympia is eligible for similar funding or technical support opportunities that may become available in the future.

Attachments:
Resolution
High Impact Action Summary Report
Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan
Presentation