



Utility Advisory Committee

Climate Program Update

Agenda Date: 2/2/2023
Agenda Item Number:
File Number:22-1121

Type: information **Version:** 2 **Status:** Filed

Title

Climate Program Update

Recommended Action

Information only. No action requested.

Report

Issue:

Briefing on Olympia's climate change response and implementation of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan.

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Presenter(s):

Pamela Braff, PhD, Director of Climate Programs

Background and Analysis:

Climate Action Goals

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

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 2021, Olympia joined the Cities Race to Zero, pledging to achieve net-zero emission by 2040 and set an interim 2030 science-based target, resulting in the following community-wide greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for the City of Olympia:

- 59% below 2019 levels by 2030
- Net-zero by 2040

Implementation Progress

Key progress to date includes:

- Building staff capacity to integrate climate action across all levels of city policy, planning, and decision-making.
- Reducing facility energy consumption and preparing to electrify city facilities and fleet vehicles.
- Developing new policies and programs to reduce community-wide emissions related to transportation and the built environment.
- Designing and implementing projects to make it easier to walk, bike, and ride transit.
- Supporting regional coordination of the TCMP.
- Initiating a new program focus area on climate preparedness and adaptation.

Major projects planned for 2023 include:

Municipal Operations

- Complete facility electrification feasibility assessment.
- Develop fleet electrification master plan and vehicle acquisition policy.

Climate Mitigation

- Launch heat pump group purchase campaign (Energize Olympia).
- Research and evaluate strategies for decarbonization existing buildings.
- Integrate climate considerations within major planning processes (e.g., Capital Mall Subarea Plan and Comprehensive Plan Update)
- Propose electric vehicle readiness requirements for new parking and development.

Climate Adaptation

- Conduct a Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA).
- Conduct an urban heat vulnerability assessment.
- Initiate 2023 Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Collaborative work plan items (land subsidence survey, groundwater study, and assessment of public financing mechanisms).

During this presentation, climate program staff will provide an overview of program accomplishments and upcoming initiatives for 2023.

Climate Analysis:

Implementation of the 2023 climate program priorities will result in a long-term reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and increased resilience to climate stressors.

Climate program initiatives planned for 2023 will support the following strategies from the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan: reducing energy use in new and existing buildings, electrifying buildings to phase out natural gas, developing land use plans that increase urban density and reduce urban sprawl (including increasing the use of walking, biking, and public transit), and increasing the adoption of electric vehicles.

Equity Analysis:

Climate change affects everyone, but it does not affect all people equally. Some communities experience disproportionate climate impacts due to existing vulnerabilities and socioeconomic disparities, as well systemic environmental injustices. Low-income communities, people of color,

indigenous people, and people with disabilities are often more vulnerable to climate risks and face greater barriers to benefit from climate action.

Implementation of Olympia's climate mitigation and adaptation projects will include intentional assessments of existing disparities that may impact who benefits and who is impacted by these projects, and identify opportunities to engage and improve outcomes for historically marginalized communities.

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:

None at this time. Information only.

Financial Impact:

None at this time. long-term costs to achieve Olympia's greenhouse gas reduction targets and prepare for local impacts of climate change are expected to be significant over time. Additional funding will be necessary to achieve these goals.

Attachment:

Link to Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan