



Climate and Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
August 25, 2022

Committee Members in Attendance: Kendra Smith, Chris Greacen, Janet Alderton, Jerry Whitfield, Vince Dauciuinas, Barbara Marrett, Jay Kimball, Luke Fincher

Committee Liaisons in Attendance: Jeff Dyer, Paul Andersson, Lynn Bahrych, Steve Bernheim

Ex-officio and County Staff: Councilmember Cindy Wolf, Greg Sawyer, Van Avery (by phone), David Williams

Members of the public: R. Brent Lyles

Convene meeting

Meeting called to order by Kendra Smith. Kendra opened the meeting with the Coast Salish Acknowledgment.

Public Comment

Brent Lyles expressed his support for the inclusion of the proposed Climate Element language submitted by FOSJ to be included in Comp Plan. He noted a collaborative team created the proposal and that it was written using existing language in order to help fast track it.

Business Operations

Kendra noted one proposed change to agenda: David Williams was invited to give an update on the Comprehensive Plan elements during staff updates.

June 23 meeting minutes approved; motion made by Vince, seconded by Janet.

Staff Updates

Kendra invited County staff Van Avery and Greg Sawyer to provide an overview of their work as it pertains to climate and sustainability.

County fleet transition update – *Allan Van Every (“Van”), Fleet Services Director*

- County vehicles typical lifespan of up to 10 years, 15 for heavy duty vehicles. Bought at various times so fleet rotates continually. Discussions are held with department heads all the way down to users, about what was working and what wasn't, as well as new technology, green options (hybrid, electric).

- Overall support in adoption of new EVs, and many options. Public and Council seem to be all for it; the Sheriff is ready to go electric next year. Our location lends itself well to EVs. Just completed motor pool changeover from gas to electric. With heavy duty vehicles, as tech gets better we keep having those conversations, but they are the stalwarts.
- The County fleet doesn't do a lot of miles so aim is to get the fleet number right, share more, own less and purchase great tech.
- Charging location is a big consideration. Need is often at ferry landings, which involve multiple agencies, so it can be slow. Electrifying places like parks, monuments, and trailheads involves multiple agencies – someone needs to have a vision for all that, which is why we're all here.

Kendra remarked that conversations have been happening with WSDOT Ferries about the need to move people “not just shore to shore, but door to door”; it's tied into sustainable tourism planning as well.

Asked if County vehicles have a depreciation schedule with state funds to replace them, Van explained that depts purchase their vehicles and he charges a monthly fee that covers all maintenance and fuel as well as next replacement. They pay for 10 years and it goes in revolving fund, allowing a mechanism of savings they can't touch, funds can only be released by new purchase or majority Council vote.

A member noted the wait for electric utility vehicles is over 2 years and prices are inflating rapidly, wondering how the County thinks about what to pay for an EV and when. Van looks at balancing the need with that time frame. He's all for it, but we don't spend a lot of money on fuel. Hoping as supply chain improves that tech comes down in cost and we can catch up. Also thinks about infrastructure - currently, we've bought just normal 240-volt overnight chargers which are fairly thrifty, faster chargers add 7-10K to cost. It's a great fit here because we don't do a lot of miles.

When asked about grant opportunities for fleet replacement, Van said there is money out there, he'd like to tackle infrastructure portion first so when we make purchases, we can hit the ground running with no obstacles.

County facilities energy management update – *Greg Sawyer, Director of Facilities Management*

- EV chargers: currently have Level 2, more than capable of recharging current fleet vehicles. Current market availability of vehicles fits well with the demand from County staff.
 - o Challenge is where to locate chargers. Ferry landings are key spot – have at Orcas, haven't figured out how to site them near ferry landing at Lopez and San Juan.
 - o Struggle with the function of cost-recovery; current installed chargers are for county vehicles so no mechanism to charge a user. Chargers that do have a mechanism to charge are costly - doesn't cover the cost of equipment, and being a government, handling money becomes tricky. It will have to be addressed eventually.
- Solar: recently turned on our first large solar at the fairgrounds and have plans to do more. A solar study was done a few years ago for all county properties and looked at land for ground based units. Money aside specifically for solar installs in capital plan.

- Heating: most insulation is not great, but heating is almost 100% electric, no propane or oil is used in county buildings. Buildings have aged out of older electric baseboard/heat pumps and have been upgraded to extremely efficient reversible heating/cooling pumps.
- Lighting: All our lighting moved away from incandescent some time ago – now they are pretty much all LED, a few pieces of fluorescent still around but always being replaced with LED when they fail. Includes LED holiday lights on the courthouse for about the last 5 years, purple LEDs in October from Safe San Juans for domestic violence awareness month.
- 2 or 3 major replacements like HVAC system every year, uses capital dollars replace things that fail or upgrade for more efficient options.

When asked if there could be infrastructure buried for EV charging with recent Eastsound upgrade, it was explained that this was considered, but parking in the core commercial area is meant to be short term, so charging sites are best located at longer-term parking areas such as the school.

Greg responded to a question about the power generated by the fairgrounds solar array that Opalco's program allows up to 10 of your meters to benefit from a solar site; the fairgrounds power more than offsets the entire park and fair dept. and the courthouse is designated to take any residual power. Expected ROI in the 20's pushing 30 years. Enormous roof capacity required 3 phase power in order to support it. Fairgrounds doesn't have/use 3 phase power, but needed it to backfeed from the solar panels, that increased the ROI. Fairgrounds now hope to utilize 3 phase for things they couldn't do. New Public Works building at Beaverton already had 3 phase power, so that installation will have quicker ROI.

What makes a free EV charge a gift of public funds versus for example using hot water in a bathroom?
Noted as good question to run by the PA's office.

Committee expressed appreciation for Van and Greg's time and expertise.

Comprehensive Plan update process – *David Williams, Director of Community Development*

- The Comp Plan update has been going on for 6.5 years, far longer than standard cycle. We are obligated to have the update done by a set date in each iteration. We've been working over the past year to get this finished.
- By state law it is non-compliant – the Governor could determine that SJC is no longer eligible for state-shared revenues – we could potentially lose millions of dollars as a punitive measure for not completing the update on time. Non-compliance means we are ineligible to apply for many grants, including one that could fund the greenhouse gas inventory this committee is seeking. Losing state-shared revenues shuts down County programs immediately.
- Planning agrees that climate issues need to be in the Plan. Most of the recent recommendations from Friends of the San Juans are already in the plan, just not in its own unique chapter.
- If Council approves this year, then in January we begin the update of the development code to implement the Comp Plan –hasn't been done in the past. Also start work on the next Plan update, due date is June 2025. Code will be updated thematically - will come back for feedback on specific changes next year, probably end of 2nd quarter.

- David proposed, and the Planning Commission agreed, to bring the climate element in on the next cycle. This provides time to get your Climate Action Plan done and for Commerce to release the model climate element.
- We're in the final review days of SEPA review, and about to start Commerce review. Entire SEPA review would have to restart by bringing in more elements at this point. SEPA time frame is about 5 months and \$40k – money out of pocket that could be covered by grants when compliant.

When asked how recommendations from this committee would be acted upon, David indicated it would still be a final consideration for the Planning Commission at 9/16 meeting. From there it would be transmitted with the Plan to Council if they approve it in its entirety. Noted the Commission did already recommend denial of a chapter for climate for this round with the direction that it be included with the 2025 plan.

Some committee members expressed a desire to publicly show support for the climate element, understanding it may not happen until the next update. Discussion ensued around difficult decision Council would have to make if committee voted to recommend adding climate element in now – voting in favor would mean missing opportunity for additional resources and funding, and remaining out of compliance with the State.

David reiterated that the concepts in the proposal are already scattered throughout most of the plan, in both vision and policy implementation. The problem is creating an entirely new chapter for it. He suggested the committee may recommend including climate element as a priority in the next cycle. They're already planning on this, but he'd rather have committee's thoughtful input when not under pressure. Committee can work collaboratively with the Planning Commission.

Discussion included potential future funding sources, but came back to the fact that we're not currently eligible to get Commerce funding for the GHG inventory and it's an immediate need to move our work forward. Without it we are making prioritizations based on gut feel.

The suggestion of a compromise was put forward: a committee statement saying we would have liked to have been able to see a climate element in the Comp Plan at this point, and it's the sense of this committee that when the next Comp Plan update is opened up, we'd like a commit to adding a climate element that will consist of climate actions we have identified. Also recommend to Council that they support \$50k expenditure for the GHG inventory. Suggestion for strongest language we can put in to commit the County to climate mitigation and resilience that won't trigger a SEPA and Commerce review. Noted we could include a conceptual overlay of the regulations to be drafted with focus on climate issues we can add that as to guide new regulatory changes.

Discussion continued to clarify the rest of the process: Planning Commission is making their formal recommendation Sept 16, tentative approval of Plan language already in place, David will review all existing elements and proposed changes with Council in Sept/Oct, 3-touch process in Nov, hopefully on track for formal adoption after Thanksgiving. Possible additional community outreach meetings in October.

Also discussed was enforcement of environmental regulations, and new measures County has enacted to strengthen this, including adding an Environmental Inspector, possible additional code enforcement

person next year, and improved compliance monitoring.

To wrap up, Kendra proposed the committee make a statement to share with Council that:

- we would like to see as a priority a climate element added in the next cycle of the Comp Plan
- we support climate-oriented upgrades and improvements to the development code that will be updated starting next year
- we support GHG emissions work going forward and request funding for it

Kendra asked for a show of hands and offered to draft language and circulate it if this felt like a reasonable path to go forward. 6 members raised hands in support: Vince, Jerry, Jay, Janet, Luke, Chris (Barbara's camera was off, others present are non-voting liaisons or guests.)

ACTION ITEM: Kendra asked members to read the Comp Plan and if there are specific things they think need to be strengthened right now to send those to her by next Weds. She'll draft note to Council.

The committee thanked David for his time. He reiterated his commitment to the environment and that he appreciated the dialogue.

Cascadia Consulting proposal for GHG inventory – *Kendra Smith*

Kendra asked for feedback on the proposal. Several members showed strong support, describing this as a vital starting point for all the committee's work. There was positive reception around Cascadia's approach, particularly the first phase, but some question as to whether the second phase would be necessary with the committee's work and expertise. We can pull together available data in the coming months and refine the second phase as needed. Committee members noted the following:

- As densely tree-covered islands it can be difficult to analyze – consultants must understand the nature of this place. Kendra noted we can make sure they get relevant data about forest health and condition.
- Desire to see difference between residential/commercial carbon footprint, gas and propane emissions, carbon footprint info on marine vessels and private/commercial aircraft. Hopefully parsed out more than just how much fossil fuel emission there is.
- We are unique because we get flooded by tourist/visitors and we need to account for that as it is part of our economy.

Kendra asked for general show of support for the Cascadia proposal – several members showed nodded heads or showed thumbs up in approval.

With only a few minutes remaining, committee decided to set a special meeting to have time to address the working groups item on the agenda. September 12th was selected as a date.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:33pm