

Climate Program Overview (Updated 01/13/22)

The Washington State Legislature instructed the Department of Commerce to initiate a multi-year project that would develop the means by which counties and cities could address climate change issues, mitigation (greenhouse gas reduction) and resilience (preparation for adverse effects from climate change) in their comprehensive plans. The initial products – the model element(s) – are due by June 30, 2023.

The core steering committee for this project is composed of representatives from Washington State Department of Transportation, Department of Ecology, the Department of Health, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Emergency Management division of the Military Department. The committee also includes members from the UW Climate Impacts Group, Municipal Research & Services Center, and Association of Washington Cities. *The proviso states that Tribal representatives may choose to participate.*¹

Subcommittees

Commerce is interested in ultimately producing meaningful and practical guidance for local governments. Commerce will be soliciting input from and collaborating with several subcommittees.

Climate Change Review Group (“CCRG”): The CCRG will include representatives from counties, cities and non-profit/non-jurisdictional organizations who will be asked to review and provide input on drafts as they are developed. Some of the draft materials will include: climate goals, objectives and policies; and potential climate change best practices and actions. The review will include evaluating measures for both climate change mitigation and adaptation/resilience and determining their usefulness to a county or city planner that works on GMA comprehensive plans. The duration of the CCRG will be from February 2022 to June 2023.

Communities Disproportionately Impacted by Climate Change (“Uplift”): The proviso directs Commerce to ensure that the model guidance prioritizes greenhouse gas reduction in communities that have disproportionately experienced harm from climate change. The model guidance must also prioritize resilience actions in communities that will be most impacted by natural hazards due to climate change. Commerce will rely on the environmental health disparities map from the Department of Health to identify disproportionately burdened communities. The direct web link is:

<https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/wtnibl/WTNIBL/>.

Commerce intends to contract directly with organizations with competence in racially, ethnically or otherwise diverse communities who historically have been disproportionately impacted by climate change. The contract is titled, “Prioritize Actions to Uplift Communities Disproportionately Impacted by Climate Change” (“Uplift”). The Uplift Subcommittee(s) will assist Commerce in the development of a framework to evaluate climate mitigation and adaptation measures, and utilize the framework to prioritize the draft measures.

¹ Commerce is finalizing details on how best to invite Tribal representatives into the effort. Commerce staff could meet directly with representatives to provide periodic project updates and/or they could choose to join the core steering committee meetings.

Program Phases

Initialization Phase

Most of the project startup tasks have been accomplished. Only two interagency agreements remain to be finalized.

- Introductions to teams at each agency and sorting into resilience or mitigation areas of focus. Began creating a shared understanding of project deliverables and steps to achieve them.
- Finalize interagency agreements with Commerce.
- Finalize strategy for inviting Tribal representatives and inviting them to project team.
- Draft and publish RFPs for supportive work
 - Issue on 1/14/22 - Prioritize Actions to Uplift Communities Disproportionately Impacted by Climate Change (Contract Start April 1, 2022)
 - Issue on 1/24/22 - Pilot program (Contract Start July 1, 2022)
- Recruitment for local government partners for Chapter Review Committee
- Recruitment for other interested groups (e.g. climate action non-profits) for Chapter Review Committee
- Collaboration tool is launched (Smart Sheets Dashboard).

Climate Program	Deadline	06/30/23
Initialization Phase	10/01/21	12/31/21
Definition Phase	01/03/22	04/20/22
Design and Development Phase	04/21/22	09/20/22
Momentum Phase	09/21/22	02/27/23
Final Draft Phase	02/28/23	06/30/23

Definition Phase

Between January and April, Commerce would like its State agency partners to apply their subject-area expertise by adding examples of climate mitigation and resilience measures to an interactive Smartsheet [form](#). Such measures could come from existing plans — for example policies/actions from local climate plans — and other sources (e.g., agency staff ideas and online action toolkits). The purpose of this work is to create a draft list of more than 100 actionable measures for further refinement and assessment by Commerce and its project partners, including local government staff members and Uplift members.

The Team meetings in this phase will be split into Mitigation or Resilience focused meetings. Teams will be formulating core questions to ensure that there are no surprises in later months. We will also solicit assistance with our data needs from our partners in order to differentiate the draft measures that can be quantified and ranked numerically versus qualitatively.

Commerce staff will organize introduction meetings with the Chapter Review Groups and familiarize them with the program schedule and deliverables. The contractors will also be selected in response to the Uplift RFP.

Interim deliverables 4/20: (1) Resource list organized by mitigation or resilience. (2) Measures/policies will be organized by common themes. (3) We will be in the beginning stages of creating an evaluation structure.

Design and Development Phase

We will be exploring options for ranking measures between May and September. There will also be a focus on selecting a reasonable number of measures that will form a solid base for a jurisdiction to build upon. A few questions to assist with selecting those measures could include:

- Is the measure scalable by size of jurisdiction?
- What is a common denominator that can be used as a multiplier (e.g. population or area)? If a common measurement is needed that isn't population or area of jurisdiction, then could we provide that baseline data for every city?
- What data do we (agency partner team) have to support a ranking system? What best available science do we have support a jurisdiction if they choose the measure?
- Will the measure achieve the reduction or provide resilience. How is the success demonstrated?

Commerce staff will facilitate Chapter Review Group meetings in parallel with the work of the steering committee. A contractor will be selected in response to the Pilot Program RFP.

Interim deliverables 9/20: (1) Draft evaluation structure (2) Draft weighting system (3) Public facing website will include dashboard for Chapter Review Teams.

Momentum Phase

In September, we will continue perfecting our model elements and evaluation tools. Our work will shift slightly to include drafting the model guidance and incorporating periodic input from the Pilot Program.

The contractor leading the pilot program will work with two to four jurisdiction to assess hazards, test the prioritization tool, and add measures to their comprehensive plans. Feedback from this effort will help us fine tune our guidance documents and measures.

Interim deliverable 2/27/2023: (1) Draft climate change chapters; (2) Draft guidance documents; (3) Climate Change Short Course.

Final Draft Phase

The last four months of the Program, we will ensure that the model elements and guidance are relevant and scalable to jurisdictions. We will diligently track versions of the drafts and solicit final responses on the drafts from all interested groups.

Outreach during this phase will include potentially offering a Climate Short Course and presenting the draft guidance to interested groups throughout the state such as regional planner forums, or planning director meetings.

Deliverable 5/4/2023: Comments due from all interested parties in order to incorporate into final documents. Final Deliverable 6/30/23: Model elements/chapters and guidance available on Commerce website.

Climate Proviso:

(126) \$1,656,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and \$1,615,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 are provided solely for the department to publish the guidelines and guidance set forth in (a), (b), and (c) of this subsection. The department shall publish the guidelines and guidance described in (a), (b), and (c) of this subsection no later than June 30, 2023. From amounts provided in this subsection, pursuant to an interagency agreement, the department shall provide funding to the department of ecology, the department of health, the department of fish and wildlife, the department of natural resources, the department of health, and the emergency management division of the military department to fund activities that support the work specified in (a), (b) and (c) of this subsection.

(a) The department, in consultation with the department of ecology, the department of health, and the department of transportation, shall publish guidelines that provide a set of actions counties and cities may take, under existing statutory authority, through updates to their comprehensive plans and development regulations that have a demonstrated ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to achieve the statewide greenhouse gas emissions reductions set forth in RCW 70A.45.020(1), allowing for consideration of the emissions reductions achieved through the adoption of statewide programs. The guidelines must prioritize reductions in communities that have experienced disproportionate harm due to air pollution and may draw upon the most recent health disparities data from the department of health to identify high pollution areas and disproportionately burdened communities.

(b) The department, in consultation with the department of transportation, shall publish guidelines that specify a set of actions counties and cities may take through updates to their comprehensive plans and development regulations that have a demonstrated ability to reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled, including measures that are designed to be achievable throughout the state, including in small cities and rural cities.

(c) The department shall develop, in collaboration with the department of ecology, the department of fish and wildlife, the department of natural resources, the department of health, and the emergency management division of the military department, as well as any federally recognized tribe who chooses to voluntarily participate, guidance that creates a model climate change and resiliency

element that may be used by counties, cities, and multiple-county planning regions for developing and implementing climate change and resiliency plans and policies subject to the following provisions:

- (i) The model element should provide guidance on identifying, designing, and investing in infrastructure that supports community resilience to climate impacts, including the protection, restoration, and enhancement of natural infrastructure as well as traditional infrastructure and protecting natural areas resilient to climate impacts, as well as areas of vital habitat for safe passage and species migration;
 - (ii) The model element should provide guidance on identifying and addressing natural hazards created or aggravated by climate change, including sea level rise, landslides, flooding, drought, heat, smoke, wildfires, and other effects of reasonably anticipated changes to temperature and precipitation patterns;
 - (iii) The model element must recognize and promote as many cobenefits of climate resilience as possible, such as salmon recovery, ecosystem services, and supporting treaty rights; and
 - (iv) The model element must prioritize actions in communities that will disproportionately suffer from compounding environmental impacts and will be most impacted by natural hazards due to climate change and may draw upon the most recent health disparities data from the department of health to identify disproportionately burdened communities.
- (d) If the department publishes any subsequent updates to the guidelines published pursuant to (a) or (b) of this subsection, the department shall include in any such update a determination of whether adequate progress has been made toward the statewide greenhouse gas and per capita vehicle miles traveled reduction goals. If adequate progress is not being made, the department must identify in any updates to the guidelines what additional measures cities and counties may take in order to make further progress.

(e) The department, in the course of implementing this subsection, shall provide and prioritize options that support housing diversity and that assist counties and cities in meeting greenhouse gas emissions reduction and other requirements established under chapter 70A.45 RCW.
