

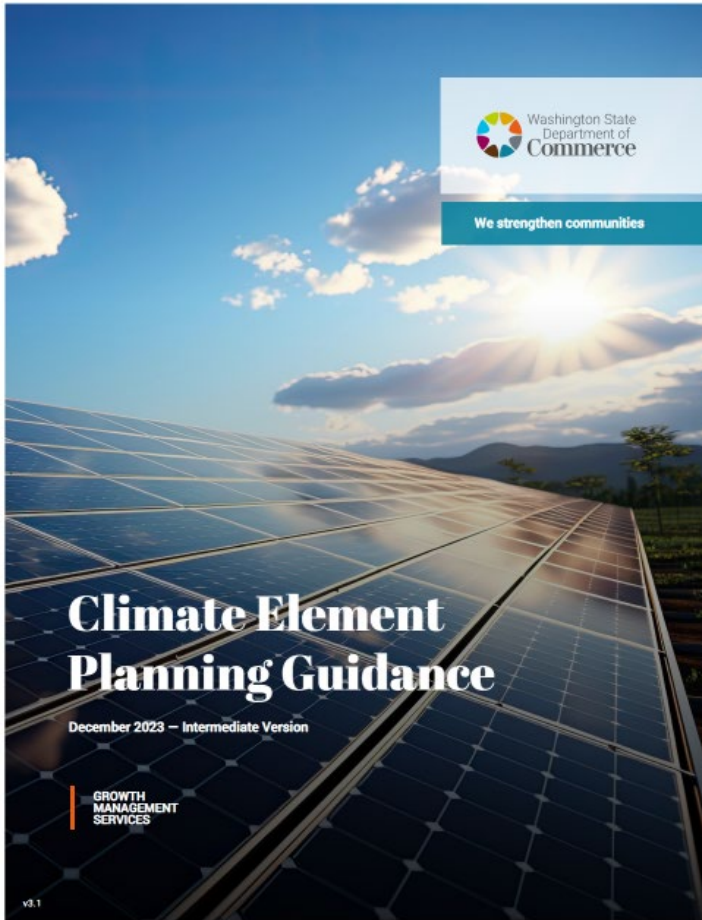
April 15, 2025

CLIMATE PLANNING- COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (HB 1181)



Whatcom County Public Works

Climate Planning & Comprehensive Plan



- Cities and counties planning under Growth Management Act must add a new climate element (chapter) to their Comprehensive Plan (HB 1181)
- 2025 jurisdictions are the first group subject to new state guidance issued by Washington Department of Commerce
- Climate element must have two “sub-elements” that include policies that to reduce greenhouse gas emissions reductions and increase resilience



Climate Planning Grant- Technical Deliverables

Greenhouse Gas Emissions-Trends, Inventory, and Projections

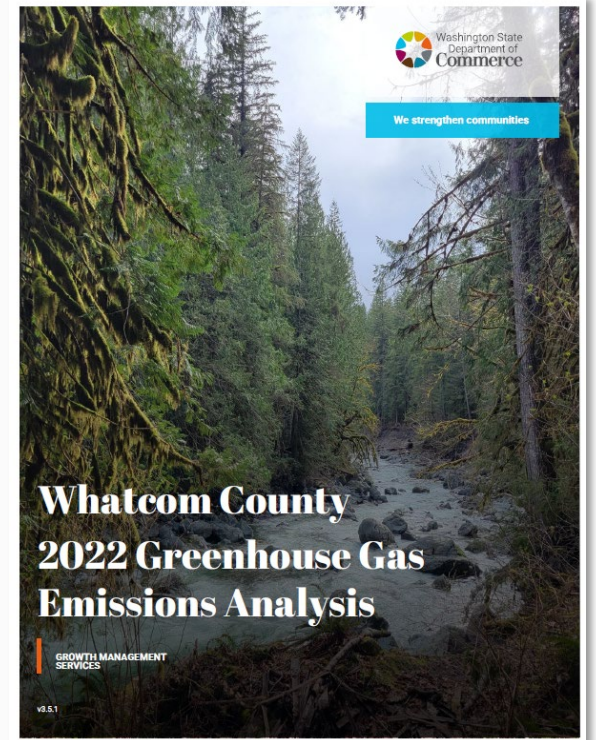
Target Whatcom County emissions reductions to reach state goal of “net zero emissions”

Environmental Justice & Health Disparities

Assessment of demographic and locational characteristics that put residents at greater risk to climate impacts

Hazard & Impact Assessment

Assessment of climate hazards and risk for update to the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (2026)



State Requirements- Climate Element

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS SUB-ELEMENT

1. Reduce emissions from transportation and land use within Whatcom County
2. Reduce per capita vehicle miles travelled
3. Prioritize overburdened communities

RESILIENCE SUB-ELEMENT

1. Address hazards created or aggravated by climate change (sea level rise, landslides, flooding, drought, heat, smoke, wildfire, and changes in temperature and precipitation)
2. Identify, protect, and enhance natural areas and habitat
3. Identify, protect and enhance community resilience to climate impacts (social, economic, and built environment)



Climate Element- Topics Addressed

Agriculture & Food Systems (production and distribution)

Buildings & Energy (energy generation, transmission, and consumption)

Cultural Resources & Practices (historic sites, cultural resources and practices)

Economic Development (business continuity, opportunities)

Ecosystems (land and water species and habitat)

Emergency Management (community preparedness, response, and recovery)

Health and Wellbeing (community well-being, equity, and engagement)

Transportation (multimodal travel and infrastructure)

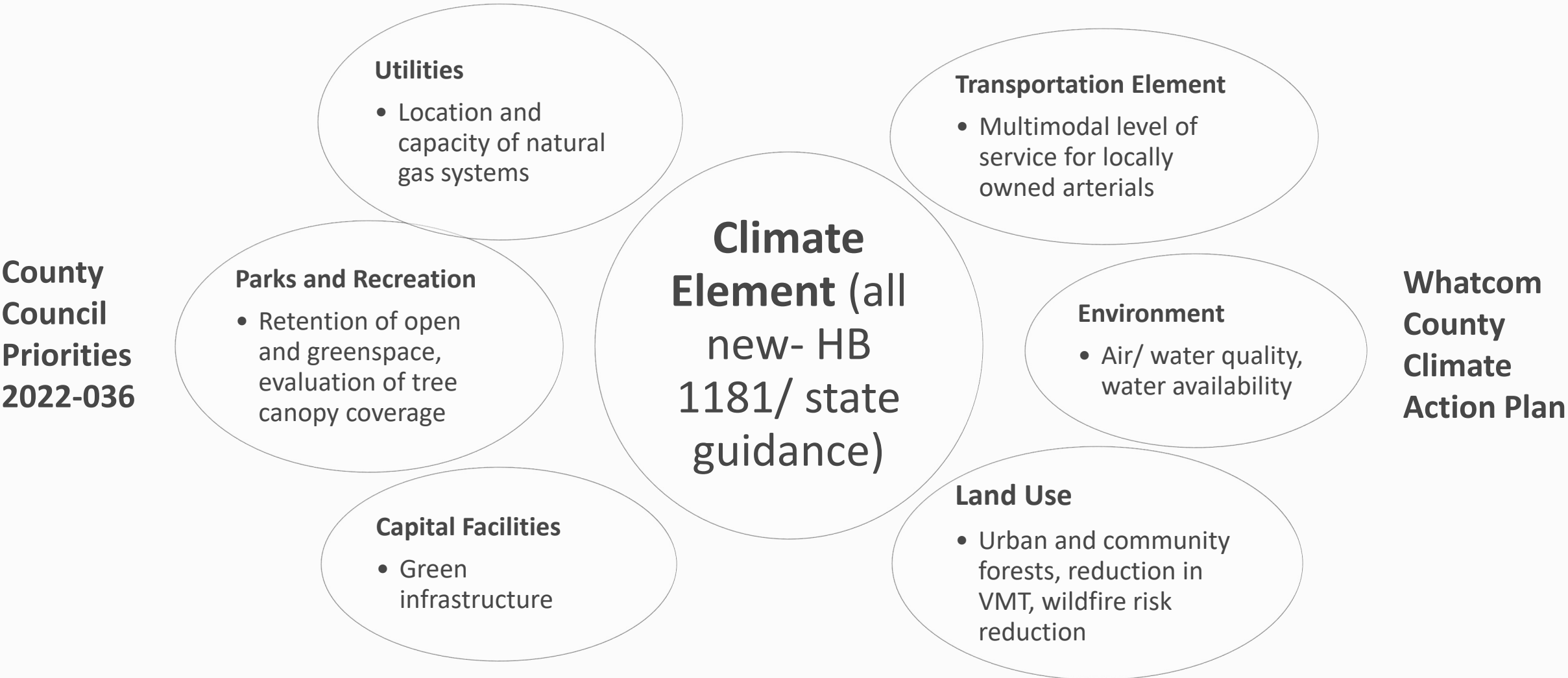
Waste Management (materials recycling and disposal)

Water Resources (water quality and quantity)

Zoning & Development (site use, design, and other development facets)



HB 1181 and Council Priorities



New topics not addressed previously in Comprehensive Plan

- **Policies to reflect changes in state legislation** (ex: building code, Clean Building Performance Standard, tribal consultation for Climate Commitment Act funding)
- **Inclusion of priorities from Council adopted Plans** (ex: Food Systems Plan, Climate Action Plan)
- **Council priorities (resolution 2022-36) not specifically addressed in HB 1181** (ex: updates to capital facility plans- electric vehicles, renewable energy, conservation easement program)
- **Other items required from state guidance** (ex: forecasted impacts from sea level rise, riverine flooding, wildfire, smoke, heat)



Policy direction from Climate Impact Advisory Committee

- Updates to **descriptions of sectors** in resilience subelement
- **Substantial changes to policy statements** in Agriculture and Food Systems, Ecosystems and Water Resources sections
- **New policies** related to drought response
- **More prescriptive language** related to critical facilities and emergency response

Full approved revisions at: www.whatcomcounty.us/2744/Climate-Impact-Advisory-Committee



State Rulemaking & Voluntary Approval

- **Final Rulemaking HB 1181-** Commerce is updating the Washington Administrative Code to provide final guidance on climate element.
- **Voluntary Greenhouse Gas Reduction Sub-Element Approval-** if submit sub-element for approval, Commerce will defend the decision before state's Growth Management Hearing Board.



Climate Planning- Next Steps

1. **Tribal Consultation-** Consistent with RCW 36.79A.040, tribal nations may opt to participate in the county or regional planning process.
2. **Advisory Committee Review-** The committee version of climate element was issued for comment in January 2025. Climate Impact Advisory Committee recommended changes at March 20th meeting.
3. **Planning Commission Work Session-** After incorporation of advisory committee recommendations and tribal consultation.



Discussion & Questions

