

**Skagit County Planning Commission  
Comprehensive Plan Update:  
Environment, Climate Change Resiliency, Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction  
October 22, 2024**

**Planning**

**Commissioners:** Kathy Mitchell, District 1 (absent)  
Vince Henley, District 1  
Angela Day, District 1  
Amy Hughes, District 2  
Tim Raschko, Chair, District 2  
Joe Woodmansee, District 2  
Tammy Candler, Vice Chair, District 3  
Jen Hutchison, District 3  
Kiera Wright, District 3

**County Staff:** Robby Eckroth, Senior Planner  
Tara Satushek, Senior Planner

**Consultants:** Erin O’Kelley, Kimley-Horn  
Andrea Martin, Cascadia Consulting  
Dan Nickel, Facet NW

**Public**

**Commenters:** (none)

Chair Tim Raschko: (gavel) Good evening. The October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, meeting of the Skagit County Planning Commission is now in session. Let’s note that we are missing Commissioner Mitchell. So would anybody care to make a motion to approve the minutes of our last meeting?

Commissioner Vince Henley: I move that the minutes from last time be approved.

Commissioner Angela Day: Second.

Chair Raschko: It’s moved and seconded to approve the minutes. Is there any discussion of the minutes?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: No? None. All those in favor, say “aye.”

Multiple Commissioners: Aye.

Chair Raschko: Opposed?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: Okay. So we have time tonight for Public Remarks. This time on the agenda is an opportunity for anybody to speak to the Planning Commission about any topic except items scheduled on the agenda for a public hearing the same day – which there are none – or items that have had a public hearing and are still under Planning Commission deliberation. Public Remarks, which is *not* part of the formal public participation process for any development regulation or Comprehensive Plan amendment project, is limited to three minutes per speaker and up to 15 minutes total. So if anybody would like to speak, it's three minutes. And would you kindly state and spell your name and state your address? So is there anybody who would like to speak?

(silence)

Chair Raschko: No? Is there anybody online that you know of?

Robby Eckroth: We've got quite a few people online tonight. If you're interested in speaking, please either unmute or raise your hands on Zoom and we'll give you an opportunity to speak.

I'm not seeing anyone unmute or raise their hand.

Chair Raschko: Okay, thank you. So that'll end our public comments. So we'll get to our main agenda item, which is the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update – Environment and Climate Change, Resiliency, and Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction. So Mr. Eckroth, please.

Mr. Eckroth: Yes. Thank you, Chair. So tonight we have Erin O'Kelley with Kimley-Horn, and some of our other consultants from Cascadia Consulting Group and Facet, who will be presenting tonight. And I believe we'll be starting with Erin.

Erin O'Kelley: Thank you, Commissioner, or thank you, Chair. My name is Erin O'Kelley. I'm a long range planner with Kimley-Horn. Kimley-Horn as well as the various consultants you see on the slide are working together on this Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. So we do have Cascadia Consulting online tonight to be presenting around the climate policies, and then we have Facet online tonight as well, who helped develop the preliminary draft revisions for the Environmental Policies.

I'm just going to again do the brief introduction for anyone that's new here or is unfamiliar with the project. We do have some new faces in the audience tonight, it appears. This is part of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update as well as the introduction of a new Climate Element, a Resiliency Sub-element, and a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Sub-element as part of the Periodic Update. So we're going to be going over the preliminary draft policies for those elements tonight as well as the Environmental Element of the Periodic Update.

The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update has been going on since the beginning of this year and will continue into next year until June 2025. During the spring and summer of 2024, earlier this year, the project team in consultation with the planning – long range planners of Skagit County, were doing data collection and analysis, and that leads into drafting preliminary policies, which occurred over the summer. Since July we have been taking preliminary draft policies to the Planning Commission by one element at a time or a couple elements at a time just for first initial comments, questions, and concerns that the Planning Commission or the public may have about the proposed changes.

So in July we took the Rural Element, the Natural Resource Element to the Planning Commission for a preliminary draft. We did have an associated 30-day public comment period for that element. And then in August we brought the preliminary draft revisions of the Land Use, Housing, and Economic Policies. There was another public comment period for those. And then in September we discussed the Transportation and Capital Facilities and Utilities Element – preliminary draft revisions to those policies in that Comprehensive Plan – and there was a public comment period for that. So with this discussion of the Climate and Resiliency and Environment preliminary draft policies tonight, there is another public comment period that will be open for the next 30 days. So people are welcome to submit public comment on the exhibits discussed tonight, and you can download the exhibits also on the website as well to look through them further.

Since the beginning of this year, the project team, in consultation with the Skagit County planners, has also been executing the public engagement for this project as part of the public participation program that was adopted earlier this year. So a lot of engagement between May and June was focused on land use, housing, and rural element revisions, because there are a lot of changes to the Housing Element that we have to address from the state. But the end of the summer we decided to focus on some climate-oriented engagement to work with the community on this new Climate Element that hasn't been introduced in the Comp Plan yet. So we did have a Climate open house that was completed on October 1<sup>st</sup>. We're working on assembling the final results of that engagement event that will be provided to the public in – we think – November. Our team has also worked on some climate stakeholder interviews and a climate survey is currently in process. The public is welcome to take that climate survey. It is available on the Skagit County website for the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.

As far as engagement regarding climate-focused engagement up until this point, we have completed some of that engagement, as I just mentioned, and I will have someone from the Cascadia team kind of present preliminary findings that we have at this point to present.

Andrea Martin: Thanks, Erin. Climate public engagement, as Erin mentioned, has included interviews, an in-person open house, and an online survey, which is now open and will close at the end of the month. And through these \_\_\_ points, we're aiming to understand more about the community's top priorities and concerns. We interviewed both environment- and community-focused organizations, including Familias Unidas por la Justicia, a farmworkers' advocacy organization; the Skagit Land Trust; the Skagit Watershed Council; and Evergreen Islands. The open house was hosted at Jefferson Elementary in Mount Vernon at the beginning of October.

As Erin mentioned, we're still going through all the input that we received, but some of the initial themes from our engagement thus far include overall support for the Climate Element. We've heard people say they're glad that the County is taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate hazards. People have expressed an interest in climate hazard mapping and wanting to make sure that the County has hazard maps that show the full extent of potential impacts and which areas of the county are at risk. And we've heard support for different climate policies and approaches. Some of those include conserving forestland and protecting working forests; protecting the floodplains and minimizing development in flood-prone areas; supporting farmworkers in the face of extreme weather events; expanding transportation options; encouraging native and resilient plants and trees; and educating communities about how to prepare for extreme weather events and other hazards. So those are some of the – just the initial themes we're gleaned and, as Erin mentioned, we'll share more and integrate these themes as appropriate into the draft policies after the survey closes at the end of the month.

Ms. O'Donnell: Thank you, Andrea. So with that, we would like to get into more of the preliminary draft policy discussion for tonight. Again because we have some new people in the room, we take all of the policies, we take the existing policies in the Environmental Element, and then we do have a whole set of new policies obviously for the new Climate Element and the Resiliency Element and the GHD Sub-element. And we basically make sure we go through several rounds of review of those policies to ensure a couple specific things. We are trying to ensure consistency with the Growth Management Act, other applicable state laws as needed. We also are trying to make sure all these policies we're proposing are consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan and other regional policies, you know, administered from Skagit Council of Governments. So that would also include the Countywide Planning Policies. It's required, you know, under the Growth Management Act that there's consistency between the County's Comprehensive Plan and the regional policies that are administered through SCOG.

We also review the policies for streamlining – trying to make the policies easier for Skagit County staff to implement and execute over the course of the 10-year planning period between updates. So you'll see, when you download the exhibits, there's a lot of reasoning of trying to clean up the policy and reduce redundancy. This is really trying to just help the Skagit County staff interpret a policy and apply it in everyday use over the 10-year period. We find that there's definitely some older policies that will include a lot of Growth Management Act language. We try and clean it up and make sure it's easier for the staff to implement so we don't need to repeat the same Growth Management Act language. So when you look through the exhibits online you'll see a lot of reasoning about that as well.

And then there's very unique – sorry. Before I turn it over to Andrea, there's very unique reasoning and analysis by each element that we review and so that's what we'll discuss tonight. The analysis of the policies for the Climate Element, the Resiliency, and the Environmental Element.

Andrea, I'll give it back to you.

Ms. Martin: Great. Thanks, Erin. So I'll now go into our approach and initial work on developing the Climate Element as part of this Comprehensive Plan Update.

So first I'll begin with a review of the context around this new element. As many of you, I'm sure, know in 2023 the Washington State Legislature amended the Growth Management Act through House Bill 1181, which requires local jurisdictions to integrate climate change policies into their comprehensive plan updates. The Washington State Department of Commerce plays a key role in guiding local jurisdictions on how to implement this new policy. They call for developing a climate element within the comprehensive plan, and the element should include goals and policies that meet two primary objectives. The first is greenhouse gas emission reduction, so that focuses on reducing climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions from both County government and the broader community. And then secondly the climate element must also address resiliency, which focuses on helping communities prepare for and adapt to climate impacts such as flooding and drought in extreme weather events.

Within this overarching framework, Skagit County has the flexibility to tailor the greenhouse gas emission reductions and resilience policies to fit its unique context. Our goal is to present local policies that align with HB1181 and Skagit County's priorities and needs. And the Climate Element won't present any new requirements or mandates for the county per se, but it will provide policy guidance to help make sure that the County's policies around transportation and land use, natural resources and housing address these climate goals as appropriate and set the county on a path toward a more sustainable and resilient future.

So first I'll talk a little bit about the Resilience Sub-element and our approach for developing that sub-element. So in line with state requirements, the goals that are set forth for this Resilience Sub-element are to address natural hazards created or aggravated by climate change; to identify, protect, and enhance natural areas to foster climate resilience; and to identify, protect, and enhance community resilience to climate impacts consistent with environmental justice.

So our approach to developing these policies, Erin overviewed the approach at a high level but specific to climate we wanted to make sure we built off and leveraged the County's existing related policies and programs, so including looking at the current Comprehensive Plan, the Shoreline Master Program, Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the County's Climate Action Plan. We also referenced Department of Commerce's new Climate Planning Guidance, which includes a menu of measures, which is essentially a comprehensive database of potential climate policies to consider. We focus the policies on areas that we identified as having the greatest climate risk in Skagit County and conducted a vulnerability assessment to support identification of climate risks. And then we also based the policies on input that we've received from the community and partners and County staff.

Next slide, please. These resiliency policies represent a strategy to address climate challenges facing Skagit County now and over the next 20 years. So by focusing on collaboration and preparedness and effective resource management, the goal here is to create a resilient community ready to face climate and other hazards and risks. Some key policy areas related to resiliency that are covered in the draft policies include building and leveraging partnerships – oops, sorry – to enhancing community preparedness and emergency response to climate hazards; integrating climate projections into land use and development planning; strengthening flood, sea level rise, extreme heat, and drought resilience; improving energy and transportation infrastructure; reliability against climate risks; and ensuring long-term water security through resource management and conservation.

And policies in the focus areas utilize a variety of approaches and levers, so some that we wanted to highlight that are reflected in the draft policies include building and leveraging partnerships and collaboration. So that includes collaboration with organizations such as WCU's Skagit County Extension Program; County Conservation District; Drainage District; Public Works; and Emergency Management. We also include in the draft policies highlighting implementation of current related plans, like the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, which already includes many resilience-focused policies. We also highlight tapping into available federal and state and private funding and grant programs to support policy initiatives and enable implementation of those policies in a cost-effective manner. We also propose policies around building, siting, and design and development to make buildings more resilient. Policies also focus on County-owned infrastructure improvements to ensure that the community can rely on County roads and other infrastructure during climate hazard events, as well as integrated natural resource management planning to ensure that the County's approach to resilience is holistic and interconnected with other natural resources, priorities, and needs.

Next slide, please.

Ms. O'Kelley: So Andrea – sorry, could I ask a question? Is it safe to say that the left side is sort of what we're trying to achieve through these policies – kind of the end goal – and the right side is *how* we would expect to get that done? Okay.

**Ms. Martin:** Good question. Thanks, Erin. So that's an overview of our approach to the Resiliency Sub-element and the policies that we're currently proposing for that sub-element. I'll now pivot into the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Sub-element. So I just wanted to highlight here the objectives. In accordance with state guidance, greenhouse gas emission reduction policies support work towards a state overall target of net zero emissions by 2050. And there are some state requirements for the sub-element that I just want to highlight. The first is to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions generated by transportation and land use in cities and towns; to reduce per person driving miles; and prioritize actions that benefit overburdened communities.

So our approach to developing policy builds off the County's existing policies aligning with state guidance for the sub-element, and incorporates community input received thus far, and addresses major county emission sources that were identified in the County's recent greenhouse gas emissions inventory.

So similar to the Resilience Sub-element, the greenhouse gas emission reduction policies don't proscribe new mandates or restrictions on county residents, but they do provide policy direction to support low carbon solutions in variance sectors, like the transportation, land use, natural resource, and industrial sectors over the 20-year planning period. And also note that community involvement is a crucial part of developing these policies, and so we'll continue to gather feedback from residents and stakeholders to ensure that policies reflect local needs and priorities.

Next slide. Sorry, my – I'm losing my voice here. So the proposed greenhouse gas emission reduction policies emphasize reducing emissions in areas where the County has the most direct impact. So that includes things like energy-efficient buildings; enhancing waste reuse recycling and reduction efforts; reducing per-person driving miles; and supporting the transition to low carbon vehicles. It also includes protecting and sustainably managing natural lands and expanding support for renewable energy and low carbon energy generation.

Proposed policies in these areas utilize a variety of policy levers. So one of those is partnerships and collaboration, kind of similar to the Resiliency Sub-element. So that includes partnerships with Skagit Transit, Public Works, WCU Extension, high carbon emitting sectors, and energy providers. The Climate Element policies also support implementation of related existing County plans, like the County Solid Waste Management Plan.

Another available policy lever is leveraging a significant amount of available federal, state, and private funding. So that can support local programs such as energy efficiency and EV rebates and tax incentives. Green building guidelines and programs can also offer effective and cost-effective options and guidelines for more sustainable and resilient buildings. And there are also other incentive programs that can be pursued, like commute trip reduction programs, that would work with employers to offer information incentives to support flexible commuting options. And policies for this sub-element can also emphasize alignment with other existing programs such as the Conservation Futures and Open Space Program.

Next slide. Environmental justice is a requirement of the GMA for both the Resiliency and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Sub-element. So we've included standalone environmental justice and social equity policies, as well as integrated environmental justice and equity into new and existing comprehensive plan policies. Some of the key focus areas and levers for this include prioritizing strategies that benefit burdened communities, policies to support equitable access to green jobs. So that includes in sectors like renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management, and green construction.

And then some key policy levers here include developing resources and programs for the County's most vulnerable communities: leveraging state, federal, and private funding and grant programs; collaborating with tribal governments and local leaders; implementing culturally sensitive education and outreach efforts; and developing community resources, such as resilience hubs.

Next slide. So the proposed Climate Element is designed to encompass resiliency, greenhouse gas reduction, and environmental justice goals and policies across 10 different sectors. And each sector includes an overarching goal and between two to eight policies, for a total of 10 new goals and 48 proposed policies. And these both work together to address sector-specific needs, both addressing resilience and greenhouse gas emission reduction. And the sector framework is designed to be flexible and can be adapted to meet Skagit County's unique needs as we move forward in drafting the Climate Element.

So finally, in addition to adding new policies in this new Climate Element, we've also proposed amending policies in the current Comprehensive Plan. So some of these amendments that we have suggested include slight modifications to policy language to promote resiliency and the protection of rural character in natural resource lands and environment chapters; modifications to the transportation policies to emphasize accessibility, equity, and reducing per capital vehicle miles and greenhouse gas emissions. And modifications also include increased emphasis on existing programs and partnerships in the utilities energy conservation chapter to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

And then finally, there was a policy on composting that was added to the solid waste management chapter, and that aligns with existing policies in the Climate Action Plan and the Solid Waste Management Plan.

So, sorry, everyone. I seem to be losing my voice here. Hopefully \_\_\_\_. We're able to take care of everything \_\_\_\_\_ happy to address questions, but for now I'll pass it over to Dan to talk about the Environment Element.

Ms. O'Kelley: Actually, Andrea, could we do questions now for this element?

Ms. Martin: Yeah.

Ms. O'Kelley: Is that okay? Just while it's fresh. I mean, I can go back to some slides as well but I just – it makes more sense.

Ms. Martin: Absolutely.

Chair Raschko: Questions, anyone? Commissioner Day?

Commissioner Day: Thank you very much for your presentation. So a question about the greenhouse gas emissions analysis: Is that analysis what is driving the policy goals in the climate segment of the new Comprehensive Plan?

Ms. Martin: Yeah, we definitely reference the greenhouse gas inventory to identify the major emission sectors to ensure that we had policies to address those major emission sectors. And, you know, but I would say it wasn't prescriptive per se. You know, we include policies that address emission sources, you know, even if they're not a major emission source because there are other benefits. So that – you know, solid waste is an example where you can see an inventory of that solid waste as a big source of communitywide greenhouse gas emissions as it's reflected in the

greenhouse gas inventory. But we know that solid waste management is an important climate issue and so we've included policies addressing that sector as well. So yes, it was information that we consulted and used to inform policy, but we consulted, you know, other sources and knowledge and understanding of greenhouse gas emission sources as well.

Commissioner Day: Thank you. Just a follow-up on that. I've studied your – the assessment that was done by Department of Commerce that's the basis for these policies. So land use is one of the big emitters, according to that study. It's the second biggest. But if you dig into the appendix it explains that. It's a little bit hard to understand how that was derived, and it also doesn't include – for example, it talks about tree cover loss, which is a significant supposed emission or source of carbon or metric tons of carbon equivalent. But it doesn't discuss in the report what's addressed in the appendix, which is the enormous carbon sequestration benefit of our forests. So that creates, you know – that would make land use actually have a net benefit, significantly so. So when you say that part of our land use policies are developed from that assessment, I find it a little bit difficult to understand how those policies wouldn't actually support the resource industry that is sustainable forest in Skagit County.

Ms. Martin: Mm-hmm, yeah. Thanks for the question. And it is, you know, I think difficult to be able to really interpret that land use, the tree loss piece, because there is the sequestration piece, as you mentioned that's important to think about. So the tree loss analysis is based on remote \_\_\_\_, so basically just looking at satellite imagery and using that to try and estimate where there are areas of tree loss, where we're losing tree canopy cover, and it also looks at where tree cover might be gained or you're gaining tree biomass. And in the inventory, we report the tree loss separately from that carbon sequestration piece, so the carbon sequestration is basically taking/capturing carbon from the atmosphere and putting it into tree biomass. We record that separately and the reason for that is because that's consistent with the standard U.S. protocol for greenhouse gas emissions inventories, which calls for reporting all emission sources together and separate from any sequestration that might be happening. So that's why that's reported separately and the report is to be consistent with those accepted protocols. But there is also a chart in the report that shows the sequestration benefits and that's definitely something that we acknowledge and is reflected in the policies too. So, you know, policies around enhancing tree canopy cover and improved forest management practices that help to sequester more carbon are included as draft policies as well. So acknowledge that sequestration is happening in Skagit County and providing a benefit, a carbon benefit. And that's reflected in the policies even though it's not in that pie chart, that emissions pie chart.

Commissioner Day: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Anybody else?

Commissioner Joe Woodmansee: I've got a couple questions.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Woodmansee?

Commissioner Woodmansee: First, can you define "climate justice" for me?

Commissioner Henley: Good question.

Ms. Martin: Yeah, I – there's – I would probably want to reference Commerce's definition of climate justice that – I don't have that in front of me. But I think if I were going to provide, you know, a definition on the spot I would say working to assure that climate change doesn't provide



a new burden on particular communities or exacerbate burdens on communities, especially those that are already burdened.

Commissioner Woodmansee: So is that different than environmental justice?

Ms. Martin: I would say that they are similar. Climate justice is more specific to climate change impacts on communities, whereas environmental justice is more broadly about environmental impacts on communities.

Commissioner Woodmansee: So it seems to me that it would be good to have a definitions page with all these terms that are coming out with all this new stuff, because a lot of these – most people are not going to know what the definition of “climate justice” is, or even “environmental justice.” And I’m sure there’s many more things mentioned in here that an actual – just a clear definition of what that really means would be helpful for the public to be able to read it and then actually understand, okay, well, What is climate justice? And so rather than just, you know, have this report that – this isn’t pointed at anybody, but definitions matter, and especially when you’re talking about policies and law and RCWs and all that kind of stuff. Code – I meant to say “code,” not “law.” So I don’t know if there’s a way to add a definition page for the majority of anything that is like kind of a new term or whatever, because there’s a lot of terms in here that I’m a little bit sideways on what we’re really talking about and what we’re really saying. Everybody likes the word “justice.”

Ms. Martin: Yeah.

Commissioner Woodmansee: But sometimes justice is also in the eye of the beholder. So that’s a couple questions I have. When these policies are being put together, is there – are we required to or is there a process that says, Okay, here’s the policies. What does this do to our Housing Element? Like, what’s the impact? So if we go to implement x, y, z policies and then is it in this process of – because we’re creating new, something we’ve never had before. So how does it affect the cost of a house? How does it affect your cost of transportation? And so on and so forth. And so is that part of the analysis of this when we get all the way down to recommending policies, or is that equation like not part of the process here? Like, standalone climate, new climate policies are what they are, and then, you know, five years from now we’re going to figure out what the result of that was.

Ms. O’Kelley: Andrea, I could do an answer and then give it over to you.

Ms. Martin: Sure.

Ms. O’Kelley: This is the moment that we would like to integrate this new element into existing and, you know, try and not diminish what is in the existing element of the Comprehensive Plan. So this is the moment that we would like to hear what you’re worried about would impact from these policies so that we can take – because this is just the first draft. And we can then take it and continue to analyze and understand the values that we need to be preserving with the – given that we have such a new element for the entire state that we don’t fully know, you know, how it’s going to look in a few years as we get through implementation. So I’m very happy to hear those concerns and we would love to hear even more if you would like to tell them to us now. But what I’m hearing from you is concern about the housing affordability impact if we were to implement these policies.

Commissioner Woodmansee: Well, yeah, I mean on a high level, right? I mean, I'm not detailed into, Okay, this particular policy's going to cause this.

Ms. O'Kelley: Sure. Mm-hmm.

Commissioner Woodmansee: But definitely, you know, I think it's – the housing – there's still a housing crisis. And it's kind of my soapbox but the more things that we pass that cause housing to be more expensive or the more policies we put in place that cause housing to be more expensive the farther away people are going to be able to get from affordable housing. And I –

Mr. Eckroth: Commissioner Woodmansee?

Commissioner Woodmansee: Yes?

Mr. Eckroth: If there're specific policies as you dig through this further that you have concerns, particularly about cost and housing affordability, please forward them our way. We can take a look at them. Thank you.

Ms. O'Kelley: And the strategy, too, for the whole project was to release these as an early draft. They're redline versions and I'm sorry we didn't go into all 50 of them in more detail in this preliminary draft, but it was to get this out to the public to get those concerns so that we can go back and integrate this more strongly together so that it does work and there's not – we're not coming back next year and you guys are finding out there's really, really dramatic inconsistencies between the elements, because it is required that they're consistent with each other, that they're all promoting the direct vision of the community together and they're not trying to – you know, we're not fighting over what we're trying to accomplish. Because that's not going to be helpful for anyone.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Henley?

Commissioner Henley: Yeah, a couple things. It's one thing to write a policy down. It's quite another thing to actually implement it and execute it. And I noticed, and maybe it's elsewhere in these documents, but you don't address either feasibility or cost, and both of those are likely to rear their ugly heads at some point in the process. For example, we've got this Clean Energy Transformation Act here. I don't know how you get there without addressing something like nuclear, for example. And given the lead time to create new nuclear energy plants, that could be a very, very long time far out of the realm of what the policy is suggesting. So I would like to suggest that at some point in time you at least take a stab at the feasibility and cost of some of these things. I mean, I know Joe's concerned about affordable housing and I think that's a really, you know, important thing to be focused on. Because we get hammered on affordable housing all the time and it doesn't seem to me like some of these policies are going to improve that. It sounds to me like they're going to make it worse.

And the other thing is is that some of these energy policies, I think, are – how would I put it? – so industrially fragile that you're likely to end up with zero energy as opposed to zero GHGs. So I think you need to be concerned about that and I'd like to see something addressing the cost feasibility and so forth that there are. I don't think you should ignore nuclear.

Mr. Eckroth: So Commissioner Henley, if there's particular policies that you want us to take a look at. Please feel free to email them our way and we can see if we can explain the feasibility. Staff looked over all the proposed policies that Cascadia wrote up just to make sure that they

would be feasible for us to carry out. So that's something that staff looked at as we know our county particularly well.

Commissioner Henley: Are those policy changes available? The cost?

Mr. Eckroth: No, we did not look at cost specifically. Also, looking at nuclear energy and things like that, it's a little bit outside of the realm of what the County's able to do.

Commissioner Henley: It's outside the realm of the County, but it's not outside the realm of the state. And the County stuff is actually being driven by the state. The County didn't think of this on its own.

Mr. Eckroth: Right.

Ms. O'Kelley: And then I can add some additional context. So I'm going to go back to one of these slides. Here we go. So as I kind of briefly highlighted before, as Andrea was presenting: So the right side is, you know, what needs to be achieved and maybe what – has it been required of us to achieve? And then the right side is how we would expect that to be achieved as the way we've written these policies. So we've written these policies for partnerships in collaboration with other agencies that could accomplish these things – right? Because Skagit County cannot do everything that *is* in the requirements. We have also written policy so that they hopefully optimize on the existing plans that have already been done. So we're trying to utilize those resources into those plans as much as possible before we would have to consider seeking outside sources. And that leads me to the third point of federal, state, and private funding. So, you know, if there are other things we find outside of what Skagit County is already doing to meet these requirements – and there are quite a few that are already being done – we would try, and the policies highlight or prioritize trying to find existing funding elsewhere so that funds wouldn't have to be reallocated. And then you have a section at the end of this policy revision process. You'll have a big chunk of policies that really are intended to be implemented through the development regulations, so that's this fourth policy you'll see here with the green building development regulations. Those are obviously just development regulation amendments that would go into the development regulations process. So that's the feasibility, or that's the implementation of those policies. And so those would be kind of the zoning and development policy sectors that you see on there.

And then the incentive programs. And those – and they align with other programs as well. Those are kind of – we would kind of pull those out and do a little further study and try and get a little more details on the feasibility. We certainly haven't done it at this point since these are a first draft and we didn't want to go to the level of detail in the first draft of policies. But we do hope whatever policies are not in the existing Skagit process or in development regulations we would try and help staff understand, Okay, how would this actually be accomplished? And get some more reasonable details for you.

In the next – when we come back next year, we hope to have a little more detail.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Candler?

Vice Chair Tammy Candler: I saw in your – the Kimley-Horn summary briefing, that the – you're indicating the Climate Commitment Act, there's a target for Washington State aiming at a 95% reduction in climate pollution by 2050. So 26 years from now. Climate pollution appears – if you look at the Act itself – appears to be defined as GHG. I didn't see other definitions and maybe I didn't see it, but I saw the climate pollution *is* GHG. And so my question is: Am I reading that

correctly? Because I didn't go back. I should have gone back to the bill, but am I reading that correctly to say that's all existing structures and not limited to future builds? Is that your understanding, is that that's a complete reduction of what we've got going on right now?

Ms. O'Kelley: I will actually defer to Andrea, if she could provide some additional –

Ms. Martin: Yeah, sure. That's a great question. So the goal, the 2050 goal, would be for whatever would contribute greenhouse gas emissions in 2050, it would be reducing those emissions. So greenhouse gas emissions are projected to increase in the future, just given population growth and economic growth, without any kind of policy intervention. And so that's why our policy intervention is needed in order to, you know, help to reduce those emissions from a business-as-usual type of no-action scenario. So it would – in order to reach that goal, you would want to address new development in addition to existing development.

Vice Chair Candler: You're saying development – existing development or existing uses? The example that I'm thinking of is when I built my houses. In the last 20 years or so, where I live it changed from I could have oil or propane, and now if I were to build in the same place right now the only option is going to be electric heat. And that's a regulation that has been in place and that's, I think, responsive to this kind of issue. But my question is, Would – we're talking about development regulations, so it doesn't – I can't figure out whether this goes back and says reduce 95% of what's going on or the regulations are only going to affect future developments. Does that make sense?

Ms. Martin: Mm. Yeah, I think – if I answer the question, I think it would, you know, depend – as Erin said, we're in the initial stages here so I don't think we have specificity on what those development regulations will look like. But I would assume that they would apply to new construction of new building construction and major retrofits of buildings.

Vice Chair Candler: Major retrofits. That makes sense. And I read that this bill is sort of –

Commissioner Henley: Yeah, but the benchmark is 2017 so that implies that it's actually retroactive.

Vice Chair Candler: Right. And what I saw when I looked this up – just looking around online – was that the bill was designed – some would say and some *did* say on Google, and it's only worth what it is, I guess – but to get – mostly targeting businesses, and so I don't know if that is actually stated in the Act or not. It doesn't seem like it, based on what's been prepared, but – anyway, I have a different question. I also read on our website that we're not presently measuring sea level rise in and around Skagit County. Is that you guys's understanding? Because I'm trying to figure out how we're going to address that if we're not really – obviously you have the Shoreline Management Act, the coastline, but we have rivers, we have – I guess I'm trying to figure out if we're not – is there a piece of plan to start measuring any of this stuff?

Mr. Eckroth: Thank you, Commissioner. You look at the policies, I believe there's a policy that says that we would work to establish maps and we don't currently have anything adopted at this moment.

Vice Chair Candler: Maps, but as far as – well, okay. Thank you. I understand.

Ms. O'Kelley: Could I go back to your previous question?

Vice Chair Candler: Sure.

Ms. O’Kelley: We’d be happy to provide some additional information. It sounds like you’re – you had a question on the requirements or anything trickling down from the Act versus what would be implemented in development regulations in Skagit County and the requirements between those differences.

Vice Chair Candler: Well, I’m just – I mean, I’m looking at the numbers and you’ve got the built – let’s just take a look at Skagit County community. You’ve got the built environment. You’re saying it takes 60% of the GHG emissions. You’ve got Land Use, which is 23%. And I didn’t do quite as deep a dive, I think, as Commissioner Day but I’m not really sure how those intersect.

And then you’ve got – and apparently the built environment includes both businesses and residences. And so then you have another chart that distinguishes that more thoroughly. And so apparently built environment, GHG emissions by sector and source, you do industry, commercial, and residential and the industrial is 300,000 residential just under – that’s well under 500,000. I’m not sure what that – what is that? 400 or 455 – anyway, I’m just wondering – you know, just like everybody, I’m just kind of trying to figure out how this – what this really looks like. Because 95% sounds like a high number. I mean, I know that’s good if we could do something like that. But I’m also wondering, you know, about the energy grid in general. Like, if we were to reduce GHG by 95%, you know, what would replace it at this point? But we’ve got 26 years on this plan, I guess.

Ms. O’Kelley: So you’re curious more about the details of what would that look like. I get that.

Vice Chair Candler: I am, I am. I know that’s not necessarily where we get in here, but I think everyone is.

Ms. O’Kelley: No, that’s okay. We can certainly provide you more information, and obviously we don’t have anything. We have not reached that point yet, but I could provide you, you know, examples.

Vice Chair Candler: Well, here’s an example of the question I would have: You indicate that the Clean Energy Transformation Act requires transition to 100% zero emission electricity by 2045, but I don’t know what the emission is right now. I don’t know how much of a change that is. And I don’t know – we have zero emission vehicle mandates, low and zero emission vehicle standards for vehicles in Washington. That one doesn’t have a *date* of when that would be implemented. I’m assuming – well, I don’t know. But what are they now? You know what I mean? Like, how big of a gap are we filling here? So those were my questions.

Ms. Martin: I can answer that, if that is okay.

Ms. O’Kelley: Yes, of course.

Ms. Martin: Okay, great. Yeah, thank you. So in terms of the – what’s entailed here: So the primary emission sources \_\_\_\_\_ residence and businesses. And electricity takes up 8% of your total emissions, and so relatively speaking that’s pretty low so that indicates to me that your electricity utility has, you know, a relatively cleaner fuel mix. And so, you know, complying with the Clean Energy Transformation Act might be less of a change compared to maybe some other electricity utilities. But I just wanted to reinforce that, yeah, that’s a state level requirement that utilities are aware of and they’re planning for, and not something that the County necessarily needs to be involved in or, you know, has a role in. It’s really the utilities who are aware of it and are planning for that. And that policy does require that utilities have a plan and

demonstrate that they're able to continue providing electricity in a reliable way during that transition. And so that is something that the utilities are thinking about to ensure that the grid is reliable as the electricity fuel mix transitions and as communities transition more to electric fuel sources. And I also note that we do have in our draft policies, I believe, some policies focus on energy resiliency in the Resiliency Sub-element, just acknowledging, you know, that that is important to ensure during hazard events and extreme weather events that you can continue to keep the lights on and have reliable energy. So that's something that we have also included, I believe, in the policies as well.

Vice Chair Candler: And just as Commissioner Woodmansee's concerned about the rising cost of housing, I would also be concerned about, of course, losing jobs in the industry and would be interested in the cost analysis of that as well. If the vast majority of the community emissions that we're concerned about is industry, then that is a concern, I think, as far as whether or not those industries can absorb that kind of a change or whether they would stay here – all of that.

Ms. Martin: Yeah, thank you for that. And I just wanted to note too around jobs, it's an important point and, you know, we are focused on making sure that these policies don't inevitably impact the local economy. And so we also included policies looking at job training opportunities and supporting if people needed to transition to other job opportunities and up-and-coming sectors, especially related to energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, you know, there are work force training programs – be implemented across the country to support people with – you know, solar panel installation and learning that trade, for example. So that is something that we also included in the policies here.

Vice Chair Candler: To offset – yeah. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, but Commissioner Day had a follow-up to what we were just discussing with Commissioner Candler. So if you don't mind, I'll let her go first and then come back to you. Okay.

Commissioner Day: Thank you. There is a policy, I think, that partially addresses your question, Commissioner Candler, that I also had in my notes. It's the climate integration into existing policies 9A. And first of all, I want to say that I think most of the policies are extremely well written and well done. I appreciate all of your work on this. This particular one, I'm have a hard time understanding it and I'm not sure if it responds to Commissioner Candler's question or if it's just not been edited. It says "generating energy generation from non-renewable sources such as natural gas should be phased out when possible and the County will explore use of renewable energy sources in both new and existing buildings."

When I read that, it sounds to me like, you know, we're going to have one choice for energy in our homes, which is electricity. And as a person and as, I think, a county that values self-reliance and resilience, I don't think that offers very much to those of us who, for example, just had a power outage in the windstorm a few days ago. And if I hadn't had a gas cooktop and, you know, a set of matches I would have been eating cheese and crackers for dinner. Which is fine for one night, but, you know, as time goes by I don't want to have to resort to what's in another part of your climate policies, which is CE3.2, which offers resilience hubs to people so they can go there and, you know, get a hot meal in an emergency and charge their phone. I'd rather just be resilient in my own home. And so, you know, I understand these are responsive to state policies and that you can't get to 95% reduction without, you know, eliminating the oil refineries and, you know, eliminating all of our propane tanks and everybody working at a computer that somehow powered their AI by renewable sources of energy. And I also don't know how to get to the resilience hub in

my electric vehicle if my power was out and my battery was dead. So I think these are things that are on people's minds in this county and is certainly on mine. And I guess the place that I saw that raised that question for me was that particular policy. There may be others, but I think those are things that Skagit County as citizens will want to know more about before, you know, we enact these kinds of policies.

Ms. Martin: Thank you so much. Yeah, and I think many others share your concern. And I'll just note – let's see, a couple things I'll just note: I guess, first, the focus – we do need to phase out fossil fuel sources in order to meet that emission reduction goal and natural gas is a fossil fuel. So it will be important to reduce fossil fuel consumption, which, you know, would in its current state include natural gas. I will say that your example of the cooktop, I think the first priority will be some of those bigger natural gas consumption sources in the home, and right now cooktops aren't the primary source of natural gas used in a home. You know, HVAC systems for heating, water heating, and air heating are the primary sources, so, you know, I think you could look at those sources first. And we're not saying take away all your cooktops. Because at the end of the day those are more minor sources. But, you know, starting to transition to more efficient HVAC systems, for example, will be an important step towards bridging things – some of the current greenhouse gas emissions sources.

Also note that battery storage will be increasingly important with this transition. And, you know, you mentioned the example of the EV and not being able to drive it to the resilience hub. You know, EVs have giant batteries in them and there's increasing technology to be able to use those batteries for your home, too. So the technology's being developed but when you're looking far out to this 2050 year goal, it's looking like we'll increasingly be able to use things like electric vehicles, you know, as battery storage mechanisms that can help support your home during a power outage, for example. So there're some technological solutions that are under development that I think can help address some of these issues, you know, as we're making this transition. And then in the meantime, you know, focusing on some of those biggest energy-consuming and natural gas-consuming appliances and equipment in the home will be important.

Commissioner Day: Thanks.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Wright?

Commissioner Henley: I think Commissioner Day – oh, I'm sorry.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Wright.

Commissioner Henley: Go ahead, go ahead.

Commissioner Kiera Wright: No, I just want to follow up on the Commissioners. Thank you for this report. Just, again, more information would be great to educate us all, as well as our Skagitonians. Feasibility, cost, and enforcement: These are policies or codes. How could we be enforcing reducing per person driving miles? That feels like an infringement to me. Where is the choice coming in? I'm just really concerned about this language, that we don't know how it's going to look. So again, what does it look like? When we say "reduce per person driving miles"? And if you create transportation hubs and what-not, or we have electrical issues or – losing some choice here. And I don't know how it feels and how it looks but we all are not contained to a five-block area. We have jobs and we have childcare and we have a big county to traverse, so I just wonder how that would look, especially – we have tourism. We have a major amount of travelers here throughout the day, throughout the year, throughout the month of April alone. How is that all going to look and how will it be enforced? We're creating policies. Are these *ghost* policies? Will they

actually have consequences? Or how that will look and lay out to the ground level person? – is my concern. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Thank you. Okay – go ahead.

Ms. Martin: Yeah, thank you for all that concern, for sure. And, you know, I'll just say that the current policies that we have introduced here, you know, they're not putting restrictions on personal use of a vehicle or anything like that. It's for more currently on just providing support and incentives and information on different transportation options. And on, you know, being able to provide other ways of, you know, working or telework or whatnot. So, yeah, there's not – as of right now, in these draft policies there's nothing that's going to be prescriptive about how you use your vehicle or not. It's just things that we can do to encourage different modes of transport.

And then I'll also say that we also include quite a few policies around EVs and transitioning to electric vehicles and supporting the transition, which, you know, I think as someone noted, is the direction that the state is heading in terms of what the vehicles that will be available in the future. And, you know, of course electric vehicles are going to be using the same roads as the current traditional vehicles. So, you know, we're not necessarily saying get all the cars off the roads now, acknowledging that we're set up in a way where it's important to use a vehicle to get to places that you need to be but, yeah, just wanting to encourage the use of other modes and options and the ability to minimize that travel as it makes sense.

Commissioner Wright: So thank you for that, but to me the word “policy” – I'm a rule-follower. I'm going to follow the rules of all the policies. And maybe change the language – be more encouraging, like you're saying. Because you're explaining it in better way than like how it was on your slide, was my concern. Because you're saying reduce, reduce, do, do. We're going to follow that policy and follow those rules, but you're saying it more as an encouragement or as access to stuff. I think that verbiage I mentioned \_\_\_ change and make it more positive would be helpful to the lay reader.

Ms. O'Kelley: Sorry. The “reduce” was the word to change. And the “reduce” was the –

Commissioner Wright: I get the goals of “reduce,” but it's an encouragement to the population to do that by the different means you're suggesting in your policies, correct?

Ms. O'Kelley: Yeah. I just want to make sure I heard you right.

Mr. Eckroth: And that's actually how a lot of our policies are constructed, if you look through them. There's a *lot* of language like that, so we're not putting the county or its citizens in a position where if it's not feasible to transition because of costs or change in federal/state regulation we're not completely bound by that.

Commissioner Wright: But we don't know the cost though, correct? And you say you don't have a cost feasibility, so how do we know what the word “reduce” will do? I'm lost then.

Mr. Eckroth: What I was saying was if you actually look through a lot of the policy language there is not a lot of language in there that says specifically, like, You must do this. Reduce. It's a lot of it is encourage, support, things like that.

Chair Raschko: We've got Commissioner Hughes and then Commissioner Hutchison and then Commissioner Henley.



Commissioner Amy Hughes: All right. I'd like to go back to the almost 50-page study on the Skagit County '22 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis. It says that this was funded by the Washington Department of Commerce and it funded an 11-county GHG mission's inventory and scenario planning effort. Who were those 11 counties? When was this first produced? This seems what's driving a lot of this and so I'd like some background information on this report.

Ms. Martin: Yeah, absolutely. I'm happy to provide that. The 11 counties were the 11 counties that are required by the state to develop a greenhouse gas emissions sub-element as part of the comprehensive plan update. So they include Skagit County, Whatcom County, Thurston County, and some counties on the east side of the state as well. And it was developed for the calendar year 2022 but done this year to specifically support comprehensive plan updates and development of the greenhouse gas emissions sub-element. So that was the intention of the study. And I can't remember if I've – I don't know if I've answered all your questions about it, but that was the geographic coverage of the study and the images of it.

Commissioner Hughes: I'm still wondering, Why Skagit County? We have numerous – 33 – counties in the state and we're kind of on the first round of this. Why Skagit County? Are we similar to the other 10 counties, or is it a mix of urban and rural? As I go through life, there's a lot of difference between urban and rural so I'm interested in who we're targeting here.

Mr. Eckroth: Andrea, I can speak to that a little bit, if you'd like.

Ms. Martin: Yeah, \_\_\_\_\_.

Mr. Eckroth: House Bill 1181, if you read the language, has specific criteria for counties that specifies when the greenhouse gas emission reduction requirement applies to them. And specifically within 1181 it says for counties west of the Cascades if they have a population over 130,000, that portion of the bill applies to that county. And we have 132,000. So that is the way they crafted it and captured Skagit County within that. There's also different criteria for counties east of the Cascades. I can't remember those off the top of my head.

Commissioner Hughes: So mostly the western counties are being directed in this manner.

Mr. Eckroth: Yes. Yeah, so it does include Benton, Franklin, and Spokane east of the Cascades, and then on the west side it's Clark, Thurston, King, Pierce, Kitsap, Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom.

Commissioner Hughes: Okay. Similar to how GMA went through – Growth Management Act. Same type of a scenario and then the other counties come after.

Mr. Eckroth: Well, those are the – if anyone exceeds those population requirements then they'll have to do that. You are correct, though. The 2025 jurisdictions – which that's us – are the first jurisdictions that do have to have a climate planning element, including the greenhouse gas emission reduction sub-element, where the 2024 jurisdictions – which that's Kitsap, Pierce, King, Snohomish – they've started the process but they don't have to do it until 2029.

Commissioner Hughes: Okay. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Hutchison?

Commissioner Jennifer Hutchison: Thank you. There's so much to all of this. So much to all of this. Packets of it. Wow. A lot of the ideas behind it all are just incredible and I want to support them, but when we look at the way the language is it's kind of terrifying at the same time.

I really just have a comment which, I guess, I'll follow with a question. We were talking earlier about costs and we talked about the cost of housing, we talked about – I don't think I heard anybody mention taxes but I don't know why we haven't mentioned taxes. There's costs to transportation that's been a concern. And I fear that we're not even touching on the cost of future costs for utilities. We just keep – I see you defer all of – you know, the utilities are going to take care of that; that's their job! They know what's being asked of them and the expectation. And I just really – I, you know – for over 25 years it's been my opinion that the electric companies should have been rolling out solar on residential properties in fleets and masses and have complete departments for it, and this wouldn't even be something we'd be worried about today! So considering that they're probably 25 years behind, you know, just having initiative to do that on their own and create those jobs and keep their own customers – right? Instead, now we're, like, forcing this all through. The state's making requirements, which I want to note there are initiatives that are currently on our ballots that could repeal some of this burden to our providers of utility and electric and heat that we all love. I just wonder, like, is there any rolling this back? Has the County just said, straight forward, 100%? We opted in for this second grant and now we're just going to *do it*? Or if this repeal comes through is there some leniency for PSE and all – the whole process, the expectation on them is impossible for me to conceive. I just – I can't put it together how that's going to happen in the next 25 years.

Mr. Eckroth: Thank you, Commissioner Hutchison. So just to make clear, House Bill 1181, which sets up the requirement for the climate element, is completely separate than the initiatives on the ballot. You're correct – one of those does pertain to energy and natural gas, but if that does get repealed, Skagit County still is on the hook for the climate planning element.

Commissioner Hutchison: It doesn't stop 1180 – okay.

Mr. Eckroth: No.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Henley.

Commissioner Henley: Yeah, I think Commissioner Day had a very good point and that is that instead of seeking single sources of our energy requirements we ought to seek as many as we can handle. Because, as she pointed out, if you have a power outage – like I think they had here in Mount Vernon today – it would be good to have an alternative source of energy whether that's propane or natural gas or diesel fuel or whatever it might be – solar – I don't care. But the point is that it ought to be good that we exploit all of the energy sources we can.

Now the thing that is the elephant in the room where the room is already filled with elephants, is the power grid. Now we haven't added much to the power grid in a very long time and I think that the more load we put on the power grid the more fragile it's going to become. But I don't see huge investments in expanding the power grid. I mean, transmission lines cost a lot of money, they take up a lot of property, et cetera, et cetera, and they take time to build. I don't see construction going on on the power grid and there probably should be. So we need to think about this before we jump off the cliff and try to swim with the elephants.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Day?

Commissioner Day: I'm sorry. I feel like I'm asking too many questions. But I appreciate all the work that's been done on this and I think it's very important to the future of the county. And I also understand the goals are coming from the top down, from the state. And the 95% reduction in greenhouse gases in 26 years – I think we need to put our minds around what that would entail. So we have two oil refineries here, which I believe that the assessment of the greenhouse gas emissions is not accurate. I also looked up what's called the "FLIGHT data," which is referenced in the methodology on the EPA's website for 2022. There are two oil refineries and they emitted 3.2 million metric ton equivalent, not the lesser amount that's listed in the report. So that's a significant amount, and you cannot get the 95% reduction without those refineries going away and all of the jobs and all the industry and all the product that they provide that currently has no alternative, like gasoline and diesel and jet fuel. We don't have electrified semitrucks or electrified cargo ships or electrified airplanes. And so I think – I noted in your policies that it says, you know, we're going to support carbon intensive workers to transition to new jobs. But I just think that when we take a look at the little impact that County operations can make, or, you know, putting high efficiency gas – electric furnaces in our house and replacing the gas furnaces. Adding two more inches of insulation over the foot that's already required, or whatever it is. Commissioner Woodmansee could speak better to that. I just think we're making tiny, incremental dents in the greenhouse gas emissions, you know, at a cost to our economy and our lifestyles, and I just think that we need to think about and be realistic and not fall prey to magical thinking about what reductions we actually can make in a realistic way in 26 years. And our policies should reflect that.

Commissioner Hughes: Yeah, I'll agree.

Ms. O'Kelley: Well, I will say – Andrea, you're welcome to respond as well – I mean, we are really trying to write the policies in a way that does try and work to reach those exterior, alternative, other sources, or solutions that are not impacting lifestyle as best as possible. Again, I just want to reiterate that's why the partnerships and collaboration and, you know, advocacy outside of Skagit's networks is kind of listed first here. We'd be happy to, you know, explain more in depth of what – you know, the priority levels of how these policies would be. But, yeah, I totally understand and we'd be happy to go and do another check and look and review and consider all the concerns you guys are bringing up with us tonight.

Andrea, do you have additional response?

Ms. Martin: Yeah, thank you. I just wanted to – you mentioned the industrial process emissions approach – the analysis approach – and questioned that. I just wanted to clarify that we took the outputs from the FLIGHT tool that you referenced and we removed the natural gas consumption piece of that because that is reported separately under the natural gas part of the greenhouse gas inventory and we didn't want to double-count. So that's why the number that you see for additional process is different from what was in the EPA FLIGHT tool. And to note that the natural gas part of the greenhouse gas emissions inventory includes industrial natural gas, so that includes natural gas consumption by those industries that you mentioned.

Commissioner Day: Oh, I'm sorry. May I interrupt?

Ms. Martin: Yeah, absolutely.

Commissioner Day: I just looked up the, you know, FLIGHT stands for – what is it? – the specific site information, point sources that are reported to the EPA. And so I looked at all the sources, which, if you take those all into account, the refineries are 3.2 million metric tons and total it's 3.6

million metric tons. So even if you take away the natural gas part, we're still way over what is included in industrial processes in this report. I mean I'm sorry to question this, but, you know, as a person with a Ph.D. in a social science, I've done a lot of my own, you know, statistical and qualitative research and so I guess understanding the methodology and trying to replicate it is important to me, and I think it's important that the citizens of this county have confidence in the data which is providing the basis for these policies.

Ms. Martin: Yep, absolutely, and I'm happy to look into it in more detail and follow up to provide you with the calculations.

Commissioner Day: Okay. And I have also sent a memo to Robby sharing the FLIGHT data search that I did, so perhaps he could share that with you, and if you could provide us additional feedback that would be great.

Ms. Martin: Absolutely. Yep.

Commissioner Day: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Woodmansee?

Commissioner Woodmansee: So I'm just following the energy conversation here. So I just see it tunnelling down to a single source of energy, and everything written in these codes and all of the goals, and the only way to get there is electricity. So I'm imagining a world where the handful of electricity providers control 100% of your energy and a government that regulates them. And there's these two small groups of people that are controlling this *major* need for everybody that lives in the state of Washington. So I think that we should caveat into these policies future technologies in fossil fuels. I do not share the same – I don't think it's a smart thing to have a goal to eliminate fossil fuels. I think it's a bad policy. But technology may change, information may change, so our policy should leave a door open that we can reverse course with new information, new technology. Maybe they're going to discover some other kind of energy that's fossil that doesn't have the emissions. I don't know.

Commissioner Henley: Kryptonite.

Commissioner Woodmansee: Yeah, exactly! And so I have a big concern that – I know it comes down from the state, but I still want to state it: I have a big concern that we're funneling down to basically a single source of energy, and very few people control that energy. And that's a big concern I have.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Hutchison.

Commissioner Hutchison: I would just add to that that elimination to me does not sound like what I identify to be resilient. At all. In the name of resiliency, there's a conflict of interest in how this is being delivered, I believe. When you do de-regulate all the other providers and you have only power coming from the energy company, it sounds like a monopoly to me. I mean somebody at the state level must feel like gods right now to be able to pull that kind of control, and I just have very mixed feelings about the whole thing.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Candler.

Vice Chair Candler: Well, and another elephant that we haven't talked about is the fact that most of the – we're not producing enough electricity – not without fossil fuels, at any rate – to do any of this. And so if you eliminate fossil fuels, you don't have oil for the windmill to spin around; you don't have gas to – you don't have the power to generate the electricity that's charging the electric vehicles right now – and I understand technology may change. But if we get rid of our industry that is the refineries, then we're losing out on a piece of this puzzle that hasn't gone away yet. So I don't – I know that this – I almost do acknowledge this comes from the state, but – and this has nothing to do with you. You guys did a great job. We're trying to talk to the legislature right now, I guess, mostly. So thank you.

Ms. O'Kelley: I just have a follow-up question. You know, if this wasn't – I know you guys don't like – this is a very, very difficult thing to allow – you know, ask of any community, let alone the entire state, or let alone rural communities and applying state requirements across the state. You know, you'll obviously find inconsistencies. I am curious: Is there any other additional – what these policies are drafting, and I know that we are trying to satisfy some things from the state, but, you know, without that, is there other concerns about the policies too that you guys want to bring up? I mean, I think this is great information for us to take back. I'm just curious. I know it's a lot of like we're just very concerned about these state requirements. I like the livelihood discussion.

Vice Chair Candler: I had a similar question. Commissioner Woodmansee first opened it up with the social equity question, and I did look up the definition of that and it looks like it's something along the lines of it references overburdened communities and it references vulnerable communities where people are exposed to environmental pollutants causing significant adverse health effects as one of those, and also, I think, separately areas where specifically sea level rise is going to disproportionately affect people \_\_\_\_. I don't remember if that came up here, but.... But has – is it part of the role of any of this to identify what that looks like in Skagit County? Or we just make this policy and we don't care what the practical implication is. Anybody have a thought about that?

Ms. O'Kelley: We have multiple – Andrea, do you want to start?

Ms. Martin: Sure, yeah. We're still working on finalizing it, but as part of this we conducted a climate vulnerability assessment and that included looking at the science in terms of projected sea level rise, as you mentioned, and flood risk and wildfire smoke risk, temperature, extreme heat risk. So we looked at what that will look like for the county using available mapping products. There's one that the state provided that, you know, shows how these impacts might vary across the landscape. And then we, you know, overlaid that with demographic data and information about different communities to get an understanding about, you know, where some of these communities (are) most at risk and, therefore, where it would be important to focus efforts around resiliency building and preparing for those climate effects.

Vice Chair Candler: And do you know whether environmental pollutants in that definition includes – well, climate pollution specifically defined as GHG, but what comes to mind to me is, like, people living under the power lines. Historically, I think there's been some concerns about the health risks involved in that. Is that part of what you're looking at?

Ms. Martin: Yeah, and thanks for bringing that. That is important in environmental justice issues, yeah, in terms of communities that might already be exposed to air quality impacts, you know, if they live next to a highway or something like that, or next to some industrial process location where they're getting pollutant exposure. So that is important to consider. And we use – Washington State has some information around environmental justice that we often will reference

for those vulnerability assessments. So, yeah, that supplies something that we \_\_\_\_\_ into account. \_\_\_\_\_ by power lines, but it does look at indicators of increased vulnerability, health indicators, things like that.

Vice Chair Candler: But it sounds like you're saying of GHG, i.e., living by the freeway but not of electricity, i.e., living under power lines. Is that your understanding of what's being looked at?

Ms. Martin: So in terms of greenhouse gases, you know, typically it's looking at criteria air pollutants like particulate matter, exposure. I'm not sure if we looked at that specifically as part of the vulnerability assessment. I can check on that and get back to you.

Vice Chair Candler: Thank you. I'd appreciate it.

Ms. Martin: As far as I understand it, I don't think we've looked at exposure to or proximity to power lines as part of that.

Mr. Eckroth: Andrea, it's mostly just been from a resiliency perspective, right? So communities that are more prone to flood hazards, for instance – things like that. Is that correct?

Ms. Martin: Yeah. Yeah. And then, you know, we'll also look at characteristics of the community that could make them more predisposed to detrimental impacts from that exposure. So if, you know, lower income communities might not have the resources available to be able to, you know, bounce back or rebuild or be able to access other resources to support them during flood events and things like that. So we will look at some of those indicators as an indicator of vulnerability as well.

Vice Chair Candler: Is it just the sort of events or is it more like if they can afford to put in like a filtration system? Is that – you know what I mean? If you're talking about socioeconomic factors are you talking about communities that might be lower income that are going to be impacted if they are too close to the freeway? You see what I'm saying?

Ms. O'Kelley: Yeah. So a lot of this – also there's the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map provided by the Department of Health in the state, and then the EPA Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping, and it overlooks environmental hazards and toxins; tropic proximity; superfund proximity; lead paints. And then also with the Department of Health it is income, age, race, a bunch of – so it's environmental factors again with socioeconomic factors together income, and from there that's where – additioned with the GIS data or the environmental on-the-ground data that's being addressed as well to identify where the most vulnerable communities be, with this vulnerability assessment. So it's kind of a layered approach.

Commissioner Henley: One quick source of data like that is the Electric Power Research Institute. They're in Palo Alto, California, and they specialize in all of this sort of stuff that has to do with the grid, transmission lines, power transformers, and so on. If you can get access to some of their data, it would be pretty useful.

Ms. Martin: Thank you.

Mr. Eckroth: Thank you.

Ms. Martin: I also just want to note that we do have a policy proposed to identify those communities that will be most at risk to these different kinds of climate hazards. So looking, as

you mentioned, at low income communities, that also would include looking at outdoor workers who would be more exposed. So things like that. We do have this addressed in the draft policy as well.

Ms. O'Kelley: And then just to add to that, \_\_\_ additional just to supplement. So we had the analysis side that Andrea just mentioned about the vulnerability analysis that's being conducted looking at all the data. But I will say too that the engagement, the public participation program – at multiple stages during the public engagement we did ask, you know, are there – we asked the community also to kind of supplement, provide additional data because, you know, the data has this high level approach, then we also tried to do a grassroots approach. So during the open house in June, we did ask, Where in the community are you seeing what hazard impacts? And we asked people to kind of put stickers around, say what kind of experiences they were having, and share those. So we provided some of that data. That's already online for anyone that would like to look. Additionally, at the second climate open house we had a similar activity again to ask further details about where they were seeing it, which again helps us supplement, fill in that local information to pair with the data. We also at all of the stakeholder interviews we did with various groups and organizations that work with different demographics in the community, we asked them also: What are you seeing in the community? Where are the biggest issues? So particularly I recall in June we had a stakeholder interview that was multiple groups that were around housing, and they brought up, Well, we're seeing these flooding issues, and these displacements issues around these areas, and so we'd gather that information as well to supplement.

Vice Chair Candler: The study you referenced, is that – would you link that in one of your reports, please?

Ms. O'Kelley: Yeah. No, I will follow up with the definition of “environmental justice” as noted by the RCWs for the Commission, and then those two mapping sources.

Vice Chair Candler: Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Wright?

Commissioner Wright: You asked for edits or ideas and I have things in timelines and some grandfathering policies be appropriate? Just like we're backwards if 2050 is the goal. When would homeowners, landlords, all these different levels of stakeholders have to have these things done? \_\_\_ backwards approach? \_\_\_our low income population who are renters and then a place that's guests and has to be \_\_\_ by \_\_\_? Who is that burden that cost going to go onto and have it prepared for? I think \_\_\_\_\_ little bit, but more concrete. What's grandfathered, what's not grandfathered? Because again, we have multiple resources in our homes right now. I'm not going to change my gas use back on the dime just because it's not broken but I have to be compliant. So kind of give it some opportunity to figure out long term planning and grandfathering in and when things have to be done by might be helpful. Just kind of give what it looks like and who's paying for it, because if a landlord takes that cost on and raises the rent on our low income population then we have another whole crisis. So I think just a lot more support on 26 years of work of some type.

Chair Raschko: Okay, shall we wrap this part up? Questions?

(silence)

Ms. O'Kelley: Thank you very much for those great comments. And we will now go to Dan. Dan, thank you for being patient. Yeah.

**(NOTE: The following presentation by Dan Nickel is very muffled and difficult to understand.)**

Dan Nickel: Great. Thank you, Erin. \_\_\_ plus, again, my name is Dan Nickel. I'm from Facets. \_\_\_\_\_ working together on the Shoreline Master Program process \_\_\_ years. But today I'll keep this brief. I mean, this discussion we \_\_\_\_\_ regarding our review of the environmental policies. It's more than review – and really looking at where people buy, recommendations on \_\_\_\_\_ existing policies. Some of this is obviously some integration but \_\_\_\_\_ regarding the Climate Element.

But our review really focuses on just a few approaches here. One is looking at areas in which the existing policies can be enhanced to provide more support for implementation purposes. There're some examples here \_\_ 405A-2 where he talks about some of the educational components, looking at providing some more support for implementation there.

We're also looking at removing any redundancies between the – in the existing Comprehensive Plan as well as things that are pointing to areas that are already contained in the Critical Areas Ordinance. There's areas in which we have extraneous sources that are mentioned in some of our policy language that can be removed or areas where we – that still are not appropriate to have in the critical areas regulations as opposed to policy \_\_. We're making kind of – here's where we think we can clean things up.

And then lastly is to provide improved clarity of the policy language, making sure that we are – again, some of that is tied to not being redundant but also just pointing to where we have connections between the new climate policies.

So some of those, we'll see that in the document you have regarding the policy as a recommendation \_\_\_\_\_ identify these three components, whether it means providing more detail or we'd be \_\_\_\_\_ clarity.

We've also taken a look at where we can make improvements on that integration element \_\_\_\_\_ some policies and looking where the Best Available Science is also supporting refinement of policy language. A good example of this, I think, is Policy 5A.3.1, which speaks to – we've added language in there – recommended adding language \_\_\_\_\_. That is something that is discussed in the Best Available Science. Some enhancing references like that that we point to needs to \_\_\_\_ in our policies.

So that's – really, I just wanted to make mention of this as you review those policy recommendations. This was, again, the focus there, mostly just to provide enhancement of the existing policies as opposed to providing new policies that you \_\_\_\_\_.

Chair Raschko: Is there anything for Mr. Nickel?

Commissioner Day: I just have one small thing.

Chair Raschko: Commissioner Day, please.

Commissioner Day: Thank you for your presentation. I thought they were very well done and I see that they're not really adding or changing but they're cleaning up a lot of language and I think



that's very helpful. I though it was very good. I just had one comment that I think is this – could be a little bit more clearly stated regarding critical areas. It's 5A-5. "Critical areas and their buffers should be avoided, maintained, restored, acquired, replaced, or enhanced." And I just thought that's a little bit confusing. I think – do you mean development should be avoided in critical areas, and otherwise they should be maintained, restored, and enhanced, et cetera? It's just something you can check in the future.

Mr. Nickel: Yeah, I'll check.

Commissioner Day: Yeah. Thank you very much for all of your work on this.

Chair Raschko: Any other questions or comments?

(silence)

Ms. O'Kelley: Awesome. Dan, thank you very much for your presentation. That actually completes our presentation tonight. I do want to say thank you very much, Planning Commission, for these last four months of being able to bring these very preliminary policies to you. Understand we brought them to you in an early draft version. They're not the cleanest and they're not the easiest to understand. We just – our approach was to get things out early so we could hear early if there was any really, really big concerns, but also just to continue to refine to address what the Planning Commission's priorities and where your priorities are at so we still have additional time in the project to go and refine and continue to improve.

I would also like to thank you for this discussion tonight. I understand that this is a lot of content and it's not easy for people to understand and it is a lot of stuff. So I really appreciate your working through it with us. We *will* follow up on your questions and your additional information, providing definitions. We do plan to provide definitions. The final product will have definitions in it in the Comprehensive Plan. That's a best practice that we take pride in following. But thank you very much, and we appreciate it.

Chair Raschko: I'd like to thank the three presenters as well, and also what I thought was a very credible job of answering people's questions. It's – and probably it's quite a challenge at times. So I thank you. And we'll move on to Planning Commissioner Comments and Announcements. Before we go there, I'd just like to remind everybody that we're having a special meeting next week, October 29<sup>th</sup>. And that is to replace the November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, which is cancelled because that's election day. Okay? Okay. Thanks.

So Jen, what have you got tonight?

Commissioner Hutchison: I just should say thank you for everybody's hard work. It's a lot of information that you put together for us and it's very well written, I will say. It helps when there's so many different packets too. So we really appreciate all the energy that goes into this. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Kiera?

Commissioner Wright: Again thank you. I echo that. And also just change is hard and help us navigate and understand it and use the right language to make it approachable and safe. I appreciate it. So thank you for listening to our small, little edits or ideas. It's always good to be heard. Thank you.

Chair Raschko: Vince?

Commissioner Henley: Yeah. I thank you for your presentation and answering the questions. I appreciate the effort that it takes to do that.

Chair Raschko: How about you, Joe?

Commissioner Woodmansee: I'm tempted to say "ditto," but, you know, thanks for all the hard work and putting up with the questions we have and – the efforts are appreciated.

Chair Raschko: Tam?

Vice Chair Candler: Change is hard. And I appreciate you guys listening to our questions, which I think are better directed either to the legislature or to the voters of Skagit County. *But*, I do appreciate your time, and everyone else.

Chair Raschko: Angela?

Commissioner Day: I just also want to thank all the consultants who have worked on this. I think you've done a really good job. I know you have a difficult balance to strike with the legislative mandates and a rural county like Skagit, so I appreciate that and your patience answering our questions. But I also want to thank Robby and Tara. It's clear that this isn't just a project that they handed to consultants to do for our county. It's very clear your guidance and leadership in this process, and I appreciate it and I think you're doing a really good job, so thank you for that.

Chair Raschko: Amy?

Commissioner Hughes: I can't add anything better than what was just said.

Chair Raschko: Same here. So having said that, we'll stand adjourned. Thank you, everybody (gavel).