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To: Board of County Commissioners

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RE: Climate Planning Update

Introduction

The Public Health Division (PHD) and the Office of Sustainability (OS) prepared this memo to follow up on the [June 5, 2024, Climate Planning Update](#) to the Board of County Commissioners. The memo below includes updates to the climate planning approach, outlines progress made to date, and updates the planning timeline.

Key Takeaways

- The Washington County Climate Plan will be completed by December 2025, meeting contract deliverables for the Oregon Health Authority and the U.S. Department of Energy.
- Department staff are leveraging current grant resources and braiding funding to support an effective and collaborative strategy.
- Staff completed a heat island assessment, greenhouse gas emissions inventory, internal department survey, and community engagement processes to identify key priorities that will be reflected in the Washington County Climate Plan.
- Staff are implementing strategies to support climate adaptation, resilience and preparedness (e.g., providing community trainings; developing and sharing health and safety messaging materials; distributing supplies like fans, filters and cooling towels).
- Staff continue to create data tools and products that communicate the risks and impacts of climate-related events to Washington County communities.

A One Washington County Approach and Public Health Modernization Requirements

The Public Health Division and Office of Sustainability continue to demonstrate a One Washington County approach as they collaborate on climate planning activities and ensure

coordinated and aligned efforts across departments. The following sections describe various climate planning and resilience activities to support the Washington County community.

As outlined in the memo update provided to the BCC on October 6, 2023, the majority of the resources invested to support Public Health in climate planning are through the current biennium intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the Oregon Health Authority through June 30, 2025. The IGA was approved by the BCC in September 2023 ([MO #23-234](#)). The funding helps satisfy legislative requirements that local public health authorities across the state must submit modernization plans, including a climate adaptation plan, to the Oregon Health Authority for submission to the legislature. Per the IGA, these planning efforts require robust community and partner engagement.

In early 2024, the Oregon Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) adopted a set of accountability metrics specifically focusing on state and local governmental public health as required in ORS 431.139. These metrics serve as a tool to monitor and measure outcomes related to how state public health modernization investments strengthen community resilience against the health impacts of climate-related events. To support progress on these metrics, Washington County Public Health is focusing on demonstrating the use of data to identify populations who face the greatest health risks from climate-related events, and community partnership development to improve outcomes related to extreme heat in Washington County. Current climate planning efforts align with these metrics (i.e., data-informed, collaborative).

Climate Planning Landscape Updates

Federal Funding Opportunities

Funds approved by the Biden-Harris Administration in the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law supported projects that address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Updates to these projects are described below. As transitions continue with the new federal administration, staff will actively track funding opportunities and relevant updates to inform any changes to the current plan.

A. Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) designated \$324,390 for Washington County from the EECBG program. In April 2023, a letter of intent signed by the BCC was submitted to DOE confirming that the County would accept the funds. EECBG program funds must be used for planning related to clean and renewable energy projects that will ultimately reduce community fossil fuel emissions and energy use.

Public Health and Sustainability staff are braiding public health modernization funding and the EECBG to leverage available resources and further help Washington County communities become more resilient in the face of climate change.

UPDATE:

The DOE approved Washington County's EECBG work plan and provided notice of award on December 12, 2024. The work plan was created in collaboration with Public Health and

Sustainability staff and was informed by external and internal engagement. Public Health staff have accepted the award and will use the funding to support ongoing work with consultants to create an energy efficiency and conservation strategy for the county. This strategy is a required deliverable of the grant and will utilize the data from the completed community greenhouse gas emissions inventory to help prioritize actionable mitigation measures that reduce energy consumption and improve community resilience across the county. In addition, the project team will create a Climate Hazard and Social Vulnerability Index (CHSVI), to help focus planning efforts to support communities that face the greatest risks related to a changing climate. Public Health and Sustainability staff will work with County departments and city partners to ensure that the CHSVI will meet the future needs and requirements of hazard and mitigation planning. As of this memo, although there is a signed contract staff have been unable to draw down the funds. It is our understanding that DOE staff are working on figuring out impacts of changes in the federal administration and that DOE will follow-up when they have a better understanding.

B. Planning Phase: Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Program

Metro was awarded CPRG climate planning funds from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). They continue to lead the development of regional priority and comprehensive climate action plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area counties (Clackamas, Clark, Columbia, Multnomah, Skamania, Washington, Yamhill).

UPDATE:

In the first planning phase, Metro completed and submitted the Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) to the EPA. The region is now in the second planning phase, with a draft Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP). The CCAP will help meet climate goals over the next 20 years and includes additional opportunities to reduce emissions and engage public agencies, community partners and the public. The process has built on partner-led efforts, such as the State CCAP and climate plans, local climate plans and projects, community plans and feedback, and Metro-led efforts including the [Climate Smart Strategy](#), [Solid Waste Progress Report](#), and [Metro Sustainability Plan](#). Sustainability staff are engaged in these regional efforts and continue to ensure that County departments are informed about the planning process and can provide input on the draft measures within the CCAP. Sustainability staff have also participated in meetings with the CCAP's steering group of local partners to ensure the region is moving in a direction that supports and aligns with Washington County's ongoing and future climate plans.

C. Implementation Phase: Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Program

The purpose of the CPRG implementation grants program is to support community-driven solutions addressing the climate crisis, reduce air pollution, advance environmental justice, and accelerate clean energy transitions. Local, state and tribal entities were eligible to apply.

UPDATE:

In July 2024, the EPA announced their selected applications, including the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) statewide application. The DEQ was the only Oregon agency funded, receiving \$197 million to support measures identified in Oregon's Priority Climate

Action Plan. These measures will provide benefits to communities across the state as they will further funding of existing programs to build public charging infrastructure, provide electric vehicle rebates to lower-income households, expand heat pump installations and weatherization assistance to lower-income households, and support food waste infrastructure. The list of approved measures from Oregon’s Priority Climate Action Plan can be found on the [DEQ’s webpage](#).

Climate Planning and Implementation Milestones

Since fall 2023, we have:

- **Shared** data from the [Portland Metro Heat Island Assessment](#) with county and city planning partners, Clean Water Services, THPRD, and the Tualatin Valley Soil and Water Conservation District. As a reminder, the assessment covered 400 square miles of the Portland Metro region. The project was funded by Health Share of Oregon and made possible through the increased capacity from public health modernization funding. Public Health staff are currently using the data to inform existing heat response plans, develop data tools like the Climate Hazard and Social Vulnerability Index (CHSVI) to understand who is most impacted by extreme heat, and for ongoing climate adaptation planning efforts. Key findings from the assessment include:
 - The afternoon heat index data show a 10-degree Fahrenheit difference between the hottest and coolest areas of Washington County. This is significant on a really hot day.
 - Washington County’s hottest areas include parts of Sherwood, Tualatin and Cornelius.
 - Characteristics of the hottest neighborhoods include fewer trees, more hard surfaces (like roads, rooftops and parking lots), and sprawling development patterns.
- **Collaborated** with Emergency Management and community-based organization partners to develop an [extreme heat tabletop exercise](#) that will allow staff and partners to better utilize heat island assessment data, public health impact data and prepare for future extreme heat events. The tabletop exercise will take place in spring 2025.
- **Published** a new seasonal climate hazards report highlighting the health impacts of [extreme cold and winter storms](#). These reports help Washington County meet the state requirements related to the public health accountability metrics, provide us with detailed information to track changes over time, and help us refine our response and long-term planning approaches to increase community resilience.
- **Completed** Washington County’s first [community greenhouse gas inventory](#), which provides a community baseline for greenhouse gas emissions. This data will be used to support community and partner engagement (e.g., County departments, public agencies, utilities, nonprofit partners, and the business community) in identifying GHG reduction measures for developing energy efficiency and conservation goals and strategies.
 - Energy used in buildings is the largest source of local GHG emissions, accounting for 40% of local emissions (primarily electricity and natural gas use, 40%).

- The transportation sector (primarily gasoline combustion, 27%) is the second largest source of emissions at a community scale.
- On-road passenger vehicles were the leading source of local transportation emissions and are responsible for 81% of local transportation emissions.
- **Engaged** with County departments and Clean Water Services (CWS). Sustainability staff regularly connect with CWS staff who support the implementation of the CWS climate roadmap. County departments were surveyed to update information collected in 2022 about County agency-focused and community-facing work addressing climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience. This information will inform the development of the Public Health-led climate plan and the energy efficiency and conservation strategy. These departments completed the survey:
 - Community Development
 - Economic Development
 - Emergency Management
 - Fleet Facilities and Parks
 - Health and Human Services
 - Housing
 - Land Use and Transportation
 - Office of Equity, Inclusion and Community Engagement
 - Procurement
- **Distributed** climate preparedness kits to over 200 agricultural workers in partnership with Virginia Garcia. Workers also received compressions-only CPR training from Public Health Emergency Preparedness staff.
- **Released** a [report summarizing community engagement findings](#) to support public health modernization. This report summarizes a year and a half of community engagement efforts. The findings represent information summarized from 45 unique engagements, reaching 551 participants. Engagements included interviews, focus groups, knowledge exchange events, tabling events, surveys and partner meetings. Communities reached included Latino/a/x/e, Chinese, Vietnamese, African American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic-speaking, Somali-speaking, and Pashto-speaking communities, in addition to other immigrant and refugee groups. Individuals and organizations also represented youth, students, older adults, individuals who identify as LGBTQIA2S+, people with disabilities, unhoused individuals, and individuals experiencing food insecurity. Key findings:
 - People are most concerned about extreme heat and wildfires in terms of climate-related events.
 - Communities want climate adaptation resources and information tailored to their community (e.g., language, culture and accessibility needs).
 - Community expressed an interest in expanded access to energy-efficient heating and cooling resources and support with utilities.
 - There is a need for neighborhood-scale preparedness support and opportunities for building community connections.

- There is a need to reduce barriers for people so they can prepare for and respond to climate-related events. This includes balancing individual adaptation with communitywide strategies.
- **Funded** 10 organizations in the tri-county region to bolster the traditional health worker workforce and capacity to support climate resilience within communities most impacted by climate-related events. The funding source for this work, done in collaboration with Multnomah and Clackamas counties, is a one-time grant from Health Share of Oregon.

Timeline and Board Updates

The PHD and the OS will continue to provide the Board updates throughout the climate planning process. The timeline has changed due to external factors since the June 2024 memo. New anticipated BCC updates are indicated as purple arrows on the timeline below (Figure 1. Updated Climate Planning Timeline). The next update is anticipated for Fall of 2025 and may include, but is not limited to, progress on internal and external climate planning engagement, federal funding awards, and Washington County Climate Plan implementation.

Staff continue to strengthen partnerships with organizations, governmental agencies and the community to identify collaboration opportunities and to ensure inclusivity in this work. Internal coordination with departments will continue to align ongoing work and planning efforts.

Staff appreciate the board’s continued support on this strategic approach that allows us to leverage resources, center equity and community voice, and ensure we are aligning and coordinating work across the county.

Figure 1. Updated Climate Planning Timeline

