

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative (TCMC) Executive Committee (EC) and Community Advisory Workgroup (CAW)

FROM: TCMC Staff Team:
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Pamela Braff, City of Olympia
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Rebecca Harvey, Thurston County

DATE: June 16, 2023

SUBJECT: 2023 Annual Retreat Packet

Requested Action

Discuss the proposed regional initiatives and identify one initiative to advance to the Executive Committee for approval.

Background

The City of Lacey is hosting the first annual Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative (TCMC) Regional Climate Mitigation Retreat on June 24, 2023. The Retreat brings together the TCMC Executive Committee, Staff Team, and Community Advisory Workgroup (CAW) in a strategic planning session to discuss climate mitigation progress and needs, with an emphasis on strategies that would most benefit from regional coordination.

After presentations by each jurisdiction highlighting recent and upcoming climate mitigation work, the Retreat will focus on building consensus around a **single Regional Initiative** to advance in a coordinated way among all TCMC jurisdictions in 2024. After the Retreat, the selected Regional Initiative will be presented to the Executive Committee for approval at their June 26, 2023 meeting. Once approved by the Executive Committee, the Regional Initiative will be considered by all jurisdictions for potential inclusion in their 2024 work plans and budgets.

This memo summarizes the process that the Staff Team used to develop a short list of proposed regional initiatives (*Attachment C*) to guide the discussion and decision-making process at the Retreat.

Selection of Potential Regional Initiatives

The proposed new organizational structure for the TCMC includes a process for choosing and implementing a Regional Initiative during the annual Retreat. The process is outlined in *Attachment A*. In April and May, 2023, the CAW and Executive Committee submitted proposals for potentially coordinated regional initiatives. The CAW list of initiatives was generated at the April 2023 CAW meeting, included in *Attachment D*. Executive Committee members provided their recommended initiatives directly to their jurisdiction's Staff Team member.

The Staff Team compiled all proposed regional initiatives from the CAW and Executive Committee into a Matrix (*Attachment B*). The Staff Team evaluated all the proposed initiatives to develop a short list of recommended

initiatives for further discussion at the Annual Retreat. The Staff Team’s analysis included consideration of the following criteria:

- Was the initiative proposed by the CAW full group, CAW individual member, and/or the Executive Committee? (priority given to items proposed by more than one person)
- Is this initiative consistent with TCMP Strategies?
- Is this initiative substantially improved by regional coordination?
- Are jurisdictions one of the right entities to implement this action?
- Other Considerations (e.g., if any jurisdictions have already implemented the initiative, need for additional research or analysis, already addressed by state policy, etc.)

An additional analysis was conducted to select the three items related to trees/forests. Members of both the Executive Committee and CAW proposed generally that “tree canopy protection” be included in the list of regional initiatives. To identify more specific actions to advance, the Staff Team reviewed the list of potential policy options in the February 2023 *Carbon Sequestration White Paper*. This process is explained in the “Agriculture & Forests” section of *Attachment C*.

All regional initiatives that advanced* to the short list are described in more detail in the Summary of Proposed Regional Initiatives (*Attachment C*). The Staff Team will present each proposed regional initiative at the Retreat, after which all members in attendance from the Staff Team, CAW, and Executive Committee will have an opportunity to discuss and reach a consensus on a single initiative to move forward.

** Two of the proposed regional initiatives (Rural Tree Canopy Targets and State Forest Lands Management Advocacy) were recommended to be advanced via “Executive Committee Advocacy, with minimal Staff Team involvement.”*

Decision Options

Option 1: Reach consensus on one of the Proposed Regional Initiatives to advance to the Executive Committee for approval.

Option 2: Reach consensus on one of the Proposed Regional Initiatives to advance to the Executive Committee for approval; and advance one or more additional initiatives (marked with *) for the Executive Committee to champion/advocate (with minimal staff involvement).

Attachments

- *Attachment A: Process for Regional Initiatives*
- *Attachment B: Regional Initiatives Selection Matrix*
- *Attachment C: Summary of Proposed Regional Initiatives*
- *Attachment D: CAW Regional Initiatives April 2023*

Proposed Process for Regional Initiatives



Selection of a regional initiative by the Executive Committee does not guarantee that it will be implemented by the Staff Team. Jurisdiction partners must approve the necessary staff, resources and budget for this work to occur.

Executive Committee advocates for allocation of staff and budget resources.

Executive Committee supports and champions completed work product.

Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan Partner Annual Retreat (2023)
Proposed Regional Initiatives

PROPOSED INITIATIVES						STAFF TEAM ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION					
TCMP Strategy	Initiative Name	Implementation Outcome / Vision of Success	CAW Proposal (Full Group)	CAW Proposal (Individual)	CASC/EC Proposal	Consistent with TCMP strategies?	Substantially Improved by regional coordination?	Are jurisdictions one of the right entities to implement this action?	Other Considerations?	Staff Team Recommendation	Justification (for initiatives not advanced)
B1. Reduce energy use in existing residential buildings.	Financial Incentives for Reducing Energy Usage	Provide property tax breaks or other upfront incentives to reduce energy use. Include all kinds of property owners (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial), but focus on housing.	x		x	Yes	Yes	Maybe		Advance as part of proposed Home Energy Audit and Efficiency Campaign.	
B1. Reduce energy use in existing residential buildings.	Residential Energy Audits (B1.2)	Develop and adopt policies that require residential properties to undertake an energy audit at the time of sale or during a substantial remodel. Work with financial institutions to develop mortgage products that incorporate audited energy efficiency recommendations.	x		x	Yes	Yes	Yes		Advance	
B4. Reduce energy use in new construction or redevelopment.	Permitting Incentives (B4.5)	Offer streamlined permitting, lower fees, or other incentives for projects that meet green building certification standards.		x		Yes	No	Yes		Do not advance.	This initiative is best addressed by individual jurisdictions.
B6. Convert to cleaner fuel sources.	Residential Conversion from Natural Gas to Electric (B6.1)	Educate business owners and residents on the options for electric appliances and the benefit of pairing electrification with the installation of renewable energy. Create incentives to support fuel switching.		x	x	Yes	Yes	Yes		Advance as part of proposed Heat Pump Group Purchase Campaign.	
B6. Convert to cleaner fuel sources.	Regional Clean Energy Program	Develop, fund, and launch a regional clean energy program for residential energy efficiency and electrification projects focused on households using fossil fuels for space or water heating.		x		Yes	Yes	Yes		Advance as part of proposed Home Energy Audit and Efficiency Campaign.	
T1. Set land use policies that support increased urban density And efficient transportation networks and reduce urban sprawl.	20-Minute Neighborhoods (T1.4)	Dense, urban centers where walking, biking, and using transit are the first and best options.	x			Yes	No	Yes	Achieving this vision is a long-term outcome resulting from multiple planning, policy, and public investment decisions. Many jurisdiction partners are already working on this initiative in different ways. For example, the City of Olympia is developing a strategy to improve neighborhood centers throughout the City and developing a Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement and subarea plan for the Capital Mall Triangle region.	Do not advance.	This initiative is best advanced by individual jurisdictions.
T1. Set land use policies that support increased urban density and efficient transportation networks and reduce urban sprawl.	Middle Density Housing (T1.2)	Reevaluate and change zoning as needed to allow for a range of housing types to promote social economic integration of housing near our region's urban centers or moderate-density zones.		x		Yes	Yes	Yes		Do not advance.	Already addressed by state policy. E2SHB 1110. Increasing middle housing in areas traditionally dedicated to single-family detached housing.
T1. Set land use policies that support increased urban density and efficient transportation networks and reduce urban sprawl.	Coordinated Long Term Planning/Infill (T1.1)	Coordinate long-term plans with transit agencies to project where increased density would support more transit corridors. Then change zoning/ density that would support new transit corridors and variety of household incomes. Promote long-term equity and healthy communities by developing incentives such as density bonuses for development where a percentage of the units will be permanently affordable for household incomes. Look for opportunities to meet the Sustainable Thurston land use vision by reducing urban sprawl.		x		Yes	No	Yes		Do not advance.	This initiative is best advanced by individual jurisdictions.
T1. Set land use policies that support increased urban density and efficient transportation networks and reduce urban sprawl.	Eco-districts (T1.3)	Identify potential Eco districts to advance innovative district scale urban development, sustainability, and neighborhood equity. Then make necessary code/zoning changes to support their development and set ambitious performance outcomes to ensure their long-term success.		x		Yes	No	Yes		Do not advance.	This initiative is best addressed by individual jurisdictions.

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T2. Increase efficiency of the transportation system.	Transportation Efficiency (T2.2)	Fund programs and projects to increase transportation efficiency, reduce delay, and reduce emissions such as signalization coordination improvements along with application of speed harmonization techniques (ex. reevaluate speed limits, roundabouts vs signalized intersection, street connectivity). Added benefits are decreased idling time (pollution) and improve fuel efficiency (cost savings to driver).	x			Yes	No	Yes		Do not advance.	This initiative is best advanced by individual jurisdictions and is already being implemented.
T2. Increase efficiency of the transportation system.	Telework/Flex Work (T2.7)	Increase opportunities for employee teleworking options and staggering workdays or schedules to reduce employees driving during peak traffic times.		x		Yes	No	Maybe		Do not advance.	This initiative is already being implemented internally by individual jurisdictions. Telework is also addressed at the regional level via TRPC's Commute Trip Reduction program.
T3. Increase adoption of electric vehicles.	EV-Ready Building Code (T3.5)	Require all new residential construction be built with EV chargers and parking spaces that are EV capable and EV ready. This requirement would either be at the level required by the State Building Code or be above and beyond that requirement.		x	x	Yes	Yes	Yes	Olympia has already begun work to develop local EV ready parking standards.	Do not advance.	Olympia has already begun work to implement this action. Other TCMP partners may choose to advance this initiative individually or together.
T3. Increase adoption of electric vehicles.	EV Infrastructure Plan (for public property)	Plan for providing or siting community EV charging on public properties.			x	Yes	Maybe	Yes	While regional coordination is not necessary for the installation of EV charging infrastructure on public property, a regionally coordinated effort may be benefitted by economies of scale and simplify applications for state and federal EV infrastructure charging grants.	Advance	
T3. Increase adoption of electric vehicles.	Regional EV Infrastructure Plan	A Regional EV Infrastructure Plan that includes at minimum: future projections of available EV charging from new development, suggested locations for the deployment of Fast and Level 2 chargers, prioritization of those locations, and the timeline necessary for deployment to meet current and future demand.			x	Yes	Yes	Maybe		Advance	
T3. Increase adoption of electric vehicles.	Electric/Alternative Fuel School Busses			x		Yes	No	No	Best addressed by School Districts.	Do not advance.	Jurisdictions are not the best entity to implement this action.
T4. Increase the use of public transit.	Fareless System (T4.4)	Maintain a fareless system for public transit.		x		Yes	No	No	This action has already been implemented. Continued implementation is best addressed by InterCity Transit.	Do not advance.	Jurisdictions are not the best entity to implement this action.
T5. Increase use of active forms of travel (such as, bicycling, walking).	Mode Shift Targets (T5.11)	Reevaluate long term plans (if available) and update to prioritize people walking and riding bikes. Set goals for mode shift and plans on how to achieve those goals like developing car-free corridors in commercial and mixed-use areas to encourage mode shift.		x		Yes	Yes	Yes	Future update to the TCMP and supporting Carbon Wedge Analysis could be designed to help inform mode shift targets.	Do not advance.	This initiative is best advanced after the TCMP partners update the TCMP and carbon wedge analysis.
T5. Increase use of active forms of travel (such as, bicycling, walking).	Car Free Areas (T5.11)	Plan and achieve goals related to developing car-free corridors in commercial and mixed-use areas to encourage mode shift.		x		Yes	No	Yes		Do not advance.	This initiative is best addressed by individual jurisdictions.
W4. Divert more solid waste from landfills.	Waste Reduction Incentives	Incentivize consumers and producers. Incentivize more recycling of packaging materials and other recyclables such as cans and bottles.		x		Yes	No	Yes		Do not advance.	This initiative is best advanced by individual jurisdictions and does not require regional coordination.
W4. Divert more solid waste from landfills.	Waste Less Food (W4.10)	Expand Thurston County's "Waste Less Food" program.		x		Yes	Yes	Yes	The Department of Ecology is developing a Model ordinance for jurisdictions to voluntarily adopt which discourages the disposal of organic materials in landfills. Some jurisdictions are developing business outreach campaigns for the Jan 2024 implementation of Organics Management Law for Businesses.	Do not advance.	This initiative is best advanced after the Department of Ecology develops the model ordinance for jurisdiction adoption.
A5/A6/A7. Preserve tree canopy and manage forests and prairies to sequester carbon.	Rural/Urban Tree Outreach and Education Program	Educational outreach campaign for both rural and urban landowners focused on tree benefits, conservation, and best management techniques.		x	x	Yes	Yes	Maybe	This initiative would require funding for a professional services contract. The program could potentially leverage existing educational materials of partner organizations.	Advance	

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A5/A6/A7. Preserve tree canopy and manage forests and prairies to sequester carbon.	Rural Tree Canopy Targets	Apply data from countywide tree canopy assessment to set regional targets for tree canopy, focusing on rural Thurston County.		x	x	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Tumwater already adopted canopy targets in their Urban Forestry Management Plan, and other cities have done some work on this. The cities' role would be largely as advocates for rural forest protection.	Advance* <i>*Executive Committee advocacy, minimal Staff Team involvement</i>	
A5/A6/A7. Preserve tree canopy and manage forests and prairies to sequester carbon.	State Forest Lands Management Advocacy	Advocate for legacy forest protection and other changes to DNR forest management rules and practices.		x	x	Yes	Yes	Maybe	This initiative has momentum with ongoing advocacy by elected officials and other TCMP stakeholders. There is a minimal role for the Staff Team in this initiative.	Advance* <i>*Executive Committee advocacy, minimal Staff Team involvement</i>	
G1. Conduct education and outreach across climate mitigation areas.	Community Outreach and Education	Community campaign about TCMP progress and what actions people can take to lower their carbon footprints.			x	Yes	Yes	Yes	Community outreach campaigns are most effective when tied to a specific call-to-action.	Advance	
G4. Enhance monitoring and evaluation of climate mitigation measures and outcomes.	Social Cost of Carbon (G4.6)	Develop and adopt policies that require the use of a "social cost of carbon measure" in zoning, development, construction, and transportation decisions.		x		Yes	Yes	Yes		Do not advance.	Further work is needed to identify a specific policy or initiative to implement.
N/A	Food Security			x		No	Yes	Maybe		Do not advance.	This initiative is not consistent with the TCMP.
N/A	Boater Incentives	Incentive reduced speed limits and reduced fuel use and identify non-motorized areas to protect wildlife and reduce fuel use.		x		No	No	No		Do not advance.	This initiative is not consistent with the TCMP.



Summary of Proposed Regional Initiatives

Compiled by: Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative (TCMC) Staff Team

Presented at: TCMC Regional Climate Mitigation Retreat, June 24, 2003, Lacey, WA

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Buildings and Energy

Residential Energy Audits

Develop a proposed policy, supporting program, and budget to implement a Home Energy Score (HES) disclosure policy and program.

Background

While recent updates to the Washington State Building code significantly increase energy performance requirements for new residential development, these requirements do not address existing homes, many of which were built to less efficient standards. Most homes in the Thurston region were built before 1988, and more than two-thirds of the housing units that will exist in 2050 already exist today. Retrofitting existing homes is a key strategy to increase the energy efficiency of residential buildings.

One of the barriers to improving the energy efficiency of existing housing units is a lack of homeowner awareness and information on the energy performance of their properties. Without this information, it is challenging for consumers to prioritize energy efficiency in home purchasing and improvement decisions. To address this challenge, several cities and states have developed residential home energy labeling policies and programs.

A home energy labeling program provides homeowners and homebuyers with an assessment of home energy performance, expected energy costs, and cost-effective improvements to reduce energy use and costs. By making energy costs transparent to consumers, home energy labeling programs also provide a mechanism for the real estate market to value both energy performance and home energy improvements that reduce the total cost of home ownership.

Target Outcomes

- A model ordinance, which requires disclosure of residential energy performance ratings for residential buildings at the time of listing.
- Community engagement to solicit community input on the development of the model ordinance and identify potential barriers for successful implementation.
- Program proposal and budget for regionally coordinated implementation of the proposed model ordinance. Program budget may include costs such as program development and administration, workforce training, and quality assurance.
- All TCMP Partner consider the proposed policy and budget request for regionally coordinated policy adoption and implementation.

Key Considerations

- Pros: A regional policy would provide consistent requirements that are easy to understand, and ensure that energy performance information is widely available and easily comparable across jurisdictions. A large regional program would also support the development of a robust energy assessor market to provide the required home energy score assessment.
- Cons: Developing a regionally consistent policy may be more complicated and time-consuming than each jurisdiction developing and implementing a policy on their own.
- The recommended Home Energy Score report, developed by the U.S. Department of Energy only applies to single family homes. A separate program and policy would be needed to support energy audits for multifamily and commercial buildings.

Home Energy Audit and Efficiency Campaign

Design and implement a regional home energy efficiency and electrification campaign.

Background

Even when homeowners are aware of cost-effective improvements for reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in their homes, high upfront costs can still be a barrier to implementation. Limited technical support also makes it difficult for homeowners to understand which improvements are most cost-effective for their households and navigate existing state, federal, and utility incentives.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) established several federal rebates (e.g., Home Efficiency Rebates and Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates) to help households implement energy efficiency and electrification improvements. These rebates will help reduce the upfront costs of electric appliances, such as heat pumps and heat pump hot water heaters, particularly for low- and moderate-income (LMI) households.

A Home Energy Efficiency and Electrification Campaign would help community members utilize the forthcoming federal Home Efficiency Rebates and Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates established by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The proposed campaign could include the following elements:

- Home Energy Score audits to increase homeowner awareness of the energy efficiency and electrification improvements that would have the greatest benefits and costs savings for their home.
- Information and resources to connect homeowners to relevant state, federal, and local rebates and incentives to help reduce the costs of recommended upgrades.
- Identification of vetted local contractors and installers to provide recommended upgrades.
- Technical and customer support for program participants throughout the process.
- Marketing and outreach to ensure broad community awareness of the program.

Target Outcomes

- Design and implementation of regional home energy efficiency and electrification campaign, including:
 - Development of a shared program vision and goals.
 - Community outreach, education, and marketing.
 - Program incentives, rebates, and customer support.
 - Subsidized installations and assessments for low- and moderate- income households.
 - Contracts with third-party partners, as needed, to implement the program.

Key Considerations

- Pros: A county-wide program would allow residents of all partner jurisdictions to benefit from the campaign, without requiring each partner to develop and implement individual programs.
- Cons: While a large regional program would likely benefit from economies of scale, it will be more complicated to coordinate and manage.
- Jurisdiction partners could leverage EECBG (Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant) funding to develop the program. Olympia, Lacey, and Thurston County are eligible for formula grant funds and Tumwater has applied for a competitive grant award.

Heat Pump Group Purchase Campaign

Implement a regional heat pump group purchase campaign to support community-wide adoption of air source heat pumps throughout Thurston County.

Background

In Summer 2023, the City of Olympia launched a heat pump group purchase pilot program (Energize Olympia) to increase community awareness of the benefits of heat pump technology and increase local installations of air source heat pumps, resulting in:

- A reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and indoor air pollution.
- Increased community resilience to extreme heat through the provision of air conditioning.
- Lower residential energy bills, particularly for lower-income residents with older inefficient appliances that utilize fuel oil, propane, and electric resistance elements.

Following the model of successful solarize campaigns in Thurston County and other regions, the program employed a group purchase-model to achieve economies of scale and reduce upfront cost barriers to heat pump retrofits for all program participants.

A key element of the program is to provide a pathway for residents with low wealth to participate in the heat pump retrofit by fully subsidizing the cost of retrofits for low- and moderate-income participants (up to 120% Area Median Income). The program also addresses other common barriers for low- and moderate- income participants by integrating fully subsidized weatherization, electrical upgrades, and other critical repairs necessary for heat pump retrofits for all income-qualified participants.

While conducting community outreach for the program, City staff also spoke with residents of Lacey, Tumwater, and the Thurston County who indicated their interest in participating in the program. A larger, county-wide campaign in 2024 would enable more community-members to access support and incentives for heat pump retrofits.

Target Outcomes

- Design and implementation of regional heat pump group purchase program, including:
 - Development of a shared program vision and goals.
 - Community outreach, education, and marketing.
 - Program incentives, rebates, and customer support.
 - Subsidized installations for low- and moderate- income households.
 - Contracts with third-party partners, as needed, to implement the program.
- Submission of 1 or more joint grant applications to fund subsidized installations for low- and moderate-income households.

Key Considerations

- Pros: A larger regional program would allow residents of all partner jurisdictions to benefit from the program discounts and incentives, without requiring each partner to run separate campaigns. A larger program would also enable the partners to apply for larger grant programs that they may otherwise be unable to administer on their own.
- Cons: While a large regional program would likely benefit from economies of scale, it will be more complicated to coordinate and manage.

Transportation and Land Use

Regional EV Infrastructure Plan

A regional EV Infrastructure Plan

Background

Washington State set a target for all model year 2030 or later passenger and light-duty vehicles sold in Washington State to be electric vehicles. The State of Washington and Federal government are advancing multiple funding opportunities to install EV charging infrastructure.

At this time there is no regional plan for the deployment of EV infrastructure in the Thurston Region. At this time, jurisdictions plan and deploy EV charging based on their own individual research within their jurisdiction boundaries, existing electrical capacity at existing sites, and/or available funding opportunities and their constraints. This deployment strategy is not aligned with regional transportation data but rather is a piecemeal or independent approach. The deployment of EV infrastructure in the Thurston Region should be done in a data-driven manner that takes the entire region into account.

Target Outcomes

A Regional EV Infrastructure Plan that includes (at minimum):

- Future projections of available EV charging considering adopted EV charging, ready, and capable requirements and future development;
- Suggested locations for the deployment of DCFC and Level 2 charging;
- Prioritization of those locations; and
- Timeline necessary for the deployment of those stations to meet current and future demand.

Key Considerations

- Pros: Planning for a network of EV infrastructure at the regional level should help ensure connectivity and a better end-user experience.
- Cons: While a large regional program would likely benefit from economies of scale, it will be more complicated to coordinate and manage.

Public Property EV Infrastructure Plan

Plan for providing or siting community EV charging on public property

Background

Many jurisdiction-owned facilities are somewhat older and have reached capacity for existing electric infrastructure. However, many jurisdictions seek to add public (and/or fleet) EV charging to their facilities. To be competitive for future grant opportunities to pay for EV charging infrastructure, jurisdictions must first know what capacity there is to add charging, what electrical infrastructure would be needed to add charging, and what those associated costs and timelines might be. This idea was first included as a grant proposal to which Tumwater, Olympia, and Thurston County agreed to submit together.

Target Outcomes

- Project sheets outlining the needs and future costs to deploy EV charging at public facilities (including ROW) for each jurisdiction.

Key Considerations

- Pros: The results of any Regional EV infrastructure Plan that identified any jurisdiction-owned property as being a priority or future location for EV charging would be well met with this information for more rapid deployment.
- Cons: While a large regional program would likely benefit from economies of scale, it will be more complicated to coordinate and manage.

Agriculture and Forests

Process for selecting potential agriculture and forests initiatives

Members of both the Executive Committee (EC) and the Community Advisory Workgroup (CAW) proposed that “tree canopy protection” be included in the list of regional initiatives for consideration at the June 2023 Climate Mitigation Retreat. Their proposals were general, so the Staff Team analyzed the list of potential policy options in the February 2023 *Carbon Sequestration White Paper* (CSWP) to select specific regional initiatives to advance for discussion at the Retreat.

The Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (TCMP) includes carbon sequestration among the strategies and actions identified to meet the region’s emission reduction targets. In February 2023, the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) delivered the *Carbon Sequestration White Paper* (CSWP) as a preliminary effort to quantify carbon sequestration potential of the region’s forests, agricultural lands, and prairies; and to inform next steps for policies and programs to increase sequestration in the region. The CSWP includes an analysis using ICLEI’s Land Emissions and Removals Navigator (LEARN) tool, estimating that rural areas of Thurston County account for 93% of carbon sequestration performed by the county’s forests and trees. The CSWP describes 16 policy options related to forests and trees, which were categorized based on their level of carbon sequestration potential (low, medium, high, or enabling) and other criteria (Appendix E).

The Staff Team reviewed the options in the CSWP and selected three actions that could potentially be advanced in the coming year. Some actions were not selected because they are already completed or underway (e.g., Forest Conversion Ordinance update, Comprehensive Plan update) and others because they would best be advanced after Thurston County’s Comprehensive Plan Update provides authority for program development (e.g., Working Forest Conservation Easements, Community Forests, etc.).

The proposed regional initiatives include:

- Rural/Urban Tree Outreach and Technical Support Program
- Rural Tree Canopy Targets
- State Forest Lands Management Advocacy

Rural/Urban Forest Outreach and Education Program

Educational outreach campaign for both rural and urban landowners focused on tree benefits, conservation, and best management techniques.

Background

The first two policy options listed in the Carbon Sequestration White Paper (CSWP) are *Rural/Forest Landowner Outreach* and *Urban Tree Outreach and Technical Support*. The rural program is identified as medium carbon sequestration potential, and the urban program as low. However, the Staff Team proposes that combining them into a joint initiative could facilitate a unified message that could help advance tree canopy protection regionwide. The four TCMC jurisdictions have all identified the need for outreach and education about tree protection. Local partners such as Thurston Conservation District and WSU Extension operate ongoing programs to train rural landowners on land management, but there remains a need for community-wide education about forest ecology, healthy forestry practices, and laws/regulations.

Target Outcomes

Development and launch of a “healthy forest” educational outreach campaign for both rural and urban landowners.

- Overarching program would provide consistent, science-based regional messaging about healthy forestry practices, forest ecosystem services, and local/state laws and regulations
- Quantifiable community engagement through multi-media marketing including TCMC and partner websites, social media posts, in-person events, presentations, etc.
- Specific rural and urban elements could target information to each environment and resident needs, for example:
 - Rural element may provide guidance and technical support on best management techniques for small and large landowners, and funding resources like conservation easements and cost-share programs.
 - Urban element may highlight social, environmental, and health benefits of trees, recommended tree lists, and siting and maintenance considerations for urban trees.

Key Considerations

- Pros: Developing a unified regional outreach program would provide political support from the cities to advance forest protection in rural Thurston County. This initiative builds on the momentum of Thurston County’s Healthy Forest Project, urban tree code updates by the cities, and stakeholder engagement around tree protection. The program could potentially leverage existing educational materials of partner organizations.
- Cons: This initiative would require funding for professional services. According to the CSWP, these programs have medium costs (both initial and ongoing) and medium staff requirements. TRPC estimated a cost of \$150,000 to establish a program, and ongoing funding to support outreach staff would depend on its scope and reach.

Rural Tree Canopy Targets*

Apply data from countywide tree canopy assessment to set regional targets for tree canopy, focusing on rural Thurston County.

*** Staff Recommendation: Advance via Executive Committee Advocacy, with minimal Staff Team involvement.**

Background

Thurston County is now implementing the “Healthy Forests Project” (Development Code Docket A-25) which consists of an update to the County’s forest conversion ordinance, a countywide tree canopy assessment, and forthcoming updates to both rural and urban tree standards. The County has defined Tree Canopy Targets as a necessary next step that will inform upcoming Comprehensive Plan updates and enable future programmatic actions recommended in the CSWP. Because of the enormous impact of rural forests in the region’s carbon sequestration, combined with the fact that some of the cities have already adopted canopy targets, the Staff Team determined that this action would focus on rural Thurston County. For this reason, the cities' role would be largely as advocates for rural forest protection.

Target Outcomes

- Once Thurston County completes its tree canopy assessment, the data will be analyzed to help identify forested areas at highest risk of conversion and opportunities for conservation and restoration.
- These data will be applied to set targets for tree canopy at the regional level, focusing on rural Thurston County where the large majority of carbon sequestration takes place.
- The established targets will be integrated into Thurston County’s Comprehensive Plan Update along with goals and policies to guide future programmatic actions to enhance tree protection.
- Partner cities may engage primarily as advocates for rural forest protection, but may also opt to refine existing urban tree canopy targets in alignment with policy updates, to the extent feasible.

Key Considerations

- Pros: Coordinating tree canopy targets as a region would provide political support from the cities to advance forest protection in rural Thurston County. This initiative builds on the momentum of Thurston County’s Healthy Forest Project and is well-timed with the beginning of the Comprehensive Plan Update process. According to the CSWP, the costs and staff requirements would be low. TRPC may be able to support this work.
- Cons: This is primarily a Thurston County initiative with the role of the partner cities likely limited to advocacy for rural forest protection.

State Forest Lands Management Advocacy*

Advocate for legacy forest protection and other changes to DNR forest management rules and practices.

*** Staff Recommendation: Advance via Executive Committee Advocacy, with minimal Staff Team involvement.**

Background

Members of the Executive Committee (EC) explicitly mentioned “advocacy for legacy forest protection” in their proposed regional initiatives. According to the Legacy Forest Project, “a legacy forest is a naturally regenerated (i.e., non-plantation) mixed-species forest selectively harvested before WWII that is now on a healthy trajectory to old growth in dynamic landscapes that are reservoirs of both biodiversity and carbon.” The Thurston Climate Action Team (TCAT) and other local activists have been campaigning to persuade DNR to declare a moratorium on logging legacy forests. The Thurston County Board of County Commissioners has been working on this issue, and is advocating for dedicated funding to purchase younger, replacement forestland in exchange for legacy forest protection.

The Carbon Sequestration White Paper (CSWP) identifies “State Forest Lands Management Advocacy” as a policy option with high carbon sequestration potential because it would affect large areas of rural forest through impactful strategies such as extended timber harvest. The momentum gained through legacy forest advocacy could be extended into this broader initiative to advocate for changes to DNR forest management rules and practices. Washington State manages significant areas of timberland within Thurston County (52,000 acres, according to the US Forest Service), mostly through the DNR, so state-level advocacy plays an important role in regional tree protection.

Target Outcomes

A State Forest Lands Management Advocacy campaign that addresses any combination of the following:

- Legacy forest protection including a dedicated funding source for purchasing replacement stands of younger trees
- Changes to DNR forest cutting permit rules, such as requiring a carbon impact analysis, increasing protections of critical areas, creating incentives for climate-smart forestry practices, and longer harvest rotations
- DNR enrolling more of its land in its Carbon Project
- Employing extended harvest rotations on DNR lands in Thurston County

Key Considerations

- Pros: This initiative has momentum as a result of ongoing advocacy by elected officials and other TCMP stakeholders, particularly TCAT. It has the potential to affect large-scale practices with high carbon sequestration potential. According to the CSWP, the costs and staff requirements would be low.
- Cons: Advocacy for state forest management may be best achieved by elected officials, with a minimal role for the Staff Team.

Cross-Cutting Actions

Communication and Outreach-CBSM Campaign

A community based social marketing (CBSM) campaign would consist of marketing and education targeted to increase participation in climate action, while encouraging community members to adopt actions to decrease carbon footprints. This CBSM campaign would be focused through an equity lens and ensure multi-media marketing as a priority from start to finish. Campaign elements could include general awareness of carbon footprints, information about Inflation Reduction Act incentives for residential energy savings, and/or overall awareness about local governments' climate action in Thurston County.

Background

The Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative (TCMC) has been working together since 2020 to implement the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan and take steps to reduce GHG emissions. Each jurisdiction has been working to design, implement and manage new climate programs, but other than an annual progress report circulated to key stakeholders, the TCMC has not updated the larger community on this work. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) is a historic act which gives unprecedented funding to local governments and residential home owners for energy efficiency upgrades. The Office of State and Community Energy Programs (SCEP) in the Department of Energy is working to release funds and provide program guidance. Homeowners will need resources to access funds and apply for IRA programs. In addition, community members would benefit from access to resources to help transition to clean energy and lower their household's carbon footprints.

Target Outcomes

Depending on the approved goal for the marketing program, specific outcomes may include the following:

- Education Campaign: more community members are aware of the TCMC's work and access programs through the proper jurisdiction. Surveys could be used to quantify knowledge and behavior change resulting from education campaign.
- Resource Sharing for IRA: Increase participation in federal programs and incentives through the new IRA funding pools, web page hosted on the TCMC website; specific outcomes could be web page hits or web page to application conversions.
- Carbon footprint Campaign: web page hosted on the TCMC website. Could include a carbon footprint reduction pledge with links to specific climate programs in each jurisdiction. Outcomes could include number of pledges and program participation.

Key Considerations

- Pros: Easy to complete in a year, likely early success for TCMC collaboration, regional approach allows for economy of scale, timely information for federal/state incentives
- Cons: Would require funding for professional services to develop and implement campaign; difficulty of changing behavior and quantifying outcomes; individual-level actions have lower greenhouse gas reduction potential compared to large-scale policy changes.