



Climate Action Steering Committee

Charter

APPROVED: May 23, 2022



1. Charter Purpose

The purpose of this charter is to outline the charge, composition, schedule, communications, and decision-making framework for the Climate Action Steering Committee. The Climate Action Steering Committee is convened as an advisory body to the four Jurisdiction Parties that developed and are leading implementation of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (Thurston County and the cities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater).

2. Background

Thurston County and the cities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater (the Parties) worked with the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) to develop the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (TCMP) with actions to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change. As part of the first phase of this project, the Parties adopted a mutual emissions reduction goal, which is to:

Reduce net communitywide greenhouse gas emissions 45% below 2015 levels by 2030 and 85% below 2015 levels by 2050 to ensure that our community does its part to keep the global average temperature from rising more than 2° Celsius (3.6° F) above historic levels.

The TCMP is our regional framework to achieve those goals and describes:

- A shared vision for the alignment of climate action with community goals
- Data on greenhouse gas contributions from various sources
- Strategies and actions to reduce emissions
- Emissions reduction estimates based on the strategies and actions
- A strategy for implementing climate mitigation actions.

The four Parties agree that regionally coordinated implementation of the TCMP is essential to the most efficient and effective deployment of the plan's actions. In 2022, they approved an Interlocal Agreement for Implementation of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (Interlocal Agreement – Attachment A) that establishes the following goals for ongoing partnership:

- To maintain momentum for local climate action.
- To develop efficient regional solutions for reducing sources of greenhouse gases in ways that support all partner jurisdictions.
- To provide accountability on progress toward achieving regional climate targets.
- To build public awareness of and engagement in climate mitigation activities across the region.

One of the key components of ongoing coordination is the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee builds from the successful framework of the Steering Committee used throughout development of the plan. The Steering Committee is initiated by the four Parties and TRPC staff will provide coordination and facilitation support per the Interlocal Agreement between the four Parties and TRPC.

3. Steering Committee Purpose

The Steering Committee’s purpose is to provide continued coordinated leadership to build local capacity for climate mitigation action. The charge of the Steering Committee is to:

- i. Review and approve an Annual Work Program that identifies regional priorities for the upcoming year.
- ii. Review progress toward achieving emissions targets.
- iii. Discuss and coordinate on opportunities for regional collaboration, including legislative priorities, funding, and public private partnerships.
- iv. Review and approve any proposed changes to TCMP strategy, based on emerging information.
- v. Where needed, convene issue-specific working groups on an ad-hoc basis to provide targeted input on implementation activities.
- vi. Provide financial oversight for activities funded through the Interlocal Agreement.
- vii. Review and approve memoranda of understanding, letters of support, and other agreements deemed necessary to achieve work items identified in the Annual Work Program.

4. Roles and Authority

Jurisdiction Parties. Jurisdiction Parties (the Parties) are signatories to the Interlocal Agreement for Implementation of the TCMP, and are responsible for administration of that Interlocal Agreement and for oversight and decision-making authority over tasks under that Interlocal Agreement. As of 2022, the Jurisdiction Parties include Thurston County and the cities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater. Each City Council and the Board of County Commissioners will make independent decisions on which strategies and actions to implement and how to resource and tailor implementation to work best for their jurisdiction.

Climate Action Steering Committee. The Climate Action Steering Committee (Steering Committee or CASC) is an advisory body to the Parties. The Steering Committee provides coordinated leadership to build local capacity for climate mitigation action, and in that role may make recommendations, identify priorities, and issue letters of support that are consistent with the vision, guiding principles, and goals of the TCMP. The Parties do not delegate jurisdictional decision authority to the Steering Committee.

Multijurisdictional Staff Team. The Multijurisdictional Staff Team (MST) provides staff coordination and technical support for climate mitigation implementation, and as needed, provides advisory recommendations and staff support to the Steering Committee.

Climate Advisory Workgroup. The Climate Advisory Workgroup (CAW) is an advisory body to the Steering Committee. The CAW provides community perspectives and input on climate mitigation progress and priorities. A member of the CAW serves as a non-voting member of the Steering Committee.

Program Coordinator. Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) serves as the Program Coordinator for the Interlocal Agreement on behalf of the Parties, and provides logistical and facilitation support to the Steering Committee, Multijurisdictional Staff Team, and Climate Advisory Workgroup.

Figure 1 illustrates the organizational structure for Plan implementation.

Figure 1. Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan Implementation Organizational Structure

TCMP Implementation Organizational Structure



Jurisdiction Parties: Each jurisdiction’s policymaking body (City Council and County Commission) will ultimately decide which strategies and actions to implement and what resources to dedicate toward TCMP implementation.

Program Coordinator: Provides coordination and facilitation support for the CASC, MST, and CAW.

Climate Action Steering Committee (CASC): Comprised of elected officials of the Parties and a member of the CAW. Advises the Parties and provides oversight for TCMP implementation.

Multijurisdictional Staff Team (MST): Comprised of staff from TRPC and each Party. Advises the CASC and coordinates TCMP implementation at a staff level on behalf of their jurisdiction.

Climate Advisory Workgroup (CAW): Comprised of community members appointed by the CASC. Advises the CASC on community perspectives on TCMP implementation.

5. Membership

Steering Committee members include a representative from each of the Parties and a representative from the Climate Advisory Workgroup (CAW). The Parties will each appoint a primary policymaker lead and alternate to fill their membership. Policymakers may invite staff to support the Steering Committee, but that is not required and staff are not considered Steering Committee members.


If neither the official primary or alternate member representative is able to attend a specific meeting, then the jurisdiction may designate, for that meeting only, an additional alternate member representative. This additional alternate must have all rights, privileges, and authorities exercised by the member representative and the alternate.

6. Meetings

Frequency. The Steering Committee generally meets monthly. Meetings may be canceled by the Chair if deemed not necessary.

Preference for Virtual Meetings. Meetings are generally held virtually, to support reduced emissions in line with the TCMP. The Steering Committee may choose to hold some meetings in person to facilitate greater opportunities for networking and relationship-building.

Quorum: A quorum for holding a meeting exists when any three Steering Committee members are present for a scheduled meeting; however, no decision may be made unless a quorum for decision-making described in Section 10 is met.



Participation and Opportunity for Public Comment: Meetings are open to the public and include an opportunity for public comment. Both policymaker leads and alternates are invited to attend meetings and participate in discussions, though decisions will only allow one vote per Party, as described in Section 10.

The Steering Committee may choose to invite subject matter experts and/or stakeholders to attend one or more meetings as non-voting participants to provide specific information, expertise, and guidance to the Steering Committee. The decision to invite non-voting participants to the Steering Committee is subject to the decision-making practices described in Section 10.

7. Officers and Elections

The officers of the Council are Chair and Vice Chair.


- The Chair presides at all meetings, works with the Program Coordinator and Vice Chair to prepare meeting agendas, and calls special meetings. The Chair may call for establishment of working groups or subcommittees with advice on scope and membership from the full committee. The Chair will facilitate meetings in a manner that provides for informal discussion among the members and use of Robert’s Rules of Order for formal decisions of the Committee (see Section 10, below).
- The Vice Chair serves in the Chair’s absence.
- Officers function as an executive committee in developing meeting agendas with the Program Coordinator, and may make recommendations to the full Committee on budget, work program, or other policy issues.

Officers are appointed annually by the Steering Committee to serve a one-year term. Only designated policymaker leads are eligible to serve as Chair or Vice Chair (excludes alternates and CAW representatives). The Program Coordinator will request nominations from voting members prior to the April meeting, and the Chair will present the slate of nominees to be considered for each position as well as taking nominations from the floor. The newly elected officers take office at the close of the meeting at which they were elected. Members may serve up to three consecutive years in any officer position.

If there is a vacancy in either or both officer positions, the Program Coordinator will notify Steering Committee members of the vacancy prior to the next Committee meeting and request nominations to fill the vacancy. At that Committee meeting, the Chair, Vice Chair, or Program Coordinator will follow the same process described above for annual elections, and the elected member will complete the term of the vacant officer.

8. Committee Facilitation and Communication

The Program Coordinator (TRPC) will coordinate with the Chair and Vice Chair to develop an agenda for each meeting. TRPC staff will strive to send out meeting agendas and meeting materials via email to participants and interested parties one week before the meeting. TRPC will support the Chair’s meeting facilitation and take summary notes of all Steering Committee meetings, which are open to the public. TRPC will post meeting materials online (www.trpc.org/climate).



In the event of media request or other opportunities to communicate on behalf of the Steering Committee, the Chair is the primary contact, followed by the Vice Chair. Media requests, presentation requests, or other communication inquiries should be directed to the Program Coordinator who will bring communications requests to the Chair and Vice Chair for direction. If Steering Committee members are contacted directly by media, that member will notify the Program Coordinator listed below along with a description of the contact, so that the full Steering Committee and appropriate staff are aware of the inquiry and response.

TRPC will clearly identify contact information for the Program Coordinator on the project website (www.trpc.org/climate). Email correspondence originating from or directed to TRPC or any of its project partners may be subject to public disclosure.

9. Committee Norms

Steering Committee members are asked to adhere to the following norms for participating and communicating inside of and outside of meetings:

- All members will review pertinent project materials on a timely basis and provide timely feedback.
- Members will come to meetings prepared to discuss items on the agenda.
- Members will honor one another by communicating honestly and respectfully; everyone will have an opportunity to speak.
- Members will resolve issues within their power to solve and re-direct those issues that cannot be solved in a timely manner. If issue resolution is necessary, team members will strive to follow the conflict resolution process identified in this Charter.
- Meetings will begin and end at the scheduled times. Participants who arrive late will catch up on what was missed during breaks or as other opportunities allow.
- Once project decisions are made, members will work to honor those decisions and avoid reopening issues that have already been resolved or decided. Decision items will be noted on agendas, and final decisions will be documented by TRPC.
- Any jurisdictional members may ask for time to confer with staff or others prior to the Steering Committee making a decision.

10. Decision-making

The Steering Committee makes decisions that are needed for committee operation or to support the Interlocal Agreement, including approving an Annual Work Program and changes to the TCMP. The committee may make recommendations, identify priorities, and issue letters of support that are consistent with the vision, guiding principles, and goals of the TCMP.

Decision authority. The decisions and recommendations from the Steering Committee are advisory and do not bind any of the Jurisdiction Parties to specific action – that is the purview of each Party’s Council/Commission.

Decision timing. Recommendations for action may come from any member, the Program Coordinator, the Multijurisdictional Staff Team, or the Climate Advisory Workgroup. The Steering Committee may

make a decision immediately or assign the issue to a subcommittee, the MST, the CAW, or the Program Coordinator for further review and recommendations. Whenever possible, the need for a specific decision or action will be identified at least one month in advance, and information necessary to make a decision should be provided to members with sufficient time for members to think about the issues under consideration and discuss them with their member organizations and other members.

For time-sensitive matters that cannot wait until a future meeting, such as submitting comment, testimony, and/or letters of support tied to a deadline, committee members may direct the Chair or Program Coordinator to develop and submit comments aligned with the TCMP on the committee's behalf.

Quorum. A majority of voting members (3) must be present for a decision to be made. For decisions on the Annual Work Program, policy positions (ex., approving a legislative agenda or updates to the TCMP), or that involve financial commitments, all voting members (4) must be present.

Voting. A quorum of members must be present to make a decision. Members have one vote per Party. If both the lead and alternative representatives from a single Party are present for the meeting, the lead will provide the decision for that member. The CAW member may participate in discussions leading up to an action, but does not have a vote. If neither the official primary or alternate member representative is able to attend a specific meeting, then the jurisdiction may designate, for that meeting only, an additional alternate member representative who may vote on behalf of that member.

Consensus process. The Steering Committee will use a consensus-based process to make decisions. Consensus decision-making is a way of reaching agreement between all members of a group. Instead of using a simple majority vote, a consensus-based group considers all viewpoints and commits to finding solutions that all members actively support—or least can live with. When consensus is reached on an agenda item requiring action, a vote will then be taken, using Robert's Rules of Order, to formalize the decision (one vote per Party).

The following six types of agreement reflect consensus. Solutions that result in types of agreement closer to the top are preferred.

1. **Endorsement:** "I like it."
2. **Endorsement with Minor Point of Clarification:** "Basically I like it."
3. **Agreement with Reservations:** "I can live with it."
4. **Abstain:** "I have no opinion that prevents this from going forward."
5. **Stand Aside:** "I don't like this, but don't want to prevent the group from agreeing."
6. **Formal Disagreement, but Willing to Go with Majority:** "I want my disagreement noted, but I will support the decision."

The following two responses by one or more members indicate a lack of consensus.

7. **Formal Disagreement, with Request to Be Absolved of Responsibility for Implementation:** "I don't want to stop anyone else, but I don't want to be involved in implementing it."
8. **Block:** "I don't support this proposal and will work to see that it won't be implemented."



Decision documentation. Steering Committee decisions should be made during regular meetings, and noticed as an action item on the meeting agenda. Decisions will be documented in the meeting notes. If consensus over a decision cannot be reached, the conflicting points of view will be documented in the meeting notes.

11. Amendments

This charter may be amended, or repealed and a new charter adopted, by decision of the Steering Committee. Proposed changes shall be presented one meeting prior to the meeting at which action by the Steering Committee will be taken.