

MEMORANDUM

TO: Climate Action Steering Committee
FROM: Michael Ambrogi, Senior Planner
Thurston Regional Planning Council
DATE: July 19, 2021
SUBJECT: Monitoring and Assessment Program

Requested Action

Review staff recommendations for a long-term climate monitoring and assessment program.

- Would the monitoring program recommended by the MST meet the region's needs?
- Is there anything else that should be included in the monitoring program?

Background

The Climate Mitigation Plan includes a monitoring framework (Appendix 10.7) to gauge accountability and track progress toward achieving the regional greenhouse gas emission targets. The Parties recognize that monitoring and assessment will be critical to the long-term success of implementation. The monitoring framework serves as a starting point for a long-term monitoring program. The Phase 3 ILA scope of work includes the following task:

Task 4.1: Recommendations for Long-term Monitoring Program. Develop recommendations for longer-term monitoring and assessment program to be included in the ILA described as a deliverable for Task 2. This task would include reviewing monitoring and performance assessment programs for 2-5 other climate programs and presenting different options to MST and Steering Committee.

The review will involve researching feasibility and developing options and recommendations for including the following components in a long-term monitoring and assessment program:

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory (Action G4.1)
- Methods and baseline data to track additional emissions sources and supplemental indicators identified as gaps in the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (i.e., consumption-side emissions, baseline sequestration information, equity indicators) (Action G4.3). This task would not include collecting the actual data to track these additional emissions sources and indicators, but only to assess the feasibility and costs of doing so.
- Performance Assessment, including an online dashboard reporting status and trends of key performance indicators and annual or other progress reporting on regional climate action (Action G4.2)
- Cost estimates for each component of the long-term monitoring program.

Goal of the Monitoring Program

The intent of a climate mitigation monitoring program is to hold parties accountable for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A monitoring program can do so in two ways:

- Tracking changes in greenhouse gas emissions in the Thurston Region
- Tracking implementation of the strategies and actions identified in the TCMP

At the June Multijurisdictional Staff Team (MST) meeting, staff recognized that both options are important. However, who takes the lead on each will differ. Since much of the plan's implementation will be done by jurisdictions, tracking implementation of actions and strategies would best be done by each jurisdiction. This would also give jurisdictions opportunities to highlight their climate mitigation efforts. TRPC's resources would be best used to track greenhouse gas emissions and key performance indicators across the region; this should be the focus of the monitoring program included in the ILA.

Recommendations

TRPC staff reviewed climate monitoring programs in other cities, counties, and MPOs and presented options for a Thurston County monitoring program to the MST at their June meeting. Topics discussed included:

- Who is the audience?
- What metrics are being monitored?
- How is the information presented?
- How often is the monitoring program updated?

Based on that discussion, staff identified a need for two different products in the monitoring program: a user-friendly dashboard and a more detailed report.

Climate Dashboard

The climate dashboard would be an online resource intended for the general public. This audience may not be familiar with the TCMP, may not be data-savvy, and may have limited time. The dashboard would have clean, simple layout, limited jargon, and only a few key charts. To promote accessibility, it would be both mobile and desktop friendly.

The climate dashboard would track the region's greenhouse gas emissions plus a small number of key performance indicators related to each sector of the greenhouse gas inventory. Underlying data would be available for download for more data-savvy users. Where available, the downloadable data would be broken down by jurisdiction.

Why many climate indicators do not change much from year to year, staff felt the dashboard should be updated every 1-2 years to show commitment to monitoring.

Key features:

- Simple layout, with limited jargon

- Online desktop/mobile friendly
- Limited number of charts and tables
- Updated every 1-2 years
- Links to download data
- Emphasis on regional emissions

Example:

- City of Fort Collins, Colo. Climate Dashboard
<https://ftcollinscap.clearpointstrategy.com/>

Detailed Report

In addition to the public-friendly dashboard, staff identified a need for a longer monitoring report that was updated less frequently (about every five years). The primary purpose would be to inform future updates to the TCMP, Comprehensive Planning, or other jurisdiction climate planning efforts by identifying where more action is needed (i.e. which sectors) to meet the region's goals. This report would include the data used in the dashboard plus other key performance indicators as needed. This longer report would be in pdf format. The intended user would be jurisdiction staff and other people familiar with the TCMP.

Key Features

- PDF report
- Data-focused
- Updated every 5 or so years
- Help inform future climate mitigation action
- Jurisdiction-level data, where available

Other Options

A few options were considered by the MST but not recommended:

- Tracking TCMP action implementation — Staff felt that this task was important but was best left to individual jurisdictions
- TCMP Monitoring Protocol — Appendix 7 of the TCMP includes a Monitoring Protocol with 70 key performance indicators. While this could be a source for indicators to use in the monitoring program, staff did not feel it was useful to include all of the indicators. In addition, data are not available for some of the indicators in the Protocol.
- The Profile / Sustainable Thurston Report Card — TRPC provides data on many climate-related topics in The Profile and Sustainable Thurston Report Card, two resources which are updated annually. While some of this data may be used in the monitoring protocol, staff felt it was important to have all climate-related data available from a single website, with context about how it relates to regional goals

Other examples of city/county climate monitoring dashboards

<p>San Francisco, CA</p> <p>https://sfenvironment.org/sf-climate-dashboard</p> <p>Data-centric dashboard that provides detailed information on San Francisco’s greenhouse gas emissions.</p>	<p>Vancouver, BC</p> <p>https://opendata.vancouver.ca/pages/vandashboard/</p> <p>Climate change indicators are part of Vancouver’s overall city performance dashboard. Includes very clear targets.</p>	<p>Nashua, NH</p> <p>https://www.livablenashua.org/home</p> <p>Monitors key metrics. Also highlights related city initiatives and resources.</p>
<p>Fort Collins, CO</p> <p>https://ftcollinscap.clearpointstrategy.com/</p> <p>Includes a mix of direct and indirect measures of greenhouse gas emissions. Some metrics are linked to targets while others are informational.</p>	<p>Boulder, CO</p> <p>https://bouldercolorado.gov/boulder-measures</p> <p>Small number of metrics with very clear targets. Similar layout to TRPC’s <i>Sustainable Thurston Report Card</i>.</p>	<p>Broward County, FL</p> <p>https://bcgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=19a5119bfb254d7db93e390305c4d4dc</p> <p>Contains a mix of information about local plans, sources of emissions, projects and initiatives, and tools.</p>

Next Steps

Based on Steering Committee feedback, TRPC staff will draft a climate monitoring program for the ILA, including a budget estimate for individual elements of the program.