

MEMORANDUM

TO: Climate Action Steering Committee (CASC)
FROM: Allison Osterberg, Thurston Regional Planning Council
DATE: August 16, 2021
SUBJECT: Public Outreach and Engagement Options for Long-Term Governance Agreement

Requested Action

Discuss and provide guidance on options for public engagement to include in a long-term governance agreement.

Background

As part of the Phase 3 Interlocal Agreement, the CASC is charged with reviewing options for public outreach and engagement that support a coordinated regional approach to climate mitigation. This includes identifying a role for key public and private sector stakeholder in TCMP implementation.

At the July 26th meeting, the CASC agreed that one of the goals of a long-term agreement is: To **build public support** for climate action, and **coordinate outreach** on climate mitigation activities.

Public engagement activities could address one or more of the following objectives:

- **Raise awareness.** Increase or improve general knowledge among members of the public about the region's framework for climate action and climate mitigation actions and opportunities.
- **Change behavior.** Influence and catalyze people's decisions to take actions in line with climate mitigation targets.
- **Inform decisionmaking.** Involve key stakeholders and community representatives to ensure a broad range of perspectives are used to inform the development and direction of climate mitigation policies and programs.

The type of public outreach activities included in the Long-Term Governance Agreement should depend on which objectives the CASC would like to achieve at a regional level.

Decision Options

Below are some options for public outreach that could be included in the scope for a Long-Term Governance Agreement. The options are not exclusive – the CASC could direct staff to include a combination of options in the scope.

Option A: Basic Public Outreach

Objectives: Raise Awareness

This option would maintain public engagement and outreach activities at a similar scale to that funded in Phase 3. Individual jurisdictions may opt to organize and lead additional public outreach activities.

- Maintain and update central website (www.thurstonclimateplan.com) with information on plan, meetings, annual report, climate dashboard.
- Maintain a master “interested parties” email contact list
- Publicize meetings and key events through email contact list, traditional and social media
- Collect and respond to public comments with centralized email address (climate@trpc.org)
- Develop centralized messaging on climate mitigation topics, for use by jurisdictions.
- Give a limited number of public presentations on climate activities to community groups or table information booths at community events.

Option B: Public Forum

Objectives: Raise Awareness

This option includes hosting a public conference-type event with speakers and information session showcasing latest progress on climate mitigation activities. This event could be similar to the Climate Convention hosted by TCAT in 2018 and 2020 or could be similar to a Town Hall-style event, with opportunities for questions.

- Could be a 1-day annual event or quarterly, topic-focused
- Could be co-sponsored with other entities
- Could be combined with policy discussion among elected officials

Examples:

- Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact [hosts an annual Climate Leadership Summit](#) to share knowledge, showcase climate action, engage leadership across sectors, and mobilize the collaboration needed to tackle this significant challenge at scale. They have also hosted a number of smaller, topic-specific [Implementation Workshops](#).
- King County-Cities Collaborative (K4C) hosted a [virtual Climate Town Hall](#) in July 2021

Option C: Targeted Outreach Campaigns

Objectives: Raise Awareness (among specific population); Change Behavior

This option includes targeted outreach to specific audiences around one or more specific climate mitigation issues. This approach could be similar to the behavior change programs included in jurisdictions’ stormwater management plans. This approach could also be used to build awareness and gather input among populations that have been less involved in climate mitigation planning to date or are identified as impacted communities.

- Addresses **Action G1.7** of the TCMP – social research and behavior change campaigns.
- Identify one or more specific audiences and issues to target. Campaign topics could be recommended by the Staff Team and determined by the CASC as part of an annual work program.
- Research effective marketing and education strategies for audience and topic.
- Implement campaigns based on audience research.

- Monitor and evaluate campaign outcomes
- Would likely involve partnering or contracting with higher education institutions or other entities to conduct research and/or implement campaigns.
- Note that behavior change campaigns may require a phased approach.

Examples:

- The Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative runs annual [PSA campaigns](#) on Heat and Floods.

Option D: Advisory Committee

Objectives: Inform Decisionmaking

This option includes convening a dedicated Advisory Committee, composed of public- and private-sector representatives, who would be charged with advising the staff team and CASC members on climate mitigation activities. This approach could be similar to the Climate Advisory Workgroup convened for Phase 2.

- Membership would be identified/approved by the CASC
- Could meet on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis (4-6 times/year)
- Representative from Advisory Committee (such as the chair/vice-chair) could serve as an ex-officio member on the CASC to provide stakeholder input to CASC discussions and decisions.
- Committee could provide input and feedback on annual work program and funding priorities.
- This approach could potentially be delegated to the Thurston Thrives Climate and Clean Energy Action Team to connect with that existing community group.

Examples:

- Whatcom County has an 11-member [Climate Impact Advisory Committee](#) that advises the Whatcom County Council and Executive on issues related to the preparation and adaptation for, and the prevention and mitigation of, impacts of climate change.
- Fort Collins, Colorado has 25-member [Community Advisory Committee](#) that advised the city on the development of its Climate Action Plan and continues to meet quarterly or on an as-needed basis to provide input on implementation.
- Bend, Oregon, has a 9-member [Environment and Climate Committee](#) that develops recommendations on implementing the city's Climate Action Plan, including recommending which actions from the plan for the City to pursue in the next biennium and which actions to consolidate or add to the plan.
- Bellingham has a 9-member [Climate Action Plan Task Force](#) charged with determining the feasibility of reaching targets faster than those in the city's Climate Action Plan. Members have subject-matter expertise and are appointed by the City Council.
- Multnomah County, Oregon has a 13-member [Advisory Committee on Sustainability & Innovation](#) that advises the County on implementing the 2015 Climate Action Plan. Members also evaluate proposals for innovations in technology and business processes that may be applicable to county operations.

Option E: Topic-Specific Work Groups

Objectives: Inform Decisionmaking

This option includes convening several topic-specific work groups, made up of stakeholders with technical expertise or interests in identified climate mitigation areas. The groups could be charged with developing detailed implementation plans or approaches for actions included in the TCMP or with reviewing progress and making recommendations for plan updates. This approach was proposed for Phase 3, but not implemented.

- Work group topics would be identified by CASC, but membership could be open. Topic areas could be tied to TCMP sectors (Buildings & Energy, Transportation & Land Use, Water & Waste, Agriculture & Forests) or other focus area (climate justice, legislative priorities, monitoring data)
- Groups could be convened regularly (bi-monthly or quarterly) or for a concentrated period – for example, leading up to the more-detailed monitoring assessment.
- Representatives from each work group could serve as an ex-officio member on the CASC to provide stakeholder input to discussions and decisions.

Examples:

- The Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative (CRC) has [targeted Working Groups](#). Groups are established by the Steering Committee. Each group must have an identified lead who is a CRC member; CRC staff provide some administration and coordination support. Current groups are focused on Extreme Heat and Building Electrification.
- King County convened a [Climate Equity Community Task Force](#) to inform the 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan. The task force included 22 community leaders, representing many different frontline communities, and met bi-monthly over two years.
- In addition to its Advisory Committee, Bend, Oregon has several topic-specific [Working Groups](#) that make recommendations related to Energy in Buildings, Transportation, Energy Supply, and Waste and Materials