

From: [Rebecca Messinger](#)
To: [Oliver Orjiako](#); [Jenna Kay](#); [Sonja Wiser](#)
Subject: FW: Climate Plan
Date: Friday, November 17, 2023 3:19:32 PM
Attachments: [CLARK COUNTY CLIMATE STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT](#)
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Good afternoon,

Please see the below comments, as well as attached files, from Richard Rylander pertaining to the PPP - climate element. Thank you.



Rebecca Messinger
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From: richard rylander <bdad2@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 3:03 PM
To: Karen Bowerman <Karen.Bowerman@clark.wa.gov>; Gary Medvigy <Gary.Medvigy@clark.wa.gov>; Glen Yung <Glen.Yung@clark.wa.gov>; Michelle Belkot <Michelle.Belkot@clark.wa.gov>; Sue Marshall <Sue.Marshall@clark.wa.gov>
Cc: Rebecca Messinger <Rebecca.Messinger@clark.wa.gov>
Subject: Climate Plan

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Clark County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you for allowing additional time to complete a review of the materials posted on the County website regarding the climate plan. Attached are three (3) documents. Each contains the original information/statements with input from me. I hope you have time to review and consider the questions and comments I offer.

As the plan document sits I believe it is fatally flawed. Approval of the plan as presented will produce significant harm to Clark County and it's residents (current and future). There are no measures to use to assess success or failure. The scope of the proposal, given the span of

tasks and the timeframe, are going to produce poor results.

Please say no and instruct staff to go back to the State with a list of reasons why more time is needed to gather information, analyze and only then prepare a plan. I will attend the Nov 28th meeting to highlight examples.

Yours in service,

Richard (Dick) Rylander

CLARK COUNTY CLIMATE STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

Prepared by JLA Public Involvement, Inc. Date October 9, 2023

These are my comments regarding the report issued by the consultant

- 1) Completing this in 2 months was a rush. Given the magnitude of the task this is simply too fast.
- 2) The report appears to show the bias of the consultant in they identified people and groups for interviews. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique used in sociology and statistics research, where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. The sample group grows like a rolling snowball.¹ Researchers start with a small population of known individuals and expand the sample by asking those initial participants to identify others that should participate in the study.
 - a. I understand why they used the process given the short time frame
 - b. The choice of special interest groups/people acting as referral sources for additional interviews creates a bias and sends the feedback down a path of those are like-minded. This skews the input and raises significant questions of balance.
- 3) The requirement and premise that “equity” must be a center stone of a process is deeply troubling. Equity is in the eyes of the beholder and is not only subjective but susceptible to manipulation and guidance.
- 4) How can the public weigh in if they have no idea what’s involved, what it will cost and how it will impact their lives. What’s required is a full study that is comprehensive and paid for by the legislature and governor...not be another unfunded mandate.
- 5) The plan is required for unincorporated Clark County but what of the cities? How are they involved and impact?
- 6) 3 advisory groups but only one of them that will make recommendations to the Council? That will lead to 2 of the groups going through motions. This has happened throughout government history and won’t change now.
- 7) Given that ~15% of the county are classified as minorities why would their representation in the form of various organizations supporting them receive so much attention and power? What of the 85%?
- 8) When looking at page 9 -specific measures it appears that the solutions and decisions have already been made but no data to support them:
 - a. Require solar panels for new construction? Solar has low value in our climate. The studies show that. The initial cost, maintenance, breakdown costs, loss of efficiency over time and more make this proposal poor but unsound. Costs? How does this affect housing costs?
 - b. Replace natural gas with heat pumps? At 40 degrees F heat pumps efficiency drops and resistance heating (electric) kicks in and is more costly. How much additional production capacity will be needed, by when,

at what cost, etc.? Has this been modeled out and are people aware of the costs?

- c. Encourage planning so people can walk or bike to work? How many days of rain do we get per year in our climate? 154 days on average and 42" of rain. How well does that work?
- d. Replace vehicles with EV's? The costs, lack of charging, time of charging and so many more factors show the EV, without a quantum improvement in battery technology, will only be solution for multiple vehicle families and then only for local trips. It's not practical nor cost effective. The costs?

9) Cost topic (Page 9)

- For small businesses, homebuilders and developers
- Meeting climate policy requirements will be expensive.
- More specifically, the cost of building affordable housing will rise: state and local agencies should have incentives available.

For residents

- Increased cost of living will be a likely unintended consequence of climate change policy.

For unspecified persons or organizations

- Electrification is costly. There needs to be a dual system; electrification can't handle everything.

The report notes the high costs yet offers no substantive or useful solutions. It feels like they shrug it off and expect people just to bend over. Without an accurate cost estimate and a way to pay of the changes nothing should be done. To move forward would be irresponsible and wrong.

The only way to reduce is to stop growth; force people into high density residential, ban personal vehicles, use the Growth Management Act to stop rural development and limit access to energy and other resources for people who do not comply with the edicts.

Page 10: Trust, equity and inclusion

> The public and stakeholders lack trust with the county and don't see it as transparent in its processes and projects — particularly related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

> Equity and inclusion will need to be front and center and be considered in every aspect — not just related to people, but industry and technology as well.

> Some people in the county don't believe in sustainability or green infrastructure — they think it's a fleeting interest.

Comment – Where is the data that support these interpretations? Most of the population doesn't believe there is a climate emergency so the County/State claiming there is creates distrust. Using equity as a cornerstone (front and center) will drive a wedge not improve believability. These, and other statements included in the report, raise serious questions about the consultants honesty, interpretation and skill.

Vehicle Miles Traveled

- Public transportation has continued to decline. The public doesn't find it useful but the consultants thinks its part of the solution?
- The public is against pay per mile because it leads to government tracking.
- Density is the solution?

Public health

- Climate change will impact health, particularly for older adults and vulnerable populations.
- Consider the global impact and cost of climate-related migration (to this country).

Comment – First, we need to focus on Clark County not the rest of the world. Second. What about climate changes is going to impact health? Specifics and proof? This assertion is disingenuous, false and used to create an emotional response instead of providing hard facts.

Food, water and natural systems

- Water sheds are a concern to some? What is heavens name does this mean? Again, another worthless statement is unbecoming a professional consulting firm.

Education (Page 8)

- Educating and informing the public about climate preparedness in accordance with their
community needs such as educating forest landowners on wildfire readiness
- Integrate school programs, involve educators, teachers, staff and parents in the process.

Comment – Does this mean that they are suggesting using children to take the message home to parents and convince adults that climate change is real and these solutions are the answer? Honestly? Socialism 101.

Input for future community involvement (page 9)

- lowering barriers to participation by providing accommodations such as transportation access and childcare, amongst other suggested supports and

resources, as well as incentivizing participation through providing meals, compensation and engaging in culturally appropriate manners

Comment – So buying people off to engage is part of the solution? Give people services and goods to get them to buy in? I honestly hope this is not true.

Input related to the advisory group process

- The advisory groups need to establish a shared agreement on appropriate conduct during meetings, conflict resolution, and the decision-making process.

Comment – So ahead of time, to assure getting agreement and consensus so a plan comes out that meets expectations. Don't let the process work...control it.

- Many noted the importance of using data and facts to lead the process and discussions, especially using data to establish the same foundational understanding of equity and climate change for everyone.

Comment – So get people in the groups who are of like mind and agree on the “facts”? Foundational understanding of equity? So those who think equity is a negative are not to be chosen for any of the groups?

- Some participants suggested specific alternatives for when consensus could not be reached, such as rank choice voting.

Comment – Rank choice voting is a disaster. It was voted DOWN in a public referendum in Clark County so what would it be use for voting? That's a serious misunderstanding of the clear intent of the voters.

This entire section of the report is not just problematic but unacceptable. It shows a clear lack of understanding of the public by the consultant, shows the skewed nature of their “snowballing” interview approach and raises serious questions about the entire process.

Input related to committee composition

- This section appears to focus on groups that may NOT represent the population of Clark County. What are they using for demographics and why isn't that data in this report? 2020 census showed “White” 85% leaving 15% for other ethnic groups. Gender focused groups appear to represent 5-10% of the general population. The proposed approach would give minority groups disproportionate representation and in so doing damage credibility and direct actions down pathways that could ignore the majority.

Input related to engagement

- They admit they missed connection with a significant number of people and groups by doing this in just 2 months. I assume that was done because of deadlines from the County, ignoring the need to “get it right”?

RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON FEEDBACK

Committee composition, formation and charge

- important that all members of these committees are working with the same data and information, to support a foundational understanding of equity and climate.

Comment – So only like minded people are to be on the committees? If there different views then block those who disagree?

Open recruitment process

- Interpretation – Find people who think alike and will follow the plan without arguing or disagreeing. The outcome is a forgone conclusion.
- An invitation to apply should be distributed to the stakeholder list generated through this assessment work.

Comment: so only the groups they identified should be contacted? What about the groups and people overlooked? This comes across as so controlling and anti-choice it's insidious.

Committee purpose, recruitment structure and membership

- **Environmental Justice Coalition:** We envision the Environmental Justice Coalition's role as being key to forming the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) framework for the climate change and resiliency element planning project. This group will also lead the design of in-community public engagement work for the project with staff and consultant support. They can also serve as a sounding board for the Community Advisory Group to hear from and react to and give feedback on policy and program recommendations to ensure that possible outcomes from this process have given consideration to the impacts to vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.

Comment: “We envision?” Diversity, equity and inclusion? How about results? How about listening to people who will pay the bills and shoulder the financial burdens and not get subsidies or special payments?

- Recruitment for this committee should occur via an open recruitment process as indicated above, however, focused outreach would be needed to community-based organizations that were identified through this

assessment process. This includes but is not limited to: (then there is a list of minority and diversity groups)

Comment: Given the statement and groups listed it appears that control of the process and choices will be almost totally in the hands of the 15% of the population that is not “White”. How is that equitable? Wait...equality is not mentioned nor supported in this report.

- Chart on page 18 shows 3 circles and with intersection being “equity. Not results, Not meeting the goals of the legislation. Equity. That tells the public that this isn’t about science but rather about trying to identify people/groups that someone/group believes have been wronged or harmed and then giving them special treatment at the expense of others.

Community Advisory Group:

- will be where consensus-based recommendations are formed to be forwarded

Comment – What if consensus is not reached? Wait...their intent is that like minded people with the same fundamental views on climate and equity will be on the committee’s so consensus should be easy.

Decision-making framework

- An example of how these groups may interact and support one another would be that Environmental Justice Coalition may be responsible for initiating an equity framework/lens to guide the work and serve as a touchstone for the other two groups...

Comment – again with the equity and not results

Group process (page 16)

- **Equity framework/lens:** A Diversity/Equity/Inclusion framework should be developed early in the process to serve as a touchstone and guide the decision-making for all three committees. This framework would apply equity values and goals established by the Environmental Justice Coalition and Community Advisory Group and guide recommendations and measure success at key milestones.

Comment – The #1 recommendation is to focus on diversity and equity? Side note: The Environmental Justice Coalition sounds like a tribunal. They will be judge and jury and punish those who transgress. The name of the group really needs to be reconsidered.

- **Data and facts:** Feedback through this assessment underscored the importance of using data and facts as a framework for setting goals and informing discussions related to climate policy and benchmarking. It will be

important to orient each committee to current climate data, trends and forecasted impacts.

Comment – So is this a one way street in that the group is handed data that is absolute and is the only basis for consideration? What about committee members bringing information to the table for consideration and action?

Meeting formats

- Meetings should be facilitated by third party consultant, which would allow county staff to act as a participant, collaborator and information resource.

Comment – This appears to be the same format being used for the Bridge/Tolling Commission. They attempt to control every aspect of the process. They told the participants certain decisions were already made and that there was no way to fight or disagree. That process has been less than successful. Why follow the same path?

Accessibility and accommodations

- Stipends? Meals? Child care? Honorariums? Travel compensation?

Comment – Cost? If people are committed they will participate.

Summary thoughts:

- 1) The process is being rushed. Garbage in and garbage out.
- 2) The proposals and implications are massive and not reasonable to achieve in the timeframe defined. Making rash decisions has implications that could affect the entire fabric of our society and, as such, simply can NOT be forced.
- 3) Equity as the cornerstone of the process is wrong and harmful.
- 4) The science is far from settled and contentious. A significant block of society does not believe there is a climate crisis that requires radical change.
- 5) Do NOT approve the process as outlined. Go back to the legislature/state and tell them you need more time to study, investigate and develop recommendations.
- 6) The costs and date must be defined and prepared and analyzed before taking any step.

Finally, how are cities impacted? It appears the effort is focused on unincorporated clark county. Are the cities bound to create their own process or follow the county?

Richard Ryander November 17, 2023

Climate change & resiliency element PowerPoint presentation 11/7/23

By: County Staff

Comments:

- 1) How is success measured and reported?
- 2) What scale of time is necessary to produce meaningful data/outcomes (who are the experts with details?)
- 3) The term “public participation” is used extensively yet the lists of those contacted and to be contacted appear to be members of different groups and organizations...all of which have their own bias’s and agendas. Where is the general public in all of this?
- 4) Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC):
 - a. **Primary purpose: Equity-focused public engagement with vulnerable community members**

Comments: Equity is defined how? Please be exacting. Equity is a determination (judgement) by a person or group that people or groups are not being treated “fairly”. What does “fairly” mean? Who says the judgement as to impact is being made in a equitable manner? What are the costs and implications of using an equity lens and how is it justified. This is so fraught with potential for abuse as to be staggering.

- 5) Ethnic mix data for Clark County as of the 2020 Census: **85.2% White, 2.6% African American, 1.2% Native American, 5.4% Asian, 1.0% Pacific Islander, and 4.6% from two or more races.** If “equity” is applied to ethnic minorities how does that translate locally?
- 6) Timeline – The scope of the plan as presented is so massive as to be undoable. The changes, as outlined, would create a fundamental change in society. Trying to undertake and implement such changes (assuming it’s the right thing to do) is unattainable.

If there should be changes, we are talking decades of data gathering, research, modeling and planning before starting to implement any program. Moving too fast/soon will have repercussions that are devastating and harmful.

What are the costs (financial and societal)? Who pays those costs and how? What are the future ramifications?

I realize there is a State mandate but it’s still acceptable to speak up and raise questions and get answers before committing. Failure to take a stand is tantamount to ignoring the fiduciary responsibility to our community and generations to come.

Richard Rylander November 17, 2023

Comments about the Clark County Climate Change Process presentation

- 1) Cost of all this?
- 2) Who pays for it?

Clark County Community Planning Dept Document of Nov 6, 2023

- 1) The intent of this Public Participation Plan is to ensure that the county facilitates a thoughtful, open, and equitable process to provide residents, workers and other interested parties meaningful opportunities to discuss climate change and resiliency and shape policy recommendations for the unincorporated county

Comment: So the end objective is already set and it's policy to support the State's plan? Since there is only one outcome it appears this exercise is nothing but rubber stamping and coming up with ways to sell it to the public.

- 2) The greenhouse gas subelement must be designed to result in reductions in overall local greenhouse gas emissions.

Comment – So a /10th of 1% meets the objective? Or is it a percent of a target? With new population as a ratio vs old or a reduction in a fixed set of numbers regardless of population growth? This topic is critical to establish if there is to be any planning.

- 3) The subelement requires the county to identify actions it will take during the 20-year planning cycle to reduce greenhouse gas emission and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) related to transportation and land use, without increasing greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere in the state, and must prioritize reductions that benefit overburdened communities to maximize co-benefits of reduced air pollution and environmental justice.

Comment – This lacks detail and thus makes it worthless. What's the 20 year population growth estimate for clark county? According to the April 18th 2023 estimate using the middle range = 698,416. That would compare to the current estimate of 510,000 or an increase of ~188,000. How is it possible to reduce VMT with a 36.9% increase in population? Given the rural nature of the county ALL residential growth would need to occur in centrally located high density clusters AND public transportation would need to have a dramatic increase in use (instead of continuing the historical decline).

- 4) protect, and enhance community resiliency, including social, economic, and built environment factors, consistent with environmental justice;

Comment – What does this mean? Sounds like a lot of rhetoric and gobbledeygook. What is “environmental justice”? The EPA offers their definition: Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

Another definition: Environmental justice is a social movement that aims to address environmental injustice. [It occurs when poor or marginalized communities are harmed by hazardous waste, resource extraction, and other land uses from which they do not benefit](#)¹. The movement began in the United States in the 1980s and was heavily influenced by the American civil rights movement. [It focused on environmental racism](#)

Who defines what is fair? Since when is a social movement appropriate? Who defines what racism means in environmental contexts? Are changes made that disadvantage the majority to give something to the minority? Why?

- 5) prioritizing actions that benefit overburdened communities that will disproportionately suffer from the compounding environmental impacts and natural hazards due to climate change.

Comment - What of the burdens and costs for the majority? This all presumes that the claim of climate change is negative and requires remediation.

- 6) A team of consultants is in the process of being hired to help Community Planning staff with this project.

Comment – Which, how many, at what costs, to do what? Why the haste?

Project Area - The project area is unincorporated Clark County, including both unincorporated rural and unincorporated urban areas outside of the cities.

Comment – What of cities? Do they need to do their own plan? If not why not? Do they need to comply with the County’s plan? If not why not? Why only unincorporated?

Public Participation Plan

- JLA Public Involvement to conduct a climate change stakeholder assessment. (See separate comments)
- Prioritize equity

Comment: Were there other consultants? What did this cost? Why the prioritization of equity?

Prioritize equity. Incorporate the environmental justice and equity components of E2SHB 1181 into the public process. “Environmental justice” means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, and national origin, or income with respect to development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Environmental justice includes addressing disproportionate environmental and health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities and the equitable distribution of resources and benefits.” The new legislation mandates that the county develop policies that benefit those harmed by greenhouse gas pollution and most vulnerable to climate change impacts.² A goal of this PPP is to include approaches to engage with these most vulnerable community groups. Vulnerable community groups include: communities of color, Tribal and Indigenous populations, low-income populations, people with disabilities, chronic illnesses, or existing health conditions, infants and children, pregnant people, older adults, migrant farmworkers, outdoor workers, first responders, indoor workers without air conditioning, unhoused or unsheltered populations, people with limited English proficiency, some immigrant and refugee populations, populations with other social and geographical vulnerabilities (e.g., people with low educational attainment, renters, historically “red-lined” communities, urban, rural, vulnerably housed populations, people who are unemployed, areas with poor infrastructure). The formation of an Environmental Justice Coalition (Section 6) to design public engagement activities and use of an equity framework (Section 3.8) throughout the project are two key tools for accomplishing this goal.

Comment: Where does the US Constitution speak of equity? The 14th Amendment is clear on the subject. Equity does not mean equality. Equity is someone/group judging a person/group should be treated differently and given certain advantages. It’s totally arbitrary and capricious.

- JLA Public Involvement, a neutral third-party consultant

Comment: How do we know if a 3rd party is neutral? Because they say so? JLA has shown a clear bias and focus on equity so they are not neutral. How does one assure neutrality?

- The advisory groups will develop [a?] Diversity/Equity/Inclusion framework

Comment: The framework is inappropriate and unfair.

- The consultant's advisory group member recommendations will then be forwarded to the County Council to consider for appointment.

Comment: So we hand off decisions about participants to an unknown 3rd party of unelected people? How does that make sense? It does allow the decision makers at the local government level to wash their hands and responsibility.

- Environmental Justice Coalition (EJC) formed and made up of members who are a part of a vulnerable or overburdened population, work, or are involved, with, local vulnerable and overburdened populations.

Comment: Again, 15% of the County residents are considered minority. Why give them such a large decision impact? That would make it clear the majority is being ignored. That will drive a wedge into the public/government relationship.

- Participant list

Comment: Special interest group are represented but where is the 85% of the common public? A review of the participant list makes the consultants bias clear and thus questionable.

Richard Rylander

November 17, 2023