

Jenna Kay

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Sent: Tuesday, December 17, 2024 6:54 PM
To: Jenna Kay
Subject: New guidance from Commerce regarding the Climate element

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From Don Steinke

To the Climate CAG and EJC, c/o Jenna Kay

New guidance from Commerce regarding the Climate element

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Hello everyone,

On December 16, I received a new guidance document from the Department of Commerce called [Climate Policy Explorer](#).

Its formatting wasn't very useful for me so I reformatted it **see below**.

I limited the scope of my work to emissions reduction, Zoning and development, Buildings and energy, and Transportation.

I omitted Resilience, Agriculture, Cultural resources, Economic development, Ecosystems, Emergency management, Health and Wellness, Waste Management, and Water Resources.

I added commentary in {braces}, bolding for emphasis and the colors as a visual indicator of a change in category.

I also added lists of grants potentially available for our work, under **budgets**

Here are the policies and goal suggested by Commerce

Zoning and Development - High Priorities

1. Foster higher-intensity land uses in mixed-use urban villages and transit corridors. EJ note: Frontline Communities identified building dense, affordable communities around public transportation as an environmental justice priority. Develop overlay or master plans for urban villages and transit corridors -- "nodes and corridors" planning. Also, **make any necessary code changes (zoning, design standards, parking, etc.)** and develop incentives.
2. Ensure public transit stops and stations are located at or near (e.g., within 600 ft.) dense commercial and employment areas. Goals and policies in transportation and land use elements should be consistent and complementary. Successful implementation of this measure should be coordinated with subarea or corridor planning to ensure that housing is near these transit facilities.
3. Adjust single-family home impact fees and system development charges so those homes with larger impacts on utilities pay more. Incentivize smaller single-family homes - carbon footprints.

4. Limit parking spaces near transit-oriented development to encourage use of transit and decrease single-occupancy vehicle travel. This measure could be most effective if public works and planning efforts are coordinated. Goals and policies in transportation, land use elements and housing elements should be consistent and complementary. Local government response to House Bill 1923 (laws of 2019) may provide an example of how to implement this measure. House Bill 1923 amended RCW 36.70A.620 to limit the amount of parking local governments planning under RCW 36.70A.040 may require for low-income, senior, disabled, and market-rate housing units located near high-quality transit service.
5. Prioritize infill development through zoning and permitting processes. A jurisdiction could incentivize infill by reducing impact fees and permitting fees, as well as by amending SEPA exemptions to allow residential infill development projects outright.
6. Establish form-based codes where appropriate to better integrate higher-density development. Form-based codes can and should be intentionally used to facilitate greater density in urban areas (including UGAs) and to allow a mix of uses. They could then act as enablers of reductions of VMT and subsequent GHG emissions. This measure could be most effective if public works and planning efforts are coordinated. Goals and policies in transportation, land use and housing elements should be consistent and complementary. {Form based codes are what you want, rather than what you don't want}
7. Increase housing diversity and supply within urban growth areas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support environmental justice. EJ note: Frontline Communities identified building dense, affordable communities around public transportation as an environmental justice priority. Zoning density increases are **enablers** of GHG reduction. Zoning density increases should allow for increases in mass transit. Increases in mass transit uses should result in decreased VMT. GHG reductions should result from reduced VMT.
8. Increase or remove density limits in areas well-served by transit and other services within the urban growth area. This measure could be most effective if public works and planning efforts are coordinated. Goals and policies in transportation, land use and housing elements should be consistent and complementary.
9. Allow middle housing types, such as duplexes, triplexes, and ADUs, on all residential lots. This measure can facilitate increases in density. It could be most effective if public works and planning efforts are coordinated. Goals and policies in transportation, land use and housing elements should be consistent and complementary. {I believe our legislature requires us to allow this}
10. Allow or encourage micro-housing units. Such compact housing units -- typically about 250-400 square feet and located in urban, multistory buildings -- will help reduce air and water pollution associated with building energy use and transportation. Micro-housing units support housing supply, diversity, and affordability.
11. Develop and implement inclusionary zoning to support greater income diversity in housing types. This measure supports environmental justice, urban density, and reductions in vehicle miles traveled. {*Sightline* says Inclusionary zoning could be counter-productive}
12. Implement complimentary, mixed land uses versus traditional zoning, such as locating business districts, parks and schools in neighborhoods to promote cycling and walking and reduce driving. Creating walkable, accessible communities with mixed-use developments can reduce VMTs and subsequent GHG emissions from vehicles. The majority of Washington cities are zoned single-family and do not allow for commercial uses adjacent or integrated within the residential area. Amending comprehensive plans and land use regulations to require mixed-use developments can facilitate GHG reductions. {Consider allowing a convenience store at every intersection.}
13. Prohibit the expansion of polluting industries in overburdened communities via local zoning and development regulations. Jurisdictions could use the Washington Department of Health's Environmental Health Disparities Map to help identify overburdened communities juxtaposed to pollution sources.

Zoning and development secondary suggestions

14. Establish minimum residential densities within urban growth areas. This policy will help reduce vehicle miles traveled by supporting other modes of transportation.
15. Plan for and invest in capital facilities to accommodate infill development. {electricity, not gas}
16. Maintain a stable urban growth area to reduce development pressure on rural and resource lands.

Buildings and energy priorities

17. Ensure {as part of building codes} that buildings {both new and old} use {100%} renewable energy, conservation, and efficiency technologies and practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. EJ note: Frontline communities identified the design, build, and retrofit of buildings for conserving energy, generating solar power, and weathering climate impacts as a top environmental justice priority. Residential and commercial buildings use large amounts of electricity. Jurisdictions can amend land use regulations to require new residential and commercial buildings to utilize renewable energy sources, reducing GHG emissions and mitigating climate change.
18. Require additional net-zero greenhouse gas emission features of all new residential and commercial structures. Residential and commercial buildings use large amounts of electricity. Jurisdictions can amend building and land use regulations to require new residential and commercial buildings to utilize zero-emission GHG features, reducing GHG emissions and mitigating climate change. {features as being EV ready}
19. Retrofit buildings for energy efficiency. Develop requirements for updated insulation and replacement of back-up generators that rely on fossil fuels. Replace with onsite solar and storage systems, where feasible.
20. Phase out natural gas use in existing publicly owned facilities by [insert target date] and retrofit with electric heat pumps. Replacing natural gas power and heat systems with electric heat pumps in public facilities can make the facilities carbon-neutral and reduce GHG emissions. Burning natural gas produces fewer GHG emissions than burning oil, {not necessarily} but natural gas is still a fossil fuel that contributes to climate change. Build in policies within local comprehensive plans' climate and utilities elements that support renewable energy sources.
21. Incentivize green building certification to improve energy and environmental performance. Cities and counties could provide structural and financial incentives (e.g., density bonuses and tax credits) to developers to certify projects under a third-party standard (e.g., the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standard). {Or EarthHaus or Living Building Certification}
22. Prioritize the adaptive reuse of buildings, recognizing the emission-reduction benefits of retaining existing buildings. EJ note: Frontline communities identified maximizing the use of existing buildings and preserving peoples' ability to stay in their community and preventing displacement from green gentrification and hazards exacerbated by climate change as a top environmental justice priority. Adapting and reusing existing buildings avoids carbon emissions associated with building demolition, new building materials, transportation of those materials, and construction of a new building. Jurisdictions can incentivize reuse of existing buildings by waiving or reducing fees associated with the use and providing economic development grants for reuse of existing buildings. {The easiest way to make a building more efficient is to gut it.}
23. Prioritize the preservation and weatherization of housing in overburdened communities, particularly at higher densities, to reduce emissions and increase resilience. Financial assistance should be prioritized for existing tenants at risk of displacement from green gentrification.

Inslee's proposed 2025-7 budget for buildings decarbonization

- State Agency Building Decarbonization / Multiple / \$68,755,000
- High Efficiency Electric Appliance Rebates Program / Commerce / \$30,000,000
- Clean Buildings Performance Grants / Commerce / \$25,000,000
- Energy Retrofits for Public Buildings Grants / Commerce / \$22,500,000

- Multifamily Efficiency Grants / Commerce / \$25,000,000
- Weatherization Plus Health Grants / Commerce / \$36,000,000
- Clean Building Technical Assistance / Commerce / \$3,803,000
- Continuation of CCA Dollars / Commerce / \$3,946,000
- Clean Buildings Training / Commerce / \$1,500,00

Building and Energy Secondary suggestions

24. Maximize renewable energy sources for the supply of electricity and heat to new and existing buildings. New and existing buildings use large amounts of electricity. Cities and counties could amend land use regulations to require new residential and commercial buildings to utilize renewable energy sources for heat and electricity, reducing GHG emissions and mitigating climate change. Cities and counties, along with state agencies and electric utilities, could also provide financial incentives (e.g., credits and subsidies) to support investment in residential and commercial solar energy projects.

25. Develop local microgrid solar and battery storage facilities in low-impact sites. Integrating small-scale renewable energy production throughout a jurisdiction can reduce transmission losses and provide an alternative to fossil fuel energy sources. Jurisdictions can do this by amending land use regulations to require new structures to have solar orientation. Jurisdictions can also waive or reduce fees for uses that include local renewable energy generation to incentivize developers to include these features in land use proposals. Low impacts could include: roofs, parking lots, brownfield sites, and former fossil fuel facilities that have access to the electrical grid.

26. Require all publicly owned buildings {including schools} to be powered completely by renewable energy by [insert target date]. Add data that provides benefits if adopted by date certain (e.g., by 2040 or 2050). Transitioning publicly owned buildings to renewable energy reduces GHG emissions and sets an example for the community to follow. Build in policies within local comprehensive plans' climate and utilities elements to support renewable energy sources.

27. Preserve and reuse existing buildings. Adapting and reusing existing buildings (e.g., converting vacant commercial buildings into housing) avoids carbon emissions associated with creating new building materials, transporting those materials, and constructing new buildings. Jurisdictions can incentivize reuse of existing buildings by waiving or reducing fees and by providing economic development grants for reuse of buildings.

28. Maximize solar access of site design, where practicable, for new solar-ready residential and commercial buildings. EJ note: Frontline communities identified distributed, community-controlled solar as a top environmental justice priority.

29. Direct solar development onto lands identified as having “least conflict” through the Least-Conflict Solar Siting process on the Columbia Plateau. The least-conflict utility scale solar siting project in eastern Washington was undertaken with the goal of identifying areas where there would be the least amount of potential conflict in the siting of utility-scale solar photovoltaics (PV).

30. Require solar panels on buildings with large rooftops, as well as within or over parking areas. Cities and counties could require new distribution warehouses and parking lots to be pre-wired for solar panels and electric delivery truck chargers.

31. Prioritize the adaptive reuse of buildings, recognizing the emission-reduction benefits of retaining existing buildings. EJ note: Frontline communities identified maximizing the use of existing buildings and preserving peoples' ability to stay in their community and preventing displacement from green gentrification and hazards exacerbated by climate change as a top environmental justice priority. Adapting and reusing existing buildings avoids carbon emissions associated with building demolition, new building materials, transportation of those materials, and construction of a new building. Jurisdictions can incentivize reuse of existing buildings by waiving or reducing fees associated with the use and providing economic development grants for reuse of existing buildings.

Transportation High Priority

32. Eliminate parking minimum requirements, and establish parking maximums. This policy, which could be implemented in a development code, could help reduce impervious surfaces that exacerbate stormwater runoff and the urban heat island effect. This policy also could encourage active-transportation (walking, biking, riding transit) alternatives to driving automobiles; this reduces emissions, improves community health, and supports other co-benefits.

33. Reduce parking requirements where there are multimodal options available. This policy will help reduce vehicle miles traveled by supporting other modes of transportation.

34. Improve transit speed, frequency, coverage, and reliability. Local jurisdictions could expand public transit through additional routes, frequency of stops, and other mechanisms as identified by the community needs. Cities may choose to "buy" more transit service from service providers, including purchasing more buses or transit service. Invest in ensuring 30-minute headways throughout all bus routes. This measure could also include developing new transit routes and expanding transit service. Finally, jurisdictions could implement "last-mile" strategies (shuttles, ride-sharing, bike-sharing), beginning with frontline communities, people with physical impairments, children and elderly transit riders.

35. Prioritize and promote public transit expansion and use through coordination of land use and transportation planning. Development permits and public works transportation plans should be directly coordinated beyond impact fees. New developments and transit expansion must be considered simultaneously. Examples: bus rapid transit, transit fleet electrification, first- and last-mile connectivity to be considered with development.

36. Implement multimodal transportation planning to reduce single-occupancy vehicle dependence and greenhouse gas emissions. Develop mode-specific plans, such as bicycle and pedestrian plans, adopt complete streets policies and ordinances, and a multimodal transportation concurrency program.

37. Provide low-income residents subsidies to purchase or lease electric vehicles and bicycles. A county or city could set aside a budget portion that could be distributed to low-income residents via direct application. An applicant would supply proof of income and a quote on the price or lease terms of an electric vehicle. The subsidy could be 1-3% of the cost of a vehicle.

a. {Ensure access to EV charging infrastructure with affordable rates where people sleep, particularly in multifamily developments.}

38. Reduce vehicle miles traveled to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals. EJ note: Frontline Communities identified making it easier to not need a car by designing walkable and accessible neighborhoods and providing affordable public transportation as a top environmental justice priority.

39. Implement travel demand management (TDM) programs and strategies. Commute trip reduction (CTR) programs and strategies are required for large employers (100+ employees). These programs can and should be scaled to fit smaller businesses in different jurisdictions and circumstances. Facilitate participation in the employer commute trip reduction program and expand the program beyond large employers. Provide workers with flexible work schedules and guaranteed rides home. CTR should be an integral part of expanding existing demand management programs. Encourage major employers to establish satellite offices, as well as remote and telework programs.

40. Increase multimodal capacity in coordination with the location of higher-density housing and commercial centers. Transportation and multimodal improvement considerations should be part of the permitting process beyond housing and road impact fee assessments. Transit-supportive residential densities are impactful to provide shorter trips and increase transit and non motorized usage. In some locations, such as freeway transit stations, the location of land uses may be best when tangential to the station and not concentrated within 600 feet.

41. Create a safe, well-connected, and attractive bicycle and pedestrian transportation network to encourage active transportation. Implementation of this policy could include a strategy to reduce pedestrian or bicycle and car collisions, beginning with overburdened communities with the highest rate of injury or death. Key to the success of this policy is to establish a safe and welcoming environment that includes lighting, visibility, landscaping, and active uses.

42. Prioritize, develop, and maintain mobility hubs in transportation-efficient locations — especially in overburdened communities experiencing a scarcity of transportation alternatives. Mobility hubs are centralized locations where people can access multiple transportation modes (e.g., bike share, transit, and micro mobility devices). Mobility hubs need to be adapted to specific contexts and settings both in terms of the type of components and their scale. For example, a city center rail hub may offer more space to public transport and bike share bikes whereas a hub in a market town center or transport corridor interchange may focus on providing a smaller number of vehicles but greater choice of flexible travel options between housing and jobs. Mobility hubs should be planned as network-integrated with public transport and other active transportation components as a key part of planning strategy for optimal impacts. The development of mobility hubs may be an incremental upgrade of sites as opportunities arise such as: new or refurbishment of middle and multifamily housing plus commercial development; upgrade of rail, trolley, bus or rapid-bus route stops; utility service work; introduction of electric vehicle infrastructure.

43. Facilitate the siting of complimentary destinations such as commercial-employment centers, schools or education centers, and residential developments. Jurisdictions should use zoning to co-locate complimentary developments that help reduce VMT and encourage transit ridership.

44. Address active transportation and other multimodal types of transportation options in concurrency programs – both in assessment and mitigation.

45. Prioritize permitting for transit-oriented development (TOD) proposals. This is an enabling policy that should reduce future VMT.

Inslee's 25-27 Budget for Clean transportation

- *Offer incentives for electric vehicle adoption:* (\$62.5 million Climate Commitment Account)
- Electric vehicles (EV) lower greenhouse gas emissions, and while more people are driving EVs, adoption rates must significantly increase *to meet our statutory emissions requirements*. Funding would continue a highly popular and effective incentive program to provide low-income Washingtonians access to electric vehicles.
- *Invest in electric vehicle charging* (\$40 million Climate Commitment Account, \$13.8 million other funds)
- Funding for the Washington Electric Vehicle Program will make it easier for more people to drive EVs by investing in community-based EV charging infrastructure. This will narrow gaps in charging access and keep pace with growing EV adoption. Funding for charging infrastructure is also provided to five state agencies to help electrify the state fleet.
- *Electrify school buses* (\$15.6 million Model Toxics Capital Account)
- This grant program supports the transition of school buses to zero-emission fleets. Projects are prioritized that replace the oldest diesel-fueled vehicles, especially those used in or near vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.
- *Incentivize Medium and Heavy Duty ZEV Vehicles* (\$83 million)
- *Incentivize ZEV Transit* (\$55 million)
- *Incentivize bike ped* (\$129 million)
- *Electrify Washington State Ferries* (\$87.1 million Carbon Emissions Reduction Account, \$595 million in 2025–27 and a total of \$1.3 billion for all five vessels. Capital Vessel Replacement Account, Carbon Emissions Reduction Account, Move Ahead Washington Account, Puget Sound Capital Construction Account)
- Washington State Ferries is converting three Jumbo Mark II vessels from diesel to hybrid electric. These ferries serve the most densely populated urban areas in the central Puget Sound and produce 26% of the fleet's annual greenhouse gas emissions. Each conversion will reduce emissions by nearly 50,000 metric tons a year with the first vessel scheduled to sail in summer 2025.
- AND EPA grants for ZEV heavy duty vehicles: <https://www.epa.gov/clean-heavy-duty-vehicles-program>. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [announced](#) that 70 applicants across 27 states, three

Tribal Nations, and one territory have been selected to receive approximately \$735 million to assist in the purchase of over 2,000 zero-emission vehicles through its first-ever [Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Grant Program](#).

EPA's Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Grant program, created by the Inflation Reduction Act, will replace existing internal combustion engine heavy-duty vehicles with zero-emission vehicles, while also supporting the build out of clean vehicle infrastructure, as well as the training of workers to deploy these new zero-emission technologies. Proposed replacement vehicles include battery-electric box trucks, cargo trucks, emergency vehicles, refuse/recycling haulers, school buses, shuttle buses, step vans, transit buses, utility vehicles, and other vocational vehicles. The program is also expected to fund a small number of hydrogen fuel cell transit buses.

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Transportation Secondary Priorities

46. Use demand-based methods to reflect the actual cost of existing parking. EJ note: Frontline communities identified making it easier to not need a car by designing walkable and accessible neighborhoods and providing affordable public transportation as a top environmental justice priority. Demand-based methods could include demand-based pricing and dynamic processing. This measure could assist with alleviating parking shortages by encouraging other modes of travel to their destination, if parking costs reflect the premium value. Alternatives to vehicle travel must be provided to be successful.

47. **Expand electric vehicle infrastructure.** EJ note: Frontline communities identified making it easier to not need a car, as well as reducing fossil-fuel vehicle miles by switching to electric vehicles and installing charging stations near residences, as an environmental justice priority. Jurisdictions can reduce GHG emissions by making ownership and use of electric vehicles convenient and affordable. Jurisdictions should examine their neighborhoods, commercial centers, and transportation systems to determine the optimal locations for charging infrastructure. Update comprehensive plan land use elements to allow and support EV charging infrastructure.

48. **Require electric vehicle charging infrastructure in all new and retrofitted buildings.** Encouraging private businesses and property owners to implement EV charging infrastructure helps encourage community-wide use of EVs and reduce GHG emissions from vehicles. Jurisdictions could reduce or waive application or impact fees for land use proposals that include EV infrastructure. They could also use economic development grants to help private businesses afford EV charging infrastructure.

49. Improve the efficiency of transportation system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This measure focuses on incorporation of Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) strategies that emphasize operating the existing transportation system as safely and efficiently as possible.

50. Provide signal prioritization for freight vehicles, transit buses, and other heavy-duty vehicles. Signal prioritization for such heavy vehicles can reduce travel times, traffic congestion, fuel costs, and pollution.

51. Develop dedicated electric-vehicle (EV) lanes on local roads and highways. Construct or retrofit locally managed roadways to include EV-exclusive lanes and coordinate with WSDOT to connect these lanes to state roadways and facilities.

52. Convert public fleets to zero-emission vehicles by [insert target date] and develop supporting infrastructure and programs (e.g., charging stations and dedicated lanes for electric cars and buses). EJ note: Frontline communities identified reducing fossil fuel vehicle miles by switching to electric as an environmental justice priority. Provide benefits of adoption by certain date, such as 2040.

53. Provide vehicle licensing fee subsidies to low-income drivers who present proof of transit pass use over the previous year to encourage mode shift. An example of such a program has been implemented in several communities where they provide a subsidy of 20%, with a minimum subsidy of \$250.00 (e.g., Orca Card - Sound Transit, Connect Card - Spokane Transit).

54. Integrate "Complete Streets" principles into the roadway designs of residential developments. Complete Streets are roadways that are designed and operated to provide safe, accessible, and healthy travel for all users of our roadway system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists. A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crosswalks, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, or related structures.

55. Establish micromobility centers wherever plausible (e.g., hubs for shared bikes and scooters). This is an enabling policy that should reduce future VMT.