

Memo

November 5, 2024

To: Linsey Fields, Climate and Sustainability Coordinator, City of Lacey
From: Robyn Wong and Ron Whitmore
Subject: Plan and Policy Audit, Lacey Resilience Sub-Element

Introduction

The Plan and Policy Audit (Task 2.1) is an assessment of existing City and regional plans related to climate resilience. The purpose of this memo is to describe the methodology and to summarize the findings of the Audit.

The assessment was completed as a matrix of goals, policies, actions, projects, and other information that identifies gaps, maladaptation policies, and considerations when drafting policies for the Resilience Sub-Element of the Lacey Comprehensive Plan. The assessment matrix was created using the Climate Element Workbook provided by the State of Washington Department of Commerce (Commerce) and is provided as a separate Excel file.

Plans and Policies Reviewed

The selection of plans and policies reviewed was based on Commerce's Climate Element Planning Guidance as well as recommendations from City staff. The following seven documents were reviewed:

- Lacey Comprehensive Plan (2016)
 - Economic Development Element
 - Housing Element
 - Environmental Element
 - Utilities Element
 - Shoreline Master Program (2021)
- Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region (4th Edition) (2023) and City of Lacey Annex to the Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region (4th Edition) (2024)
- Thurston County Climate Mitigation Plan (2020) (there were no climate resilience goals or policies in the Plan)
- Lacey Parks Culture & Recreation Comprehensive Plan (2023)
- Lacey Urban Forest Management Plan (2021)
- Lacey Government Facilities Master Plan (2023)
- Lacey Stormwater Comprehensive Plan (2020)
- 2030 Transportation Plan (2012).

Method

Each plan was reviewed according to selected criteria in the “Task 2.1: Review existing plans for climate gaps and opportunities” tab of the Climate Element Workbook provided by Commerce (in Excel). All goals, policies, initiatives, and activities in the plans that have any implicit or explicit connection to climate resilience were included in the matrix (included as a separate Excel file); components of the plans that do not have a nexus to climate resilience were not assessed.

The criteria assessed are:

- **Type:** This identifies the type of “measure” in the source plan. The types of measures listed in the matrix reflect those used in the plans and include: goals, policies, strategies, initiatives, capital improvements, and program activities. Some reviewed plans contain very high-level goals and policies (e.g., in Comprehensive Plan Elements), while others include facility-specific projects (e.g., in the Government Facilities Master Plan).
- **Sector:** This identifies the sector(s) the measure applies to. The sectors recommended by Commerce are: Buildings & Energy; Cultural Resources & Practices; Economic Development; Emergency Management; Health & Well-being; Ecosystems; Transportation; Agriculture & Food Systems; Waste Management; Water Resources; Zoning & Development.
- **Assets:** This identifies the built and natural assets that the measure applies to. If it has to do with people, the entry is “Residents.”
- **Hazards:** This identifies the climate change hazard that is relevant to the measure. The hazard is “relevant” if it is identified in the measure itself or in the source plan (e.g., based on the plan’s organization or naming/tagging convention of the measure). Climate hazards that *can* be applicable but are not explicitly mentioned are also listed in this column of the matrix.
- **Climate Impacts:** This identifies the climate impacts that the measure addresses as written, if applicable, or could be addressed with changes.
- **Gaps and Opportunities:** This is an initial assessment of how the measure could be incorporated into the Resilience Sub-Element, often with additions or revisions.

Plan and Policy Audit Findings

Recommendation: Incorporate stormwater management measures from the Stormwater Comprehensive Plan.

The Stormwater Comprehensive Plan contains a comprehensive assessment of how climate change impacts stormwater management and its downstream impacts to water resources and riparian ecosystems. The plan contains goals and recommended actions to address flooding, changes in streamflow, and extreme precipitation. Drought is not

mentioned explicitly in these goals and recommended actions, but actions that increase stormwater infiltration also help support local groundwater supplies.

Recommendation: Incorporate adapted measures from the Lacey Annex to the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and the Regional HMP.

The Lacey Annex to the HMP has “initiatives” to address the hazards that specifically impact Lacey. With amendments to more directly address climate hazards and with a longer planning horizon in mind, these initiatives should be incorporated into the Resilience Sub-Element. Additional initiatives from the Regional HMP can also be incorporated and adapted to the Lacey context.

Numerous HMP policies focus on making facilities and assets resilient to “disruptions” and “hazards.” The language of these policies can be modified to specifically reference climate hazards and then incorporated into the Resilience Sub-Element.

Recommendation: Prioritize measures to increase the resilience of vulnerable communities.

Lacey faces relatively little direct exposure to climate hazards that have a defined geospatial footprint, such as wildfire, flood, and sea level rise. However, as a couple of plans noted, every resident is exposed to heat and wildfire smoke regardless of where they live in the city. Vulnerable populations (due to socioeconomic conditions, household characteristics, linguistic isolation, or their housing and environment) will face disproportionately large impacts and have more difficulty recovering.

Recommendation: Add measures to reduce wildfire impacts.

Missing from existing plans are measures to harden/manage buildings and properties to reduce the risk of ignition during a wildfire or to mitigate the impacts of wildfire smoke. Even though wildfire hazard areas are limited within city boundaries, burning embers from a wildfire can fly for miles and start fires. The Resilience Sub-Element should include measures to harden structures and establish defensible space. Likewise, smoke can be addressed in the Sub-Element through outreach and notifications about smoky conditions and through the provision of community spaces that serve as clean air spaces.

Recommendation: Add measures to address heat impacts.

Also missing from existing plans are measures that directly address heat. Some goals and policies in the HMPs that are focused on resilient facilities can be adapted to ensure access to cooling centers. Likewise, measures in the Urban Forest Management Plan can be adapted to reduce the urban heat island effect.

Recommendation: Consolidate detailed policies in departmental plans into higher-level policies in the Resilience Sub-Element.

This recommendation applies to multiple departmental plans as well as the Shoreline Master Plan. Many of the measures in these plans are too specific for the purposes of the Resilience Sub-Element and should be consolidated.

- **Government Facilities Plan:** This plan recommends improvements to City facilities down to the level of design alternatives. The information from this plan can be

combined with measures from other plans to craft more general policies about climate resilience upgrades to City facilities.

- **Shoreline Master Program (SMP):** The SMP goals cover many aspects of managing multiple habitat types, ecological functions, vegetation, and beach areas. Two central themes from all the goals listed in the matrix are: 1) Encouraging restoration/implementation of nature-based solutions on beaches and shorelines, and 2) Avoiding development and shoreline hardening. The Resilience Sub-Element can include policies to advance these measures.
- **Stormwater Comprehensive Plan:** Public Works – Water Resources staff have indicated that this plan will likely be updated in the next year. The existing plan (2020) has policies that clearly connect to climate change impacts, and the update will likely do the same. The two planning efforts should mutually inform each other and remain consistent.

Recommendation: Incorporate climate resilience in the narrative, goals, and policies of the Transportation Element Update or Resilience Sub-Element.

The 2030 Transportation Plan has broad goals and policies that could relate to climate change resilience with changes. Updated goals and policies that connect climate resilience and transportation could either be in the Transportation Element (to be updated by Fehr & Peers) or the Resilience Sub-Element. F&P, R+A, and City staff should collaboratively decide their most suitable placement in the Comp Plan during the development of the Policy Frameworks.

Some of the 2030 Transportation Plan’s goals and policies currently reference climate change, but they mostly allude to transportation’s impact on greenhouse gas emissions. Transportation systems can be negatively impacted by climate hazards (e.g., damage to infrastructure, rider/user impacts). However, connected, safe streets, multimodal networks, and active transportation networks can also increase the resilience of Lacey residents during hazard events.

Attachment

- Task 2.1: Review Existing Plans for Climate Gaps and Opportunities Matrix (Excel)