Multnomah County

CLIMATE JUSTICE PLAN

A community and government plan for climate action



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Multnomah County
Office of Sustainability

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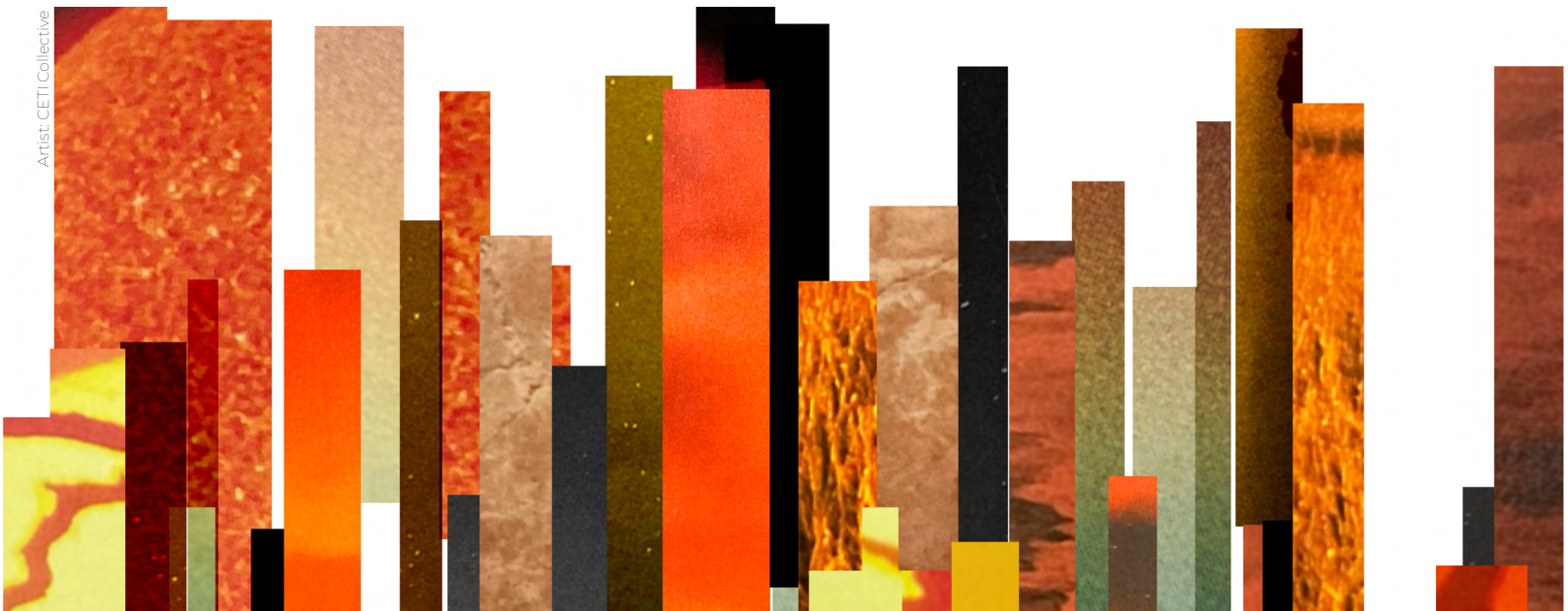
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Indigenous Placekeeping Statement

The land that we now call Multnomah County, indeed this entire area of the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette rivers, is the traditional homeland and fishing and gathering range of tribes throughout the region. Its wealth of resources sustained Native American people who lived here both year-round and seasonally. These tribes have honored, protected, and stewarded these resources for thousands of years and continue to do so today. We honor with gratitude the land itself and the peoples who have cared for it since time immemorial. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we all call home.

The governments that now occupy these lands have a government-to-government responsibility to honor and fulfill treaty obligations. Today there are nine tribal nations in Oregon representing diverse cultures and peoples, and other Tribes outside of Oregon who access the lands and waters of Multnomah County as their usual and accustomed places. While not every tribal nation has Federally recognized treaties, all tribal nations are owed the right to help shape the future of this community, particularly with respect to water, gathering of traditional foods, the management of natural areas, the protection of the environment, and other issues that are deemed important by those tribes.

In the face of today's climate crisis, Tribes in Oregon continue to lead in the protection of the biosphere, sacred waters, and First Foods. To help inform the plan and to form a basis for ongoing partnership, a review of Tribal climate plans, and the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) resolutions was conducted (See Appendix A). Based on the review of climate plans and ATNI resolutions, it is clear that there is broad alignment between the goals and strategies of the Climate Justice Plan and the adopted priorities of ATNI members.

See the full statement in Appendix A

Letter from the Steering Committee

Dearest Neighbors,

This plan is our attempt to capture a vision for the future that is by us and for us. We envision a community where everyone has access to clean air and water, parks, trees, natural areas, affordable housing, clean energy, and the building blocks we need to thrive. Importantly, we envision a future where we achieve these goals not in spite of the *climate crisis*, but because we tackle the crisis head on.

Climate change is already impacting our community, but our neighbors with limited income, substandard housing or no housing at all are most at risk. Generational discrimination has placed communities of color — more likely to live in more polluted neighborhoods with fewer trees, worse infrastructure, and hotter streets — in harm's way. This is where we think our efforts need to focus. By targeting limited resources to benefit the community members who are most at risk, we can move our entire community further and faster toward a future of climate justice.

The good news is we have everything we need to succeed. Today, solar, wind, and battery energy storage are not only clean and reliable, but are also the most affordable energy options. Investments in transit, bike, and pedestrian infrastructure will not only reduce emissions, but keep our community healthy. And the investments we need to keep our community safe, like resilience hubs and tree canopies, will strengthen community connections and *resilience*.

Finally, the collaborative model of planning used to create this plan offers us a new way of working with government, frontline communities, and the broader community to co-create the solutions we need. This is our time to work as a community to build the future we need and deserve.

Sincerely,

Climate Justice Plan Steering Committee

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Overview

Artist: CETI Collective

Summary

The Climate Justice Plan (CJP) is rooted in a vision of a just, carbon-free future for everyone in Multnomah County. The plan emerged from deep engagement with *frontline community members* and organizations.[1] This engagement began with the Climate Justice by Design initiative, through which the concept of a community and government co-creation planning process emerged. Co-creation empowered diverse voices, fostered trust, and facilitated long-term relationships, demanding adaptability and a shared commitment to building a stronger community.

Using this process, staff and community members developed a vision and values document, the Climate Justice Framework. Developing the plan involved a steering committee and hundreds of conversations with frontline community members to understand people's lived experience with climate change. This process led to the creation of 12 big-picture goals.

The plan envisions a Multnomah County where *climate justice* is possible, and a community where:

1. Every community member breathes clean and healthy air.
2. Every community member has access to clean water that supports their needs and all living systems.
3. Every community member has access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally specific food and food practices.
4. Every community member has safe, healthy and affordable housing.
5. Every community member has access to wealth-building opportunities and green jobs.
6. Every community member has access to the resources and underlying conditions that promote health and well-being.
7. Every community member is surrounded by and connected to nature, parks, and green infrastructure.
8. Every community member has access to affordable, reliable, and safe transit, biking, and pedestrian infrastructure.
9. Every community member is resilient to extreme weather events and other climate threats.
10. Every community member has access to affordable clean energy.
11. Every community member is safe from the risks posed by fossil fuels and energy infrastructure.
12. Every community member has the opportunity to contribute to climate justice in Multnomah County.

The Climate Justice Plan was further refined through public engagement with a broad swath of interested parties. Outreach included surveys, written comments, in-person events, and community forums. This input was used to create the final version of the plan. See appendix C for the full history.

Each goal has associated strategies that are meant to move the community closer toward the goals in the plan. Progress will be measured using indicators associated with each goal, and will be reported on regularly. In addition, the plan updates Multnomah County's carbon dioxide emissions targets to be in line with the latest science.

Creating a justice-centered plan and implementation strategies necessitates building social connections that strengthen our sense of community. As we continue to strategize and build the community we want to live in, we must be thoughtful about increasing our collective capacity to engage in this work.[2] To that end, the plan is structured to be more than a to-do list for the government. To transform our community, we need a swell of ongoing community engagement and participation. The plan envisions the government and the community working together for a clean and just future for ourselves, our children, and our children's children. This Climate Justice Plan articulates a shared belief that climate justice is possible.

Introduction

The Climate Justice Challenge

The climate crisis presents challenges that have historically not been issues in the Pacific Northwest, like extreme heat, new vector-borne diseases, and the potential for urban conflagrations.* Climate-related extremes also stretch public resources and make addressing existing challenges more difficult and urgent. Existing challenges like income inequality; discrimination based on income, race, age, gender, and sexual orientation; and other systemic injustices are becoming more acute. While many of the impacts of a changed *climate* are already here, the global community's ability to eliminate *fossil fuel* use can still alter our trajectory for the better, and many Multnomah County residents and businesses are eager to do their part.

At the local level, we must concurrently eliminate fossil fuel use while adapting to a warming planet and climate-changed *weather* patterns. Acting on both of these fronts will make huge positive impacts on our community. For example, since a substantial share of chronic exposure to air pollution locally comes from burning fossil fuels, eliminating fossil fuel use will substantially improve air quality, dramatically lowering nitrogen oxide, ozone, fine particulate matter, and benzene concentrations.[3,4]

Making the shift to a more sustainable and just future, however, is not something the government can do alone. In a democratic system, it takes the whole community to make major and lasting changes.

*According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), fires that involve multiple structures are often referred to as conflagrations, while an urban conflagration is a fire that destroys several buildings in built-up areas. In recent years, the combination of extreme heat and extreme drought have led to dangerous conditions during which a fire sparked in a natural area could spread to urban structures with devastating effects.

This Climate Justice Plan is not just for the Multnomah County government – it's a participatory roadmap for everyone who calls Multnomah County home.

A New Approach

The Climate Justice Plan (CJP) starts with the premise and the belief that a better world is possible: a world in which everyone in our community has what they need to thrive, people are safe from the threats of climate change, and we have avoided climate catastrophe by rapidly eliminating fossil fuel use. We envision a community that embraces and celebrates cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity, and that works diligently to eliminate any discrimination based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or other forms of identity-based discrimination — where all individuals feel safe, valued, and respected. We dream of universal access to clean air and water, abundant clean energy and housing, and nearby parks and natural areas where both people and wildlife can co-exist.

This plan is about working together to bring this version of the shared world we all deserve into reality. We can and will meet our challenges today and build a better future.

Collaboration is at the core of this plan. The CJP was developed over several years, with community members and staff from Multnomah County working together to first design a collaborative process, and then use that process to develop and refine this plan.

One of the key principles of the planning process was a shared understanding of expertise. County and organizational staff showed up as both experts and members of this community, and community members showed up as both technical experts and experts in the lived experience of those facing the worst impacts of climate change. The process relied on a consensus approach in which decisions are made together and ideas are refined until everyone feels that the decision is right. This approach required meaningful dialogue and iteration, essential to the creation of a plan that will move the community toward climate justice in a meaningful way.

Environmental justice was also a core value. Environmental justice was defined by Multnomah County Resolution 2018-108 and reads in part:

"Environmental Justice" is the equal protection from and equitable distribution of environmental and health hazards, burdens, and benefits.

- "Environmental Justice" is intrinsically reliant on meaningful public participation in decisions that affect the environment in which people live, work, learn, practice spirituality, and play.
- "Environmental Justice" necessitates that frontline communities receive additional consideration in environmental decision-making due to historical exclusions that have resulted in disparate negative impacts, including but not limited to decreased air quality, access to green space, access to transit, and access to the *renewable energy* economy.

Finalizing the plan involved a bigger group of interested parties. Through surveys, public meetings, community listening sessions, and written comments, staff incorporated feedback to make the plan better through dialogue with utilities, industry, labor, environmental organizations, and interested individuals.





Artist: CETI Collective

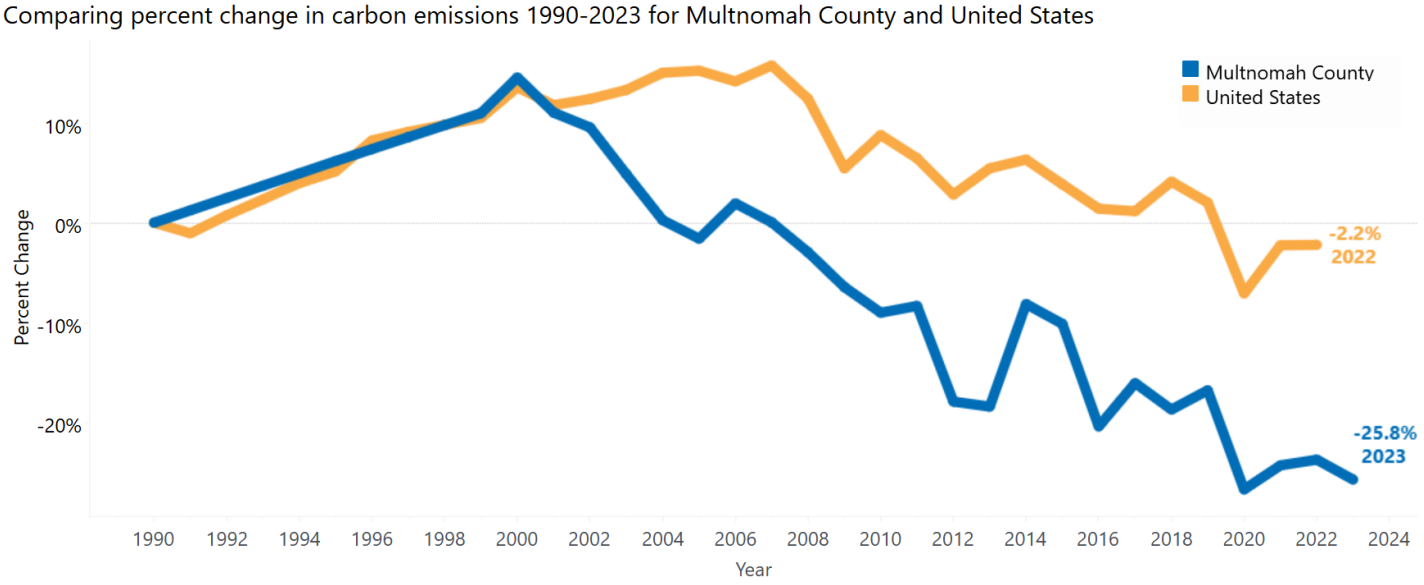
Our pursuit of climate justice will result in a community that benefits from:

- Stable, thriving families and communities
- Improved air quality, water quality, and access to green spaces and healthy homes
- New *green jobs* and support for sustainable economic development
- Enhanced ability to adapt and respond to climate-related disasters

Accelerating progress on reducing *greenhouse gas* emissions and implementing *climate resilience* strategies, while also maintaining a focus on justice, will require the support and buy-in of the community. County staff and elected officials will need to intentionally seek opportunities to partner with community groups, businesses, and other governments. At the same time, community members will need to pursue solutions that fit their needs and circumstances, like local resilience networks that support neighbors in times of crisis. There is room at every level for individual, community, and government action to address the climate crisis, and this plan can bolster the infrastructure to coordinate that response.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Multnomah County and the Impact of Co-pollution

Greenhouse gas emissions in Multnomah County have been tracked since 1990 thanks to the leadership and partnership of City of Portland staff. The 2015 Climate Action Plan (2015 CAP) established goals for community-wide emissions — based on the best scientific understanding of climate change at that time — of 40% below 1990 levels by 2030, and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.



Since tracking began in 1990, Multnomah County emissions peaked in 2000 and have been below 1990 levels since 2007. United States emissions, however, peaked in 2007 and have only been below 1990 levels since 2020.

Emissions of greenhouse gases peaked in Multnomah County in 2000 and have decreased since. Total emissions in Multnomah County in 2023, the year the most recent data is available, were 26% below 1990 baseline levels and 35% below 2000 peak emissions.[5] These are significant reductions and are a little over halfway to meeting the 2030 goal under the 2015 CAP.

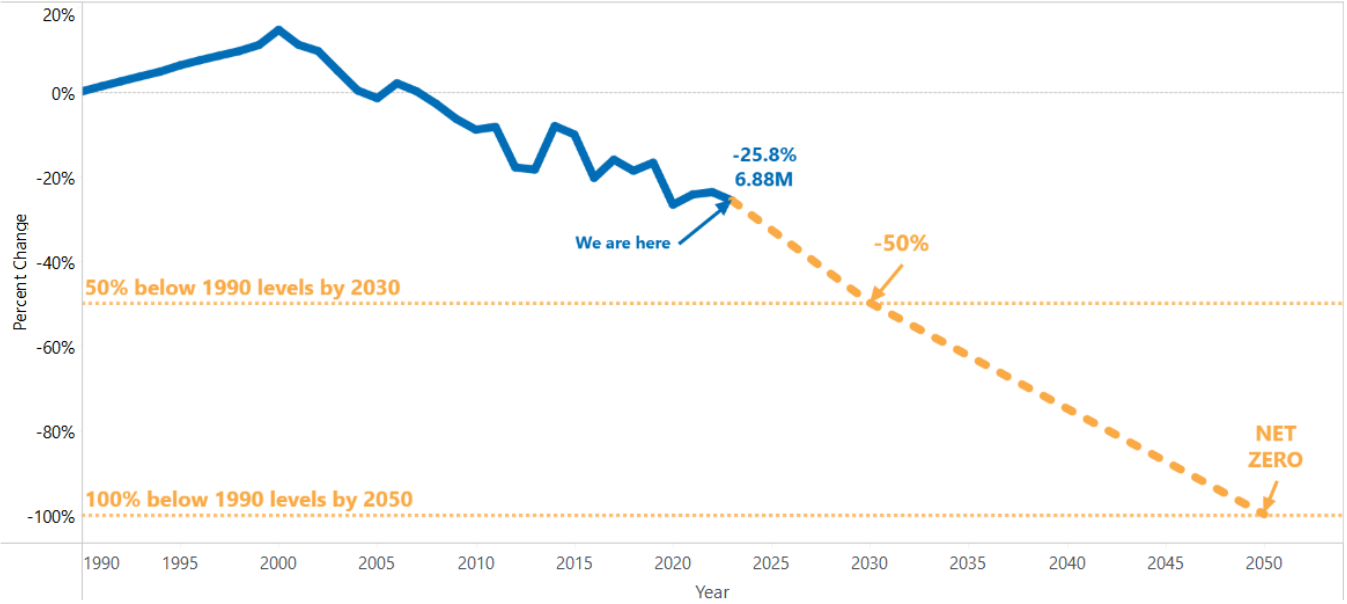
Emissions are 46% below 1990 levels on a per capita basis, showing substantial reductions despite population and economic growth during that period. Three of the four primary sectors responsible for emissions have shown significant reductions: single-family residential, industrial, and commercial. Transportation, the single-largest emissions sector, has shown smaller reductions.

The combustion of fossil fuels in vehicles and homes also presents a major public health threat. Multnomah County residents breathe the dirtiest air in the state and face the highest risk of pollution-related cancer due in large part to the amount of cars, trucks, and trains in this region. The transportation sector, currently powered almost entirely by fossil fuels, creates 40% of Multnomah County's greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, decarbonizing transportation is a critical strategy for improving both the climate and public health.

Average global temperatures between 2015 and 2024 were already approximately 1.24 degrees Celsius warmer than preindustrial averages (1850-1900), and emissions have only continued to rise since.[97] The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that maintaining global temperatures at or below 1.5 degrees Celsius would have required a global peak in emissions in 2025, followed by a reduction of 43% from the peak by 2030, 60% by 2035, and net-zero emissions by 2050. While the planet is very likely to move well beyond those thresholds, every ton of emissions reduction matters to minimize harm.

Similarly, the Oregon Global Warming Commission has recommended the state reduce its emissions 45% below 1990 statewide levels by 2030, 70% below by 2040, and 95% below by 2050. The City of Portland, Multnomah County's close partner in climate action, has adopted an emissions reduction goal of 50% below 1990 levels by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050.

Carbon emission trends in Multnomah compared to adopted emission reduction goals, 50% below 1990 levels by 2030 and net zero emissions in 2050



While progress has been made, Multnomah County will need to take aggressive action to reduce emissions by nearly 3% each year to meet its 2050 goal.

Under the Climate Justice Plan, Multnomah County adopts the goal of reducing community-wide carbon emissions to **50% below 1990 statewide levels by 2030**,

and achieving **net-zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2050**. These goals align with the City of Portland's greenhouse gas commitments.

In addition, the County maintains other climate commitments under its "100x50" Resolution (2017-046), "Fossil Fuel Free Buildings" Resolution (2021-025), and the 2015 Climate Action Plan, including commitments to:

- Achieving 100% clean and renewable sources of energy by 2050.
- Ensuring that at least 2% of community-wide energy needs are met via *community-based renewable energy* infrastructure.
- Eliminating the use of fossil fuels in all Multnomah County operations.

While these goals are ambitious, we believe that these targets are consistent with the scientific imperative to rapidly reduce emissions and with the County's vision for ensuring our community can thrive.

These emissions reduction goals will also be considered within the context of the other goals and values that drive the County's work. While these reduction goals do not specifically address emissions from the consumption of goods and services that are produced outside of Multnomah County, these outside emissions are addressed indirectly by actions throughout the plan.

Fortunately, the County is not alone in this fight to reduce emissions. The City of Portland, the City of Gresham (the largest and fourth-largest cities in Oregon, respectively), and Oregon Metro are strong local partners in this work. In addition, the State of Oregon, through the Governor, State Legislature, and state agencies, has already enacted significant policies and programs that support collective reduction in carbon emissions. These include:

- The Clean Fuels Program (2012 to current), which will reduce the carbon intensity of transportation fuels in Oregon by 37% below a 2015 baseline by 2035.
- HB 2021 (2021), which requires Oregon's largest electric utilities to fully decarbonize their electricity supply by 2040.
- The Climate Protection Program (2024), which requires a declining cap on emissions from fossil fuel use in Oregon at 50% below baseline by 2035 and 90% by 2050.

Collectively, these and other state and national programs will help Multnomah County achieve its local emissions reductions goals. Overall, the state-level policies and programs account for a reduction of roughly 60% of the gap between taking no action and the 2050 climate pollution reduction targets. This means that local actions are needed to fill the remaining 40% of emissions reductions.

Actions taken in Multnomah County, the most populous county in the state, can have a significant impact on both the region's and the state's overall climate trajectories. Multnomah County's commitment to climate justice will help ensure that each of these programs also responds to the current needs of the community while empowering communities' efforts to protect themselves in the face of growing climate impacts.



Navigating the Goals & Strategies

Goals

The Climate Justice Plan (CJP) contains 12 universal goals that together create a guiding constellation of outcomes by which we can chart our course to a stable climate and a more just community. The goals are big-picture ideas we want everyone in our community to experience, and they frame a collective vision for climate justice.

Each goal lays out a facet of our collectively envisioned future state that will benefit everyone in our community. The goals are meant to be self-evidently good — even if achieving them can seem daunting and faraway — so that even partial progress toward reaching them will make the community stronger and healthier. In this way, these goals aim to reflect future states grounded in universal agreement.

1. **Goal:** Lists one of the 12 universal goals.

2. **Description:** Outlines why this goal is important and what impact the subject has had on our community.

3. **How we measure impact:** Specific indicators that will be used to measure progress over time. Some indicators can help us understand overall trends, while others can tell us how certain groups are represented in the data and help track environmental justice impacts. This section includes a description of each indicator, as well as the most recent data for that indicator.

1 **Goal: Every community member breathes clean and healthy air.**

2 Description

Clean air is a fundamental right regardless of one's neighborhood or socioeconomic status. We all have to breathe, but we seldom have a choice in the quality of the air we breathe. Where we live, where we work, and what other people do has a big impact on the quality of the air we are exposed to from day to day.

Air pollution has substantial health impacts that can lead to sickness and even early death. Multnomah County is the most urban county in Oregon and its residents are subject to high pollution exposure from fossil fuel combustion, industry, and even residential and commercial wood burning. These sources of pollution expose people to elevated levels of fine particulate matter (soot), nitrogen oxide, ozone, diesel particulate matter, and other air toxics. Smoke from wildfires, exacerbated by a heating climate, is also an emerging threat resulting in worsening air quality across the U.S. West after decades of improvements.[6]

Air quality is an environmental justice issue. Although air pollution affects everyone in Multnomah County, it puts communities of color at greater risk. Analysis has shown that Black and Latinx communities tend to live in areas with the highest concentrations of diesel particulate matter (a highly toxic soot from diesel engines) and residential wood smoke (which also produces soot and other pollutants).[7,8] Indoor air quality is also impacted from a wide variety of sources — including household cleaners, tobacco use, pets, pests, mold, gas stoves,[9] wood stoves, and dust — and is often less healthy than outdoor air. Elevated levels of carbon monoxide or radon may also pose serious health risks for indoor air quality.



3 How we measure impact

Indicator 1: Number of days that the Air Quality Index is 50 or above, or "moderate (yellow)" level, in Multnomah County.

Description: Think of the Air Quality Index (AQI) as a yardstick that runs from 0 to 500. The higher the AQI value, the greater the level of air pollution and the greater the health concern. AQI is a composite measure of several air pollutants, including particulate matter, nitrogen oxide, and ozone. The desired outcome in Multnomah County is to have zero days with an AQI over 50, also known as "moderate (yellow)" level — the level at which air quality begins to become unhealthy for sensitive populations.

Current data: In recent years, there have been more days with unhealthy- to hazardous-air quality and more frequent consecutive days of poor air quality. In 2024, there were **55 days** when the AQI was 50 or above.

Data source: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Indicator 2: Number of emergency department (ED) or urgent care (UC) visits for breathing-related illness per 100,000 people in Multnomah County, and associated demographic data about those seeking care.

Description: This indicator measures the number of visits to hospital emergency departments and urgent care clinics (ED/UC) made by people with non-infectious respiratory illnesses. The indicator excludes data for respiratory illness caused by communicable disease such as COVID-19 and the common cold.

Current data: After a notable decrease in 2020, ED/UC visits for asthma-like illness have returned to pre-2020 levels in Multnomah County. **In 2024 the rate was 1,732 visits per 100,000 people.** Asthma-like illness ED/UC visitors are more likely to be female, older adults (ages 45-64), and/or Black than other ED/UC patients.

Data source: Regional Climate and Health Dashboard

Strategies

Each goal is assigned supporting strategies; each strategy is meant to advance the community toward the overall goal. Strategies are primarily focused on communities who are presently kept furthest from the goal by systemic inequities and injustices. Strategies may also overlap across goals — each strategy appears only once, associated with one specific goal, even though it may support multiple goals.

We also recognize that inequalities exist in our community, many of which are the result of systemic issues that have disadvantaged certain groups of people, sometimes for decades or centuries. These systemic inequalities, often enforced by the government through laws or practices, will not be solved without deliberate approaches. We cannot achieve climate justice for everyone without being intentional about solving systemic injustices caused by racism and other forms of identity-based discrimination. The CJP asserts that supporting groups furthest from the goal moves the entire community faster and further toward the type of community we want for our future.

1. **Strategy:** Lists a strategy meant to advance the overall goal.

2. **Why does this matter:** A description of the strategy and how it has impacted our community.

3. **Putting this into practice:** In the development of the CJP, community members asked questions about how work on a specific strategy could start. To help demystify the policy making process, this section outlines potential next steps for activating that strategy.

4. **Authorizing Agencies or Lead Department(s):** Identifies the government entities that can take action. Throughout the development of the CJP, community members expressed confusion and concern about what government entities could implement various priorities. The CJP tries to create clarity by identifying the entities that can make change happen.

Authorizing agencies: When authority for a strategy lies outside of Multnomah County's direct jurisdictional control, or when authority/responsibility is mixed or ambiguous, the report identifies potential government bodies that can change laws or implement new policies.

Lead department(s): When a strategy can be led by Multnomah County — in whole or in part — the report identifies a lead department or departments.



1 **Strategy:** Develop nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions standards for gas appliances that are vented to the outdoors.

2 **Why does this matter?**

Natural gas — which is mostly methane, a strong greenhouse gas — produces a variety of pollutants when combusted.* Combustion pollutants include nitrogen oxides (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), trace amounts of sulfur dioxide (SO2), and particulate matter (PM).[15] According to 2020 National Emissions Inventory data for Multnomah County, natural gas contributes approximately 1,197 tons of the anthropogenic NOx pollution in Multnomah County annually (8.6% of the total). Most of those emissions are attributed to residential and commercial space heating, along with water heating and industrial processes, with residential use making up nearly half of the total. Together, use of natural gas represents the third-largest source of NOx in Multnomah County, with the majority coming from on- and off-road diesel equipment and passenger vehicles. Emissions from these other sources are being addressed through pollution control requirements for new vehicles, registration requirements for the tri-county region, and electrification.

In California, the South Coast Air Quality Management District adopted Rule 1146.2 that requires new and existing residential and commercial buildings to transition to zero-emission water heaters. The rule applies to natural gas-fired pool heaters, larger water heaters, small commercial water heaters, boilers, and process heaters, requiring zero-emission NOx standards when the equipment is replaced. Also in California, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District adopted Rules 9-4 and 9-6 that restrict the sale of gas furnaces, water heaters, and boilers. Both air districts anticipate substantial pollution reductions. As with any new regulations, it's important to ensure they are matched with sufficient time, technical assistance, flexibility, and incentives to allow regulated entities to successfully comply.

*Uncombusted gas leaks also pose serious health and safety concerns.

3 **Putting this into practice**

- Study the applicability of similar rules in California to Oregon and Multnomah County.
- Promote non-emitting alternatives for space and water heating.

4 **Authorizing agencies**

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Environmental Quality Commission; Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability

STRATEGY CATEGORY
○ County Strategy
○ Investment Opportunity
● Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE
● Advocate ● Research
○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY
○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL
Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE
Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY
Low Med High

5 **Strategy Category (Ownership Matrix):** Organizes each strategy based on who is best positioned to lead and what resource capacity and constraints exist.

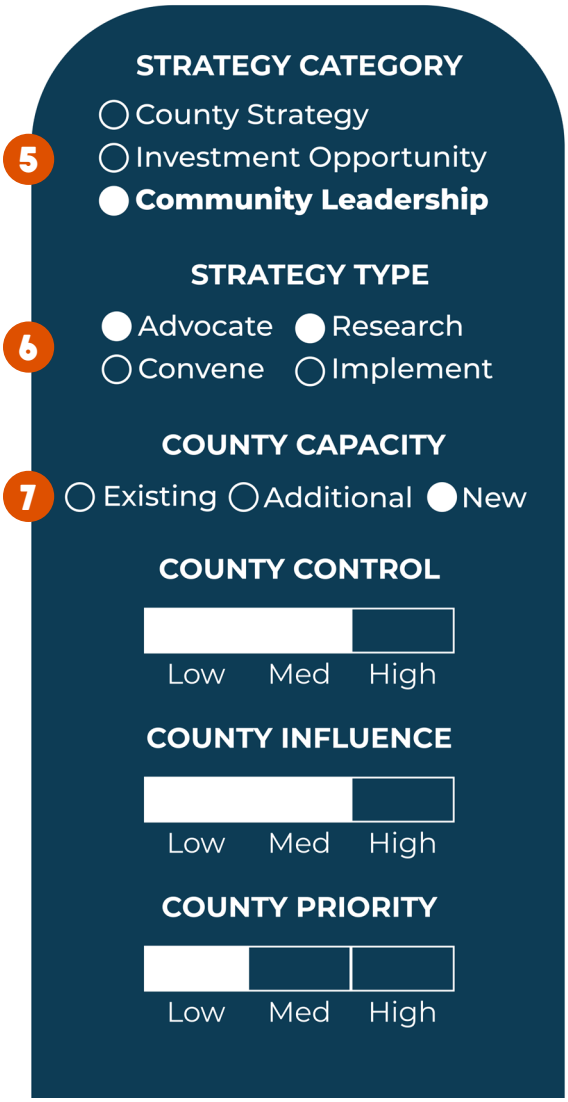
- **County Strategy:** *High County Ownership* — The County is the primary lead with the jurisdiction and/or capacity to execute.
- **Investment Opportunity:** *External Catalyst* — An opportunity that could be led by the County, the community, or another partner but requires an outside catalyst of funding or other support to move forward.
- **Community Leadership:** *Community-led Vision* — The community drives the execution and vision. The County acts as a supportive partner, providing resources and removing institutional barriers when possible.

6 **Strategy Type:** Categorizes the type(s) of tool(s) that can be used to advance a strategy.

- **Advocate:** Deploying legislative presence to lobby state/federal entities to pass legislation or remove legislative barriers.
- **Convene:** Operating as a regional anchor to assemble community partners, private industries, and cross-sector advocates.
- **Research:** Engaging in data gathering, community storytelling, and feasibility studies to resolve design uncertainties.
- **Implement:** Direct operational rollout using County infrastructure, staff execution, and dedicated institutional funding.

7 **County Capacity:** Assesses the internal County capacity to move a strategy forward, including staffing levels, in-house technical knowledge, administrative bandwidth, and existing capital budgets.

- **Existing:** The policy directive can be completely handled within current staffing levels and resource baselines.
- **Additional:** The policy directive requires targeted resource expansions or minor budget scaling to properly execute the scope.
- **New:** The policy directive demands entirely fresh funding sources or grant funds, or the creation of brand new programs.



8 **County Control:** Measures the level of direct decision-making authority held by Multnomah County. This dimension defines whether the County can immediately mandate an outcome or if it is constrained by external legal boundaries.

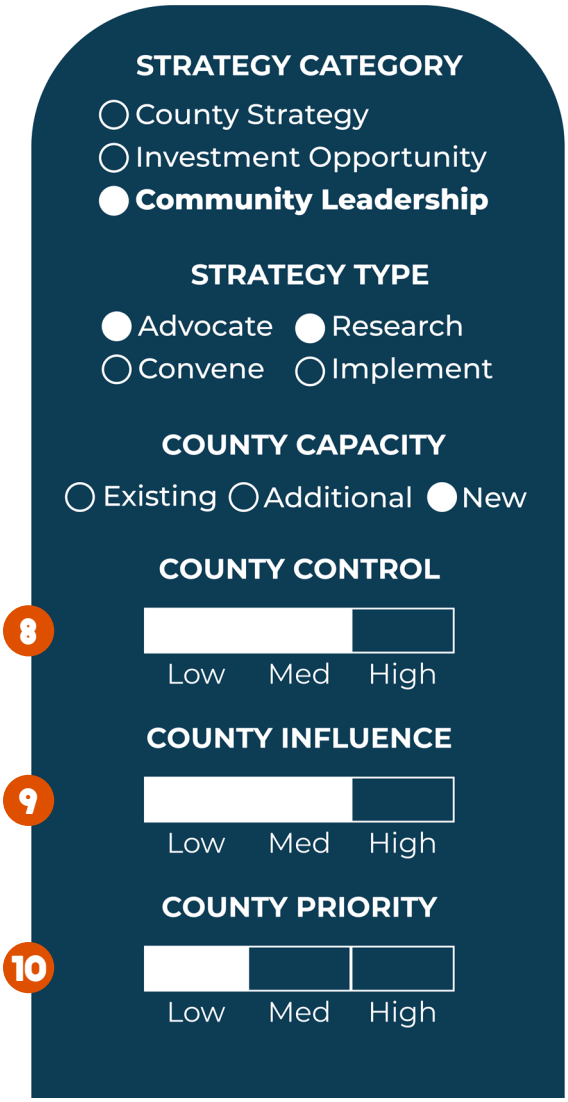
- **High:** The County possesses well-established legal authority or operational jurisdiction, or already heavily regulates the target program area.
- **Medium (Med):** There is shared or overlapping jurisdiction with municipal, regional, or state bodies, requiring multi-agency collaboration.
- **Low:** Indicates legal preemption by state or federal governments, limiting the County's capacity to directly legislate.

9 **County Influence:** Assesses the County's levered potential to persuade, incentivize, or spearhead alignments with external decision-makers (such as the state and *local governments*, private industry, and community partners).

- **High:** The County is already a leader, with powerful regional leverage and strong advocacy ties.
- **Medium (Med):** Moderate partnership capacity; depends heavily on voluntary regional coordination or coalition building.
- **Low:** Extremely limited external leverage or alignment options with third-party stakeholders.

10 **County Priority:** Evaluates how cohesively an advocated strategy builds upon current strategic frameworks, mission statements, departmental mandates, or already-established Board goals within Multnomah County operations. *The level of county priority does not reflect the value or importance of the strategy to the community.*

- **High:** Fully maps onto existing department plans, budget narratives, strategic plans, or Board resolutions.
- **Medium (Med):** Tangentially fits current operational tracks, requiring slight scope expansions of existing programs.
- **Low:** Completely novel operational focus that strays outside the currently established County focus areas.



County Strategies

The CJP is a shared community and County plan, but, to provide transparency and acknowledge limitations, 24 of the 75 strategies in the plan were identified as *County Strategies*. Multnomah County remains committed to supporting all of the strategies in the CJP, but takes ownership of each of the strategies identified as *County Strategies*. For reference, each of these strategies are listed here along with their associated goal.

Goal	Strategy
Air Quality	Improve indoor air quality through public health education and by increasing access to air cleaners.
Air Quality	Maintain a robust residential wood burning curtailment program.
Water	Promote pollution prevention programs that will reduce pollution in area waterways.
Water	Address Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) in the Lower Willamette River.
Water	Prioritize and fund the removal of culverts that block fish passage.
Housing	Implement the Homelessness Response Action Plan.
Housing	Increase housing supply and promote walkable, mixed use communities.
Wealth & Jobs	Support good green jobs in procurement & policy by prioritizing a skilled and trained workforce.
Health	Implement the Climate and Health Resilience Plan.
Health	Partner with health care providers to identify diagnosis, treatment, and prevention options for emerging climate related health threats.
Transportation	Work with all county jurisdictions to implement a safe-systems approach to the transportation system.
Transportation	Implement the Urban East County Transportation Safety Plan.



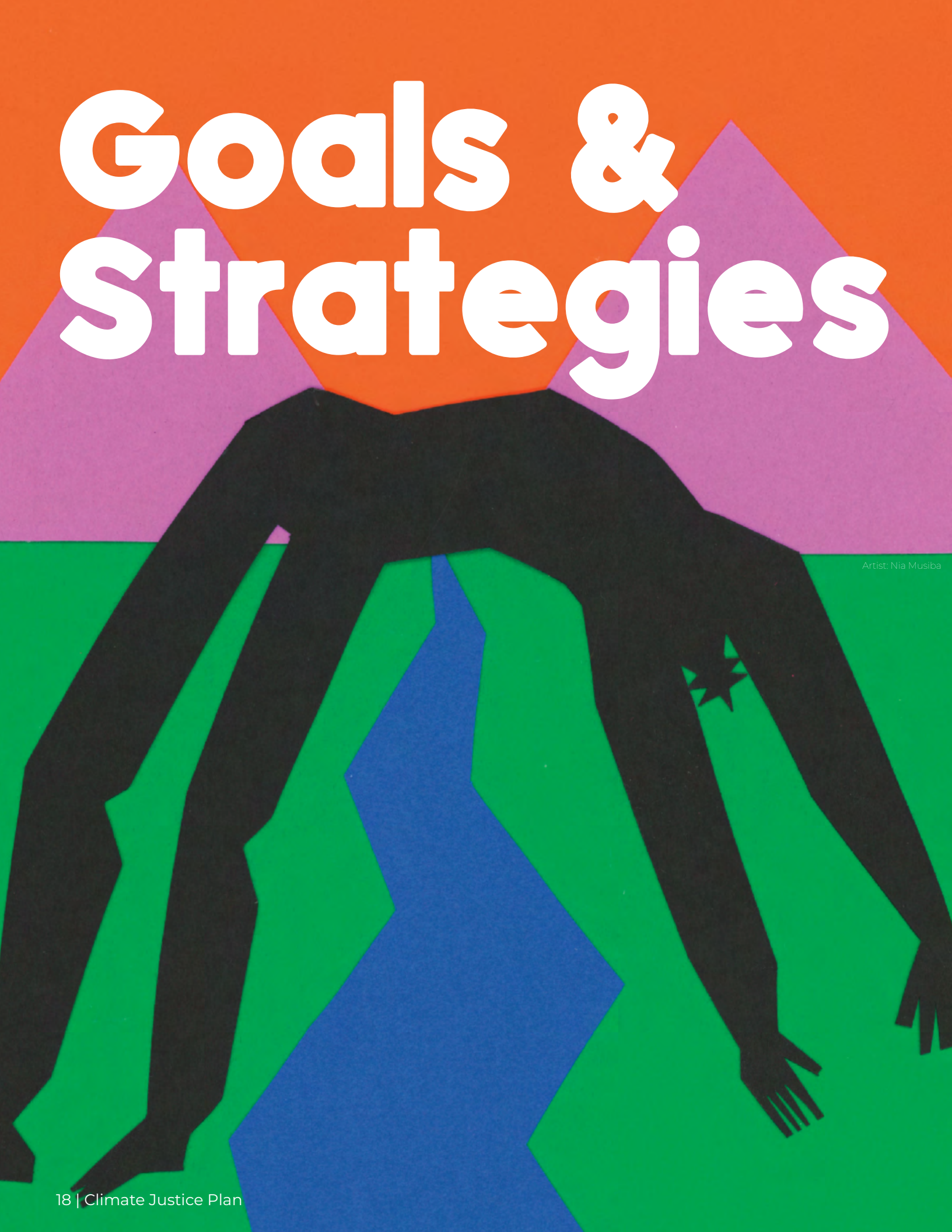


Artist: Nia Musiba

County Strategies (continued)

Goal	Strategy
Extreme Weather	Support green building practices that create more climate resilient homes.
Extreme Weather	Participate in a working group to understand urban conflagration risk and raise awareness on prevention.
Extreme Weather	Expand culturally specific outreach before and during extreme weather to ensure everyone in the community knows how to stay safe.
Clean Energy	Decarbonize Multnomah County operations and strengthen the resilience of County infrastructure.
Clean Energy	Support rate setting processes that better consider affordability and other residential customers' interests, including limiting rate increases.
Clean Energy	Strengthen policies and programs that reduce disconnections and energy burden for low-income people of Multnomah County, and expand accessibility to these programs by reducing barriers and expanding robust outreach to eligible communities.
Clean Energy	Support efforts to accelerate strategic electrification in buildings.
Clean Energy	Engage in policy conversations related to achieving clean energy goals while maintaining reliability and affordability.
Clean Energy	Support efforts by environmental justice communities to influence decision-makers on energy rates and other energy-related policy issues.
Fossil Fuels	Regulate liquid fuel storage facilities not currently covered by the DEQ Fuel Tank Seismic Stability Program.
Contribute	Ensure Climate Justice Plan implementation is accountable and transparent to the community.
Contribute	Support the development of a community-led data ecosystem to inform County policy and decision-making.
Contribute	Explore partnership opportunities to support community-based organizations in climate justice planning and implementation.

Goals & Strategies



Artist: Nia Musiba



Air Quality

Every community member breathes clean and healthy air

Goal: Every community member breathes clean and healthy air.

Description

Clean air is a fundamental right regardless of one's neighborhood or socioeconomic status. We all have to breathe, but we seldom have a choice in the quality of the air we breathe. Where we live, where we work, and what other people do has a big impact on the quality of the air we are exposed to from day to day.

Air pollution has substantial health impacts that can lead to sickness and even early death. Multnomah County is the most urban county in Oregon and its residents are subject to high pollution exposure from fossil fuel combustion, industry, and even residential and commercial wood burning. These sources of pollution expose people to elevated levels of fine particulate matter (soot), nitrogen oxide, ozone, diesel particulate matter, and other air toxics. Smoke from wildfires, exacerbated by a heating climate, is also an emerging threat resulting in worsening air quality across the U.S. West after decades of improvements.[6]

Air quality is an environmental justice issue. Although air pollution affects everyone in Multnomah County, it puts communities of color at greater risk. Analysis has shown that Black and Latinx communities tend to live in areas with the highest concentrations of diesel particulate matter (a highly toxic soot from diesel engines) and residential wood smoke (which also produces soot and other pollutants).[7,8] Indoor air quality is also impacted from a wide variety of sources — including household cleaners, tobacco use, pets, pests, mold, gas stoves,[9] wood stoves, and dust — and is often less healthy than outdoor air. Elevated levels of carbon monoxide or radon may also pose serious health risks for indoor air quality.



How we measure impact

Indicator 1: Number of days that the Air Quality Index is 50 or above, or "moderate (yellow)" level, in Multnomah County.

Description: Think of the Air Quality Index (AQI) as a yardstick that runs from 0 to 500. The higher the AQI value, the greater the level of air pollution and the greater the health concern. AQI is a composite measure of several air pollutants, including particulate matter, nitrogen oxide, and ozone. The desired outcome in Multnomah County is to have zero days with an AQI over 50, also known as "moderate (yellow)" level — the level at which air quality begins to become unhealthy for sensitive populations.

Current data: In recent years, there have been more days with unhealthy- to hazardous-air quality and more frequent consecutive days of poor air quality. In 2024, there were **55 days** when the AQI was 50 or above.

Data source: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Indicator 2: Number of emergency department (ED) or urgent care (UC) visits for breathing-related illness per 100,000 people in Multnomah County, and associated demographic data about those seeking care.

Description: This indicator measures the number of visits to hospital emergency departments and urgent care clinics (ED/UC) made by people with non-infectious respiratory illnesses. The indicator excludes data for respiratory illness caused by communicable disease such as COVID-19 and the common cold.

Current data: After a notable decrease in 2020, ED/UC visits for asthma-like illness have returned to pre-2020 levels in Multnomah County. **In 2024 the rate was 1,732 visits per 100,000 people.** Asthma-like illness ED/UC visitors are more likely to be female, older adults (ages 45-64), and/or Black than other ED/UC patients.

Data source: Regional Climate and Health Dashboard



Strategy 1: Improve indoor air quality through public health education and by increasing access to air cleaners.

Why does this matter?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Americans spend about 90% of their time indoors, and some pollutants can be 2 to 5 times higher than typical outdoor concentrations.[10] Exposure to unhealthy indoor air quality is particularly harmful to those who may be more vulnerable, such as children, the elderly, and people with health conditions like asthma and heart disease. Indoor air quality is affected by a wide variety of sources — including household cleaners, tobacco use, pets, pests, mold, gas stoves, wood stoves, and dust — and is often less healthy than outdoor air.[11] Outdoor air can also worsen indoor air quality, particularly if outdoor air has high levels of pollution, like during a wildfire.

Knowing how to maintain healthy indoor air is important, particularly as wildfires and wildfire smoke become a more common occurrence. Indoor air cleaners (filters), mechanical ventilation with proper filtration, and behavior change can dramatically improve indoor air quality.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ● Research
- ● Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE



Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY



Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Develop outreach materials to help households improve indoor air quality.
- Develop partnerships with providers, community organizations, child care facilities, and industries for distribution of air cleaning devices and education.
- Identify service gaps and necessary data to improve future air cleaner distribution and outreach.
- Research viability of safety labels for indoor combustion appliances.

Lead department(s)

Health Department, Environmental Health Division; Office of Sustainability

Strategy 2: Maintain a robust residential wood burning curtailment program.

Why does this matter?

Smoke from residential fires for heating and ambiance is a leading cause of particulate pollution in Multnomah County. Residential wood burning is responsible for thousands of premature deaths in the U.S. and contributes to climate change through the release of radiation absorbing carbonaceous aerosols and carbon dioxide. Burning wood is harmful to health because the smoke releases a complex mixture of toxic gases and microscopic particles that easily enter the lungs and bloodstream. The primary dangers are fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and hazardous air pollutants that can trigger both short-term respiratory issues and long-term chronic diseases.[12] Implementing the County's wood smoke ordinance is central to a broad suite of strategies that reduce harmful air pollutants. The regulations exist to protect vulnerable populations, prevent federal air quality violations, and reduce longstanding environmental health disparities. This strategy is most effective when enforcement is paired with outreach and education.

Putting this into practice

- Continue daily advisories and enforcement.
- Broaden outreach and education.
- Strengthen the ordinance over time to adapt to changing conditions and scientific knowledge.

Lead department(s)

Health Department



STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate ○ Research
- ○ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 3: Develop pollution control regulations for businesses that burn wood.

Why does this matter?

Using wood to cook is as old as humanity, but burning wood produces harmful pollution, including soot, nitrogen oxide, formaldehyde, and greenhouse gases, that impacts the surrounding community.[13] Multnomah County has restrictions in place for residential wood combustion that prevent the use of wood burning on days when air quality is forecast to be unhealthy.[14] Outdoor burning is also limited by the fire marshal if wildfire danger is high.

Some businesses use wood for heat, cooking, or ambiance. A restaurant that uses wood for cooking five to seven days a week, for example, creates significant localized air pollution. Wood burning can also be used as fuel for recreational heat or ambience, such as wood fired sauna businesses. Air filters can help capture and reduce that pollution in some cases, and in other cases wood burning should be avoided altogether, especially on air stagnation days.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

◯ Advocate ● Research
● Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Study the impact of commercial wood smoke, determine the impact of that pollution on public health, investigate potential technologies to address that pollution, and propose regulations that can be implemented at the state or local level.
- Research best practices for amending the existing wood smoke ordinance.
- Conduct outreach and engagement with the restaurant industry.
- Develop pilot programs to fund pollution controls at restaurants.

Lead department(s)

Health Department, Environmental Health Division; Office of Sustainability





Strategy 4: Support community-led air quality monitoring and invest in air quality outreach and education.

Why does this matter?

Community groups, both in Multnomah County and nationally, have grown more interested in developing community-based air quality monitoring networks. While the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality maintains a reliable network of air quality sensors, that network measures background, or ambient, levels of pollution and can't always detect more localized air quality problems. Technological advances have also increased the availability of accurate, lower-cost air quality sensors. In recent years, local groups like the Blueprint Foundation have developed youth education curricula that include building and deploying low-cost air quality sensors. These types of efforts can help communities feel more connected to what is often an invisible problem and develop their own solutions. In addition, localized sensor networks can detect issues that may otherwise be overlooked.

Putting this into practice

- Develop partnerships with community-based organizations to pursue grant funding to deploy an air quality sensor network and conduct research on community impacts and solutions.
- Support efforts to develop community-based outreach and education tools on air quality issues, as well as opportunities to involve the community in data collection (including qualitative data) that can identify sources and solutions to localized air quality issues.

Lead department(s)

Health Department, Environmental Health Division; Office of Sustainability



STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 5: Develop policy for protecting vulnerable communities from nearby sources of pollution.

Why does this matter?

Many people in Multnomah County live in areas that are close to sources of air pollution. These can include transportation corridors, industrial sites, and freight hubs, like warehouses. Proximity to persistent sources of air pollution can have a negative impact on health and lead to environmental justice disparities at the community level. While some policy tools exist for addressing these sources of pollution — like air quality permits for fixed sources of pollution and pollution control standards for new mobile sources like trucks — these policies can fall short for nearby communities.

Advocacy coalitions have proposed strategies that would protect communities from new and existing pollution sources in their neighborhoods. For example, a proposed addition of environmental justice criteria to land use and siting decisions would provide the opportunity to give more consideration to newer sources of pollution, like warehouses or data centers. Another strategy is called "indirect source rules" through which freight hubs that create excess pollution from mobile source diesel engines are required to adopt to minimize pollution. These and other strategies could add substantial public health protections for Multnomah County residents.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ● Research
- ● Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Investigate the use of indirect source rules and environmental justice land use screens in other jurisdictions, and evaluate the applicability in Oregon and/or Multnomah County. Estimate the pollution reduction and environmental justice benefits from applying these tools locally.
- Develop more detailed knowledge of the air quality impacts of existing pollution sources that are not currently regulated by clean air rules.
- Continue community-centered coalition work to increase the awareness of air quality issues and build toward policy solutions.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Environmental Quality Commission; Oregon Department of Environmental Quality



Strategy 6: Develop nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions standards for gas appliances that are vented to the outdoors.

Why does this matter?

Natural gas — which is mostly methane, a strong greenhouse gas — produces a variety of pollutants when combusted.* Combustion pollutants include nitrogen oxides (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), trace amounts of sulfur dioxide (SO_2), and particulate matter (PM).[15] According to 2020 National Emissions Inventory data for Multnomah County, natural gas contributes approximately 1,197 tons of the anthropogenic NOx pollution in Multnomah County annually (8.6% of the total). Most of those emissions are attributed to residential and commercial space heating, along with water heating and industrial processes, with residential use making up nearly half of the total. Together, use of natural gas represents the third-largest source of NOx in Multnomah County, with the majority coming from on- and off-road diesel equipment and passenger vehicles. Emissions from these other sources are being addressed through pollution control requirements for new vehicles, registration requirements for the tri-county region, and electrification.

In California, the South Coast Air Quality Management District adopted Rule 1146.2 that requires new and existing residential and commercial buildings to transition to zero-emission water heaters. The rule applies to natural gas-fired pool heaters, larger water heaters, small commercial water heaters, boilers, and process heaters, requiring zero-emission NOx standards when the equipment is replaced. Also in California, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District adopted Rules 9-4 and 9-6 that restrict the sale of gas furnaces, water heaters, and boilers. Both air districts anticipate substantial pollution reductions. As with any new regulations, it's important to ensure they are matched with sufficient time, technical assistance, flexibility, and incentives to allow regulated entities to successfully comply.

*Uncombusted gas leaks also pose serious health and safety concerns.

Putting this into practice

- Study the applicability of similar rules in California to Oregon and Multnomah County.
- Promote non-emitting alternatives for space and water heating.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Environmental Quality Commission; Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ● Research
- ○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY





Water

Every community member has access to clean water that supports their needs and all living systems



Goal: Every community member has access to clean water that supports their needs and all living systems.

Description

Equitable access to clean water is a pillar of climate justice. Clean water isn't just a basic human right — it's essential for healthy communities and thriving ecosystems. It fuels public health, fosters well-being and safeguards the natural world. Multnomah County is blessed with incredible water resources, including world class drinking water, aquatic ecosystems, and water-based recreational opportunities. This goal goes beyond drinking water and encompasses clean rivers, streams, and lakes for swimming, fishing, and the overall health of the ecosystem on which we depend.

Climate change, however, intensifies existing water challenges, like controlling stormwater pollution, aiding in the recovery of endangered fish, and restoring ecosystems. Rising temperatures in Oregon are causing a shift from snow to rain, leading to a diminished mountain snowpack and earlier spring melts. This transition results in higher winter flood risks and snow drought conditions that also increase fire risk at higher elevations and decrease summer stream flows. These lower summer flows, combined with heat, raise water temperatures to levels that threaten aquatic species and increase the frequency of toxic algal blooms. Lower stream flows could also diminish the energy output of hydroelectric dams. Furthermore, intensified wildfire activity increasingly compromises water quality by increasing the possibility of post-fire sediment and ash washing into municipal watersheds and treatment systems.[16]

Work is already underway to address some of these threats, but more needs to be done to preserve and enhance this most precious of life-giving resources.

How we measure progress

Indicator 1: Number of days in the year when bacteria or harmful algal bloom levels close the Lower Willamette River to swimming.

Description: The City of Portland and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality measure E. coli and cyanobacteria (harmful algal blooms, or HABs), respectively. These measures are necessary to protect public health and ensure humans and their dog companions don't get sick from swimming. These data are monitored continuously or seasonally depending on the location.

Current data: 0 days of harmful algal bloom (HAB) advisory on the Lower Willamette River in 2025

Data source: Oregon Health Authority, Recreational Cyano-HAB Advisory Archive

Indicator 2: Columbia Slough Watershed Report Card.

Description: The Columbia Slough Watershed is a highly urbanized waterway that has been the focus of advocacy and restoration work for many years. It also transects many of the most diverse neighborhoods in Multnomah County and provides an access point for urban natural lands. The Bureau of Environmental Services maintains watershed report cards for six urban watersheds in Portland. The report card — updated every four years — summarizes a holistic suite of watershed health indicators.

Current data:
Columbia Slough Watershed Report Card

- Water Quality Score: B-
- Habitat Score: D-
- Hydrology Score: B-
- Fish and Wildlife Score: D-

Data source: City of Portland Watershed Report Card

Strategy 1: Promote pollution prevention programs that will reduce pollution in area waterways.

Why does this matter?

Overuse of pesticides and herbicides is common in urban and suburban areas. Chemical weed killers used to create a "perfect" lawn can cause harm to humans, wildlife, and native fish species if chemicals reach streams because of stormwater runoff. Some chemical insecticides harm pollinators. Other pollutants like motor oil, litter, and fertilizers also have negative impacts on aquatic ecosystems.

Public outreach efforts like "Follow the Water" and "The River Starts Here" help people understand that their choices impact water quality. Public policies like pesticide bans also play an important role in protecting people and wildlife. Municipal agencies should expand partnerships and funding for outreach and education, and explore regulations to prevent the sale or use of especially harmful chemicals.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ○ Research
- ○ Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



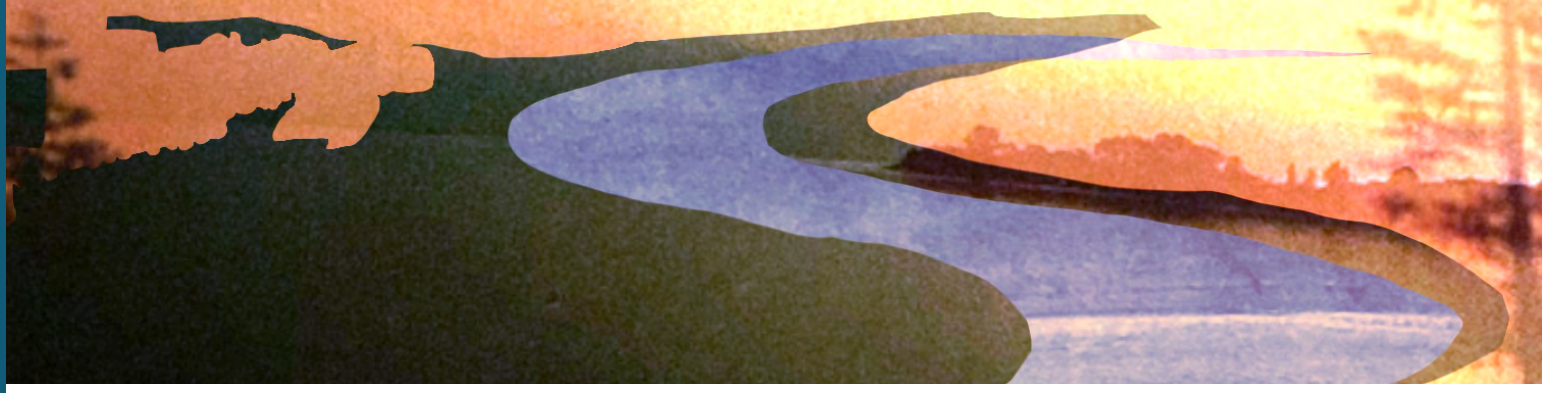
Putting this into practice

- Support "The River Starts Here" and "Follow the Water" campaigns.
- Explore opportunities to limit the use of harmful pesticides and herbicides, particularly in the context of untrained applicators.

Lead department(s)

Department of Community Services





Artist: CETI Collective

Strategy 2: Address Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) in the Lower Willamette River.

Why does this matter?

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) tend to occur in warm water with low water circulation — runoff containing fertilizers also plays a role. Climate change is increasing water temperatures; with higher water temperatures, areas like Ross Island Lagoon in the Lower Willamette River — created by mining activity — are becoming a frequent source of HABs during the summer months, at times closing the river to recreation.

Improved monitoring and public communication are helping to protect people and pets from harm, but solutions can be found for specific, known problem areas like Ross Island Lagoon. Restoring flushing channels to allow the river to flow through the lagoon would address the major source of HABs in the Lower Willamette River. In other problem areas, like Oaks Bottom Nature area, solutions may be less obvious but could include controlling polluted runoff and other treatments.

Implementing solutions, however, is complicated, for many reasons, including mixed ownership, overlapping regulatory responsibilities, and permitting and funding. Coordination and engagement between community-based groups, regulators, and state and local governments are needed to ensure equitable, science-based solutions are implemented.

Putting this into practice

- Host annual Lower Willamette River HAB convening to bring together interested parties with a focus on science and solutions.
- Continue the collaboration with Oregon State University to develop mixing channel design for Ross Island.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ● Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Strategy 3: Prioritize and fund the removal of culverts that block fish passage.

Why does this matter?

Culverts are a legacy of road construction practices from the mid-20th century that did not consider infrastructure impacts on migratory fish like salmon. These fish may have difficulty jumping upstream into, or swimming through, a culvert pipe if the water is flowing too fast.

Culvert replacement projects are both costly and time-consuming and should be prioritized based on the greatest habitat restoration potential. Multnomah County has received funding to replace the final major fish barrier culvert on Beaver Creek. As that project is completed, the County should prioritize other culverts that have created barriers for fish, especially when the culvert is in danger of failing. There are over 300 instream culverts on County roads, although not all of these culverts present challenges to fish.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate ○ Research
- ○ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Complete Troutdale Road culvert replacement project.
- Identify future priority projects and develop funding strategies.

Lead department(s)

Department of Community Services



Strategy 4: Prepare residents for prolonged drinking water disruptions.

Why does this matter?

Water access will be disrupted for a prolonged period by the *Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake*, while other natural disasters like wildfires, droughts, and floods also pose a risk to drinking water. An emergency water supply is critical for personal preparation. The recommendation is that each household have a two-week supply of stored water: 1 gallon of water per person per day, for 14 days. Community points of emergency water access should also be encouraged and distributed throughout the county. While Multnomah County is not a water provider, it works with a number of water providers to help coordinate emergency access and readiness. By investing in educational resources, the County can help bridge the gap between individual readiness and community-level action during a drinking water disruption.

Putting this into practice

- Conduct asset mapping of existing emergency water resources, including high-capacity filtration systems and emergency water sources, to identify and bridge service gaps.
- Collaborate with the Regional Water Providers Consortium to align preparedness strategies and long-term resilience planning across jurisdictional lines.
- Develop and deploy culturally specific education campaigns on household water storage to communities who face barriers to traditional emergency communications.

Lead department(s)

Office of Emergency Management



STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

◯ Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 5: Reduce impact of 6PPD-Quinone in area rivers.

Why does this matter?

6PPD is a chemical used in the production of car tires. Tire wear particles that are created by normal use can be transported into local waterways through stormwater runoff. When 6PPD comes into contact with ozone, it forms 6PPD-Quinone (6PPD-Q), a compound that is toxic to coho salmon and cutthroat trout at extremely low concentrations. 6PPD has been conclusively linked to endangered coho salmon death. Finding non-toxic alternatives to 6PPD is vital to protecting coho runs, particularly in urban areas like Multnomah County. Multnomah County should continue to convene a 6PPD work group and look for advocacy opportunities at the state or federal level to promote the use of inert chemicals in tires.

At the same time, the County can reduce the impact of 6PPD by constructing stormwater treatment facilities on County-owned roadways. Options include permeable pavements, bioswales, and other best management practices that filter stormwater.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ● **Investment Opportunity**
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate
- ● Research
- ● Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Participate in Oregon 6PPD-Q work group.
- As funding allows, add additional stormwater treatment to County roadways where stormwater drains to a salmon-bearing waterway.
- As funding and capacity allows, promote practices that reduce tirewear, like driving less and checking tire air pressure.

Authorizing agencies

Department of Environmental Quality; Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Lead department(s)

Department of Community Services; Office of Sustainability





Strategy 6: Work with community partners and water districts to develop water affordability indicators.

Why does this matter?

Water bills — including drinking water, sewer, and stormwater utility charges — can be a substantial burden to low-income households. While these services are indispensable for public and household health, and necessary precursors for a thriving community, many households struggle to pay their water bills. Nationally, 20% of households have outstanding arrearages or were in debt to their water utility.[17] This may be especially true locally as upward pressure on water bills continues to mount due to needed infrastructure investments. Currently, there is no established measure of so-called "water burden" nationally or in Oregon.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), both qualitative definitions and quantitative measurements of water affordability can be useful in evaluating the water burden faced by different communities. The County can explore, with water utility partners, appropriate measures of water burden and track those measures over time with the aim of reducing impacts, especially on those households that struggle the most to keep up with water bills.

Putting this into practice

- Establish a working group to determine the best approaches for measuring water burden.
- Develop a reproducible methodology for tracking water burden over time, ideally disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and other demographic factors.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability



STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

◯ Advocate ● Research
● Convene ◯ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 7: Connect residents to safe, accessible swimming areas within local waterways, especially in places that are accessible by active or public transit, and partner to enhance those areas when possible.

Why does this matter?

The Willamette, Columbia, and Sandy rivers offer incredible recreational opportunities. Urban swimming is a climate *adaptation* strategy, particularly for people who can't drive to places outside the urban core, allowing people to cool off on the hottest days.

The Willamette River is especially important for swimming because it's accessible by public transit. Access to swimming in the Willamette River has become easier with the addition of ladders to floating docks and beach cleanups. This work needs to continue, ensuring that beaches and other swimming areas remain accessible to people of all abilities and can be accessed via public transit.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ● Research
- ● Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Safety, however, is key. Providing seasonal lifeguards at popular riverside swimming areas and promoting awareness of water safety practices, like using personal flotation devices, will help promote the safe use of water recreation resources.

Putting this into practice

- Designate official swimming areas along Willamette, Columbia, and Sandy rivers, and ensure those locations have personal flotation devices that can be accessed by users of all ability levels.
- Promote seasonal awareness of water safety and ensure some designated swimming areas have lifeguards.

Authorizing agencies

City of Portland Parks & Recreation; Oregon Metro; Soil and Water Conservation Districts



Strategy 8: Work toward drinking water, storm water, and sewer utility affordability measures, including ensuring that eligible customers are aware of programs that can reduce their bills and bill assistance programs.

Why does this matter?

Water can be among the most expensive utilities people have to pay for. Water utility bills include drinking water, sewer, and stormwater utility charges. Water agencies, potentially with the help of community-based organization partners, should educate customers on the water system, how to read bills, and ways to conserve water and save money.

Every city in Multnomah County offers water utility discount programs. Making sure residents know about the programs and can access them when needed will require navigation assistance and coordination. Service providers, community-based organizations, schools, and health clinics should all be equipped to help residents access these programs. Multnomah County, through its utility assistance program, already coordinates emergency bill assistance programs for Portland Water Bureau and could become a central clearinghouse for information on similar programs.

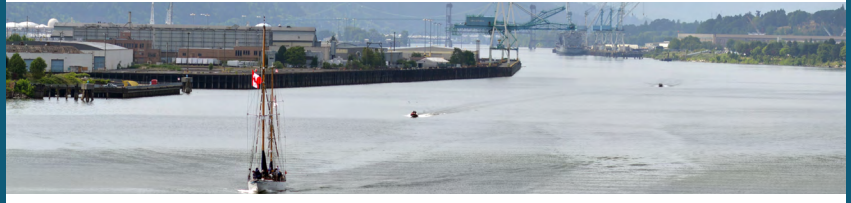
Residents may be unaware of other programs that can help reduce bills and protect the environment, like bill discounts for downspout disconnection and tree planting. Access to clean water is a human right, a public good, and vital to public health, so cost should never be a barrier.

Putting this into practice

- Work with the Regional Water Providers Consortium to coordinate information on utility bill discount programs, emergency bill assistance, and other incentives. Create a central clearinghouse of information on these programs in each jurisdiction and ensure information is accessible in multiple languages.
- Work with Regional Water Providers Consortium to ensure social service providers can easily access bill discount and assistance information to help their clients access these programs.

Authorizing agencies

Water districts in Multnomah County



STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
◯ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ◯ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 9: Increase swimming and water safety education for youth, prioritizing those with the least access to basic swimming skills and opportunities to practice.

Why does this matter?

Although drowning is preventable, it is one of the three leading causes of unintentional injury and death among persons aged 29 years or younger.[18] Access to swim lessons and neighborhood pools is key to developing water safety skills. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Black children aged 10-14 years drown in swimming pools at rates over seven times higher than white children. North and Northeast Portland, home to many Black residents, lack access to swimming facilities and swim lessons. Investing in facilities and lessons is critical, especially as extreme heat makes swimming an important adaptive strategy for staying cool.

Going forward, summers in Multnomah County will be hotter than in past decades, with more days over 90 degrees Fahrenheit on average. Swimming, and access to safe places to swim, will become an increasingly important adaptive strategy for staying cool and coping with heat. Without deliberate effort, national patterns in disproportionate death and injury from drowning are likely to persist in Multnomah County.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ● Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low | Med | High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low | Med | High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low | Med | High

Putting this into practice

- Increase the general availability of youth swimming lessons and promote culturally specific swimming lesson outreach and programming to populations at highest risk.
- Analyze proximity to public pools and availability of swim lessons in Multnomah County to determine areas with lower access.

Authorizing agencies

City of Portland Parks & Recreation



Strategy 10: Clean and restore the Lower Willamette River and surrounding land.

Why does this matter?

The Lower Willamette River — the area that runs through Portland north of the Fremont Bridge — is contaminated by the legacy of industrial uses along the river. The area is listed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a *Superfund site*; the planning for a cleanup of contaminated sediments has been in process for over 20 years. Organizations like the Portland Harbor Community Coalition have been pushing for an equitable and thorough cleanup of the river while minimizing harm to frontline communities who live near the cleanup.

The full scope of impacts from the cleanup extend beyond the river itself. Air quality, public health, and safety for local communities and people living along transportation corridors or near the disposal site intended for the waste are also important considerations. Cost is a major factor — with most cleanup costs stemming from the transport of sediment to faraway disposal sites — especially because cleanup is funded in part by local water utility ratepayers and taxes. Advocacy organizations like Verde and Neighbors for Clean Air are advancing alternatives that could significantly reduce costs and environmental and safety burdens as much as possible.

Putting this into practice

- Support community-led efforts for a fair and just cleanup of the Lower Willamette River.
- Support efforts to minimize impacts of the cleanup on impacted communities.

Authorizing agencies

Environmental Protection Agency

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
◯ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ◯ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

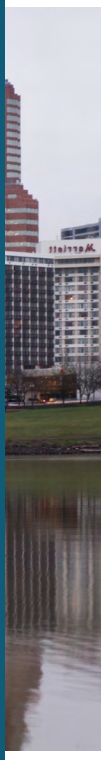
COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High





Strategy 11: Ensure that there are publicly available restrooms and plan for prolonged disruptions in sanitary sewer access.

Why does this matter?

Access to basic sanitation is a core public health need. It's also a matter of human dignity and care. Public restrooms offer a low-barrier place for people to use the bathroom and wash their hands. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends carefully washing your hands with soap and water after going to the bathroom and changing diapers to prevent the spread of infectious diseases like shigella. Without proper sanitation, this basic public health recommendation can't be followed.

Many urban areas lack adequate public access to toilets. In Portland for example, there are about 17 public restrooms per 100,000 people, and access to public restrooms may be further limited by factors like maintenance issues.[19] While adding and maintaining more public restrooms would contribute to public health and sanitation, it is also a large capital and operating expense.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate
- ● Research
- ● Convene
- ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

- ○ Existing
- ○ Additional
- ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



If sewer service is disrupted for any reason, including a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, emergency management measures for human waste need to be in place to prevent the spread of disease. The Oregon Resilience Plan estimates that basic wastewater health and safety will take weeks to restore, making preparation at the household and community level an important strategy for limiting the spread of illness.[20]

Putting this into practice

- Map the availability of public restrooms, especially 24-hour restrooms, and explore partnership opportunities to increase the availability of publicly accessible restrooms, like the Portland Loo, in the community.
- Partner with culturally specific organizations to promote emergency preparedness strategies for human waste disposal; pilot self contained dispersed technologies like composting toilets at *community resilience hubs*.

Authorizing agencies

Multnomah County cities

Lead department(s)

Office of Emergency Management



Food

Every community member has access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally specific food and food practices

Goal: Every community has access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally specific food and food practices.

Description

The food we eat is inextricably linked with our culture, community, health, and climate. As temperatures warm, changes in climate patterns affect agricultural yields and supply chains, as well as the nutritional quality, prices, and stability of our food supply. Cultural traditions for Native American communities are also being disrupted due to the changing availability of traditional foods like salmon, game, and plants important for medicine and food.

Food systems are not only impacted by climate change, but can also contribute to the emissions that cause climate change. Globally, food systems account for about one-third of total anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. Emissions are generated by the use of fossil fuels and fertilizers on the farm; livestock production; land-use changes; and the processing, distribution, and storage of food.[21] Conversely, farming techniques that focus on soil health can actually store atmospheric carbon.[22] Food waste is also a substantial source of emissions both because of the embodied emissions and from the production of methane during landfill decomposition.[23] Because so many people in our community experience hunger, food waste has an added sense of urgency.

An estimated 16% of children and 11.5% of all individuals in Multnomah County are experiencing food insecurity.[24] Connecting households in need to food assistance and food systems that support their cultural identity and practices can help to alleviate the short-term and underlying causes of food insecurity. Innovative programs that range from gardening education to culturally specific farm-based entrepreneurship have proliferated in Multnomah County. Building from and supporting innovative efforts and ongoing service delivery models can minimize the impacts of food insecurity and help to build a more resilient food system.

How we measure progress

Indicator 1: Percentage of County residents and children who are food insecure.

Description: Food insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or the limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods due to a lack of financial resources.

Current data: 11.5% of adults and 16% of children in Multnomah County are food insecure.

Data source: Oregon Hunger Task Force and County fact sheet

Indicator 2: Percentage of Multnomah County farmers (producers) who are Black, Indigenous, Latine, or other people of color.

Description: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conducts a census of farmers every five years, which includes the number of farmers ("producers"). A producer is a person who is involved in making decisions for the farm operation.

Current data: 8% of farmers in Multnomah County are people of color, with a particularly small representation of Black and Indigenous farmers.[25]

Data source: USDA Census of Agriculture



Strategy 1: Increase availability of land and farm incubators/collective farms and expand programs like Community Reaps Our Produce and Shares (CROPS).

Why does this matter?

Multnomah County has rich and productive agricultural lands and innovative farm incubator programs like the CROPS Farm and Headwaters Farm. The East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District also has programs, like the Forever Farm Program, to preserve working farm lands. Urban farming programs like Zenger Farm and the Oregon Food Bank have shown that urban farming businesses and programs are viable through partnerships with public institutions, such as the prescription community-supported agriculture (CSA) food box program. However, land in Multnomah County is still expensive, as is capital equipment like tractors. Market development and access to institutional contracts can also be difficult. The high cost of entering the farming industry is a barrier for beginning farmers, particularly low-to-moderate income individuals.

The County and other partners can help encourage new businesses, especially among historically marginalized populations like Black and Native American farmers, by buying more land and providing necessary infrastructure to operate as incubator sites for farming. Partnerships with the two Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Oregon Metro, city parks departments, Oregon State University Extension Service, and local nonprofits should be core to this effort.

Putting this into practice

- Explore partnerships, including grants and other funding opportunities, to increase incubator farm access, especially for priority populations.
- Develop a strategy for expanding existing incubator farm properties or acquiring new sites.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Health Department, Public Health Division

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

◯ Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High





Strategy 2: Expand equitable participation and access to community gardens and farms.

Why does this matter?

People from all walks of life want to connect with food and agriculture, whether through growing food at a community garden plot, an educational opportunity at a local farm, or by starting a business that grows or utilizes local produce. Ensuring that people have the opportunity to access these resources helps develop a stronger, more resilient community.

Farms and gardens can serve as important centers for cultivating community, skills, and produce. Access to community gardening programs has been shown to reduce food insecurity, increase healthy eating, and strengthen family relationships.[26] Community gardens exist throughout Multnomah County on publicly owned property, at places of worship and in schoolyards. Community-oriented farms are less prevalent, but serve as important hubs for entrepreneurship, job skills development, training, and community connection points to local food systems.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate ● Research
- ○ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Develop programs to increase community garden access, especially in affordable housing communities and other high needs communities.
- Increase access to gardening and farming education and programming by funding the Oregon State University Extension Service.

Authorizing agencies

City of Portland Parks & Recreation; City of Gresham Parks; Oregon Metro





Strategy 3: Reduce the use of pesticides and other harmful chemicals in yards, gardens, farms, parks, and other areas where people may be exposed.

Why does this matter?

Chemical pesticides can have harmful impacts on people and ecosystems.* While these tools may be needed in certain contexts, overuse, inadequate applicator training, and insufficient individual and community protections can be particularly harmful to human health. These chemicals can travel through multiple pathways, including inhalation, ingestion, and skin exposure, to cause harm and bioaccumulate in people and ecosystems.[27] According to Oregon Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA), agricultural workers, groundskeepers, pet groomers, fumigators, and many other occupations are at risk for exposure to pesticides.

These chemicals can also harm ecosystem health. For example, use of pesticides has been linked to declines in non-target organisms, including insect populations.[28] The use of systemic pesticides — which permeate plants and may linger in plant tissue — can be particularly harmful to pollinating insects.[29] Application of pesticides should be limited or avoided if possible.

*Pesticides kill, repel, or control forms of animal and plant life considered to damage or be a nuisance in agriculture and domestic life.

Putting this into practice

- Provide education on integrated pest management (IPM) and other strategies that minimize the use of pesticides (for example, "Level Up Your Lawn") and integrate IPM into County landscape maintenance.
- Support master gardener programs that provide education and support to help farmers and gardeners minimize chemical inputs.
- Explore regulatory approaches for limiting the use of pesticides and herbicides by untrained applicators and the availability of *highly hazardous pesticides*.
- Promote Native American-owned businesses that utilize Indigenous Traditional Ecological & Cultural Knowledge (ITECK).

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Environmental Quality Commission; Oregon Department of Environmental Quality; Oregon Department of Agriculture

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
◯ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ◯ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Strategy 4: Advocate for Indigenous control over federal, state, and local lands in Multnomah County, especially in usual and accustomed areas for food gathering and cultivation.

Why does this matter?

Indigenous communities have cultivated the land, stewarded fish and other wildlife, and gathered food, medicine, and fiber from these lands since time immemorial. Tribal governments and individuals are engaged in the continuous act of keeping vital traditional foodways — like cultivating wapato or gathering lamprey — vibrant to this day. Moreover, some Tribal Nations have established treaty rites with the federal government for ongoing access to usual and accustomed places for activities that include harvesting fish and other foods.

Advocating for the return of ancestral lands to Indigenous communities, especially in areas traditionally used for food gathering such as Sauvie Island, is a vital component of climate justice. Traditional ecological knowledge in land management and conservation practices is also emerging as a vitally important suite of management practices in the face of a changing climate.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Develop co-management agreements for state lands in ecologically important areas like state parks and wildlife areas on Sauvie Island.
- Consult with tribes to cultivate important indigenous plants in parks and natural areas controlled by local governments.
- Support Native American-led efforts that encourage food sovereignty.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon State Parks; U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management



Strategy 5: Strengthen local food systems by investing in diverse distribution models and community-based infrastructure to ensure equitable access to nutritious food.

Why does this matter?

There is no single action that will completely solve hunger and lack of access to healthy, culturally relevant foods. A sustained, coordinated approach across governments and community partners is required to address these issues over time. The Oregon Food Bank, local food pantries, school districts, nonprofit partners, local businesses, local hospital nutrition and food insecurity programming, and different levels of county government can all play a part in ensuring that food insecurity is not an issue in our community. Innovative programs like Seattle's Fresh Bucks program provide extra spending power to households in need to buy fresh and healthy food at farmers markets and participating grocery stores, which in turn helps sustain these businesses.

The State of Minnesota recently made free breakfast and lunch universally available to all Minnesota school-age children. Research has shown that these programs increase children's ability to learn and reduce childhood food insecurity.[30] Here in Multnomah County, prescription community-supported agriculture (CSA) boxes and other produce prescription programming have increased participating households' access to nutritious, culturally relevant produce, protein, and whole grains. While research shows these programs to be effective and supportive of the local economy, ongoing funding remains a barrier to sustained impact. Overcoming funding challenges will require broad-based community consensus and braided funding strategies to include grants, health insurance funding, and other sources of sustainable funding at the county and state levels.





Artist: CETI Collective

Putting this into practice

- Explore funding models that support food systems and low-income access to nutritious food. Examples include the City of Seattle Fresh Bucks program.
- Maintain and expand produce prescription programs such as community-supported agriculture boxes, voucher redemption through farmers markets, and grocery card options prescribing healthy food options.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
○ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

- Identify barriers and solutions to increase the number of farmers and support opportunities for food insecure families to take part in produce prescription programs.
- Expand and sustain food pantries. Prioritize high-quality food in high-need communities and leverage trusted institutions, including SUN School programs. Work with existing institutions to ensure that healthy and culturally relevant food options are part of available pantry choices. Encourage direct purchasing from local farms.
- Develop a strategy to support universal access to school meals for all Oregon school-age children. Ensure the strategy includes healthy and culturally relevant food options and encourages direct purchasing from local farms.
- Work on a community level with farms, farmers, and local institutions (food pantries, schools, etc.) to build supply chains or other relationships and infrastructure that enable ease of direct purchasing from local farms.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon State Legislature

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Health Department, Public Health Division



Housing

Every community member has safe, healthy and affordable housing

Goal: Every community member has safe, healthy and affordable housing.

Description

Every member of our community deserves access to long-term, stable housing that they can afford, feels healthy, and is connected to the community. Our homes are our first line of defense against climate-induced weather extremes and other hazards. At the same time, residential buildings also account for 18% of greenhouse gas emissions in Multnomah County.[31] The way we design, build, and maintain our housing is a critical lever for reducing emissions and building climate resilience.

Housing access, however, has a long and painful history of exclusion in Multnomah County. In the early 20th century, exclusionary policies designed to maintain racial segregation and protect white homeowners' property values were established. Through the use of exclusionary zoning and federally backed redlining, the City of Portland, for example, systematically denied Black residents and other people of color access to home loans and investment. These practices effectively funneled these communities into specific, under-resourced areas while simultaneously preventing them from building generational wealth through homeownership.

Mid-century urban renewal projects further devastated these established communities particularly in the Albina district, Portland's historic Black core. Large-scale infrastructure developments — including the construction of the I-5 freeway and Veterans Memorial Coliseum, and the expansion of Legacy Emanuel Hospital — resulted in the forced displacement of thousands of residents and the destruction of hundreds of local businesses. In more recent decades, the legacy of these planning decisions has manifested as *gentrification* and environmental injustice. Market-rate redevelopment in historically Black neighborhoods has driven up property values and combined with a distorted property tax system to further displace long-term residents who can no longer afford to live in the communities their families helped build.[32]

Some displaced families relocated to areas of Multnomah County, such as east Portland and west Gresham, where housing was more affordable, but resources like transit, parks, grocery stores, trees, and pedestrian infrastructure were deficient. Affordable multifamily housing has only been permitted on the most heavily trafficked corridors, exposing residents to noise pollution, vehicle emissions, and traffic safety issues. These patterns persist to this day. At the same time, many people in Multnomah County cannot afford housing, reflected in a homelessness crisis that has been difficult to address.

Multnomah County and its many partners seek to increase affordable housing options and address homelessness.[33] Housing exists at the critical nexus of community justice, climate resilience, and economic stability. While other planning efforts guide this work more directly than the Climate Justice Plan, it is the hope that emphasizing the intersectional nature of these challenges brings additional momentum and focus to the issue.

How we measure progress

Indicator 1: New private housing structures authorized by building permits in Multnomah County.[34]

Description: This data represents the total number of building permits for all structure types, including one-unit, two-unit, three-unit, four-unit, and five-unit structures or more.

Current data: 2,040 in 2024; downward trend since 2017.

Data source: Federal Reserve Bank of Saint Lewis

Indicator 2: Reduction in unsheltered homelessness for priority populations consistent with Homelessness Response Action Plan key performance indicators.

Description: The Homelessness Response Action Plan (HRAP) has key performance indicators that help inform the implementation of the plan. Certain populations are overrepresented in the unsheltered homeless population and the plan seeks to reduce this overrepresentation. HRAP uses January 2024 as a baseline period and considers this metric met if priority populations are sheltered at rates that exceed the baseline.

Current data: In the most recent period, 4 out of every 6 (67%) people in the priority populations were sheltered at or above the baseline rate.

Data source: Homeless Response Action Plan Dashboard

Strategy 1: Implement the Homelessness Response Action Plan.

Why does this matter?

Homelessness exposes people to increased climate risks, including a higher exposure to extreme weather, vector-borne diseases that are made more common by a warming climate, and day-to-day environmental hazards.[35] In Multnomah County, Black, Indigenous, Latine, and other people of color are disproportionately represented in the unhoused population.[36] Addressing homelessness is an urgent climate justice concern.

The joint Multnomah County-CIty of Portland Homelessness Response Action Plan offers a comprehensive plan for preventing and addressing homelessness. This includes strategies that target root causes like the availability of affordable housing and *wraparound* services. The plan has built in reporting features and is a two-year roadmap focused on preventing inflow into homelessness, expediting housing placement out of shelter and housing placement, expanding behavioral health services for people who are homeless or experiencing housing instability, and improving intergovernmental coordination.

Putting this into practice

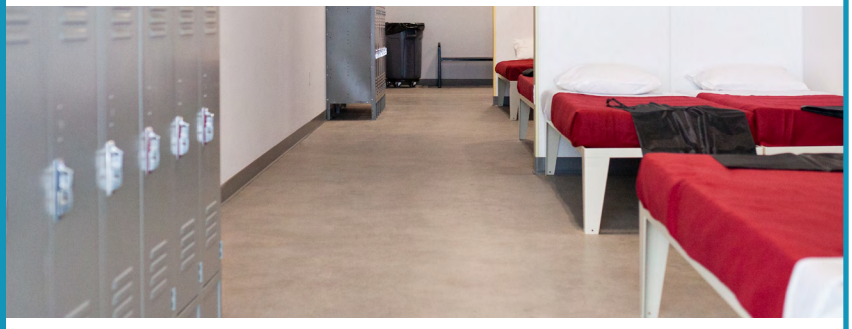
- Housing or sheltering people experiencing homelessness.
- Adding behavioral health beds and funding a drop-off sobering center.
- Increasing the number of adults leaving shelter for permanent housing.
- Reducing homelessness among people of color, people who are LGBTQIA2S+, and people in other populations of focus.
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing through regulatory changes, building conversions, and new construction funding sources, among other strategies.

Authorizing agencies

City of Portland

Lead department(s)

Homeless Services Department



STRATEGY CATEGORY

● **County Strategy**
○ Investment Opportunity
○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

○ Advocate ○ Research
○ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 2: Increase housing supply and promote walkable, mixed use communities.

Why does this matter?

Land use reform is an important climate and public health policy. Dense, walkable neighborhoods allow people to meet more of their daily needs without driving. Reduced vehicle miles traveled, in addition to energy efficiency gains of multifamily housing, lead to reduced emissions. An analysis from the Rocky Mountain Institute found that zoning reform could help reduce over a quarter-metric ton of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) per person per year, a substantial reduction.[37] Studies also show that when individuals can use their bodies in the course of daily activities, they live longer, healthier lives. Denser urban neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, uses, and transit access promote daily activity like walking and riding bikes.

It is also important to recognize the history of land use and government-sponsored segregation policies. By designating vast swaths of the county for single-family homes, the code established a high financial barrier to entry. This effectively excluded lower-income residents, a demographic disproportionately composed of people of color, from the wealth-building opportunities of homeownership. At the time, planners and real estate interests explicitly linked multifamily housing to "lower-class" and non-white populations, using zoning to keep these groups out of preferred residential districts.[32]

Today, land use reform, zoning updates, and other policies are opportunities to begin to right historical wrongs while building a healthier and more prosperous community. Land use is a key tool for increasing housing production and lowering housing costs, while simultaneously building communities that are more accessible to transit, walking, and biking. Building code updates that allow for better urban form and more affordable construction are also important. While Multnomah County does not have control over urban land use decisions or building codes, it can influence these predominantly city-level decisions through research, coordination, coalition building, and advocacy.



Putting this into practice

- Support zoning reform initiatives like “Inner Eastside for All” that increases permissible density in urban areas that already have abundant services like shopping districts, parks, transit, libraries, etc.
- Support building code reforms that allow for attached housing types, like *Point Access Blocks*, sometimes called sunlight suites or single stair multifamily housing.
- Support harmonizing the Oregon elevator code with the internal elevator code EN 81, which would allow for more elevator types in more buildings.
- Support social housing development and experimentation.
- Support building code updates that increase energy efficiency, indoor air quality, cooling, other climate resilient building practices, and innovative non-toxic low-carbon building materials.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon State Legislature, Oregon Building Codes Division; Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities program; City land use and building codes departments

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Health Department, Environmental Health



STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate
- ● Research
- ● Convene
- ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Strategy 3: Promote home preservation for cost burdened homeowners.

Why does this matter?

For many, the cost of emergency repairs or energy-efficient upgrades is a barrier to safety. When homes fall into disrepair, they become more vulnerable to heat waves, water infiltration and mold, and storm damage, putting families at risk of being involuntarily displaced. No-cost home repair programs have been successfully used to prevent involuntary displacement in gentrifying neighborhoods.[38] Critical home repair is ideally coupled with home energy efficiency and resilience measures like insulation and heat pumps for heating and cooling homes. By supporting home preservation, we protect intergenerational wealth and ensure that the most vulnerable neighbors have a resilient, long-term foundation that can better withstand the effects of climate change.

Putting this into practice

- Pursue funding, including grant funds, to expand the reach of the County's low-income weatherization program and increase funding for critical home repair.*
- Partner with allied organizations to identify legislative and regulatory changes that would help support critical home repair.

*The program offers free weatherization services to low-income homeowners (200% federal poverty limit) and renters to improve home energy efficiency, reduce utility bills by up to 40%, and enhance safety.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

○ Advocate ○ Research
○ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY

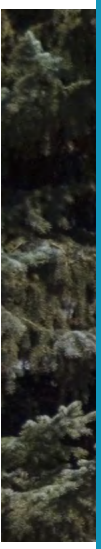


Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Housing and Community Services; Oregon Health Authority; Portland Clean Energy Fund

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Department of County Human Services, Weatherization Services; Health Department, Environmental Health





Strategy 4: Support circular economy models that integrate social needs with resource reuse.

Why does this matter?

While support exists for housing placements, rental assistance, and related services, home furnishings are an often-overlooked necessity. Access to home furnishings can be a critical component of the transition into housing for unhoused individuals that helps to strengthen and stabilize an individual or family. At the same time, consumer goods represent a large portion of global emissions,[39] making efforts to reuse durable goods an important strategy to reduce emissions.

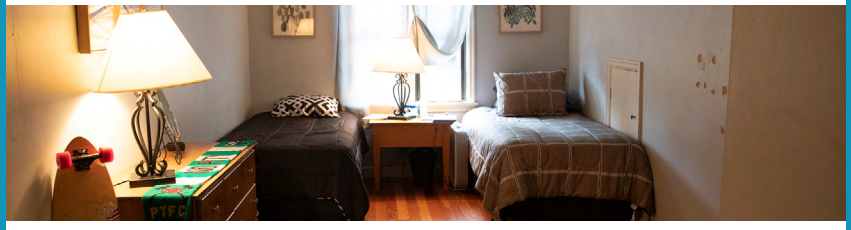
Rather than having each household purchase new furniture and household goods — each carrying significant carbon footprints — using their limited resources, this model enables resource sharing that serves both environmental and *social justice* goals. Families experiencing housing instability often also experience furniture poverty, or the inability to access, afford, or maintain essential household furniture and goods for a functional, safe, and healthy home.[40] Multnomah County is lucky to have a robust *reuse economy* with several nonprofits that provide services for low-income households. For example, Community Warehouse diverts over 1,500 tons of furniture from local waste streams through their "furniture bank" model that allows households to receive all the furnishings and household goods they need. Models like this are vital for supporting households and reducing emissions.

Putting this into practice

- Review current practices for how households are provided needed furnishings and other resources when making housing transitions. Pursue additional opportunities to support re-use organizations in the region.
- Provide rent assistance *"wraparound" support* for basic resources. Leveraging the re-use economy and local organizations like Community Warehouse can help provide cost-effective, low-carbon essential household goods including furnishings, kitchen supplies, fans, and even AC units.

Lead department(s)

Homeless Services Department; Department of County Human Services



STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

◯ Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ◯ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 5: Support the health, well-being, and stability of households that rent.

Why does this matter?

Housing that is substandard due to quality issues like cracked walls or rodent damage, or lacking essential components like heating or cooling, exposes households to greater environmental and climate risks. In the Portland metropolitan area, about 25% of renters do not have air conditioning, and that number jumps to 34% for low-income households. Extremely low-income households are far more likely to occupy rental housing with one or more of these substantial deficiencies.[41,42] Climate impacts are therefore anticipated to fall more severely on low-income rental households.

Supporting the health and stability of renting households combines financial aid, legal protections, and physical housing quality. Substandard housing is more than a maintenance issue — it is a primary driver of chronic illness, displacement, and financial crisis. By enforcing health and climate standards alongside stronger renter protections, we can reduce energy burden and environmental hazards that disproportionately impact cost-burdened families. Ultimately, these efforts provide the stable foundation necessary for households to transition from immediate crisis to long-term self-sufficiency.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ● Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Putting this into practice

- Support the City of Portland Climate and Health Standards for Existing Buildings.
- Consider establishing maximum indoor temperature standards by convening stakeholders to understand current regulations and develop recommendations, including enforcement mechanisms and alternatives like cooling space requirements in multi-unit buildings.
- Increase funding for multifamily affordable housing preservation.
- Convene broad partnership to consider alternative approaches to renter protections that help promote household health and stability.
- Explore pathways to improve rental housing standards and mandatory inspection programs to ensure all rental units are safe, healthy, and resilient to climate impacts.
- Provide property owners with resources, such as technical assistance or retrofit grants, to help them meet new standards without passing significant costs onto tenants.
- Provide Flexible Client Assistance for relief from the trauma associated with the scarcity of resources.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Health Authority; Oregon Housing and Community Services; Cities

Strategy 6: Promote homeownership for first-time homebuyers and communities historically excluded by discriminatory housing practices.

Why does this matter?

Homeownership is a primary driver for building intergenerational wealth and long-term stability. Homeowners often have greater control over their living environment, allowing for critical climate adaptations such as weatherization, solar installation, and air filtration that protect against extreme heat and smoke. For generations, these benefits were denied to Black families and other families of color.[38]

Promoting homeownership for first-time homebuyers, particularly if they come from a family with no experience of homeownership or were intentionally excluded from homeownership, requires a multi-prong approach that includes wraparound support, including homebuyer education, financial counseling, and foreclosure prevention. Promoting homeownership successfully depends on building trust, increasing awareness of available opportunities, and ensuring communities are equipped to retain their homes long term. The County can bridge the racial wealth gap and provide the security necessary to withstand future economic and environmental shocks.

Putting this into practice

- Proactively connect residents within the County's existing social service programs to homeownership resources.
- Partner with community-led organizations to leverage trust-based, peer-to-peer outreach through which residents who have successfully navigated homeownership pathways can share their success stories and guide their neighbors through the process.
- Provide down payment assistance to close the affordability gap for historically excluded buyers and expand support for Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) to help residents save for homes that accommodate multigenerational living.
- Prioritize housing assistance for residents with historical ties to areas like North and Northeast Portland to combat displacement.[43]

Authorizing agencies

City of Portland Housing Bureau; City of Gresham

Lead department(s)

Department of County Human Services

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
◯ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ◯ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ◯ Additional ● New

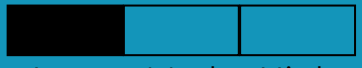
COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY





Wealth & Jobs

Every community member has access to wealth-building opportunities and green jobs

Goal: Every community member has access to wealth-building opportunities and green jobs.

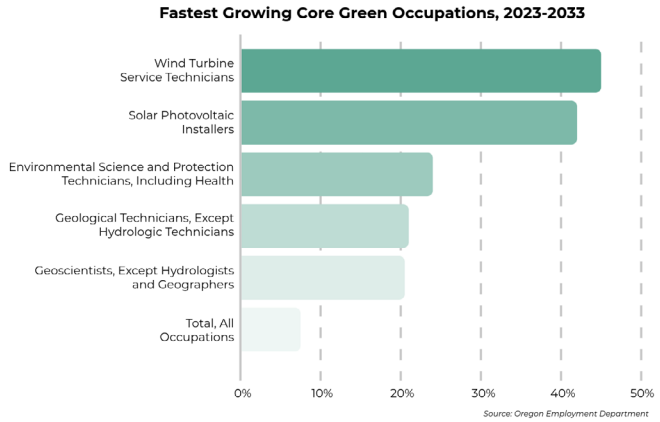
Description

Climate change disproportionately impacts those who are already cost burdened and have little to no financial security. According to the Climate Jobs Institute, the average Oregonian stands to lose roughly $12,000 in personal income annually due to climate changes already set in motion by past greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, modernizing the grid; investing in clean energy technologies like solar, wind, green-hydrogen and geothermal networks; and improving the efficiency of buildings offer tremendous economic opportunities for Oregonians.[44]

The economic benefits of this transition include new opportunities in the trades and entrepreneurial opportunities, but a history of racial discrimination needs to be overcome to ensure broad-based economic gains. Wealth-building through channels like homeownership and small business equity are the foundation of economic security, acting as a vital buffer against environmental and financial emergencies. However, Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) continue to face deep-seated systemic barriers to these opportunities, leaving them more exposed to climate emergencies and left out of economic gains in the clean energy economy.[45] The Black Business Association of Oregon's Black Prosperity Dashboard shows Black Oregonians own homes at lower rates and have less household income than their white counterparts.

A future of shared prosperity can be built through needed investments in the low-carbon economy. Multnomah County is poised to benefit from a future where abundant, clean, and affordable energy is the norm. This is a future where green jobs are common in the workforce, industry and government cooperate to incentivize clean energy technologies, and local entrepreneurs create new industry-leading solutions that grow the green economy. This is also a future where barriers to green jobs, union jobs, and entrepreneurship are no longer hampered by discriminatory practices that have historically excluded women and Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, from accessing pathways to economic stability and wealth creation.

The Oregon Employment Department's occupational projections show robust job growth in green industries, especially wind and solar energy.



The fastest growing core green occupations (2023-2033) include wind turbine service technicians, solar photovoltaic installers, environmental science protection technicians, geological technicians, and geoscientists. (source: Oregon Employment Department)

How we measure progress

Indicator 1: Growth in the clean energy job sector in Oregon.

Description: Clean energy jobs are a growing share of the workforce and show promise for workers' economic gains.

Current data: Oregon had 95,972 energy workers statewide in 2023, of which 51.5% worked in solar, wind or hydro-electricity production and energy efficiency.

Data source: U.S. Department of Energy, United States Energy & Employment Report 2024

Indicator 2: The disparity ratio is calculated by comparing the overall unemployment rate with the specific unemployment rate for the identified populations.

Description: The County can require this data as part of its reporting from training partners (like Worksystems or PCC) and from contractors working on County-funded climate projects.

Current data: Black workers are 1.43 times as likely, and Native American workers are 1.39 times as likely to be unemployed than the average worker. Teenagers are 3.13 times more likely to be unemployed, while workers ages 20 to 24 are 2.02 times more likely to be unemployed than the average worker.

Data source: State of Oregon Employment Department

Strategy 1: Support good green jobs in procurement & policy by prioritizing a skilled and trained workforce.

Why does this matter?

A skilled and trained* workforce is vital for the green energy transition and retrofitting non-energy infrastructure for efficiency and resilience. Infrastructure is under increasing strain from climate impacts, energy demand growth, and policy drivers. The need for investment has never been greater, and ensuring that the job is done safely, on time and on budget requires a skilled and trained workforce. State registered apprenticeship programs offer people the opportunity to earn while they learn, have benefits, and move up the skill ladder; Journey level trades people can command good wages and benefits to support their families and communities or strike out to start their own businesses free from student loan debt.

A green job is a good job when it offers living wages, benefits, safe and respectful working conditions, and a pathway to career advancement. Ensuring that public projects and policies require prevailing wages ensures a level playing field and fair compensation for workers – a critical part of building the green economy. State registered apprenticeship requirements help to ensure the next generation of workers is learning by doing. Workforce equity requirements help to set goals for a diverse workforce that ensures women and people of color have access to family wage jobs in the trades. The transition to green energy is going to require investments in infrastructure and workforce that will grow the economy while prioritizing the needs of workers and their communities.

Projects and jurisdictions across the West Coast have begun to recognize the importance of focusing on construction careers and small business development to deliver the best value to the communities involved. This includes Multnomah County, with the Library Capital Bond Program and its implementation of the Regional Workforce Equity Agreement (RWEA), the first multi-jurisdiction project labor agreement of its kind in the nation. One of the primary objectives of the RWEA is to ensure that the economic benefits generated by locally funded construction projects are shared broadly across the local community, particularly among historically underrepresented groups in the trades. The RWEA aims to protect public investments through the use of “high road contractors”, meaning contractors who have no willful violations from the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) or Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provide comprehensive employee benefits including healthcare coverage and skilled on-the-job training, and ensure fair treatment for the workforce building our communities. Through the continual evolution of project labor agreements like the RWEA, in partnership with labor and community groups, the County seeks to level the playing field for contractors while protecting and advancing the green energy careers that responsible public administration can produce.

*The 2012 Chevron Richmond Oil Refinery explosion, led to California SB 54 (2013) and SB 740 (2024) that required “skilled and trained” standard for oil refinery and hazardous materials management as an environmental justice measure to protect fence line communities and workers by ensuring qualified workers and contractors were performing retrofit work.



Putting this into practice

- Maintain prevailing wage requirements for County funded projects.
- Maintain support for state registered pre-apprenticeship programs.
- Ensure that County projects utilize a compliance pathways approach to workforce standards, allowing for utilization of a skilled and trained workforce, high-road responsible contractor utilization, or commitment to a legally enforceable agreement with labor and community such as a project labor agreement.
- Maintain workforce diversity goals for County funded projects.
- Utilize project labor agreements or other tools on large capital projects.
- Advocate for the inclusion of skilled and trained workforce requirements in climate and energy policies.
- Maintain an ongoing dialogue with trade unions, and other workforce groups to ensure policies and programs are shaped by their experience and expertise.
- Due to the potential impacts to key trade sectors, continue to work with labor and academic partners to study and respond to workforce and job impacts. Build off of existing studies such as:
  - California Workforce Education & Training Needs Assessment For Energy Efficiency, Distributed Generation, and Demand Response (UC Berkeley) (Full Report)
  - Putting California on the High: A Jobs and Climate Action Plan for 2030 (UC Berkeley)
  - Constructing a Diverse Workforce: Examining Union and Non-Union Construction Apprenticeship Programs and Their Outcomes For Women and Workers of Color (University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center)
  - The Impact of Oregon's Prevailing wage report (University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center)

Lead department(s)

Department of County Management, Office of Sustainability



STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ● Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 2: Build career pathways into clean energy and green manufacturing by removing structural barriers for communities historically excluded from the trades.

Why does this matter?

Building career pathways into clean energy jobs is critical because it addresses the twin crises of climate change and economic inequality. Oregon faces a massive labor demand — requiring approximately 36 GW of new clean energy and the creation of over 200,000 jobs by 2030 — that cannot be met without expanding the workforce.[44] By intentionally removing structural barriers for communities of color, women, and low-income workers, the state can tap into an underutilized talent pool while ensuring that the transition to a green economy doesn't leave behind the very people most impacted by climate disruptions.

Through the strategic alignment of County services, regional partnerships, and contracting requirements, we can ensure that every dollar spent on *decarbonization* acts as a deliberate pipeline for local wealth creation, prioritizing the very workers and community members who have historically borne the brunt of the climate crisis.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Putting this into practice

- Align Oregon's climate infrastructure buildout[44] with Multnomah County's anti-poverty strategy.
- Prioritize decarbonization and the buildout of renewable energy at County-owned facilities while implementing the County's industry-leading workforce standards.
- Integrating job readiness training and apprenticeship recruitment directly from County services, ensuring that economic mobility is a central feature of our climate response.
- Ensure contracting requirements favor firms that provide living wages, benefits, and apprenticeship opportunities, preventing a "race to the bottom" in the green sector.

Lead department(s)

Department of County Assets; Department of County Human Services; Office of Sustainability



Strategy 3: Streamline regulatory hurdles that add time and expense to the installation of renewable energy and distributed energy resources like solar PV and battery energy storage systems.

Why does this matter?

In order to unleash the economic promise of clean energy in Oregon, outdated rules need to be modernized and new administrative capacity has to be built. According to reporting from Oregon Public Broadcasting and ProPublica, Oregon trails nearly all other states in adding new sources of renewable energy. Iowa, a state with roughly the same population and usable volume of wind as Oregon, has built enough wind farms to generate three times as much wind power.[49] The slow pace of electricity transmission buildout in Oregon is one significant reason for the slow pace of renewable energy development.

Land use laws can also prevent Oregon farmers from harvesting the sun's energy with solar agrivoltaic installations. Slow administrative procedures make permitting residential solar and battery energy systems inefficient and more expensive, adding an average of $7,000 in regulatory costs to the average rooftop solar system.[50] These rules and procedures must be improved to facilitate the flourishing of clean energy projects that support clean energy jobs and economic growth and provide more opportunities for households and organizations to invest in the clean energy future.

Putting this into practice

- Support legislative efforts to create a public transmission authority to finance and build needed electric power transmission infrastructure.
- Support legislative and administrative changes that make it faster, cheaper, and easier to install residential solar and battery energy storage systems.
- Support plug-in solar legislation.
- Streamline the County's land use regulations to make residential solar energy and battery energy storage systems easier to permit in unincorporated Multnomah County.
- Advocate for local cities to adopt streamlined procedures for permitting residential solar and battery energy storage projects.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Department of Energy; Oregon Building Codes Division; Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Department of Community Services

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Strategy 4: Develop a Youth Climate Corps that provides young people (ages 16-24) with paid work experience, job readiness skills, green job exposure, and direct pathways into highly skilled green jobs.

Why does this matter?

Youth are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis, facing both immediate environmental health risks like air pollution and long-term "eco-anxiety" regarding their future. However, current youth employment models often suffer from three major gaps: poverty wages that exclude low-income participants, "dead-end" seasonal tasks (e.g., blackberry removal without career growth), and a lack of professional networking.

By institutionalizing a Youth Climate Corps, the County and its partners can transform climate anxiety into agency.[51] This approach ensures that young people aren't just cheap labor for the public sector — they are an essential talent pipeline for the low-carbon economy — while providing important services that can benefit the community. Providing a "good job" — defined as one that offers living wages, union pathways, on-the-job training, and professional development opportunities — prevents the replication of systemic poverty within green workforce programs. Multnomah County and its partners can work to modify and supplement existing youth employment programs to create a Youth Climate Corps that addresses climate resilience, *mitigation*, and care needs in the community.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Putting this into practice

- Research similar programs across the country to determine best practices.
- Convene local experts to map out needed community projects, job exposure pathways, training opportunities, and connections to trades, businesses, community-based organizations, and schools to create a supportive ecosystem for a program and connection points to future employment opportunities.
- Explore opportunities to leverage the SummerWorks program, Portland Clean Energy Fund, philanthropy, and other sources of funding to establish a program.

Authorizing agencies

City of Portland, Portland Clean Energy Fund

Lead department(s)

Department of County Management; Office of Sustainability

Strategy 5: Provide comprehensive wraparound services, including childcare, mental health support, transportation, and specialized equipment, in workforce development programs.

Why does this matter?

Workforce programs are essential for career readiness and climate-sector entry, but technical training alone cannot overcome systemic economic barriers.[52] For many residents, the primary obstacle to a family-wage career isn't a lack of skill, but a lack of stability.[53]

By embedding supportive services directly into the training pipeline, we move from a transactional model to a relational one. Integrated case management and mental health services address the historical and systemic stressors that BIPOC, justice-involved, and low-income individuals face. Furthermore, aligning these supports with County health and housing services ensures that those furthest from opportunity are the first in line for family-wage careers. Providing "flexible capital" for tools, work clothes, and culturally specific childcare isn't just a social service — it is a retention strategy that protects the County's investment in its workforce.

Putting this into practice

- Support Preschool for All and expand childcare with flexible hours, especially for the trades, which have early start times for work.
- Establish low-barrier funds for clients to cover immediate costs like specialized tools, union dues, or transportation emergencies that often lead to program attrition.
- Embed apprenticeship and workforce programs directly into County health and housing offices, meeting residents where they are with clear pathways to economic mobility.
- Establish mentorship programs where journey-level workers of color provide emotional navigation and "soft-skill" coaching to new apprentices.

Lead department(s)

Department of County Human Services; Health Department, Behavioral Health Division; Department of Community Justice

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

◯ Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Strategy 6: Establish a guaranteed income framework designed to provide assistance to households disproportionately impacted by economic barriers and climate-driven costs.

Why does this matter?

Guaranteed basic income can serve as a vital economic bridge for people who are struggling and an important tool for people trying to enter or reenter the workforce. Many studies have shown these programs are highly effective, giving households the flexibility to respond to their needs in real time while being able to establish enough stability to make longer-term plans.[54]

By providing people who have barriers to employment with unrestricted monthly stipends during professional training, such a program would ensure participants can be stable while acquiring specialized skills required for high-wage, low-carbon careers. This targeted support specifically addresses income challenges often faced during 8–12 week pre-apprenticeships or first-year training periods, shifting the focus from survival-mode decision-making to long-term wealth accumulation and professional mobility.

Focusing on these critical life transitions, such as career pivots or early childhood development, significantly multiplies the return on investment for every public dollar spent. Direct evidence from local pilot programs, such as Multnomah Mother's Trust, proves that this "unrestricted flexibility" leads to near-zero debt loads and a 50% reduction in eviction risk.[55] By creating this essential household buffer, the County can empower historically excluded communities to absorb rising climate-driven costs in energy, food, and health, transforming a potential "handout" narrative into a strategic engine for community resilience and intergenerational climate justice.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ● Research
- ● Convene ○ Implement

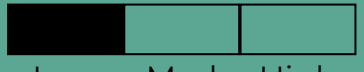
COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Putting this into practice

Research and advocate for funding pathways that would establish guaranteed income for people transitioning into the green workforce. Programs can include:

- Pre-Apprenticeship Guaranteed Income to support workers during 8–12 weeks of unpaid or low-paid training. This covers costs such as childcare, transit, and tools, ensuring that financial barriers do not lead to program attrition.
- Create a Job Transition Fund to provide monthly stipends that subsidize lower starting wages during the first year of an apprenticeship. By acting as a time-bound alternative to guaranteed basic income, this fund allows workers to maintain housing stability while they "earn and learn" their way toward journey-level wages in the green sector.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon State Legislature



Health

Every community member has access to the resources and underlying conditions that promote health and well-being

Goal: Every community member has access to the resources and underlying conditions that promote health and well-being.

Description

Climate change poses a significant threat in Multnomah County and jeopardizes access to the building blocks of good health: clean air, water, stable housing, and healthy food. It acts as a "risk multiplier," worsening existing public health issues and intensifying health inequities, particularly for communities of color and low-income populations in the Portland region who are already experiencing health inequities.

Our commitment is to counteract this by ensuring universal access to the fundamental resources necessary for health and well-being, regardless of a person's background or location. This includes providing clean water, nutritious food, safe and healthy housing, accessible green spaces, and quality healthcare (including mental health support), as well as utilizing technology to bridge gaps and address diverse climate-related health challenges.

How we measure progress

Indicator 1: Heat-related emergency department (ED) or urgent care (UC) visits, hospitalizations, and deaths.

Description: Oregon's public health and climate *accountability* metrics are designed to track progress toward a 2030 goal of building a modern, equitable, and resilient public health system. Established by the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) and managed by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), these metrics focus on reducing the health impacts of extreme heat and wildfire smoke. Public health accountability metrics are one way that Oregon's public health system ensures and demonstrates it is improving health, eliminating inequities, and effectively using public dollars through a modern public health system. Tracking health outcomes based on extreme temperatures, air quality, and infectious diseases is a way we can measure impact.

Current data: Heat-related illness ED/UC visits since 2021 have been much higher than in 2020 and earlier. Hospitalizations for heat-related illness were highest in summer 2021 (62 visits) and have been above 16 visits in Multnomah County since then. Most heat-related deaths happened during the 2021 Heat Dome; summers since then have had more deaths than expected and have not returned to pre-Heat Dome levels.

Data source: Regional Climate and Health Dashboard: Extreme Heat

Indicator 2: Effects of climate change on psychological, mental and emotional health.

Description: The current and future impacts of climate change are having a detrimental impact on the mental health of individuals and communities, undermining their well-being and exacerbating other stresses they may be experiencing.

Current data: When thinking about climate change, about 75% of respondents in a regional climate mental health survey conducted in 2025 reported feeling sadness, anxiety/fear, and helplessness at least moderately, making these the most common emotional responses. In contrast, optimism was reported the least frequently, with only 28% reporting it to a similar degree. Over half of all respondents also felt grief and anger, while fewer than half reported feelings of guilt or shame.

Data source: Regional Climate and Health Dashboard: Mental Health Survey Findings

Indicator 3: Reported case incidence for climate-sensitive infectious diseases (communicable, vector-borne, and fungal infections).

Description: Changes in local and regional climate can allow some infectious diseases to become present in areas they were previously unable to survive or thrive.

Current data: Most disease cases tracked in this Regional Climate and Health Dashboard plummeted in 2020 due to the COVID-19 shutdown. Cases then rebounded in 2021 and continued to climb through 2023. From 2023 to 2024, the total number of cases generally decreased, but this varied by condition. While the two most common diseases, campylobacteriosis (Campy) and salmonellosis, declined, less common diseases like tuberculosis (TB), coccidioidomycosis (Valley fever), and Lyme disease increased slightly.

Data source: Regional Climate and Health Dashboard: Infectious Disease

Strategy 1: Implement the Climate and Health Resilience Plan.

Why does this matter?

The Multnomah County Climate and Health Resilience Plan fulfills an Oregon Health Authority requirement to develop a climate adaptation plan. The purpose of this plan is to guide the work of the County's Health Department and Public Health Division toward a just, resilient, and healthy future for Multnomah County.

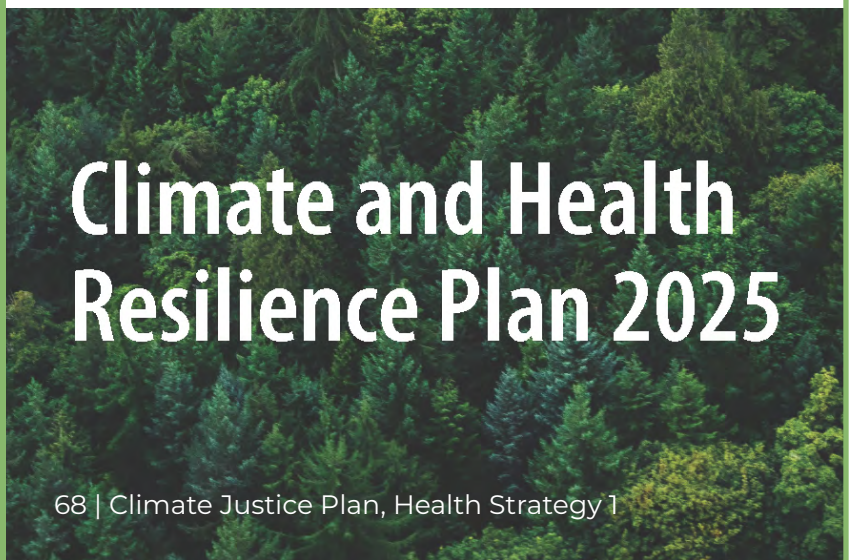
This plan outlines three action areas to guide climate and health work: building frontline neighborhood heat resilience, making our housing more resilient, and promoting mental wellness.

Putting this into practice

- Build partnerships with agencies and organizations in *Heat Resilience Focus Areas*.
- Co-develop and pilot heat resilience solutions with partner organizations.
- Measure and monitor changes to heat resilience.
- Conduct a countywide Health and Housing Vulnerability Assessment to identify areas of elevated climate risk and housing precarity.
- Develop a suite of housing policies supported by evidence on climate impacts on public health.
- Engage with partner agencies to assess the risk of conflagrations and develop risk mitigation strategies.
- Develop measures of mental health impacts of climate change and continue to resource and deploy a climate mental health survey.
- Collaborate with community organizations to establish and maintain long-term trauma recovery networks.

Lead department(s)

Health Department



STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ● Research
- ○ Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 2: Partner with health care providers to identify diagnosis, treatment, and prevention options for emerging climate related health threats.

Why does this matter?

Climate change presents health threats that are new to the area. Healthcare providers must move from reactive treatment to climate-informed clinical care to prevent avoidable deaths. For example, vector-borne diseases like malaria, for which healthcare providers may not be familiar with diagnosis and treatment, are predicted to become more prevalent. Existing health conditions, like asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), are exacerbated by climate threats like heat and smoke. Medications can be impacted by high temperatures, limiting their efficacy. These conditions require new or revised guidance by medical providers. Tracking these trends and communicating to healthcare providers will be necessary as climate impacts become more clear and worsen over time.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ○ Research
- ○ Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE



Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY



Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Track emerging climate-related health risks (e.g., vector-borne disease, impacts on medication).
- Support healthcare professionals with the knowledge and skills to integrate climate change considerations into their practice, leverage relevant technologies, and promote equitable access to climate-resilient healthcare.

Lead department(s)

Health Department



Strategy 3: Initiate a climate and health literacy education campaign to access resources and preventative care.

Why does this matter?

Climate change acts as a "*threat multiplier*," worsening existing health inequities and straining resources. For communities already facing higher rates of chronic disease or housing instability, a heat wave or wildfire smoke event can be a life-threatening crisis. By providing information and access to resources and promoting preventative care, an education campaign can reduce health disparities, improve health outcomes, and enable communities to adapt to climate and environmental challenges.

Putting this into practice

- Empower individuals and communities to make informed decisions about their health and well-being in the face of climate change by improving climate health literacy and facilitating access to resources and preventative care.
- Create a comprehensive Climate Health Literacy Campaign that:
  - Explains the health impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, air pollution, waterborne diseases, and mental health effects.
  - Simplifies scientific information and terminology related to climate and health.
  - Raises awareness about preventative measures, preparedness strategies, and available resources to promote community resilience and adaptation to climate change.

Lead department(s)

Health Department



STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

◯ Advocate ◯ Research
● Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL



Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE



Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY



Low Med High

Strategy 4: Support and participate in climate and health resilience across healthcare systems, coordinated care organizations, emergency management, and local public health authorities.

Why does this matter?

When health systems, emergency responders, and public health authorities operate in silos, it creates gaps in care and life-threatening delays during climate emergencies. A high level of coordination across healthcare systems, emergency management, and the County's Public Health Division can enhance impact, reduce unnecessary redundancies, and streamline the implementation of best practices.

Putting this into practice

- Strengthen regional healthcare coalitions, establish information sharing protocols (possibly in real-time), and develop coordinated emergency plans.
- Create an integrated inventory system to track supplies, personnel, and equipment across all interested parties.
- Engage non-traditional partners (including schools, libraries, community-based organizations) and potentially conduct joint training and exercises.
- Prepare and retrofit hospitals to upgrade for climate emergencies, including air filters, batteries, and other technologies and resources.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

◯ Advocate ◯ Research
● Convene ◯ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ◯ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Authorizing agencies

Oregon Health Authority; Coordinated Care Organizations

Lead department(s)

Health Department





Nature

Every community member is surrounded by and connected to nature, parks, and green infrastructure

Goal: Every community member is surrounded by and connected to nature, parks, and green infrastructure.

Description

Connecting everyone to nature isn't just about recreation; it's about building healthy, resilient communities that thrive in a changing climate. Trees and green spaces are powerful tools for climate action. Trees and open spaces act as nature's filtration system, cleaning our air and water. They combat the urban *heat island* effect, keeping our neighborhoods cooler. This kind of vital communal infrastructure leads to a more vibrant and healthy community, promoting physical activity, community safety, and business district vitality.[56]

Access to these resources, however, is not evenly distributed in Multnomah County. Environmental injustice is clearly visible in our landscape. According to the 2023 Multnomah County Environmental Justice Snapshot, average tree canopy cover is significantly greater in areas home to primarily white, non-Hispanic people compared to areas primarily home to communities of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color. Since trees are linked to health outcomes like birth weight and environmental benefits like cooler temperatures during a heat wave, the lack of tree cover in certain parts of Multnomah County is a glaring example of an existing environmental injustice.

Beyond trees, access to parks and green space is vital to communal and individual well-being. While access to these resources is relatively well distributed in Multnomah County, access can be hampered if people don't feel safe traveling to a park because of dangerous streets or public safety concerns. Parks may also lack amenities that people want to use, like splash pads, seating, shade, and playgrounds. School yards and playgrounds often lack shade, which makes accessing these resources on a hot day unpleasant and potentially dangerous.

A community where everyone feels welcome and safe in their neighborhood park is a healthy community. Moreover, trees, parks, and natural areas are also vital for birds, insects, and other wildlife that call the urban areas of Multnomah County home. The health of the ecosystem is also tied to human health. Communities are eager to prioritize greening in areas with low access to these amenities. Community-based organizations are taking action like removing parking lots to plant gardens at schools and churches. Community members across the county are eager to contribute to this important work.

How we measure progress

Indicator 1: Multnomah County urban area tree canopy cover and demographic disparities.

Description: Tree canopy is the layer of leaves, branches, and stems of trees that covers the ground when viewed from above. These data are collected for the region by Oregon Metro using remote sensing technologies. Average tree canopy cover is significantly greater in areas home to primarily white populations compared to areas with the highest percentage of Black, Indigenous, and other residents of color. Tree canopy in the areas home to the largest share of communities or color is also significantly lower than the county average. Tree canopy data for the region is collected every five years.

Current data: The Multnomah County average is 25.4%; areas with higher proportions of BIPOC residents have canopy levels roughly 4.4% lower than the county average.

Data source: Oregon Metro, RMLIS, Multnomah County Environmental Justice Snapshot



Strategy 1: Prioritize the implementation of park elements in the Vance Vision Plan.

Why does this matter?

The Vance Vision Plan addresses a critical need for the Rockwood neighborhood, which is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse areas in the region. Developed through deep collaboration with local residents, the plan centers the voices of BIPOC, immigrant, and refugee communities, as well as youth, to ensure the park serves as an engine for environmental justice and community growth. By reclaiming this 90-acre site, partly a former quarry and brownfield owned by Multnomah County, the plan mitigates the impacts of formerly extractive industries and provides a safe and expansive recreational space above and beyond any asset in the area. Coupled with affordable housing and economic development opportunities, the plan offers a transformative vision for the community, by the community.

Because the neighboring demographic profile features a high concentration of large families and youth — with nearly 23% of the population under 18 — the park's recreational elements are a necessity for community well-being. The community-led design prioritizes cultural, accessible, and family-friendly gathering spaces and multimodal transportation network improvements that integrate transit access for a population that can greatly benefit from more safe options to get around. Ultimately, implementing these park elements transforms an industrially scarred area into a regional asset that supports both the physical health of East County's youngest and most diverse residents and the economic resilience of its residents. Vance Park is the missing puzzle piece in the greater Gresham trail network and a generational opportunity to invest in a community that has seen decades of underinvestment.

Putting this into practice

- Work with community partners to identify and pursue funding to complete the design of the park.
- Assemble funding, including grant funds, necessary to implement the park designs.
- Establish partnerships with the City of Gresham for the long-term maintenance and management of the park.

Lead department(s)

Department of County Services

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

◯ Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ◯ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE



Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY



Low Med High

Strategy 2: Prioritize street improvements adjacent to parks to increase safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Why does this matter?

Access to parks in terms of geographic distance is relatively well distributed in Multnomah County,[57] but less is known about how easily community members can access parks that may be blocked by busy roads and other barriers in the urban environment. If you don't feel safe letting your child walk alone to the park because you are worried about them crossing a busy road, then even a closeby park is not accessible.

This issue may be more acute in east Portland, west Gresham, and East County cities where the street network is less complete. Neighborhoods with a higher proportion of Black, Indigenous, and other community members of color bear a disproportionate burden of unwalkable streets.[57] The East County Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP), for example, aims to address safety barriers by improving dangerous street crossings, but funding street improvements is a persistent challenge.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Putting this into practice

- Invest in safer routes to parks by implementing the East County Transportation Safety Action Plan. Planned upgrades include better lighting, high-visibility crosswalks, raised crosswalks, protected bike lanes, and ADA-compliant sidewalk repairs.
- Inventory streets near parks in priority neighborhoods to assess access barriers and potential road crossing safety improvements.
- Conduct qualitative research on the experience of people who live near or use parks and their perceptions of safety.

Lead department(s)

Department of County Services, Transportation Division; Health Department, Environmental Health; Office of Sustainability



Strategy 3: Prioritize investment and maintenance of parks in communities with the least access to quality green space.

Why does this matter?

Parks offer environmental health benefits for those living nearby through improved air quality, reduced noise, stormwater management, moderation of temperatures, and the reduction of urban heat island (UHI) effects.[58] Proximity to urban parks also provides opportunities for physical activity, with research suggesting that people living within walking distance of parks are three times more likely to meet recommended amounts of daily physical activity.[59]

While access to parks (measured by proximity) is well distributed in Multnomah County, less is known about the quality of park amenities and perceptions of public safety. Multnomah County tree canopy data may indicate disparities in investment and park quality, or depict recent investments in parks that have yet to experience tree growth and corresponding increases in canopy cover.[57]

Amenities, including good walking paths that are well-lit at night, playgrounds, exercise equipment, playing fields, and shade, along with other features people want for their parks, are important. These amenities can mean the difference between a well-used park and a space that is avoided because it does not feel safe. Prioritizing investment means moving beyond basic lawn maintenance to creating parks that serve as high-quality "climate refuges."

Putting this into practice

- Add amenities to undeveloped parks, including play structures, shade and covered areas, lighting, benches, splash pads, etc., and address maintenance issues.
- Identify parks in high-need neighborhoods and assess current levels of investment to determine priority projects.
- Research and develop metrics to measure park quality and biodiversity that would provide information on the nature-based benefits of parks.

Authorizing agencies

City of Portland, Parks & Recreation; City of Gresham, Parks and Recreation

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
○ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

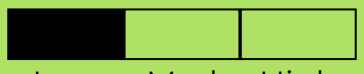
STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ○ Implement

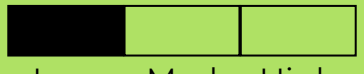
COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY





Artist: Paola De La Cruz

Strategy 4: Prioritize tree planting in low-canopy neighborhoods.

Why does this matter?

Tree canopy is a life-saving public health infrastructure, yet it remains one of the most visible indicators of systemic inequity in Multnomah County. Currently, canopy coverage is significantly lower in neighborhoods with higher concentrations of Black, Indigenous, and people of color, as well as cost-burdened households. This is particularly true east of 82nd Avenue. This "*canopy gap*" leaves some residents disproportionately exposed to extreme heat and poor air quality.

Planting and establishing trees can be a powerful intervention for cooling the surrounding area, among many other benefits. By treating tree canopies as a core component of public infrastructure, communities can ensure that every resident, regardless of zip code, has access to the cooling benefits and ecosystem services essential for survival in a changing climate.

Planting trees, however, is not enough. Asphalt and concrete removal may be necessary to create space for planting trees and making other landscape improvements. In addition, trees need to be watered and structurally pruned for the first few years after planting. The cost of tree care, which is typically the responsibility of the adjacent property owner even when the tree is in the public right of way, can be a major barrier for some households. Tree code requirements for tree planting with new development, the protection of existing canopy trees, and code enforcement are also important elements of a successful urban forestry program.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ● Research
- ○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Putting this into practice

- Fund tree planting in low-tree canopy neighborhoods and develop strategies for maintaining trees in the public right of way in high-priority areas.
- Look for partnership opportunities where the County can help catalyze focused tree planting efforts in high-need neighborhoods, like the Green Gresham, Healthy Gresham project.
- Implement Action 1 (Heat Resilience Focus Areas) from the 2025 Multnomah County Climate and Health Resilience Plan.
- Work with the Multnomah County Department of Community Services to develop street tree planting and maintenance strategy for County-owned rights-of-way.
- Continue to monitor disparities in tree canopy distribution.

Authorizing agencies

City parks & recreation, transportation, and public works departments

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Health Department, Environmental Health

Strategy 5: Develop innovative approaches to providing shade and outdoor refuge from heat.

Why does this matter?

As summer temperatures continue to rise, shade has shifted from a public amenity to a critical health necessity. Many historically disinvested communities face a significant lack of shade, with bus stops, parks, and sidewalks that become dangerous or inaccessible during extreme heat. Prioritizing strategic tree planting around vital assets, such as playgrounds and TriMet bus shelters, can help to mitigate extreme heat and improve climate resilience.

Some communities have also looked to sun shades, solar panel canopies, and reflective coatings to reduce urban heat islands. These strategies may become increasingly urgent as high-heat days threaten the safety of everyday activities. Declines in insect[60] and bird populations — leading indicators of a biosphere under severe stress from climate change — also show that wildlife is suffering. Deliberate interventions in the built environment can help protect people and the natural world we depend on.

Putting this into practice

- Host design competitions with students, academics, landscape architects, and community to identify innovative interventions that can create cooler streets, neighborhood amenities, and wildlife refuges.
- Identify grant funding to implement pilot projects and assess the projects for success.
- Develop best practices for creating shade in school yards, bus stops, playgrounds, and other important community gathering locations.
- Develop strategies to create wildlife oases in parks to help insects and birds withstand extreme heat.

Authorizing agencies

City public works agencies; Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability



STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
◯ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ◯ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High



Transportation

Every community member has access to affordable, reliable and safe transit, biking and pedestrian infrastructure

Goal: Every community member has access to affordable, reliable, and safe transit, biking, and pedestrian infrastructure.

Description

Access to safe, affordable, and reliable transportation options is critical for building equitable communities and for the goal of reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that come from transportation in Multnomah County by 40%. Frontline communities — those disproportionately impacted by both climate change and economic instability — often reside along high-traffic and high-crash corridors. These households also spend more of their income on transportation, with lower-income families spending an average of 30% of their after-tax income on transportation costs.[61]

Walking, biking, and taking public transit can be primary means of transportation for most people, but current infrastructure and policies often make these options less safe and less reliable. The burden of safety must shift beyond the individual to the design of the environment itself, recognizing most crashes are predictable and preventable.

Moving from a car-centric system through strategies like protected bike lanes, well-lit pedestrian crossings, and robust and efficient transit service is an investment in public health, economic well-being, and climate resilience. Reliable pedestrian and transit networks are essential for reducing harmful emissions and improving air quality. Safe active transportation encourages movement that reduces chronic health disparities while simultaneously lowering the community's overall environmental impact.

As the region grows, it is clear that simply building more lanes for cars will not meet community needs. Instead, we must prioritize a more balanced system where every resident, no matter who they are or where they live, can get to where they need to go safely, reliably, and affordably.

How we measure progress

Indicator 1: Traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries.

Description: All traffic-related fatalities are preventable. In the Portland metro region, "traffic-related crashes are the leading cause of unintentional injury and death for people aged 5–24 and second leading cause for those aged 25–84."[62] The Vision Zero approach adopted by Multnomah County and other local government partners aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries on roadways.

Current data: 183 traffic-related deaths between 2023 and 2024 in Multnomah County.

Data source: Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Death Certificates

Indicator 2: Transportation system completeness.

Description: System completeness measures how well the region's transportation systems are designed and built to support different ways of getting around. Metro collects data related to transportation system completeness as part of its regular updates to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) on a five-year cycle. The 2023 RTP established regional goals for completeness: pedestrian, bicycle, and trail networks to be 100% complete by 2035; and transit and motor vehicle systems to be 100% complete by 2045. Completeness is defined as the completion of 100% of the planned networks adopted in the RTP.

Current data: As of the 2023 RTP:

- Motor vehicle network is 98% complete.
- Transit network is 70% complete.
- Pedestrian network is 57% complete.
- Bicycle network is 54% complete.
- Trail network is 44% complete.

Data source: Regional Transportation Plan

Strategy 1: Work with all county jurisdictions to implement a "Safe Systems" approach to the transportation system.

Why does this matter?

Adopting a "*Safe Systems*" approach shifts the focus of transportation-related investments from managing traffic to protecting human life.[63] By prioritizing the East County Transportation Safety Plan and fast-tracking improvements on High Injury Corridors, the County is working to address the systemic inequities where traffic violence disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable road users. Further prioritizing this strategy moves beyond reactionary measures, instead treating traffic crashes as preventable health burdens that require transparent, data-driven reporting. As the local public health authority, Multnomah County can play a primary role in advancing this approach to transportation investments and management.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate
- ● Research
- ○ Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Putting this into practice

- Multnomah County will work with jurisdictional partners and community advocates to consider how and where a "Safe Systems" approach can be integrated into transportation planning and investments.
- The Health Department will regularly report on the health burden of traffic crash injuries.

Lead department(s)

Department of Community Services; Health Department, Environmental Health



Strategy 2: Implement the Urban East Multnomah County Transportation Safety Action Plan.

Why does this matter?

Many of the major roadways in the urban areas of East Multnomah County are designated as High Injury Corridors, meaning that they have some of the highest rates of crashes that result in deaths or serious injury. These roadways were generally designed to prioritize the movement of vehicles, which makes them more prone to traffic moving at unsafe speeds and are largely incompatible with other modes of transportation and community cohesion.

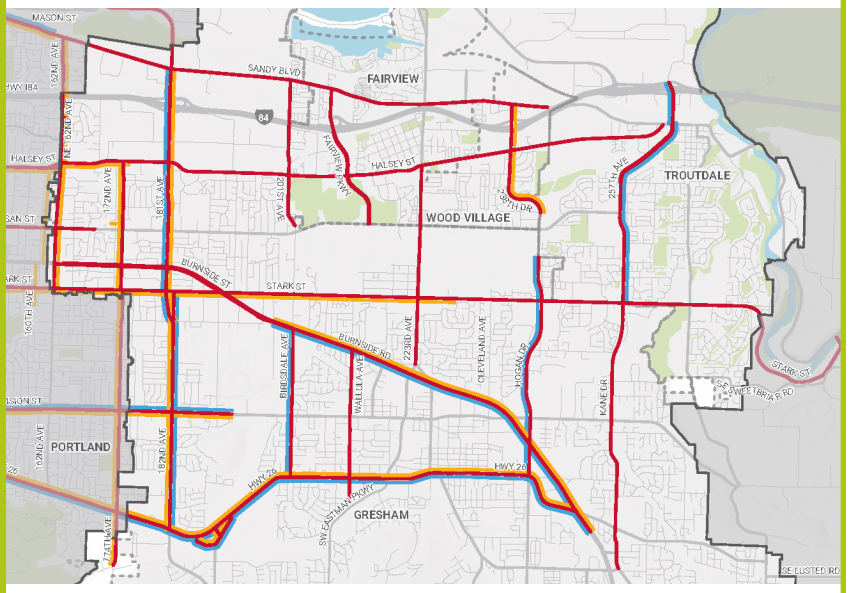
In partnership with the cities of Fairview, Gresham, and Troutdale, the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners adopted the Urban East Multnomah County Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP) in 2026 to guide priorities and investments toward a Vision Zero goal (zero fatalities) across these jurisdictions. The community-centered TSAP is shaped by widespread community safety concerns, including the risks of using active transportation options and the strong desire for safety-related investments in urban East County. When implemented, the TSAP will result in systemwide safety improvements, as well as investments in priority safety corridors. While focused on safety, the TSAP will significantly improve active transportation options for the entire community.

Putting this into practice

- Multnomah County and the TSAP jurisdictional and community partners will advocate for state, regional, and local funding to fully implement the plan.
- To ensure community transparency and accountability to the TSAP, local government partners will regularly report on its implementation and key indicators on transportation safety in their respective areas of the plan.

Lead department(s)

Department of Community Services



STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate ○ Research
- ○ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 3: Accelerate investments in ADA-compliant sidewalks and other publicly accessible pedestrian infrastructure.

Why does this matter?

The 1990 Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and related laws prohibit discrimination against individuals with different physical and mental abilities in order to ensure equal opportunities for all members of our community. The ADA is expansive, but is often first understood in the context of our built environment and the recognition that all community members must be able to physically move around and access the places and resources they need to thrive. This benefits not only individuals with physical differences, but society at large, including families with strollers and workers making deliveries. New construction of roads, buildings, and other infrastructure are required to be universally accessible. However, a significant backlog of existing infrastructure that is not ADA compliant persists.

Putting this into practice

- Multnomah County will continue to pursue additional funding to support the implementation of the 2023 ADA Transition Plan for County-maintained roads.
- Multnomah County will continue to require new developments to implement ADA-compliant improvements along adjacent roadways.
- Work in coalition with community advocates and other partners to secure stable funding for ADA improvements throughout Multnomah County.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

◯ Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Lead department(s)

Department of Community Services



Strategy 4: Secure sustainable transit funding and work toward a universally accessible, high-quality, and resilient transit system.

Why does this matter?

While public transit is a critical strategy to address the climate impacts from the transportation sector, it is also central to realizing a vision of more compact and connected communities. Public transit is an essential service, ensuring that our most vulnerable neighbors have the freedom to move, thrive, and participate fully in the life of our region. Without the foundation of a high-functioning public transit system, the region's economic health and the well-being of the community will be severely impacted.

Transportation is often a household's second-largest expense after housing. However, funding for expanding or even maintaining public transit services is a perennial challenge, including with TriMet, the Portland metro region's public transit provider. New, collaborative approaches to investing and innovating in these services are needed. Efforts like TriMet's "Forward Together" approach to targeted investments and the Portland Bureau of Transportation's Transit Wallet for transportation assistance for low-income residents offer templates to build from.

Adding to the funding strains TriMet faces are the negative impacts climate change has on public transit infrastructure. Currently, the speed and reliability of TriMet's MAX light rail can be compromised during high heat. During a declared emergency, TriMet offers free rides to people accessing cooling or warming shelters. This vital service could be further expanded to allow free service to any destination on days the community is experiencing heat waves, severe storms, flooding, or air quality advisories.

Putting this into practice

- Support efforts at the Oregon Legislature to permanently increase transit funding and ensure stable service and infrastructure investments in the long run.
- Support efforts that reduce the cost of transit for low-income riders like Transit Wallet, and look for opportunities to expand beyond the City of Portland.
- Support the Multnomah Youth Commission's work to actively advocate for a Regional Universal YouthPass that would provide free, year-round transit for all youth 18 and under in the region, regardless of school or financial status.
- Support a policy of fareless rides on all public transit systems within Multnomah County during declared extreme weather events, such as heat waves, severe storms, flooding, or air quality advisories.

Authorizing agencies

TriMet; Oregon State Legislature; Oregon Metro

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
◯ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ◯ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ◯ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Strategy 5: Deliver Safe Routes to School programs in all school districts within Multnomah County.

Why does this matter?

For many families, commuting to school by passenger vehicles is seen as the only safe option, resulting in congestion and additional safety risks for families who cannot or choose not to use other means. Safe Routes to Schools programs combine infrastructure improvements and education to shift the responsibility of student safety from individual families to a collective community standard, ensuring that every child, regardless of their ZIP code, can walk or bike to school without risk. In addition to reducing congestion and traffic accidents, these programs help integrate physical activity into the daily lives of students, reduce environmental impacts around campuses, and foster a sense of belonging within the neighborhood.

Ultimately, prioritizing these infrastructure improvements and educational opportunities is an investment in equitable access to school-based learning, ensuring that a student's journey to the classroom is as secure and supportive as the learning environment itself. School districts and local governments, including Multnomah County, support a number of school-based Safe Routes to School programs throughout the county. However, funding is limited and often grant based, which is a barrier to universal access to these programs.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
◯ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ● Implement

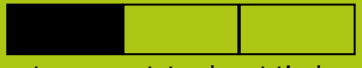
COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Putting this into practice

- Support a coalition of governmental, non-governmental, and community organizations to engage in regional and statewide transportation funding decision-making to secure stable funding for Safe Routes to School programs across Multnomah County.
- Advocate for reforms to Oregon's transportation revenue system, which currently limits the ability to invest in alternative transportation programs like Safe Routes to School.

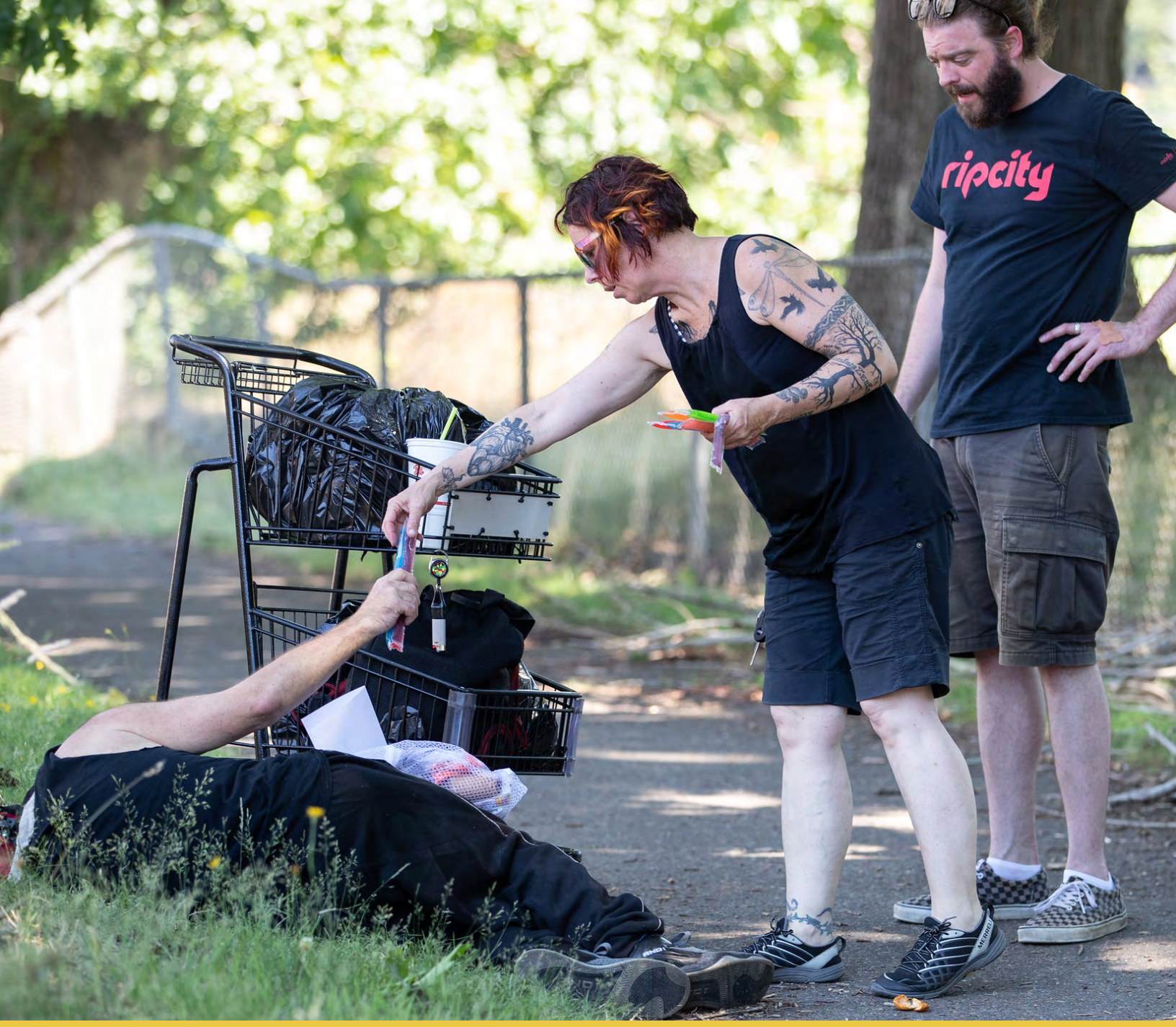
Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Department of Transportation; Metro

Lead department(s)

Department of Community Services





Extreme Weather

Every community member is resilient to extreme weather events and other climate threats

Goal: Every community member is resilient to extreme weather events and other climate threats.

Description

In a world of escalating climate-induced extreme weather, every individual needs to be prepared for, and capable of withstanding and recovering from, the impacts of extreme weather events and other climate-related challenges. This involves a combination of preparedness measures, strong infrastructure, effective emergency response systems, and a community-wide commitment to adaptation and sustainability.

The 2020 wildfires and the 2021 Heat Dome the Pacific Northwest experienced brought into sharp focus the grim realities of what global climate change is bringing to our region. While anyone can be impacted by climate disasters, people are not equally exposed to climate hazards, and those who contribute least to climate change are more often in harm's way. Climate disasters exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, which necessitates preparedness policies and practices that account for social, economic, and health disparities.

Multnomah County utilizes strategic emergency management planning to directly address a growing spectrum of environmental hazards. This focus is primarily aimed at building community resilience to prevent harm to the community in events such as extreme heat, winter weather, long-term power loss, wildfire and wildfire smoke, and severe flooding. These risks, amplified by changing climate patterns, require a more comprehensive and proactive approach to preparedness and response, including additional planning for alerts/warnings and evacuations, and new considerations, such as serving communities who relocate here due to climate impacts.

Ensuring every individual is prepared for climate challenges will save lives and strengthen our community in the face of increasing extreme weather events. By investing in preparedness, infrastructure, and response systems, as well as fostering a culture of resilience, a safer, more sustainable future for all residents is possible. Confronting inequities in systems and investing in community capacity and leadership ensures the entire community can be climate resilient.

How we measure progress

Indicator 1: Number of deaths from hypothermia and hyperthermia.

Description: Multnomah County actively tracks deaths related to extreme weather events, including extreme heat and cold, primarily through the Multnomah County Medical Examiner's Office, the Health Department, and Regional Climate Health dashboards. The total number of excess deaths — the difference between the total number of observed deaths and the expected number of deaths — and instances of severe illness and injuries that are directly attributable to extreme weather events are critical metrics for evaluating the human toll of climate change and the effectiveness of interventions.

Current data: The June 2021 Heat Dome event, which saw record-breaking temperatures of up to 116 degrees Fahrenheit, was the primary cause of 69 heat-related deaths in Multnomah County. Heat-related mortality has decreased since 2021, but it remains a persistent issue. Data shows that the majority of heat-related deaths that occurred in 2021 happened among those living alone in multifamily housing in units that lacked central air conditioning, often on higher floors.

From 2023 to 2025, Multnomah County experienced an average of approximately three deaths per year due to heat. Divorced, widowed, or single men over the age of 60 were most affected. A majority of those who died in that timeframe (n=10) had underlying conditions that contributed to the death. Common conditions included hypertension, kidney disease, and diabetes. Almost all (n=14) were housed.[64]

There were five deaths due to hypothermia in the 2024-2025 winter season, marking a decrease from the previous winter. People experiencing homelessness continue to face the highest risk for cold-related illness.

Data source: Multnomah County Health Department, Summer Seasonal Hazard Brief

Strategy 1: Support green building practices that create more climate resilient homes.

Why does this matter?

Supporting green building practices in Multnomah County is crucial for enhancing community resilience against extreme weather, reducing emissions, and lowering energy costs. These practices, which prioritize durable and energy-efficient designs, protect residents from rising wildfire risks, poor air quality, and heat waves. Advocating for local preference allows communities to implement higher standards and ensure that homes remain at safer temperatures and have clean air for longer during power outages or extreme weather events.

Putting this into practice

- Advocate at the state level to support advanced building codes, including codes that support or allow for local preference for implementation of building standards for housing that is more resilient to extreme weather.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Health Department



STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate
- ● Research
- ○ Convene
- ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 2: Participate in a working group to understand urban conflagration risk and raise awareness of prevention.

Why does this matter?

The devastating Los Angeles Fires in 2025, the Almeda Fire in southern Oregon in 2020, and previous urban wildfire conflagration in Oregon and elsewhere show that urban communities are vulnerable to rapid fire spread due to extreme weather brought on by climate change. Dry summer weather and east winds can combine to create ideal conditions for rapid structure to structure fire spread. The initial danger can be particularly acute in heavily wooded neighborhoods with steep slopes and narrow roads, but these risks also extend to adjacent urban areas where people are less likely to be aware of the danger they are exposed to. Once a wildfire is transmitted into a dense, urban neighborhood, it no longer needs vegetation to spread; wind driven embers spread fire from one structure to the next potentially resulting in exponential growth. Both rural and urban areas can face additional risk from limited evacuation routes.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ○ Research
- ● Convene
- ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

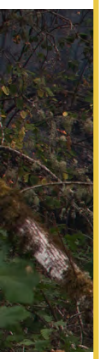
Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Increase awareness for people who live in areas of elevated risk and map out vulnerable populations in those areas.
- Partner with smaller cities and fire districts to increase awareness of wildfire risks.
- Work with partners to bring together experts from fire, emergency management, planning, and other relevant agencies to identify areas of highest concern and priority mitigation strategies.
- Research effective mitigation strategies from other communities.
- Consider other dimensions of risk, such as impacts on insurance including availability and premiums.

Lead department(s)

Office of Emergency Management; Health Department; Office of Sustainability









Artist: Ree Artemisa

Strategy 3: Expand culturally specific outreach before and during extreme weather to ensure everyone in the community knows how to stay safe.

Why does this matter?

Multnomah County and its partners have response plans in place for periods of extreme weather. Responses can include opening dedicated warming/cooling centers and shelters, free transit to warming/cooling shelters, enhanced outreach, and more. Ensuring that the entire community is aware of resources, can take steps to protect themselves, and knows how to get help is vital for keeping people safe. The County utilizes communications platforms like its *Care for When It's Cold*, *Help for When It's Hot*, and *Stay Safe During Smoke and Wildfire Season* websites during extreme weather events to connect people to critical resources and information, but more work is needed to ensure that this information is reaching all communities across the county.

Putting this into practice

- Create resource pages for wildfire and wildfire smoke.
- Assess the impact and effectiveness of communication efforts and adapt them to ensure they are effective in supporting culturally specific communities that may experience language or other barriers and other high-risk populations.
- Continue to invest in relationships with, and the capacity of, culturally specific communities and other high-risk populations to ensure maximum penetration of information during emergency activations.
- Partner with environmental justice organizations to support *community data* collection about community experiences and strategies regarding extreme weather, and incorporate into planning and programs.
- Develop comprehensive data collection and sharing systems to track climate-related impacts on houseless individuals, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

Lead department(s)

Health Department; Office of Emergency Management; Communications Office

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ○ Research
- ○ Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 4: Improve community access to emergency preparedness networks.

Why does this matter?

True resilience is rooted in social cohesion, where community connection serves as a vital lifeline during a crisis. By expanding access to Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NETs) and culturally specific education — by leveraging trusted community health worker models, for example — we can help ensure life-saving resources reach every resident wherever they are. Investing in community-based organizations to lead these efforts transforms neighbors into support systems, integrating disaster preparedness into the daily rhythm of community care so that no one navigates an emergency alone.

Putting this into practice

- Improve social cohesion by expanding access for residents to connect with other community members around emergency preparedness, including Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NETs), resilience workshops, and culturally specific offerings.
- Expand the number and reach of culturally specific resilience education opportunities and training, including leveraging a community health worker model and other popular education approaches.
- Support community-based organizations to lead and conduct their own programs. Incorporate these resources into social service and health education pathways.
- Develop cross-sector training and learning opportunities that promote collaboration between homelessness service providers, climate scientists, and emergency management personnel.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

◯ Advocate ◯ Research
● Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ◯ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Lead department(s)

Office of Emergency Management; Health Department; Office of Sustainability



Strategy 5: Develop a strategy to establish resilience hubs in every neighborhood in Multnomah County.

Why does this matter?

A network of resilience hubs transforms trusted local anchors — like community centers and houses of worship — into "islands of safety" that provide life-saving power for medical devices and cooling during extreme weather. This strategy matters because it shifts leadership to local grassroots leadership and mutual aid networks, ensuring emergency responses are culturally relevant and accessible to those most impacted by climate change. Unlike traditional shelters that sit idle, these hubs act as "steady-state" community assets that provide year-round programming like food access, strengthening the social bonds and energy independence necessary for survival long before a crisis occurs.

Putting this into practice

- In coalition with a broad range of community-based organizations and other government agencies, conduct a comprehensive assessment of community needs, ongoing resources needed to sustain resilience hubs, and potentially suitable locations in each neighborhood, prioritizing frontline and at-risk communities.
- Advocate for resources to develop and sustain a resilience hub network.
- Look for resources that would support solar panels and battery storage at resilience hubs in all neighborhoods.
- Work with community groups to help define what a resilience hub is.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability



STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ◯ Implement

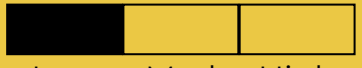
COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ◯ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Strategy 6: Increase access to efficient cooling and air cleaners in homes.

Why does this matter?

Increasing access to efficient cooling and air cleaners is a critical public health intervention. Many households across the county do not have the resources to purchase, or the physical ability to install, cooling or air filtration devices. Multnomah County and other local governments have implemented limited programs to connect low-income households to these resources, but more investment is needed to sustain and expand their reach. This includes exploring innovative funding through Medicaid waivers, ensuring that life-saving climate technology reaches the most vulnerable residents across all of Multnomah County. This strategy shifts our approach from reactive emergency response to proactive protection, ensuring that every home, regardless of ZIP code or income, can serve as a safe refuge during extreme heat and smoke events.

Putting this into practice

- Support legislative efforts that allocate funding for air cleaners and energy efficient cooling, like the Oregon Community Heat Pump Deployment Program.
- Increase funding and expand eligibility for programming to provide more residents with access to air conditioners, heat pumps, and air purifiers, especially for those outside City of Portland boundaries in Multnomah County.
- Explore expanded eligibility criteria for cooling through Medicaid's Health-Related Social Needs benefits.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ◯ Research
● Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ◯ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Health Department





Clean Energy

Every community member has access to affordable clean energy

Goal: Every community member has access to affordable clean energy.

Description

Ensuring that every community member has access to affordable clean energy is a cornerstone of climate justice. Energy is essential to survive and thrive. However, historical and systemic injustices have limited equal access to energy, including to the benefits of clean energy and new technologies.

Our energy systems are changing rapidly due in part to policies that address climate change and to the availability and declining costs of new technologies like solar power and battery energy storage. However, without an explicit commitment to justice, a clean energy future could replicate past harms and leave many behind. A clean energy future in which people cannot afford their energy bills is neither just nor how our community defines success.

The clean energy transition can be a powerful tool for community empowerment, unlocking new job markets and fostering economic prosperity and wealth building. The many organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders engaged in this transition must ensure these benefits also accrue to frontline communities — not only to actors that have traditionally benefited from the energy sector. The clean energy transition is critical to achieving Multnomah County's greenhouse gas reduction goals. If implemented thoughtfully, a clean and just energy transition will also lead to better health outcomes from reduced air and water pollution, as well as additional community resilience.

How we measure progress

Indicator 1: Percentage of energy-burdened households.

Description: Households that spend 6% or more of their total income on home energy costs are considered energy burdened. Those households are often making difficult choices about which expenses to pay, like whether to keep the lights and heat on or pay for food or medical costs.

Current data: 27% of households in Multnomah County were considered energy burdened in 2023.

Data source: Oregon Department of Energy Biennial Energy Report (2024)

Indicator 2: Sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Multnomah County.

Description: Greenhouse gas emissions in Multnomah County are generated predominantly from the combustion of fossil fuels for transportation, heating, and electricity generation. As we transition our energy systems to clean sources of energy, our greenhouse gas emissions will also decrease dramatically. Multnomah County's goal is to transition to 100% clean and renewable sources of energy by 2050, with zero carbon emissions from its energy supply. Electrifying energy systems is the key to enabling this transition. As the community progresses toward these goals, a growing percentage of the energy mix will be attributed to electricity and, to a lesser extent, bio-based fuels.

Current data:

2023 Carbon Emissions by Source

Source	Percentage
Electricity	26%
Gasoline	24%
Natural Gas	21%
Diesel	16%
Process & Fugitive Emissions	4%
Distillate Fuel Oil No. 2	4%
Other Sources	2%
Propane	2%
Solid Waste	2%

Data source: City of Portland Summary of 2023 Multnomah County Carbon Emission and Energy Trends

Goal: Every community member has access to affordable clean energy.

Indicator 3: Sources of electricity serving Multnomah County.

Description: Electrifying transportation, space heating, and other uses is a key pillar of any decarbonization strategy. Electrification is inherently efficient when compared to burning fossil fuels. For example, an automobile loses over half of the energy from gasoline to waste heat, while an electric vehicle uses nearly all of the energy stored in its batteries for moving the vehicle. However, the source of that electricity is equally important. Today, an electricity system powered with clean technologies like solar, wind, or storage can be more cost-effective than one powered by coal and natural gas. The Oregon Legislature and local governments, including Multnomah County, have adopted important policies to transition the state's utilities to all renewable sources, but much work remains.

Current data:

Multnomah County Grid Electricity Generation Mix (2023)

Source	Percentage
Natural Gas	38%
Unspecified	15%
Coal	14%
Hydro	12%
Wind	11%
Solar	5%
Bonneville Power Admin.	4%
Biogas	<1%
Biomass	<1%
Geothermal	<1%
Fuel Oil	<1%
Hydrogen Fuel Cell	<1%
Other Anthropogenic	<1%

Data source: City of Portland Summary of 2023 Multnomah County Carbon Emission and Energy Trends

Indicator 4: Renewable energy generation in Multnomah County.

Description: Nearly all of the electricity consumed in Multnomah County comes from outside its borders; much of our electricity comes from across the Pacific Northwest and beyond. There is value in having sources of electricity supply across a diversity of technologies and locations. For example, wind often is strongest when the sun isn't shining and wind production in regions like Montana tend to match well with local energy use patterns. Electricity supply and demand can differ across geographies at different times, and a connected system means that resources can be optimized, creating system efficiencies and cost savings. However, localized energy sources can also have significant economic and resilience value while supporting self-determination. Multnomah County and its communities have made a shared commitment to secure at least 2% of electricity used in Multnomah County from local, community-based resources.

Current data: As of 2023, 1.1% of the electricity used in the City of Portland is generated from renewable sources within its borders.

Data source: City of Portland Climate and Energy Dashboard



Strategy 1: Decarbonize Multnomah County operations and strengthen the resilience of County infrastructure.

Why does this matter?

The Multnomah County government has long been considered a leader in sustainable operations. From installing one of the first green roofs in the region to the recent completion of a new net-zero building (the Library Operations Center), examples of the County's leadership abound. Multnomah County must continue to be an example of the decarbonized future for the whole community.

This strategy will prioritize the replacement of equipment at or near the end of its useful life with low- or zero-carbon alternatives to minimize any disruption of critical community services and budget impacts. Further savings will come from avoided utility costs thanks to energy efficiency and renewable energy generation. Additionally, as part of its decarbonization efforts, the County will also look for opportunities to "harden" its infrastructure against climate extremes to help ensure operational continuity.

Putting this into practice

- Maximize solar generation opportunities at County facilities; leverage County facilities and properties for the development of community-benefitting clean energy projects, like community solar.
- Implement a fleet decarbonization plan with the goal of fully decarbonizing by 2050.
- Implement a capital improvement plan to electrify County facilities, prioritizing end-of-life system upgrades.
- Work to connect County buildings to thermal energy networks when those become available.
- Develop low-carbon building materials standards.
- Evaluate critical County infrastructure for durability and operability under climate extremes.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ○ Research
- ○ Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Lead department(s)

Department of County Assets; Office of Sustainability



Strategy 2: Support rate setting processes that better consider affordability and other residential customers' interests, including limiting rate increases.

Why does this matter?

Energy affordability is critical to ensuring a just energy transition. Energy utility rates have steadily and significantly increased over the past five years (~50% from 2021 to 2025) and are likely to continue to increase. New programs have been established by the Oregon Legislature and the Oregon Public Utility Commission to provide additional support to low-income ratepayers who are experiencing energy burden and to address the risk of additional increases related to utilities serving customers like large data centers. More work is needed to fully address energy burden in the state, as well as to ensure that all communities are able to benefit from new and existing technologies that offer energy savings opportunities.

Putting this into practice

- Engage with the Legislature and Oregon Public Utility Commission on policies and proceedings that have the potential to mitigate rate increases for residential customers and to ensure that utilities are incentivized to both limit their costs and not shift risks to residential customers — while meeting state policy and prioritizing community benefits.
- Support efforts that better utilize existing grid assets and other strategies that avoid excessive capital spending and better utilize distributed energy resources.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability



STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate
- ○ Research
- ○ Convene
- ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 3: Strengthen policies and programs that reduce disconnections and energy burden for low-income people of Multnomah County, and expand accessibility to these programs by reducing barriers and expanding robust outreach to eligible communities.

Why does this matter?

Oregon has had programs that offer some support to low-income customers for decades, although they have never been sufficiently funded to ensure energy security for all Oregonians with low incomes. These program offerings have expanded and evolved over time, and have helped countless families.

Persistent grassroots advocacy has delivered crucial policies like House Bill (HB) 2475, the Energy Affordability Act (2021), giving the Oregon Public Utility Commission the authority to consider energy burdens on low-income customers and other economic, social equity, or environmental justice factors that affect affordability. Last year, HB 3792 (2025) doubled funding for bill assistance grants for Pacific Power and Portland General Electric customers, setting a framework for funding these grants to keep pace with bill increases.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ○ Research
- ○ Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

These and other policies have resulted in new approaches to address energy burden in the state, including programs that allow households to receive a discount in their utility bill based on their income, forgiveness and other programs for utility debt relief, and stronger disconnection protections. Additional work is needed to ensure that community members with low incomes can access these programs and avoid the harms that stem from disconnections.

Putting this into practice

- Continue to advocate for policies and programs that prevent disconnections for low-income customers, including robust discount and bill assistance grants that keep pace with rising energy rates and evolving disconnection protections and utility debt relief tools that target those most vulnerable.
- Continue to advocate for reduced barriers to accessing and remaining enrolled in energy programs.
- Continue to advocate for improvements in utility outreach about energy assistance programs and protections, and support through programs at Multnomah County that work with potentially eligible households.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Department of County Human Services, Youth and Family Services Division

Strategy 4: Support efforts to accelerate strategic electrification in buildings.

Why does this matter?

The 2025 Oregon Energy Strategy emphasizes that accelerating *strategic electrification* in buildings is a fundamental "least-cost pathway" to meeting the state's energy and climate goals. For electrification to be considered strategic, it must advance one of the following areas without adversely affecting the others: 1) benefits consumers over the long run; 2) enables better grid management; and 3) reduces negative environmental impacts.

By transitioning from fossil fuel combustion to high-efficiency electric systems, like heat pumps, Oregon can significantly reduce its overall energy demand — modeled to drop 22% by 2050 — while simultaneously lowering greenhouse gas emissions. This shift is critical for affordability, as it helps families and businesses avoid the rising costs and risks associated with fossil fuels, and leverages technologies that are more efficient to operate over the long term.

Beyond cost containment and climate benefits, electrification can be a cornerstone for grid reliability and public health. Electrified buildings equipped with smart technology can act as flexible resources, shifting energy use to times when renewable sources like wind and solar are most abundant, or reducing use during times when there is a lot of demand for electricity. This flexibility can reduce the need for costly new generation and transmission projects.

Furthermore, removing onsite combustion improves indoor air quality and public health. By focusing on an equitable transition, this strategy ensures that the resulting economic growth — estimated to support up to 16,000 new jobs — benefits all Oregonians while creating a more resilient and dependable energy future.

Putting this into practice

- Advocate for changes to federal and state programs, as well as Energy Trust of Oregon offerings, to explicitly support the electrification of end uses, including fuel switching from methane (natural gas) to electric sources of heating and cooking.
- Advocate for changes in community action partner (weatherization) programs so that strategic electrification is a funded measure.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate
- ○ Research
- ○ Convene
- ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

- ● Existing
- ○ Additional
- ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Strategy 5: Engage in policy conversations related to achieving clean energy goals while maintaining reliability and affordability.

Why does this matter?

Through a set of legislative, executive, and regulatory actions, Oregon has established a clear pathway to transition from a fossil-based economy to a clean energy future. This transition is exceedingly complex, considering that energy reliability and affordability must be maintained throughout the process.

Complicating the transition is the fact that after decades of limited growth in demand for electricity, the Pacific Northwest is facing significant new growth in electricity demand primarily due to large data centers and, to a lesser extent, end-use electrification. Fortunately, there are a number of solutions, such as large- and small-scale battery energy storage — which can both store excess renewable energy generation and be used to shift demand when resources are available — that are now cost effective and ready to be deployed at scale to meet the challenge.

However, without a full consideration of the issues and space for everyone to be heard, there is a significant risk that those with the fewest means will be left worse off. Local government voices are key in those conversations and processes given their close interaction with constituencies, their roles as large utility customers, and their ability to engage in energy regulatory spaces. In addition, the County, through the Office of Sustainability, meaningfully supported environmental justice coalitions' efforts to share their important perspectives in regulatory and policy spaces.

Finally, decision makers, advocates, and implementation partners need complete, transparent, and accurate information to navigate different scenarios and opportunities. Efforts like the Oregon Energy Strategy provide a foundation for transparency and collaborative problem-solving, and it is critical that local governments, as well as environmental justice and other community voices, continue to participate actively and meaningfully.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate
- ○ Research
- ○ Convene
- ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

- ● Existing
- ○ Additional
- ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Putting this into practice

- Advocate for the full implementation of major climate policies in Oregon, including HB 2021 (2021), the Climate Protection Program, and others at the Oregon Legislature, the Oregon Public Utility Commission, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and other relevant regulatory and decision-making bodies.
- Advocate for transparency and accuracy in the energy planning environment — such as identifying energy pathways that maximize community benefits while meeting current and future needs, and a full consideration of the environmental benefits and risks of alternative fuel sources like hydrogen, bio-methane, and liquid bio-fuels.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability

Strategy 6: Support efforts by environmental justice communities to influence decision-makers on energy rates and other energy-related policy issues.

Why does this matter?

The voices of *environmental justice community* members have historically been left out of decision-making spaces that impact the cost of their energy and access to energy investments and their related benefits (e.g., the economic and environmental benefits of rooftop solar). While organizations like the Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB) have raised concerns on behalf of residential and low-income rate-payers, it is only in the past 10 years that additional justice- and community-oriented voices have been able to engage more deeply in energy-related policy at the Legislature and the Oregon Public Utility Commission. This increased engagement has required a tremendous commitment from these organizations as they have grown their capacity and expertise while demanding changes to make regulatory processes more accessible. They have also successfully advocated for funding to support their efforts to bring their crucial perspective to energy decision-making spaces.

More recently, environmental justice organizations and communities have worked to bring their perspectives directly to decision makers. Consequently, new approaches to decision-making in energy spaces are underway, such as training for community members and translation services at regulatory proceedings. But these efforts will require a sustainable investment in community expertise and their capacity to engage. The Office of Sustainability has played a key supporting role in these efforts, providing expertise and capacity to coalition efforts.

Putting this into practice

- Continue to work with community partners to expand the capacity of community-based organizations and grassroots advocates to promote their priorities at the state level. These efforts include the Energy Justice Cohort that Multnomah County has co-facilitated for three years in collaboration with several energy and environmental justice partner organizations.
- Continue to partner with community-based organizations to secure grant funding for ongoing projects like the Energy Justice Cohort.
- Continue providing support in coalition spaces that allow *energy justice* advocates to leverage each other's expertise and advance policy wins on energy burden and community clean energy programs, as well as other energy justice priorities.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ● Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Strategy 7: In partnership with environmental justice communities, develop a shared definition and vision of energy justice and identify quantitative and qualitative data to measure progress over time.

Why does this matter?

Energy justice is a critical component of climate justice, but a lack of shared understanding of what this means in practice and how it can be measured over time can be a barrier to its full consideration in the complex energy planning space. Investments in distributed and community-based renewable energy can provide significant opportunities for community benefit, but there is often a disconnect between community priorities and traditional energy planning processes. The impact of programs and policies that seek to address energy burden may be limited without centering community experience in their development.

A strong foundation for this effort, however, is in place. Multnomah County's 100x50 Resolution (2017-046) includes an initial goal of meeting at least 2% of the community's total energy needs with community-based renewable energy infrastructure. Community-benefitting clean energy infrastructure is also an important feature of HB 2021 (2021), Clean Energy for All, and its subsequent implementation. HB 2475 (2021), the Energy Affordability Act, presents new opportunities to deepen understanding of energy burden, including through new data collection and reporting measures. Each of these efforts would benefit from a strengthened understanding of energy justice and from additional real-world community experience and expertise collected through new community-led qualitative data collection approaches.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Putting this into practice

- Convene environmental justice stakeholders to develop and articulate a shared vision of energy justice, including specific outcomes related to community-based renewable energy, energy resilience, and energy burden.
- Support community-led efforts to gather community experience and insights related to energy justice, and prioritize those in the County's energy-related programs and advocacy.
- Refine the energy-related indicators in the Climate Justice Plan to include county-level data on energy justice, including utility disconnections, bill discount program participation, and community-based energy assets.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability

Strategy 8: Support transportation electrification in the community, especially for households most burdened by transportation costs and who have limited access to electric vehicles or charging equipment.

Why does this matter?

The Oregon Energy Strategy highlights vehicle electrification as a cornerstone of its "least-cost pathway," noting that transitioning to electric vehicles (EVs) provides substantial financial relief for Oregonians over the long term. Modeling within the strategy found that electrification offers one of the best opportunities to reduce energy use and save households money during the energy transition. According to the strategy's "Energy Wallet" analysis, while the upfront cost of an EV may be higher, most households will experience significant net savings due to lower fueling and maintenance expenses. Furthermore, because electric motors are far more energy-efficient than gasoline engines, electrifying on-road transportation is projected to reduce the state's total economy-wide energy demand by 27%.

Beyond direct financial savings, this strategy identifies critical systemic and public health benefits. When combined with efforts to reduce total vehicle miles traveled, electrification will provide the greatest local air quality improvements, drastically reducing harmful pollutants like nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. To support this transition, local initiatives, such as those in Multnomah County, are expanding the network of publicly accessible chargers at community-serving locations like libraries.[66] This infrastructure is vital for ensuring equity, particularly for residents of apartment buildings who cannot charge at home. Additionally, a growing fleet of EVs can act as a flexible grid resource, shifting demand away from peak hours through managed charging. This flexibility can reduce the need for costly new power plants and transmission infrastructure, ultimately benefiting all utility ratepayers while improving air quality and health outcomes across the state.[67]

Putting this into practice

- Expand the number of electric vehicle chargers available at public locations owned by the County.
- Advocate for the continuation of programs like Oregon's Charge Ahead Rebate and other incentives that support low-income household access to EVs.
- Advocate for utility programs that cost-effectively leverage the grid flexibility value of electric vehicles.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Department of Community Assets

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ○ Research
○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Strategy 9: Expand access to and the scope of low- and moderate-income residential energy efficiency programs to promote health, stability, and resilience.

Why does this matter?

The County has a long-standing low-income home weatherization program that helps to stabilize households by lowering energy bills and addressing household hazards. The County's weatherization program focuses on the lowest-income households and serves people living in apartment buildings and single family homes. These households are not well served by market solutions and may struggle with access to financing for projects or may have only limited options as renters. In addition, deferred maintenance and home repairs often have to be completed first in order to make energy-related investments in a household.

Recent efforts like the Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) offer new opportunities to serve communities in need, and it is critical that providers work together to align services around the best outcomes for community members. This includes pursuing additional funding to serve more households outside of the city of Portland who cannot be served by PCEF and new partnerships that bring together health, social service, and other community providers around shared goals. Given the number of challenges community members face and the limited resources to serve them, residential programs should simultaneously address energy burden, aging in place, safety, resilience, and comfort.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ○ Research
○ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Putting this into practice

- Pursue new sources of funding, including grants, that support expanding the number of low-to-moderate income people who can access weatherization, home electrification, and energy resilience opportunities.
- Align with and leverage efforts and funding that supports healthy housing, aging in place, and other housing stabilization approaches.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Department of County Human Services



Strategy 10: Support policies and programs that reduce barriers to community members accessing distributed energy resources and other technologies that can bring value to both the customer and the electricity system and support a just energy transition.

Why does this matter?

Distributed energy resources have a direct impact on household energy use, offering energy solutions that empower individuals to address their energy footprint and manage costs. These solutions include rooftop and community solar, battery energy storage, smart thermostats and demand response, and energy efficiency measures like heat pumps. These solutions can also support communities by creating value for households in the form of reduced energy bills, improved health and comfort, and energy resilience in case of power disruptions. These solutions can benefit all customers by increasing the utilization of the existing grid, and can typically be implemented much more quickly than larger-scale approaches. This approach supports the transition of the larger grid by providing small-scale solutions that translate to larger positive impacts on grid capacity.

Putting this into practice

- Collaborate with energy justice partners to advocate in utility planning and regulatory spaces for the prioritization of community-based and distributed energy resources to meet existing and future energy needs, as well as in potential future legislation.
- Advocate for approaches that ensure access to distributed resources for low- and moderate-income households.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Public Utility Commission



STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
◯ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ◯ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Strategy 11: Support policies to ensure utilities use ratepayer funds in the public interest.

Why does this matter?

Utility companies have a legitimate need to communicate with regulators and the public. However, because the utilities serving Multnomah County residents and businesses are regulated monopolies, there is a risk that ratepayer funds may be used for lobbying activities that can be, or can be perceived to be, outside the interest of their customers. Previous legislative reform efforts have sought to bring more transparency and rigor to how utilities spend ratepayer dollars on these activities, but have not been successful. These efforts would not prohibit companies from using their own resources for legislative lobbying or membership in trade organizations.

Putting this into practice

- Support efforts to advocate at the Oregon Legislature, Oregon Public Utility Commission, and other venues to clarify which lobbying activities may be in the public interest, and to prohibit utilities from using ratepayer funds for activities that fall outside of that scope.
- Work with energy justice advocates and regulators to help ensure ratepayer-funded energy-related information from utilities provides fair consideration of an issue.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
○ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ○ Research
○ Convene ○ Implement

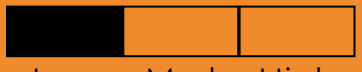
COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature, Oregon Public Utility Commission



Strategy 12: Support the development of thermal energy networks to provide energy efficient heating and cooling to buildings.

Why does this matter?

During community engagement related to the draft Climate Justice Plan, thermal energy networks were an area of shared enthusiasm among advocates, utilities, industry, and others. This new technology takes advantage of stable underground temperatures to deliver highly energy-efficient building heating and cooling. The technology is not in wide use, but has been implemented elsewhere in the United States, and these systems hold promise in the Pacific Northwest. Public buildings, in particular, could be important institutional anchor tenants that may help make these projects more feasible.

Putting this into practice

- Work with energy justice advocates, industry, and utility partners to complete a feasibility analysis of potential thermal energy networks to identify project economics, energy reliability, project locations, and other considerations.
- Work with partners to consider a demonstration project to show a proof of concept and to identify grant money to help pay for initial planning and capital investment costs.
- Explore connecting Multnomah County-owned sites to thermal energy networks as they are developed.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Department of Energy; Cities

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
◯ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ◯ Implement

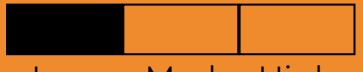
COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL

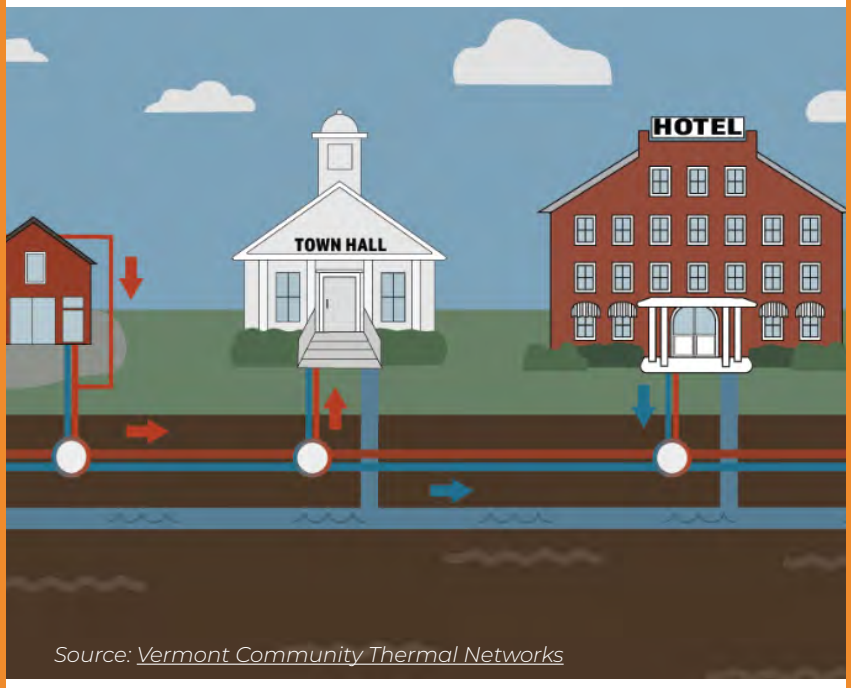


COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY





Source: Vermont Community Thermal Networks



Fossil Fuels

Every community member is safe from the risks posed by fossil fuels and energy infrastructure

Goal: Every community member is safe from the risks posed by fossil fuels and energy infrastructure.

Description

Fossil fuels endanger the planet and disproportionately harm frontline communities by stoking climate change and accelerating the environmental degradation of ecosystems, among other harms. At the same time, fossil fuels have been an important part of the economy, providing the vast majority of transportation fuels and a large portion of commercial and residential heating fuels. The infrastructure that supports the use of fossil fuels — from well heads in far-off places and large tank farms that supply a region, to a single gas pump fueling a car — is woven into the fabric of communities. The risks may be hard to recognize at first due to the ubiquity of fossil fuel infrastructure, but these systems can pose significant risks and cause serious harm when accidents occur.

The Oregon Department of Energy's 2025 Oregon Energy Strategy identified various pathways to meeting the State's energy policy. Under its "least-cost pathway," total fuel consumption will drop by 70% by 2050, and most remaining fuels will shift from being fossil based to low-carbon alternatives.[67]

A transition to cleaner sources of fuel will need to be carefully managed; legacy systems need to be maintained in good working order up to the point they are no longer needed. At the same time, as we consider alternative technologies like low-carbon fuels, we must also be thoughtful about any risks they may pose to our communities in the future.

In addition to the risks that fossil fuel use poses to the health and well-being of individuals and the planet, the infrastructure supporting the fossil fuel economy poses a significant threat in Multnomah County specifically. Multnomah County is home to the Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) Hub, a stretch of fuel depots along the Willamette River north of downtown Portland. The CEI Hub stores 90% of the liquid fuels used in Oregon and is situated on soils that will liquefy during a major earthquake. The CEI Hub poses a grave threat to the community that is being addressed through new state rules like the Fuel Tank Seismic Stability Program. Other facilities that store hazardous toxic inhalants and smaller fuel facilities are not currently regulated for seismic stability.

How we measure progress

Indicator 1: Percentage of Multnomah County energy derived from fossil fuels.

Description: Gasoline, diesel fuel, and natural gas are the three primary fossil fuels combusted in Multnomah County for energy. In addition, significant portions of the electricity used in Multnomah County are generated from the combustion of coal and natural gas. Fossil fuels will decrease over time as a percentage of total energy use due to electrification and the use of other alternative clean fuels.

Current data:

Energy Type	% Fossil Fuel Based
Electricity	63% (Coal, Methane)
Gasoline	90%
Diesel	70%
Natural Gas	~99% (Methane)

Data Source: City of Portland, Summary of 2023 Multnomah County Carbon Emission and Energy Trends

Indicator 2: Number of annual carbon monoxide poisonings resulting in an emergency room or urgent care (ED/UC) visit.

Description: Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless toxic gas byproduct of combustion that can result in injury or death at sufficient exposure levels. A combustion appliance that is not properly vented to the outdoors can result in a dangerous build up of carbon monoxide.

Current data: 25 ED/UC visits October 2024-April 2025.

Data Source: Oregon ESSENCE, Oregon Health Authority

Strategy 1: Regulate liquid fuel storage facilities not currently covered by the DEQ Fuel Tank Seismic Stability Program.

Why does this matter?

According to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), there are eight facilities with fuel storage capacity between 50,000 and 1 million gallons in Multnomah County not regulated by the DEQ Fuel Tank Seismic Stability Program. These facilities may have a similar seismic risk profile to regulated facilities. DEQ anticipates spills from these facilities after an earthquake would result in significant negative public health and environmental impacts.[68] These smaller facilities, which still pose a substantial risk, should be included in a comprehensive above ground storage safety program, similar to the existing statewide below ground storage program.

Putting this into practice

- Conduct a study of above ground fuel storage facilities not covered by the DEQ Fuel Tank Seismic Stability Program to understand the geographic distribution and demographic risks from tank failures.
- Advocate for the creation of a comprehensive above ground storage safety program.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ● Research
- ○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Environmental Quality Commission; Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Lead Department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Office of Emergency Management



Strategy 2: Protect communities from uncontrolled release of stored hazardous materials.

Why does this matter?

A 2023 Multnomah County report, Risk of Earthquake-Induced Hazardous Materials Releases in Multnomah County, Oregon: Two Scenarios Examined, found serious risks posed by the storage of hazardous industrial chemicals, including toxic inhalation hazards, that are vulnerable to uncontrolled release because of an earthquake. Most of the highest-risk hazardous facilities in Multnomah County are in liquefaction zones in North Portland and along the Columbia River Slough. These areas also tend to have higher proportions of environmental justice communities. The report modeled the release of chemicals from four facilities that store toxic inhalants in above ground tanks and found that a seismically induced uncontrolled release could result in up to 2,500 deaths and 17,000 potential injuries. The report identified 70 "type-2" facilities in Multnomah County that store gaseous hazardous materials that may pose a public health threat in case of release.

Much is still unknown about the extent of this threat, including the risks from facilities in neighboring jurisdictions. More analysis is needed to better understand the risk, current industry and regulatory practices, and what steps are needed to better protect public health. Many communities impose a fee on the storage of hazardous materials both to fund emergency response and to encourage the use of alternative materials that pose less of a risk to the public.

Putting this into practice

- Explore seismic requirements for stored hazardous materials identified in the report, and conduct further modeling to understand the scope of risk posed to Multnomah County residents.
- Work with state and local jurisdictional partners to explore and support development of a hazardous material storage fee to fund better emergency response capability, especially in areas close to hazardous material storage.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Office of Emergency Management

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
◯ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ◯ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY





Strategy 3: Research the potential public health implications of hydrogen when used to replace natural gas for residential and commercial use.

Why does this matter?

Many studies suggest that hydrogen will play an important role in a fully decarbonized future, as it does not create greenhouse gas emissions when burned. Hydrogen can be used as a battery to store renewable electricity for later use or to directly replace fossil fuel use in heating, manufacturing, and even transportation. While hydrogen can be produced from renewable energy, often called green hydrogen, most hydrogen used today is derived from methane gas, called grey hydrogen. As expanded use will require significant infrastructure investments, clarity about hydrogen sources and their respective environmental and economic value is critical.

Additional consideration is needed when blending hydrogen in the natural gas supplied to homes and businesses. The natural gas system is made of many interconnected components, including transmission pipelines, neighborhood distribution systems, and home appliances. Understanding how different hydrogen blending rates interact with the legacy system are critical for understanding overall safety. For example, hydrogen can ignite more easily than methane, and can also leak more easily, in part because of its potential to embrittle metal distribution system components and leak through polymer based pipes.[69] In recognition of the potential safety challenges, the 2025 Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 685 that requires gas companies to inform customers and the Oregon Public Utility Commission if they plan on blending more than 2.5% hydrogen into the gas system. Additional study is needed to understand the safety implications of hydrogen blending safety with existing home appliances, including issues like flashback and impacts on indoor air pollution.[70]

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
○ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Putting this into practice

- Request that state agencies:
  - Review literature and convene experts to compile a technical understanding of potential benefits and risks.
  - Host community forums to bring together parties interested in understanding the potential benefits and risks of hydrogen as a fuel source.
  - Use gathered information to inform future planning and regulatory decisions.
- Advocate for additional regulations if appropriate.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Public Utility Commission; Oregon Department of Energy

Strategy 4: Manage the transition of fossil fuel service "gas" stations.

Why does this matter?

Gasoline and diesel fuel can be dangerous if not properly handled. As a result, gas stations are subject to a variety of regulations to ensure safety. Regulatory requirements include fire suppression standards, underground storage tank regulations, and air quality permits. The introduction of battery electric vehicles (BEV) presents a new challenge for gas station businesses, including the decision to include new charging infrastructure to complement gas and diesel sales. Gas stations that serve a primarily local market may be particularly hard pressed because approximately 80% of BEV charging happens at home,[71] and smaller stations may lack the capital assets to invest in charging infrastructure.

With the sales of BEVs increasing, Oregon is entering a period of mid-transition — a time of overlap between existing fossil fuel infrastructure and a future state where BEVs are dominant. The mid-transition requires deliberate management to ensure continued access to fueling stations, while also focusing on a rapid phase-in of clean technologies.[72] Ideally, management of this transition unfolds in such a way where the cleanest and most efficient services are not inadvertently lost.

Putting this into practice

- Conduct research to understand thresholds in fossil fueling infrastructure that may lead to closures and how the transition can be effectively managed to limit disruptions while maximizing benefits.
- Advocate for additional regulatory oversight of fossil fueling stations in Multnomah County that considers opportunities to transition sites to EV charging and remediate site contamination when closures occur.
- Consider strategies, like a prohibition on new gas station developments in Multnomah County, that also recognize the need to modernize existing fueling stations, meet changing geographic demand, and minimize environmental harms.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Department of Energy; Oregon Department of Environmental Quality; Cities



STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
◯ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
◯ Convene ◯ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ◯ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 5: Identify and pursue regulatory pathways to limit the growth of the natural gas system and support integrated energy planning across electric and gas utilities.

Why does this matter?

The transition to clean energy sources and the strategic electrification of end uses like home heating need to be carefully managed. The natural gas system provides nearly half of winter heating needs in Multnomah County and can provide some resilience value in the case of an electrical outage. However, natural gas combustion needs to be addressed because it represents 21% of greenhouse gases in Multnomah County.[5] Alternatives to natural gas like renewable natural gas and hydrogen face significant questions about cost effectiveness and availability.[73] Limiting the growth of the gas system reduces the risk that new investments are underutilized.[73] This helps address the concern that households and businesses unable to electrify are left to pay more for a gas system whose costs are shared across fewer customers.

Households with older, inefficient gas furnaces can already save on heating bills by switching to high-efficiency heat pumps,[74] and the Oregon Energy Strategy's least cost pathway assumes most households will use electricity for home heating by 2050.[67] However, new demands on the electricity system from household electrification, including electric vehicles and the growth of large energy users like data centers, could overwhelm existing electricity supplies especially during periods of high demand. Significant attention is being paid to ensuring electricity supply availability, but integrated energy planning across electric and gas utilities is needed to ensure reliability, resilience, and affordability across the transition to clean energy.[67] This strategy aligns with regional precedents in limiting gas system expansion and the Oregon Energy Strategy's call for greater transparency and joint planning across utilities.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ● Research
- ○ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL



Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE



Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY



Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Advocate at the state level and explore local legal pathways to limit expansion of the natural gas system in Multnomah County.
- Explore regulatory options for limiting risk to residential customers carried by future stranded assets of the gas system, including the accelerated depreciation of existing assets, enhanced assistance for low- and moderate-income households, and other approaches.
- Advocate for and engage in joint energy planning across the gas and electric energy systems to ensure reliability and support a *just transition*.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability

Strategy 6: Add seismic safety valves to residential and commercial natural gas connections.

Why does this matter?

Natural gas leaks are dangerous and require immediate action. In the case of an earthquake, the connection point between a building and the gas system, typically near a gas meter, can break, leak, and even catch fire.[75] Automatic shutoff valves can stop the flow of gas and prevent the uncontrolled release of gas.

According to Northwest Natural (NWN), overlapping redundancies exist in their system to limit damage to the gas system from an earthquake. These include valves that will automatically close if there is a loss of pressure, flexible polymer distribution pipes that are more resistant to earthquakes, and investments in retrofitting gas meters with smart meters that can shut off automatically. NWN is currently modernizing about 10% of gas meters with ultrasonic smart meters that have automatic shutoff capabilities.[76] Dangers still exist, however, and automatic shutoff valves installed on the customer side of the meter can stop the flow of gas between the meter and the customer and provide an extra layer of protection. These valves are relatively inexpensive, but must be installed by a professional.

Putting this into practice

- Require seismic shutoff valves for new installation of gas meters that do not have a built-in emergency (seismic) shutoff.
- Explore new programs that help gas customers retrofit existing gas connections with emergency (seismic) shutoff valves.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Public Utility Commission



STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High



Contribute

Every community member has the opportunity to contribute to climate justice in Multnomah County

Goal: Every community member has the opportunity to contribute to climate justice in Multnomah County.

Description

Climate justice is not a destination reached through policy alone; it is the active practice of shifting power to marginalized communities. It requires us to ask not only who receives resources, but how decisions are made, whose voices are prioritized, and how historical harms are acknowledged and repaired.

For too long, decisions made behind closed doors have misaligned with lived experiences and community priorities. Frontline communities are not a monolith; they experience climate impacts uniquely across Multnomah County's diverse populations and neighborhoods.

For every community member to have true access and autonomy in how they contribute to climate justice, it requires moving the spectrum of engagement to ownership.[77] By shifting how we approach climate planning from tokenization and mere information-sharing toward community ownership, community leadership and co-creating strategies, we ensure that climate action is no longer something imposed upon the community, but something built by them. Realizing this vision requires the active dismantling of systemic barriers through steps like deliberate outreach and engagement to hard to reach populations, addressing language accessibility, and ongoing relationship building. Only by shifting power can we foster a lasting culture of mutual trust and genuine civic empowerment.

How we measure progress

Indicator 1: Voter participation rates, including by age and geography for general election.

Description: The Multnomah County Elections Division developed a Visualization Dashboard Pilot that showed detailed breakdown of voter turnout in Multnomah County for the November 2024 Election, comparing voter turnout by precinct to census block demographic data. This map provides insights into who is voting and which communities are engaging with the democratic process.

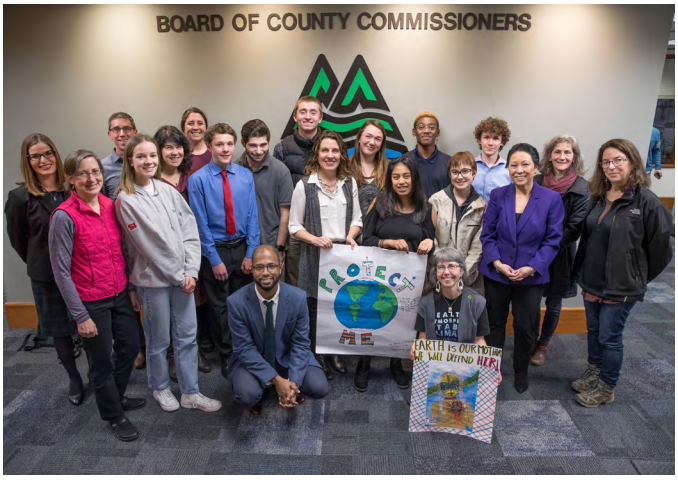
Current data: November 2024 voter turnout was 73.66%.

Data source: Multnomah County Elections Visualization Dashboard, 2024

Indicator 2: Demographic data on who is applying for and appointed to Multnomah County advisory committees.

Description: While Multnomah County maintains over 40 advisory groups, specific demographic reports for all applicants and appointees are not always published in a single, standalone document. Instead, data is often released through the Office of Community Involvement (OCI) or within individual committees "Area Plans." In 2025, the County continued to refine its processes for tracking these metrics to ensure that committees reflect the diverse lived experience of the residents. The County is developing a tracking system for this metric as part of the Multnomah County Strategic Plan.

Current data: Data under development



Strategy 1: Ensure Climate Justice Plan implementation is accountable and transparent to the community.

Why does this matter?

By codifying the oversight role of the Advisory Committee on Sustainability and Innovation (ACSI), the plan's implementation will move beyond government reporting toward true community-led accountability. This existing committee has provided valuable insights for over a decade. Codifying the role of the committee in helping to oversee implementation of the plan and inform reporting and future revisions to the plan ensures ongoing community involvement, accountability, and co-creation. Enhancing the committee structure by implementing a stipend policy would help to reduce the financial barriers to participation, honoring the labor of community members and ensuring that regional leadership reflects the diverse lived experiences of our residents. Ultimately, these measures transform the Climate Justice Plan from a static document into a living, accountable commitment to those it serves.

Putting this into practice

- Work with ACSI members to make recommendations on how to amend the Multnomah County Advisory Committee on Sustainability and Innovation Code (Chapter 3.450) to to expand ACSI's oversight of the CJP implementation. Revisions will prioritize community-led governance, co-creation, and explicit oversight of CJP milestones.
- Develop a Climate Justice Plan tracking platform to regularly report on greenhouse gas emissions, goal indicators, and strategy implementation progress.
- Develop a strategy to continuously engage with tribal governments while implementing relevant strategies in the plan.
- Implement a stipend policy for ACSI members and community partners to compensate them for their time and expertise, ensuring that financial status is not a barrier to influencing County policy.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ○ Research
- ○ Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability



Strategy 2: Support the development of a community-led data ecosystem to inform County policy and decision-making.

Why does this matter?

Relying solely on quantitative metrics can often obscure deep-seated inequities or overlook the reality of a neighborhood's climate vulnerability. Rooted in storytelling and lived experience, qualitative community-led data is a vital source of truth that complements quantitative data. It can help fill the gaps left by an overreliance on quantifiable data that might hide inequities or miss important information that help enhance service delivery, community resilience, and health. A community-led data ecosystem can help to shift the power of narrative back to the community, allowing those most impacted to define success on their own terms.

One promising local example is the Collective Environmental Datahub for Action and Resilience (CEDAR)* project led by the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC). CEDAR seeks to serve as a critical bridge between data-driven policy and the lived experiences of environmental justice communities in the region. This grant-funded, multi-year project has been supported by Multnomah County and a number of other local community-based organizations. In the context of the Climate Justice Plan, CEDAR provides a unique opportunity to move beyond simply "counting" to a deeper understanding of the lived reality behind the numbers. Community-based organizations have collected significant qualitative community data as part of their organizing work, and CEDAR is working to provide a platform to organize that data across organizations. Projects like CEDAR can help build community power and provide an opportunity for local governments to better align programs and policies with community experience and priorities.

*CEDAR was previously known as The Modernized Anti-racist Data Ecosystems (MADE) project, funded through a grant from the de Beaumont Foundation.

Putting this into practice

- Partner with community-based organizations to identify and support existing community-led data efforts, and ensure these insights directly shape the ongoing implementation of the Climate Justice Plan.
- Support a community data platform, such as CEDAR, to serve as a repository for community-led research and health narratives.
- Establish formal processes for incorporating storytelling and qualitative feedback into County climate-related decision-making to ensure policy is informed by more than just numerical data.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Department of County Assets; Health Department

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ● Research
- ○ Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL



COUNTY INFLUENCE



COUNTY PRIORITY



Strategy 3: Explore partnership opportunities to support community-based organizations in climate justice planning and implementation.

Why does this matter?

The landscape of climate justice is rapidly evolving, with federal, local, and philanthropic initiatives creating both unprecedented opportunities and risks for frontline communities to lead this work. To capitalize on the opportunities and minimize risks, we must move beyond transactional engagement and toward restitutive, long-term partnerships. Authentic partnership is the cornerstone of community governance; it ensures that those most impacted have the sustained resources, decision-making authority, and structural support necessary to dismantle systemic barriers.

Historically, government engagement has operated under a "savior" framework that assumes communities need to be "saved" rather than supported. True climate justice requires a fundamental shift in recognizing that the most effective solutions are already present within the community. We must build upon existing community strengths rather than imposing external mandates.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ○ Research
- ○ Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

By prioritizing the leadership of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), as well as elders, youth, immigrants, refugees, and rural residents, we ensure that the Climate Justice Plan is a vehicle for co-creation and autonomy.

Putting this into practice

- Continue to collaborate with community-based organizations, including work to secure grant funds. This ensures the County uses its institutional weight to access regional and federal resources that are directly funneled into community-led initiatives.
- Design community engagement that respects the specific cultural and linguistic needs of County residents. This includes hosting climate education in multiple languages and partnering with BIPOC communities.

Lead department(s)

Office of Sustainability; Health Department, Public Health Division



Strategy 4: Ensure age-appropriate climate justice education across K-12 curriculums for students in public schools.

Why does this matter?

Climate literacy is a fundamental life skill and a cornerstone of civic readiness in an age of climate crisis. Currently, most students only encounter climate topics in science classes or elective clubs, if at all, which can overlook the social, economic, and systemic impacts of the crisis, as well as its holistic solutions.

Integrating climate justice into the K-12 educational experience is a fundamental strategy for equipping youth with the tools to navigate and lead in a changing world. By moving beyond traditional science lessons, this approach embeds climate literacy into social studies, math, and professional teacher development, transforming schools into hubs for civic agency. Investing in these educational pathways honors student activism and leadership that has demanded the critical need of a climate justice curriculum.

This approach ensures that climate literacy is treated as a universal life skill, empowering the generation most impacted by climate change to be the primary architects of their own future.

Putting this into practice

- Leverage the Portland Public Schools Climate Crisis Response, Climate Justice, and Sustainability Practices Policy to develop curriculum and best practices across school districts in Multnomah County.
- Develop teacher training and support tools to help integrate curriculum into lesson plans.
- Apply for grants to support teacher training and expanding use of climate curriculum.

Authorizing agencies

Local School Districts (e.g., Portland Public Schools, Reynolds, Gresham-Barlow); Multnomah Education Service District



STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ● Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ○ Additional ● New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Strategy 5: Reduce voting age to 16 years old for local elections.

Why does this matter?

No demographic group is as impacted by climate change as young people. Because atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations continue to climb, young people will be living with the worsening consequences of the climate crisis throughout the course of their entire life. Oregon has long been committed to expanding ballot access and the voting franchise, and this step would allow young people to have a greater voice in decisions that impact their future. Lowering the local voting age to 16 years old steers youth advocacy to the center of democracy and climate action. Expanding voter access to youth can support sustaining the long-term health of our democracy and the success of climate action. Empirical evidence suggests that the earlier in life a voter casts their first ballot, the more likely they are to develop voting as a habit.[78]

While initiatives like Oregon's pre-registration for 16 year olds are important, they do not replace the power of casting a ballot. Allowing young people to vote on issues such as climate justice has a direct hand in shaping their environment. This early taste of political agency builds a foundation for broader civic participation, including community organizing and leadership. By integrating youth into the democratic process today, we ensure that the youth voices are recognized as essential partners in the present.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ● Research
- ○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Research state and local jurisdictions to identify viable pathways for reducing the voting age in cities and other local elections in Multnomah County, including potential changes in state law.
- Center youth voices in a community-led coalition that is championing change.
- Partner with community-based organizations and educational institutions to develop robust "voter readiness" programs, utilizing existing policies like Oregon's pre-registration.
- Research efforts in other states and jurisdictions that have lowered the voting age to gather lessons learned.

Authorizing agencies

Oregon Legislature




WE NEED JOY AS WE NEED AIR
WE NEED LOVE AS WE NEED WATER
WE NEED EACH OTHER
AS WE NEED THE EARTH
WE SHARE
– MAYA ANGELOU
Artist Jax Ko

Conclusion

Artist: Jax Ko

Implementation

A New Type of Climate Plan

Upon adoption by the Board of County Commissioners, this document becomes the official climate plan for Multnomah County — the County's first Climate Justice Plan. The plan reflects a long and deliberate process of community engagement — including a robust co-creation process with frontline community based groups and individuals — leading to a unique plan that describes both County and community climate priorities.

While the Board of County Commissioners' adoption of the plan does not legally obligate the County to act, it does publicly commit the County to advancing the County strategies in the plan and helping with all other strategies as resources and opportunity allow.

Planning Horizon

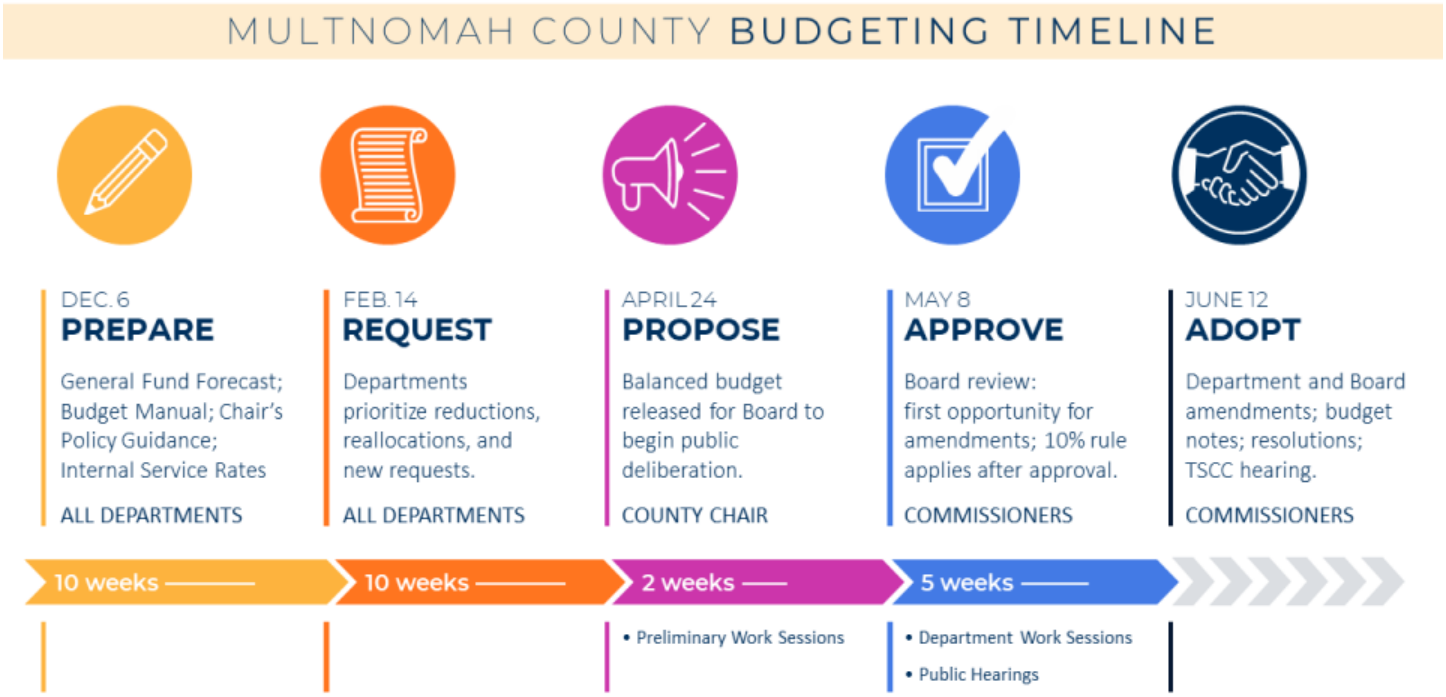
The goals of the Climate Justice Plan are meant to guide County actions through 2030 and beyond. The strategies will be implemented over the next one to five years, depending on the scope of the specific strategy and the political, community, and budget conditions in which it is being put into practice. The plan proposes regular reporting on greenhouse gas emissions and goal indicators.

In addition, the included strategies will need to be periodically refreshed, and future Boards will need to assess and reaffirm the goals and strategies. Staff must continue to work and engage meaningfully with frontline community members to ensure strategies are implemented, effective, and remain relevant to the communities most impacted by climate change and environmental injustice.

Resources

Many of the strategies align naturally with existing programs and priorities and may not require additional resources to implement. This is particularly true of "Advocacy" and "Convening" type strategies. The success of other strategies likely depends on a commitment of additional County resources, grants, strong community partnerships, and organizing by the community, or all of the above.

When new County resources are needed, it will require County leadership to make the strategies in the plan a priority and will likely need advocacy from community leaders. Multnomah County begins to consider budget ideas late in each calendar year, and develops specific proposals in the beginning of the calendar year for inclusion in the Chair's Executive Budget, which is typically published in April. The full Board of County Commissioners deliberates on the Chair's proposed budget in late spring and must adopt a final budget by the end of June. Staff will also look to maximize grant opportunities and partnerships to advance the priorities in the plan.



Community Oversight

The need for strong community oversight of the plan's ongoing implementation is essential both to keep the County accountable to the community and to ensure the work moves forward in a manner that reflects the values it is based on: community and justice centered, co-creative, and empowering.

Ongoing community oversight and involvement is critical for the success of the CJP. The plan calls for amending the County Code that establishes the Advisory Committee on Sustainability and Innovation (ACSI) to be the ongoing community oversight body to help oversee implementation of the CJP (See: Contribute, Strategy 1). This would provide an outside group to help make sure implementation and reporting are carried out in line with the values and goals of the CJP and provide staff counterparts in the community to help assess opportunities and set priorities.

ACSI has already proven to be an important and influential advisory committee, helping the County understand opportunities to advance community priorities. Recommendations for the committee have led to a wide range of important County policies including:

- The establishment of the Clean Air Construction Standards to limit diesel pollution.
- The establishment of the PropertyFit program to facilitate private investment in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and seismic resilience for commercial buildings.
- The establishment of a Board policy on environmental justice.
- The renaming of the Wapato Bridge to honor Indigenous communities and their role as ongoing stewards of the environment.

Beyond ACSI, Sustainability staff are committed to maintaining and growing relationships with not only frontline communities, but across all communities and types of organizations — nonprofit, public, and private. Ongoing consultation and coordination with tribal governments will also be needed. We understand that the ultimate success of the CJP is dependent on the breadth, quality, and trust of the relationships between the public and government.

The Office of Sustainability will be the County's lead for the plan's reporting, coordination, and implementation.

Reporting

The CJP is designed to facilitate regular and recurring public reporting on its implementation — an important accountability measure. This periodic report will contain the indicators identified for each of the goals, as well as a status update about how each of the strategies is moving forward. Reporting will also include community experiences, perspectives, and priorities related to the plan. Staff will produce a baseline report within the first year of the plan's adoption, with regular reports published every other year thereafter.

Iteration

The Climate Justice Plan is intended to be a living document that is updated to reflect the dynamic and changing conditions in our community, including climate impacts. The 12 universal goals will not change; while some strategies may endure, reflecting their complex and long-term nature, others may be completed in one to two years.

Updates to the plan will include refreshing strategies to reflect successes, barriers, opportunities, and new priorities. These updates will be shaped by the same commitment to community co-creation as the original plan, with an even-greater emphasis on community experiences and insights collected through community data. No specific timeline has been identified to formally revisit the plan; instead the timing will be dictated by the priorities of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners and the desires of community partners. It is the hope that because this plan is rooted in universal values and long-term goals, it will serve as the foundation for the County's and community's climate justice work for at least the next 10 years.



Moving Forward

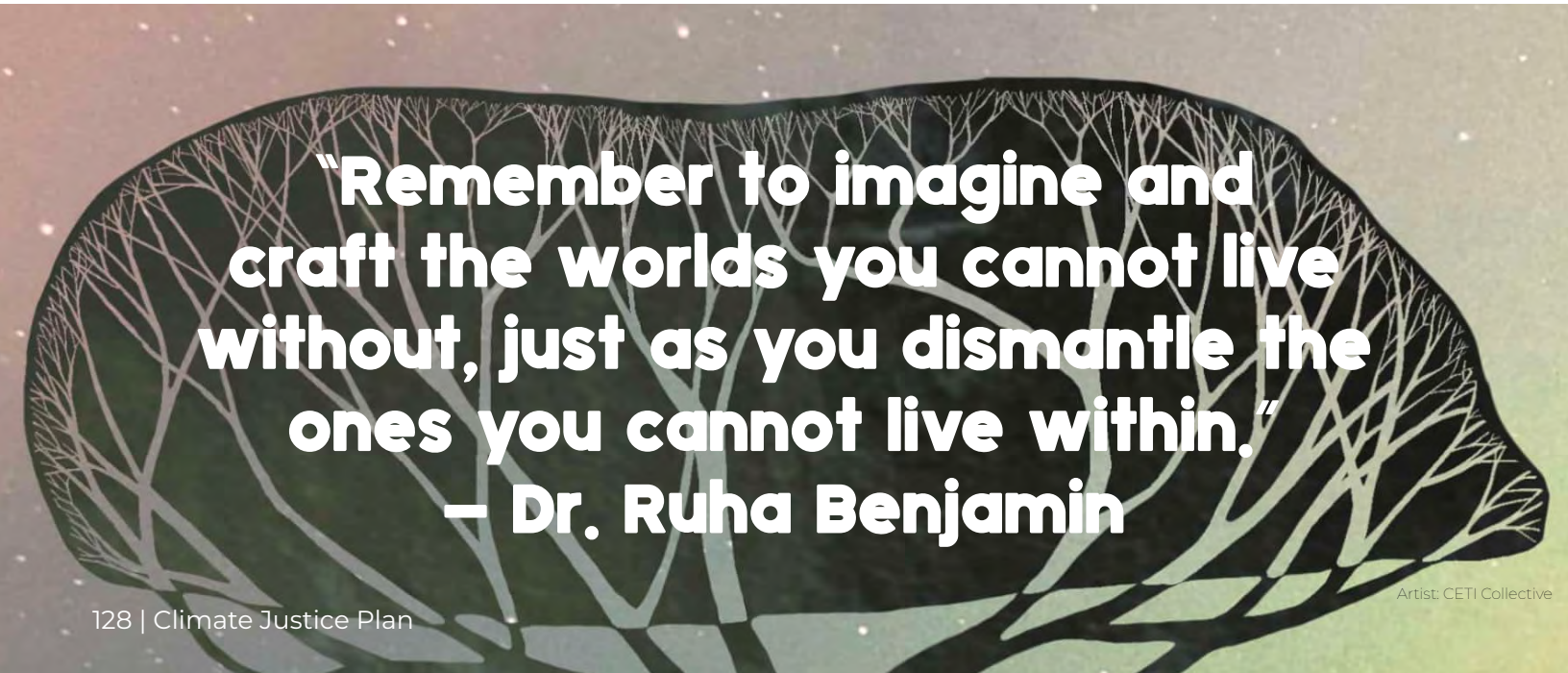
A better world is within our grasp, but the path ahead requires our collective commitment. Our current trajectory is unsustainable, as out of control fossil fuel emissions are driving the earth's climate systems to the brink. Everyone is beginning to experience the increasing pain and pressure of a climate-changed world — from extreme heat and drought, to more intense storms and flooding. The predicted impacts of unabated fossil fuel pollution are all around us.

The impacts of those changes disproportionately fall on the communities with the fewest resources, people who are unhoused, people who have been denied economic opportunity because of institutionalized racism, immigrants and refugees, and other marginalized communities.

Although it can be a struggle to see a brighter future, imagining a better world and sharing that vision with others can be a radical act. Some may give in to the tendency toward inertia and the belief that our actions won't make a difference, a stance often called doomerism. Others may subscribe to the tendency toward an imagined techno utopia: a future lived separate from nature, safe in space or on other planets, or saved by some magical new technology. Both of these extremes are actively destructive and ignore the spirit of nature and humanity that connects us.

Our interconnectedness with each other and the Earth demands a grounded but hopeful approach. The Climate Justice Plan embraces a simple truth that if we care for each other and the natural world, we will thrive — that injustice and the climate crisis have the same roots, and addressing both will leave everyone better off. It's a vision that is big enough for everyone in Multnomah County to see themselves in and be a part of, and we hope it's a vision that is expansive enough to ripple out to encompass the whole world.

Building a better world is not easy, but let's not lose sight of the incredible possibilities that lie within reach. By staying focused, working together, and refusing to be deterred, we can transform our vision into reality.



Artist: CETI Collective



Appendices

Appendix A: Indigenous Placekeeping Statement

Long before the imposition of colonial borders, Native American peoples stewarded the Americas as the original experts in regenerative living. They treated the land as a gift to be preserved for generations to come; they set an example of living symbiotically with the diverse ecosystems Native American people occupied across the continent. This deep ecological knowledge is not merely historical — it is a living, resilient practice that has survived centuries of environmental change and systemic racism. Indigenous peoples have resiliently adapted to survive and protect their cultures time and time again.

In the face of today's climate crisis, tribes in Oregon continue to lead in the protection of the biosphere, sacred waters, and First Foods. This leadership is exemplified by comprehensive strategies such as the Coquille Resilience Management Plan and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Climate Adaptation Plan,[79] which serve as blueprints for regional climate action. Multnomah County's current and future government climate plans should work collaboratively with tribes to heal and protect the environment to honor intergovernmental treaties and the sustainability expertise of Native Americans. At the core, this work is vital to safeguarding the legal rights and public health of tribal members and the broader community. This statement is a compacted introduction to Indigenous climate goals and initiatives and is intended to be used to start collaborative environment-related conversations between Multnomah County and tribal governments, and their associations.

The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) has passed a series of clean energy- and sustainability-related resolutions. The ATNI is the united voice of over 50 tribal governments in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, and Northern California. To pass a resolution, a member must present their resolution before the next convention, the appropriate committee must review and edit the resolution, and then the resolution must be presented and voted on by member tribal government representatives at a convention. The 26 climate resolutions referenced below have been approved by the convention and adopted as ATNI policy and therefore have been adopted by the represented tribes indigenous to Oregon and Multnomah County.

Native American people of Oregon have called for energy sovereignty; tribes recognize the inequitable electricity access tribal citizens face compared to other ethnic demographics in Oregon. They advocate for sufficient grid infrastructure for indigenous communities, economically accessible clean energy, and responsible energy-related land use. Eventually, this should develop to tribally owned and operated grids with clean energy generation, infrastructure, transmission, and distribution systems as well as control over their energy costs.

Tribes have long recognized that climate change necessitates a shift to a clean energy-powered system. It also needs to be noted that hydroelectric power in the Pacific Northwest has often been harmful to tribal land, customs, and ecosystems. Most significantly, salmon and other anadromous fish populations for which tribal governments have the rights to gather from usual and accustomed places. New clean energy infrastructure can also impose burdens on tribal rights and sovereignty. For example, the proposed pump storage hydropower development at Pushpum, adjacent to the Columbia River, threatened the resources and sacred ancestral sites of the Yakama Nation. (This confederation includes the Yakama, Palouse, Pisquouse, Wenatshapam, Klikatat, Klinquit, Kow-was-say-ee, Li-ay-was, Skin-pah, Wish-ham, Shyiks, Ochechotes, Kah-milt-pay, and Se-ap-cat peoples.) Such developments risk destroying culturally significant "First Foods," such as Indian celery, as well as other vital plant and animal species.

Other hydroelectric power projects in the Pacific Northwest have posed similar threats to Native American culture and resources. When tribal governments are excluded from co-management and co-ownership, it perpetuates a model of top-down resource extraction that often ignores Treaty rights and ecological health. Thus, ATNI resolves that in order to protect these resources, such projects must consult tribal governments in the affected region. ATNI also resolves to support efficient solar energy and other renewable energy use development by Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs) and believes it should replace ecologically destructive sources of energy. The ATNI encourages clean energy programs to accommodate the costs for low-income customers.

Native American people of Oregon have called upon county, state, and federal governments, including the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), to consult tribes in the planning process of project decisions that may pose a threat to tribal property and natural resources. Tribes propose government-to-government consultations with potentially affected tribes, submission and review of tribal information and input, and follow-up and a full addressing of all related tribal concerns to prevent harmful energy developments. The ATNI calls on all transmission planners to improve the responsibility of their land use by offering prior informed, free consultation to local affected tribes in transmission development processes. Stepping toward equity necessitates the removal of barriers of participation.





ATNI calls for governmental support to remedy inequities preventing the weatherization of tribal housing. Due to Oregon's unprecedented, dangerously high temperatures in the summer and other extreme climate phenomena, assistance with home weatherization is vital for the health of tribal communities. Maximizing energy efficiency of homes and commercial buildings is a crucial part of weatherization. Tribes call for governmental funding to aid their communities in this process.

On many occasions, the ATNI has expressed support for legislation in favor of the green energy transition through various methods. For example, individual tribes submitted letters supporting legislation to reduce carbon emissions to state governments, participated in rules advisory committees and commissions, and defended state legislation from regulatory roll backs. They resolve that renewable energy will bring greater economic, community, ecosystem, and health benefits.

As historical stewards of the land, Indigenous people have unique lived climate change-related expertise and must be fully involved as co-leaders in government conversations, policies, and other decisions impacting tribal treaty rights. In this time of environmental turmoil, Multnomah County should center Indigenous knowledge in climate planning.

Multnomah County's Climate Justice Plan sets universal goals for the county that include equitable access to wealth-building opportunities and green jobs, reliable transit and transportation infrastructure, affordable clean energy, access to nutritious and culturally specific food, clean and healthy air and water, extreme weather resilience, safe and affordable housing, and connection to nature. This plan differs from previous action plans by centering frontline communities in the plan's development and implementation processes. The plan's implementation will need ongoing community involvement and support. It is incumbent on Multnomah County to engage with tribal governments to refine and implement this plan.

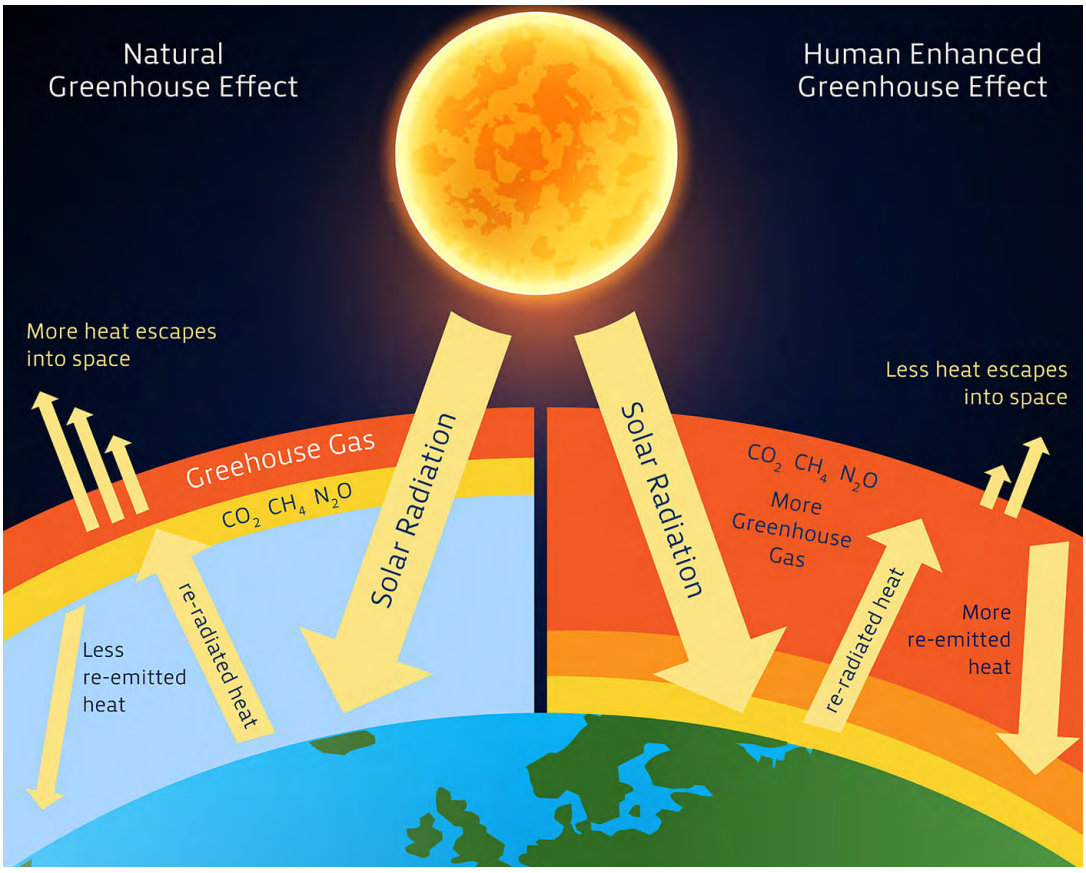
Based on a review of ATNI resolutions, it is clear that there is broad alignment between the goals and strategies of the Climate Justice Plan and the adopted priorities of ATNI members. This statement serves to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of tribal nations to address the climate crisis, and as a starting point for ongoing collaboration based on an understanding of how tribal governments have addressed climate change to date.

Appendix B: The Climate Crisis

Climate Change: What is it?

The science on climate change is clear: The continued extraction and combustion of fossil fuels and their resulting greenhouse gas emissions have put our planet on a path to massive disruption, the effects of which are already being felt in Multnomah County and around the world. Eliminating the use of fossil fuels will limit the severity of these impacts, but will not stop the changes that have already been set in motion.

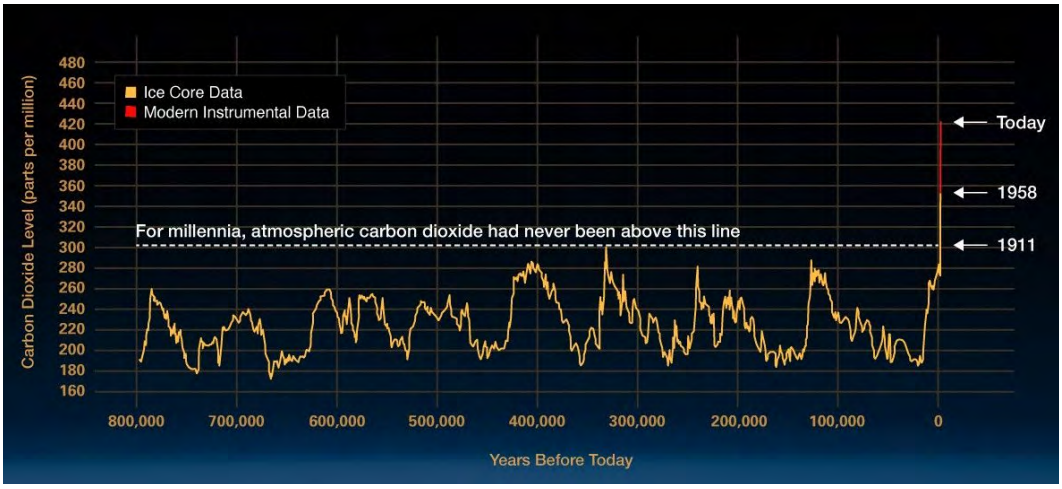
A 2023 report from the United Nations warns that even if we successfully reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the risk of extreme weather events remains "high to very high."[80] According to the report, from 2011 to 2020, global surface temperatures reached 1.1 degrees Celsius above the temperature baseline established from 1850 to 1900. The current emissions reductions trajectory projects a temperature increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius by the first half of the 2030s, a threshold that climate science has long been clear will have profound impacts on every facet of the human and natural world. At this rate, the possibility of keeping the temperature rise under 2 degrees Celsius by the end of the 21st century is very low. Temperature increases beyond 2 degrees Celsius poses risks that may be beyond our ability to manage.



Source: Smith College

Diagram demonstrating the greenhouse effect, the process of heat-trapping gases absorbing radiation from the sun and keeping the Earth's surface and atmosphere warm (from Lai, 2021). On the left, is a model of the natural greenhouse effect, and on the right is a model of the human-enhanced greenhouse effect. Burning fossil fuels releases carbon emissions into the atmosphere, amplifying the greenhouse effect and causing the planet's surface to get hotter.

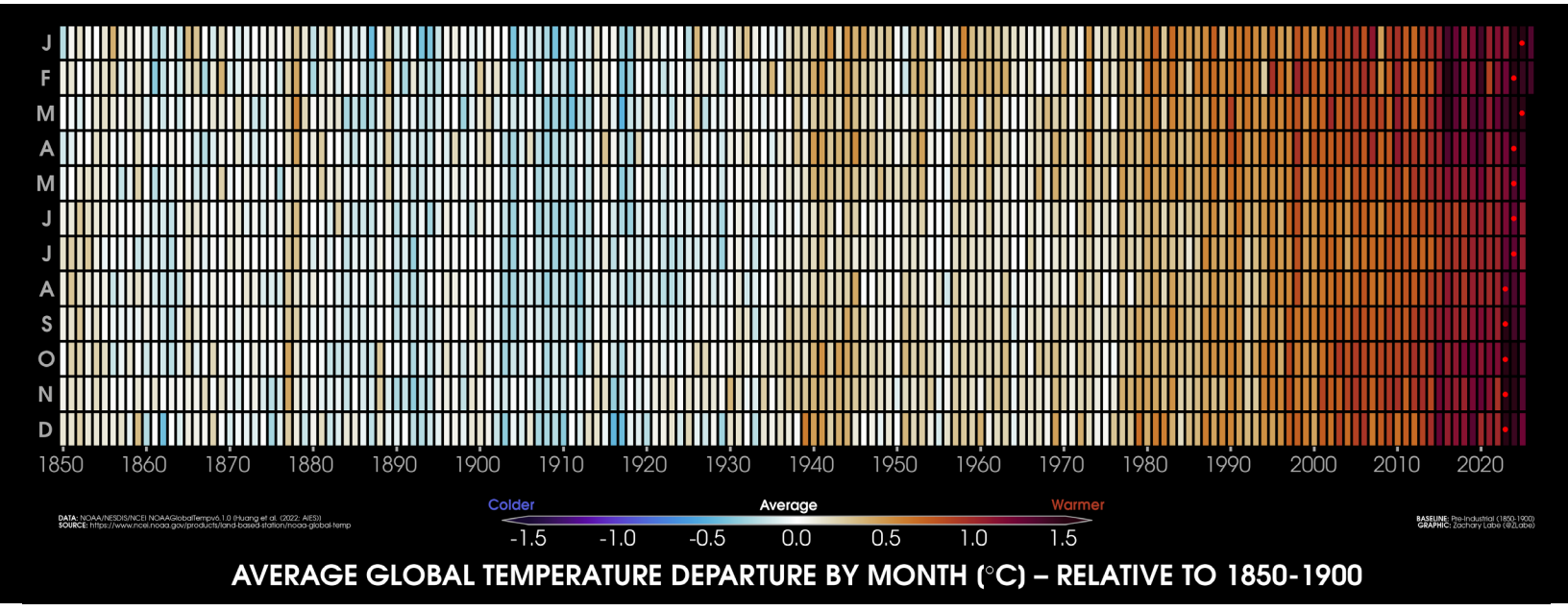
When fossil fuels like coal, oil, and fossil "natural" gas are burned, they release greenhouse gases and other pollutants. The main greenhouse gas released from burning fossil fuels is carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide pollution has been building up faster and faster in the atmosphere since the start of the modern industrial age. The build-up of greenhouse gases acts like a blanket, trapping energy from the sun and making the world hotter. The heat-trapping effect of fossil fuel pollution is called the greenhouse effect. The Earth will keep getting hotter as long as fossil fuel use continues.



Source: NASA Science
This graph, based on the comparison of atmospheric samples contained in ice cores and more recent direct measurements, provides evidence that atmospheric CO_2 has increased since the Industrial Revolution. Luthi, D., et al.. 2008; Etheridge, D.M., et al. 2010; Vostok ice core data/J.R. Petit et al.; NOAA Mauna Loa CO_2 record.

Impacts of a Heating Climate

Hotter air can dry out landscapes faster, leading to conditions for more intense forest fires. Hotter air also holds more water, leading to severe storms that can drop more rain all at once, causing floods or landslides. Sea ice, which holds back glaciers in Antarctica and Greenland, are being melted by warming oceans. As those sea ice "corks" melt away, ice on land begins to slide into the ocean and raise sea levels. This is already impacting coastal areas of the U.S., especially in southeastern and Gulf states, with sea level rise accelerating in recent years. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, the global average sea level has risen 8-9 inches (21-24 centimeters) since 1880 and is accelerating. Warmer oceans also fuel storms, like hurricanes and atmospheric rivers, that impact the Pacific Northwest. Hotter temperatures can also impact the spread of infectious diseases like West Nile virus or dengue fever that have not been common in the Pacific Northwest, but may become more common.



Source: Zack Labe | Data references

Heatmap-style visualization showing global average surface temperature anomalies, which are calculated relative to pre-industrial levels (1850-1900 – outlined in the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C). Data is from NOAA Merged Land Ocean Global Surface Temperature Analysis (NOAAGlobalTemp v6.1.0; https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/products/land-based-station/noaa-global-temp). Graphic updated using data through February 2026. Red dots mark the year of each respective warmest month in this dataset.



Observed and Projected Climate Impacts in Multnomah County

Multnomah County has already experienced significant impacts from climate change, and projections indicate these impacts will intensify in the future. Based on the Seventh Oregon Climate Assessment, the annual average temperature has increased and is projected to continue to increase significantly. Precipitation patterns are also projected to change, with increases in winter and decreases in summer. Extreme temperatures, including heat waves, are expected to become more frequent and intense. Drought conditions are likely to increase, particularly snow droughts, and wildfire risk is increasing due to increased aridity and extreme fire weather.

Extreme heat is the leading cause of weather-related deaths in Oregon and in the United States.[82] It can cause heatstroke, exacerbate chronic health conditions, and increase hospitalizations. Oregon has had its hottest years in state history in the last five years, exposing Oregonians to the many risks associated with extreme heat.

Specific demographics — including older adults, young children, individuals who work outdoors, pregnant individuals, people experiencing homelessness, and those with chronic health conditions — are disproportionately susceptible to heat-related illnesses. Data from housing surveys in the Multnomah County Health Department 2023 Environmental Justice Snapshot revealed that Black and Indigenous households have a lower rate of access to air conditioning compared to other racial and ethnic groups.

In addition to extreme heat, Multnomah County has witnessed other severe climate-related events. Climate change has increased water temperatures in the Willamette River, which is leading to more frequent harmful algal blooms (HABs). Consistent HABs have impacted the Willamette River,[83] closing it to recreational activities and increasing the exposure to health risks. The blooms occur most often during the summer months, but can also be seen earlier in the year.

Wildfires are also projected to increase with climate change and can result in significant increases of erosion in forested watersheds. In 2023, the Camp Creek Fire that happened in Multnomah County was the first significant fire in the Bull Run Watershed since it became the City of Portland's main water supply in 1895. While the city's drinking water remained safe, the fire served as a stark reminder of potential vulnerabilities. Urban areas may also be impacted by wildfire risk. When hot, dry, and windy conditions occur, wind can quickly spread sparks from one structure to the next, causing a conflagration. Fires in Los Angeles; Lahaina, Hawaii; and Talent, Oregon are recent examples of this phenomenon.

The unjust exposure to climate hazards extends, in many cases, from the fundamental issue of fossil fuel pollution. Urban residents who live close to major roadways experience an unfair share of health risks resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels despite their higher likelihood of utilizing lower-polluting modes of transportation. And chronic exposure to air pollution is exacerbated by exposure to increasing levels of wildfire smoke that are now common because of climate change.

Formulating solutions to these hazards without a climate justice lens risks leaving some people behind. Households with limited resources to obtain technologies like cooling and air cleaners will continue to be burdened by exposure to fossil fuel pollution and climate hazards. In contrast, wealthier households have the means to

transition to new electric equipment, while also having adaptive capacity to install air filters, leave during times of acute climate threats, or work from home, limiting their exposure to climate risk in their daily lives. Everyone should have the capacity to limit climate risks and benefit from new technologies like solar panels, battery energy storage systems, and heat pumps that can increase resilience, decrease emissions, and reduce daily costs.

Trends in Climate and Health Data

The Multnomah County Health Department, in coordination with Washington and Clackamas counties, publishes an annual report tracking the health impacts of the climate crisis in the region across a dozen indicators. The most recent Regional Climate and Health Monitoring Report illustrates how climate change affects the physical and mental health of the residents of the tri-county area:

- **Extreme heat:** The region experienced a record-setting Heat Dome in the summer of 2021, resulting in 69 deaths in Multnomah County alone — a number significantly higher than the one heat-related death the region had typically seen each year prior. Emergency department visits during the summer of 2021 more than doubled compared to the average number of visits in previous years (2016-2019), while heat-related hospitalizations increased sharply.
- **Extreme weather events:** Since 2014, 236 people in the region have died due to extreme weather events. While most of these deaths were due to extreme heat, 84 people died because of exposure to extreme cold, which is a growing concern.
- **Air quality:** More people visited the emergency department for air quality-related respiratory illness than for any of the other health indicators included in the report. Visits to the emergency room also include illness related to pollen allergies, which are worsened by poor air quality and experienced over longer durations because changes to weather patterns impact the length of pollen seasons.[84] The wildfire smoke events in 2018 and 2020 led to increased emergency room visits for air quality-related illnesses.
- **Vector-borne disease:** The report tracks cases of Lyme disease and West Nile virus. Lyme disease cases peaked in 2017, but the data indicates that most cases were contracted outside the region. Very few cases of West Nile virus have been documented in the region since 2012.
- **Communicable disease:** The report includes data on salmonellosis, campylobacteriosis, and tuberculosis. There were fewer cases of these diseases in 2020, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report also explores the mental health impacts of climate change through Google Trends data and interviews with community responders. The interviews highlighted a lack of access to mental health services, systemic trauma, and compounding factors like the COVID-19 pandemic. Google Trends data showed an increase in searches for trauma-related terms after the 2021 Heat Dome event.

The report also emphasizes the importance of addressing health inequities and supporting mental health in the face of climate change.



How Climate Justice Strategies Benefit Health Justice

The Climate Justice Plan directly addresses public health concerns by emphasizing that climate change disproportionately impacts frontline communities, leading to significant health inequities. Strategies outlined in the plan, such as reducing air pollution through clean energy transition[85] and implementing extreme weather resilience measures, are designed to mitigate environmental hazards that contribute to increased morbidity and mortality, particularly among vulnerable populations. Many of the strategies in the Climate Justice Plan can reduce healthcare costs by focusing on preventative measures, while also reducing the strain on emergency services and hospitals during extreme weather events.

By focusing on equitable access to resources like clean air, affordable energy, and safe housing, the plan aims to improve social determinants of health, fostering community cohesion and ensuring that everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status, can experience better health outcomes and reduced risk from climate-related threats.

The just transition framework — focused on a fair and equitable shift to a low-carbon economy — is intrinsically linked to public health and addresses the social and economic inequalities that disproportionately affect frontline communities. The involvement of professionals and practitioners in the healthcare and public health sectors is crucial for ensuring that the transition benefits everyone and avoids exacerbating existing health disparities.

The Age of Clean Energy

The transition to clean energy isn't just about climate targets anymore; it's happening because these technologies have become the cheapest, most efficient options on the market.

Wind and Solar Are Just Cheaper to Build

For a long time, fossil fuels were the default because they were reliable and more cost effective than most alternatives. Today, that narrative has completely changed. Massive global investments — recently totaling over $2 trillion — have scaled up solar power manufacturing and deployment to an incredible degree.[86] Because solar panels are now so inexpensive to mass produce, solar has become the least expensive form of new electricity in most of the world. Renewables are surging to meet growing energy demand, with renewables and battery energy storage providing 90% of new capacity in 2025.[87] The emerging economics of renewable energy will grow stronger as deployments lead to lower costs, and lower costs lead to further deployments.

Batteries Fix the "When the Sun Doesn't Shine" Problem

The biggest argument against renewable energy used to be that the sun sets and the wind stops blowing. Furthermore, when too many solar panels produce power all at once during the middle of the day, it actually creates a glut of electricity, sometimes driving power prices down to zero or even negative numbers.[88]

This is where battery energy storage comes in. Because battery manufacturing costs have plummeted, renewable energy generation is increasingly being paired with batteries. The batteries soak up the extra, cheap electricity during the day and save it for

times of lower renewable energy production. The energy can then be discharged back to the grid in the evening when people get home and turn on their appliances. This makes the power grid highly stable and turns green energy into a reliable, 24/7 commodity.

While utility-scale battery deployments are dominant in terms of total installed capacity, batteries are also increasingly becoming a consumer product. Home battery energy storage systems are widely available, providing consumers with additional reliability and the potential to participate in utility bill discount programs that can generate additional savings.

Electric Vehicles Have Reached Tipping Points

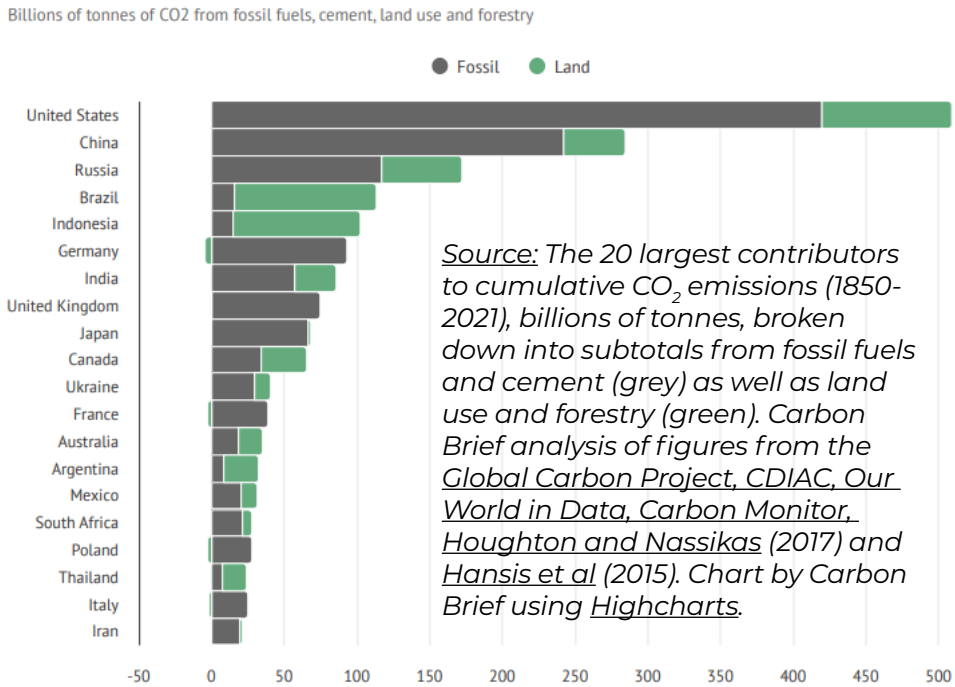
In the car world, electric vehicles (EVs) have moved out of the early-adopter phase and into the mainstream. Globally, about **1 of every 4 new cars sold is now electric**. In leading markets like China, over half of all new car sales are electric, while the U.S. is steadily climbing past 10% as charging stations pop up across the country.[89,90] This shift is a math problem for oil companies. As millions of drivers switch to electricity, global demand for oil is losing momentum.[91]

The Takeaway

The energy system is changing because a powerful loop has formed: Cheaper solar panels create cheap electricity, cheaper batteries store that electricity for when we need it, and more EVs use that electricity to move us around. Each piece of the puzzle makes the other pieces cheaper and more dominant. The future will be dominated by cheap, reliable, and abundant renewable energy.

A Global Perspective

Climate change is a global phenomenon driven by the growing concentration of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. These emissions, primarily from the burning of fossil fuels, can be measured at the local, state, national, and global scales. A pound of carbon dioxide emissions (the primary, but not only, greenhouse gas) contributes equally to the global impacts of climate change irrespective of where it is produced. However, as previously discussed, the climate crisis is neither experienced or enabled equally. The consequences of the massive scaling of fossil fuel-powered industrialization that kickstarted climate change — as well as its resulting wealth generation and the ethos of consumption associated with it — have been distributed unequally around the globe.



Source: The 20 largest contributors to cumulative CO_2 emissions (1850-2021), billions of tonnes, broken down into subtotals from fossil fuels and cement (grey) as well as land use and forestry (green). Carbon Brief analysis of figures from the Global Carbon Project, CDIAC, Our World in Data, Carbon Monitor, Houghton and Nassikas (2017) and Hansis et al (2015). Chart by Carbon Brief using Highcharts.

Average per capita carbon dioxide emissions are much higher in wealthier, more developed nations. However, within countries, the average level of individual consumption varies greatly across income, with the wealthiest individuals in a given country far more likely to generate higher emissions due to greater resource consumption.[92] Wealthier individuals and countries carry a much greater responsibility for contributing to the climate crisis. At the same time, poorer countries and individuals bear a disproportionate burden of the harms of climate change-driven hazards.[93]

The growth of the fossil fuel-based global economy over the past century has led to a great increase in wealth and improvement in standards of living, particularly in the United States and Europe, while at the same time imparting devastating impacts on frontline communities both here and abroad, as well as on nature across the world. Climate justice, then, isn't just about protecting the planet from the ravages of climate change itself, but an explicit recognition of, and response to, the grave harm the continued use of fossil fuels has on all of our global communities. Focusing on the elimination of fossil fuel use in Multnomah County will curtail greenhouse gas emissions, but it will also help eliminate local pollution and along the entire production chain that globally harms poor people and people of color disproportionately.[94]

Appendix C: Climate Planning History

Path to the Climate Justice Plan

Traditional government planning can exclude the communities most impacted by decisions and rely on data that may fail to fully reflect those communities' needs. When public input is gathered poorly, impacted communities can feel tokenized and marginalized, while also being subject to the status quo determined by the interests of those with power and resources. Climate justice planning recognizes that frontline communities are the experts on how to address their needs. Their lived experience fuels the most effective strategies and innovative solutions.

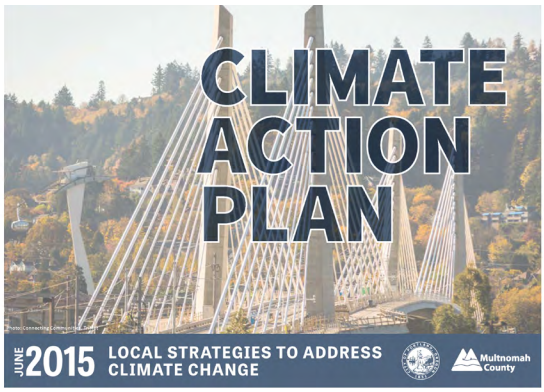
In traditional top-down planning, community engagement can be seen as a box to check; it does not prioritize activating sustained community leadership or building authentic long-term partnerships. Community members and community organizations are often expected to volunteer and are typically not compensated for their time filling out surveys or participating in open houses and focus groups, which is a burden for working households with limited time and income. Solutions are rarely developed collaboratively through this conventional planning approach, failing to draw from the wisdom of frontline communities. Emphasis and authority are given to quantitative data over qualitative data and personal stories, and credentialed expertise over lived experience.

Climate justice planning work builds upon the recognition that with or without the partnership of government, communities have long been working to address and act on environmental injustices. Accordingly, the Climate Justice Plan aims to expand upon authentic and equitable partnerships between Multnomah County, the residents we serve, and community-based organizations.

Artist: CETI Collective



Background: 2015 Climate Action Plan



The 2015 Multnomah County/City of Portland Climate Action Plan (2015 CAP) was the last climate action plan adopted by the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners. When adopted, this Climate Justice Plan will replace the 2015 CAP.

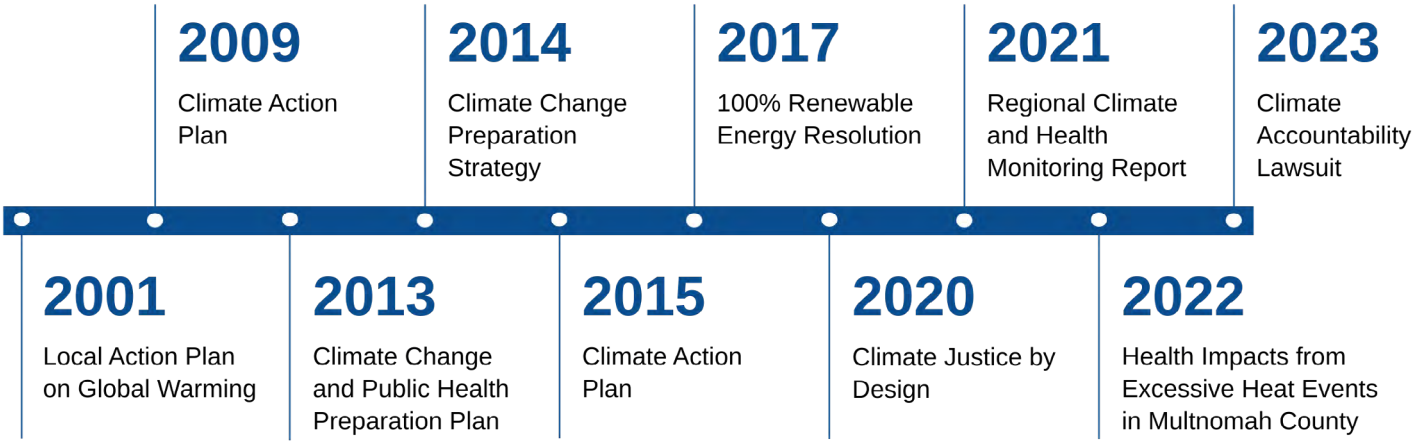
Though it was adopted over 10 years ago, the 2015 CAP was innovative in many ways, including its consideration of equity metrics and resilience strategies, and by providing sector-by-sector greenhouse gas reduction actions. But the 2015 CAP was also a reflection of traditional government planning.

The 2015 CAP sought to address equity concerns by organizing an Equity Working Group made up of representatives from several frontline organizations and County and City staff. At the time, this approach was considered an innovative and community-responsive model, in part because it included compensation for the frontline organizations' participation, a focus on building relationships and capacity, and the establishment of community priorities ahead of government goals.

While this approach did help center equity in the plan, the impact was ultimately limited by the power imbalance between the CAP Equity Working Group and a larger, more powerful CAP Steering Committee made up of mostly mainstream, dominant-culture organizations.

In addition, a lack of additional, focused investment in community capacity and partnership after the 2015 CAP's adoption limited the long-term impact of the effort. Frontline organizations pivoted to focus instead on community-based organizing efforts that proved in many cases to be successful, likely benefiting from community participation in the CAP Equity Working Group.

However, more progress could have been made on shared local government and community priorities, and some subsequent conflicts may have been avoided or better navigated, had the collaboration proved to be more durable. These missteps demonstrated the need for a new model of community-centered, deeply collaborative, accountable, and sustained planning.





Artist: CETI Collective

Laying the Foundation - Vision & Values (2020-2023)

Climate Justice by Design

In 2020, Multnomah County, the City of Portland, and several frontline community partners came together to contemplate a new model of community-centered collaboration. With support and thought leadership from consultants Kapwa and studio b:ask, the idea of Climate Justice by Design (CJxD) was formed.

CJxD was based on the idea that climate change and social injustice are symptoms of the same problem: that our economy and political systems were intentionally designed to exploit human and natural capital for the generation of power and wealth.

The premise of CJxD was simple: if systems can be designed for exploitation, then a new system can also be designed for justice. Over two years, CJxD provided a space of mutual learning, relationship development and capacity building. While participants considered CJxD a valuable experience, stakeholders recognized that a more formal, co-creative planning process was needed to chart a clear path to advancing climate justice goals.

Community Climate Justice Vision

In 2022, Multnomah County and the Coalition of Communities of Color came together to develop a frontline community-centered vision of climate justice that would serve as the foundation for a climate justice plan shared by the Multnomah County government and the community. Funding from the Urban Sustainability Directors Network's Partners for Places grant fund and Meyer Memorial Trust was secured to support community participation in the process.

An Executive Committee made up of community leaders and representatives from community-based organizations and local government was formed to guide the development of a climate justice vision. The Executive Committee looked to two key community frameworks to guide the next steps: The National Association for Climate Resilience Planners' (NACRP) "Vision, Power, Solutions" framework (See: Appendix D) and the Movement Strategy Center's "The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership" (See: Appendix D).

To ensure the effort moved at the speed of trust, the Executive Committee started by establishing a foundation of shared values and tools to ensure co-creation and power sharing in decision-making. This approach to decision-making included giving each organization (or individual for those not affiliated with an organization) a single vote in decisions, creating parity between government and community partners. The Executive Committee relied on a simple voting methodology to surface concerns and allow for any of the organizations to express reservations about an issue if they had significant disagreements.



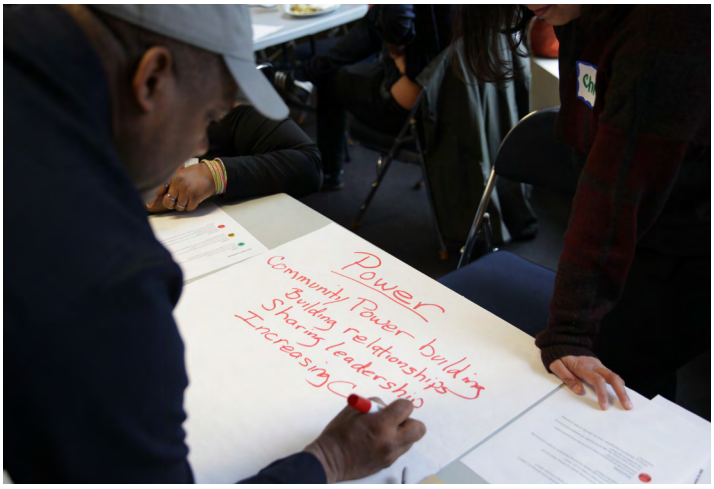


Climate Justice Earth Day Convening

Inspired by the NACRP's "Vision, Power, Solutions" framework, the Executive Committee organized a climate justice-focused Earth Day event in April 2023. The convening brought together over 60 individuals from frontline communities. The day was divided into sessions focusing on several components: developing a shared vision, building power, and identifying solutions. Following an introduction to community-driven planning, participants engaged in a visualization exercise adapted from the NACRP toolkit.

Participants imagined what they hoped the world would be like in 100 years. They wrote their values on sticky notes and placed them under an image of a tree, symbolizing the foundational values necessary for a just and sustainable future. Participants then envisioned their ideal future, writing their aspirations on leaf-shaped sticky notes and placing them on the branches of the tree. This exercise fostered a shared vision of a future that included housing for all, free transit, and communities of care, all guided by values of justice, cooperation, love, and liberation.

The group then identified the conditions for building community power (represented by the roots), short-term actions (represented by seeds) and long-term strategies (represented by the trunk of the tree) to move toward this envisioned future. By the end of the day, the tree — bare before the convening — was transformed into a vibrant representation of the community's collective vision and a roadmap for achieving this version of the future. The insights gathered at the Earth Day Convening were then analyzed by Executive Committee members.

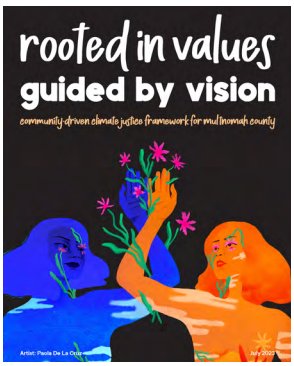




The Climate Justice Framework and Environmental Justice Zine

In July 2023, the Executive Committee marked a significant milestone with the adoption of the Climate Justice Framework which was the culmination of two years of deep collaboration, and included the Climate Justice Earth Day convening, and community surveys and focus groups. The framework set the Climate Justice Plan's foundation of vision, process, and crucially, values, which include:

- Community Care
- Coexistence
- Lifting Voices
- Connection
- Meeting Basic Needs
- Liberation
- Justice: Health, Racial, Economic
- Healthy Environment and Clean Air
- Solidarity
- Housing for All





Also released in July 2023 was the Environmental Justice Indicators Storytelling Zine (EJ Zine), which complements and accompanies the framework by providing a snapshot in time of how our communities experience environmental justice. The EJ Zine demonstrates how dominant-system quantitative data can be paired with community data, storytelling, and art to create a more comprehensive, insightful, and accessible picture of community well-being.

Together, the EJ Zine and Climate Justice Framework provide a foundation for shifting the concept of the Climate Justice Plan (CJP) from a bureaucratic document to a living document that reflects the goals and aspirations of frontline communities. They serve as an effective roadmap for achieving our vision. Planning should not be viewed as an exclusive process for the privileged few who possess technical knowledge and know how to access and navigate systems of power.[96] The CJP instead centers the frontline community as co-creative collaborators who have the knowledge and skills to plan for their own futures.

Phase 1: Steering Committee

Comprising members of 13 community-based organizations representing and serving frontline communities, the Climate Justice Plan Steering Committee brought a wealth of expertise, wisdom, and lived experience to their charge of co-creating the plan based on the Climate Justice Framework. Its members — many of whom are Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, and span in age from youth to elders — were already actively engaged in advocating for energy equity, social justice, and environmental health within their communities. This diverse group ensured that the CJP prioritized the needs of frontline communities.



Working in close partnership with staff from Multnomah County and the CIty of Portland, the Steering Committee provided invaluable leadership and strategic vision by:

- Informing plan development: Committee members used their expertise and knowledge to identify strategies and projects that prioritized the needs of frontline communities.
- Aligning organizational priorities: Committee members considered how their respective organizations and the communities they serve aligned with the CJP's priorities and strategies.
- Fostering leadership development: The Steering Committee intentionally included members outside traditional executive leadership roles to foster leadership and strategic planning skills within each organization.

This collaborative space allowed advocates and organizers to generate new and transformative solutions; develop ways for community members to be involved in the implementation and communication of the plan; and share lessons learned that are necessary for developing the plan and achieving climate justice in Multnomah County.

Committee members advanced a focus on ensuring the plan is specific and actionable, with clear metrics to track progress. Members also pushed community engagement as a major priority, ensuring that all voices are heard. The Steering Committee also grappled with Multnomah County's role as a local government and how the plan could influence other jurisdictions. City of Portland staff partnered closely with Multnomah County to support Steering Committee members and ensure alignment between local government planning efforts.

The Steering Committee members represented the following organizations:

- APANO
- Coalition of Communities of Color
- Community Energy Project
- Multnomah Youth Commission
- Portland NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Committee
- Neighbors for Clean Air
- NW Energy Coalition
- Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Rahab's Sisters
- Self Enhancement, Inc.
- Unite Oregon
- Verde

Staff members represented the following departments and bureaus:

- Multnomah County Office of Sustainability
- Multnomah County Health Department/Healthy Homes and Communities Team
- City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Approach to Community Engagement

Community-driven climate justice planning centers communities most impacted by climate change as experts who possess the deepest understanding of the challenges and hold the most creative and innovative solutions.

Recognizing the critical importance of a community-led planning process, the Steering Committee pushed staff to reach out to frontline community members beyond the committee and helped develop an inclusive engagement plan. This plan involved identifying and connecting with community partners who have traditionally been underrepresented in this type of work.

The Steering Committee employed several key principles during this effort:

- Break cycles of perpetual advocacy: Many communities find themselves constantly advocating for basic needs, diverting energy and resources from long-term solutions. True community leadership can empower communities to move beyond reactive advocacy to actively shaping their own futures.
- Build trust and equity: By centering community voices and empowering them to lead, governments and the communities they serve can build stronger, more equitable relationships with each other.
- Develop more effective and just solutions: When communities have genuine ownership over the planning process, the resulting solutions are more likely to be effective, equitable, and sustainable.

Through a series of workshops and collaborative gatherings, the Steering Committee and staff prioritized outreach to youth, immigrant and refugee communities, and residents of East Multnomah County. These efforts resulted in meaningful connections with over 120 community members who provided invaluable input.

In December 2024, the Steering Committee and project staff showcased the progress of the Climate Justice Plan at a community open house. Anchored by 12 universal goals, the open house event offered an opportunity for community members to share valuable feedback, exchange ideas, build vital connections, and broaden the circle of input.

Based on the feedback from the open house and significant contributions by each of the Steering Committee members, County staff developed the initial draft of this Climate Justice Plan. After further review and refinement by Steering Committee members and staff, the Steering Committee voted to move the draft CJP forward for public comment.



Artist: Paola De La Cruz

Phases 2 & 3: Public Comment and Community Forums

The public comment period officially began with the presentation of the Public Discussion Draft of the Climate Justice Plan to the Board of County Commissioners in April 2025. Following the presentation, County staff hosted or participated in 24 events to help spread the word about the opportunity to comment on the draft plan. Through this outreach, staff connected with nearly 600 individuals and received 46 survey responses and 39 written comments. Although most comments were very supportive of the plan, a persistent theme was that community members and other interested parties wanted more time to review the details of the plan and share their input.

After once again briefing the Board of County Commissioners on public feedback in September 2025, staff launched a 12-part community forum series designed to dive into each of the 12 goals in the plan with any interested parties sitting at the same table. The hybrid meetings had a total of 279 participants.

Staff used all of the additional feedback collected from the public comment period and the community forums to redraft the indicators and strategies. Staff adjusted indicators after looking for data sources that could help measure progress for each goal while also aligning with the plan's strategies. Missing strategies were added while some strategies were consolidated or dropped, shrinking the total number of strategies from 90 in the draft to 75 in the final plan. Finally, each strategy was categorized to clarify the role of the County and the community in its implementation. 24 County Strategies were identified where the County will directly lead on implementation; 24 strategies were identified as an Investment Opportunity, where the County may play a significant role if additional resources can be identified; and 27 strategies were identified as Community Leadership, where the community will lead and the County's role is likely more limited. The revised draft was presented to the community at two additional forums that offered the opportunity to submit written comments.

Final approval of the plan included approval from the original steering committee in Phase 1 and adoption by the Board of County Commissioners.

Key Takeaways from the 12 Community Forums

- Link indicators to strategies and leverage community data to "ground-truth" progress.
- Ensure the information in the strategies is thorough and accurate.
- Protect the public from environmental harms, including climate and natural hazards.
- Address both indoor and outdoor air quality, which are community concerns.
- Expand consideration of energy reliability, given rising demand and constrained supplies.
- Support thermal energy networks, an area of shared agreement across participants.
- Ensure climate resilience is considered throughout all of the goals.
- Support decentralized, trusted community networks for resilience to extreme weather.
- Emphasize the value of ecosystem services and climate-adaptive infrastructure.
- Strengthen green jobs goal through investments in green industries, trades, and worker training.
- Ground strategies in current fiscal realities.
- Ensure ongoing community governance and accountability.

Appendix D: Community-Driven Planning Frameworks

Vision, Power, Solutions Framework

Community-driven climate justice and resilience planning is a relatively new field of practice. The National Association for Climate Resilience Planners (NACRP) is a national network of community-driven planning facilitators, grassroots organizers, and multi-sector partners focused on climate justice solutions, led by the Movement Strategy Center's Taj James and Jovida Ross, as well as Rosa Gonzalez, founder of Facilitating Power. NACRP developed the "Vision, Power, Solutions" framework, a living framework on community-driven climate resilience planning that Multnomah County's Office of Sustainability and Health Department have looked to as a guide for increasing the flow of critical data from communities to decision-makers, while simultaneously supporting community capacity for building solutions into action.

The framework outlines the principles, practices, and crucial roles that community-based organizations and other entities, such as local governments, can fulfill in actively cultivating leadership within frontline communities to drive climate resilience solutions. Clearly articulated roles that community-based justice organizations and local governments can play ultimately help improve governance structures and aid the effectiveness of our efforts to meet the challenge of the climate crisis, while also addressing the needs of the communities the County and our partners serve.

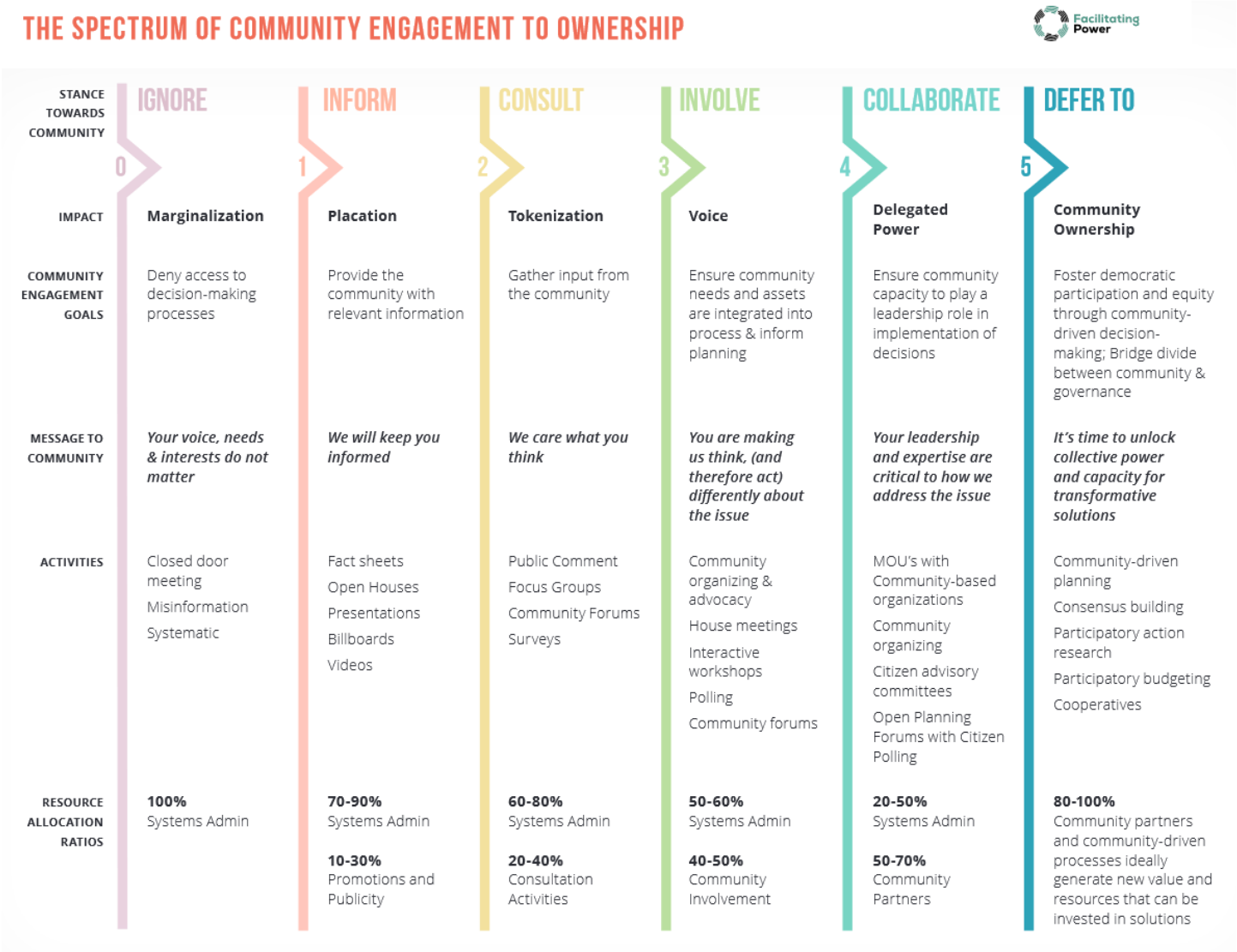


Artist: Paola De La Cruz

The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership Framework

The "Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership" framework, developed by the Movement Strategy Center, provides a valuable lens for understanding how to effectively engage communities in climate justice planning.

This framework emphasizes a shift from traditional models of engagement — where government agencies primarily inform or consult with communities — toward a model where communities have genuine ownership over the decision-making process. This spectrum helped to inspire the idea of co-creation for the Climate Justice Plan.



Source: Movement Strategy Center

Targeted Universalism

The CJP Steering Committee utilized an academic framework called Targeted Universalism. Relying on the work of the Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkeley, the concept was used to develop the basic structure of the plan: universal climate justice goals combined with more targeted strategies. Targeted Universalism means setting a single, ambitious goal for everyone, but changing how to reach it based on a community's specific needs. Instead of using a "one-size-fits-all" strategy, this approach looks at how different groups are affected by their background, culture, or where they live. It then creates custom, targeted strategies for each group so that everyone actually has a fair shot at reaching the same ultimate goal.[96]



Appendix E: Glossary

Accountability: How individuals and communities hold themselves to their goals and actions, and acknowledge the values and the groups for which they are responsible. To be accountable, one must be visible, with a transparent agenda and process.

Adaptation: The process of adjusting human systems to the actual or expected climate and its effects. Adaptation aims to moderate damages or take advantage of beneficial opportunities. Natural systems can also adapt, and human intervention may facilitate this adjustment process. ***Community-based adaptation*** is an approach that places communities at the center of processes to reduce their vulnerability and increase their ability to adapt to the effects of climate change.

"Canopy Gap": The quality and extent of a neighborhood's tree canopy is linked to health and well-being, and provides an important protection from heat in urban environments. Significant gaps in tree canopy, shaped by development patterns and prioritization or neglect of public investments across communities, exist between neighborhoods.

Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake: The Cascadia Subduction Zone is an approximately 700-mile long faultline that runs under the ocean from British Columbia to Northern California, relatively close to the coast. The faultline is formed by the intersection of two major geological plates, held together by friction, with one plate slowly slipping under the other, also known as subduction. The faultline has produced tremendous earthquakes in the past, with the last major event occurring in 1700. Should a Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake happen today, it would cause massive destruction to the greater Cascadia region, including to inland communities like Multnomah County.

Climate: The average of weather patterns in a specific area over a longer period of time, usually 30 or more years, that represents the overall state of the climate system. Human activity in the industrial age, and particularly during the last century, is significantly altering our planet's climate through the release of harmful greenhouse gasses.

Climate Change: Refers to the long-term changes in the Earth's climate that are warming the atmosphere, ocean, and land. Climate change is affecting the balance of ecosystems that support life and biodiversity, and impacting health. It also causes more extreme weather events, such as more intense and/or frequent hurricanes, floods, heat waves, and droughts, and leads to sea level rise and coastal erosion as a result of ocean warming, melting of glaciers, and loss of ice sheets.

Climate Crisis: Refers to the serious problems that are being caused by changes in the planet's climate, including weather extremes, disasters, ocean acidification and sea-level rise, loss of biodiversity, food and water insecurity, health risks, economic disruption, displacement, and even violent conflict.

Climate Justice: Climate justice means putting equity and human rights at the core of decision-making and action on climate change. The concept recognizes that the countries, industries, and people that have gained the most from the activities that drive climate change are also the ones least impacted and most resilient to its effects. Conversely, those who have contributed and gained the least from greenhouse gases-emitting activities are the ones hardest hit by its impacts. This is true across wealthy and developing nations; across communities on different sides of structural inequalities based on race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status; and across different generations, with young people facing great harm from the actions of previous generations. Climate justice seeks to understand these divides and to center the voices of those who have been harmed in shaping solutions so that no-one is left behind.

Climate Resilience: A future in which ecosystems, human labor, and cultures are integrated into a thriving regenerative web of life. Resilience is the ability of people in their communities to anticipate, accommodate, and positively adapt to or thrive amidst changing climate conditions and hazard events. Resilient communities enjoy a high quality of life, reliable systems, and economic vitality, and they conserve resources for present and future generations.

Climate and Community Resilience Hubs: Resilience hubs are community-serving facilities augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce carbon pollution while enhancing quality of life. Resilience hubs can meet myriad physical and social goals by utilizing a trusted physical space such as a community center, faith community building, recreation facility, or multifamily housing building, as well as its surrounding infrastructure, such as a vacant lot, community park, or local business.

Colonization: Invasion, dispossession, and subjugation need not be military; it can begin — or continue — as a geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban, or industrial encroachments. Such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants, often legalized after the fact. The long-term result of such massive dispossession is institutionalized inequality. The colonizer-colonized relationship is, by nature, an unequal one that benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized.

Community-based Renewable Energy: This refers to small- and medium-scale renewable energy projects, typically solar (photovoltaic) installations, that provide direct benefits to community members through low- or no-cost carbon-free electricity. In Oregon, the Community Solar program allows for the development of solar projects that allow subscribers to have a portion of the energy generated by the project credited to their utility bills. Projects are required to set aside a portion of the subscriptions for low-income households at significantly reduced rates, and the program allows households who cannot install solar themselves to take part in the renewable energy future.

Community data: "Evidence generated by communities about their everyday lives. It is a reflection of community-centric forms of knowing, being, doing, and dreaming. Community data can be numbers, words, art, music, sound, and maps. It encompasses the multiple and diverse ways that communities share, express, and articulate their lived experiences and desires. Community data requires the systematic collection, interpretation, and use of information that is produced on the terms of community; it provides contextual information about human experiences – past, present, and the desired future." (From Introducing Community Data, Fall 2024, Coalition of Communities of Color's Research Justice Institute)

Decarbonization: Decarbonization is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that a society produces. It entails changing many, if not all, aspects of the economy, from how energy is generated, to how goods and services are produced and delivered, to how buildings are built and how lands are managed. Meaningful decarbonization requires substantial investments in low-carbon infrastructure and transportation, renewable energy sources, circular economy and resource efficiency, and land and soil restoration. It also requires a rethinking of current economic models that are focused on growth at all costs.

Energy Justice: Achieving equity in both the social and economic participation in the energy system, while also remediating social, economic, and health burdens on those historically harmed by the energy system.

Environmental Justice: The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, disability, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. (Environmental Protection Agency)

Environmental Justice Communities: Environmental justice communities "are commonly identified as those where residents are predominantly minorities or low-income; where residents have been excluded from the environmental policy setting or decision-making process; where they are subject to a disproportionate impact from one or more environmental hazards; and where residents experience disparate implementation of environmental regulations, requirements, practices and activities in their communities. Environmental justice efforts attempt to address the inequities of environmental protection in these communities." (Initiative for Energy Justice) Some state and local governments define environmental justice communities by specific metrics, including the percentage of the population below the poverty line, the rate of toxic cancer among the community, and the makeup of the community by race and ethnicity.

Fossil Fuel: A general term for organic materials formed from decayed plants and animals that have been converted to crude oil, coal, natural gas, or heavy oils by exposure to heat and pressure in the Earth's crust over hundreds of millions of years.

Frontline Communities: Frontline communities are those impacted most by climate change and its root causes, which include white supremacy, patriarchy, and colonization. These communities are embedded in legacy struggles against social, economic, and environmental injustices exacerbated by extractive and pollutive industries that have been purposely and systemically situated adjacent to their communities, and in some cases, on the actual land of the communities. This disproportionate exposure to climate and environmental injustice results in acute and chronic impacts to human and environmental health. Frontline organizations are those created of, by, and for frontline communities, and are accountable to a base of frontline community members.

Gentrification: Gentrification is a process by which established communities, often historically marginalized and lower income, are displaced by wealthier households and developers acquiring properties in that community. Communities most at risk have faced systematic disinvestment, often through explicit or implicit racial discrimination, leaving property values depressed in that area. As properties are purchased and redeveloped, the existing community becomes "priced out" of that area and less connected to the new individuals and businesses that have arrived. The established community is ultimately weakened and displaced.

Global Warming: An increase in the Earth's average surface temperature that occurs when the concentration of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere increases. These gasses absorb more solar radiation and trap more heat, thus causing the planet to get hotter. Burning fossil fuels, cutting down forests, and farming livestock are some human activities that release greenhouse gasses and contribute to global warming.

Greenhouse Gasses (GHG): Gasses that trap heat from the sun in our planet's atmosphere, and re-radiate energy from the sun toward the Earth's surface, keeping it warm. Since the industrial era began, human activities have led to the release of dangerous levels of greenhouse gasses, causing global warming and climate change. The main greenhouse gasses released by human activities are carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, as well as fluorinated gasses used for cooling and refrigeration. Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas resulting from human activities, particularly from burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and changing the way land is used. Global reliance on fossil fuels has led to a 50% increase in the concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere over the last 200 years. Methane is another important greenhouse gas that is responsible for 25% of global warming. Methane is released during the extraction and transport of coal, gas, and oil, and by waste landfills and agricultural practices.

Green Jobs: A green job is a career pathway that reduces environmental impact while providing the wages, safety, and union protections necessary to build intergenerational wealth. Green jobs are decent jobs that contribute to protecting and restoring the environment and addressing climate change. Green jobs can be found in both the production of green products and services, such as renewable energy, and in environmentally friendly processes, such as recycling. Green jobs help improve energy and raw material efficiency, limit greenhouse gas emissions, minimize waste and pollution, protect and restore ecosystems, and support adaptation to the impacts of climate change. As the market for green jobs expands, countries must ensure that the workforce is equipped with the specific skills and education required to carry them out. This can be achieved by investing in training young people for future green jobs and by retraining workers from carbon-intensive industries. The latter is a key part of ensuring countries are pursuing a just transition and leaving no one behind.

Heat Island: An urban area characterized by temperatures higher than those of the surrounding non-urban area. As urban areas develop, buildings, roads, and other infrastructure replace open land and vegetation. These surfaces absorb more solar energy, which can create higher temperatures. Certain neighborhoods can be hotter even within an urban area due to a preponderance of parking lots, rooftops, and other surfaces that trap heat, and a lack of tree canopy and green space that tend to cool neighborhoods.

Heat Resilience Focus Areas: Areas disproportionately affected by the heat island effect. The purpose of Heat Resilience Focus Areas is to concentrate resources and interventions in geographically defined areas with the goal of eventually removing the designation once an area no longer meets the criteria as an urban heat island. Addressing urban heat islands involves partnerships between community-based organizations, government entities, and the private sector.

Highly Hazardous Pesticides: Pesticides that are acknowledged to present particularly high levels of acute or chronic hazards to health or environment according to internationally accepted classification systems such as WHO or GHS (the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals) or their listing in relevant binding international agreements or conventions. *(Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/World Health Organization International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management, 2014)*

Indigenous Stewardship: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas, and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations.

Just Transition: A set of unifying principles and practices that describes the process of shifting from an extractive economy to a waste-free, regenerative economy. It must be equitable and must redress past harms. Its process must be just, or the outcome will not be.

Local Government: Local government exists in most states across the United States in two forms — municipal and county. Counties may be divided further into townships. Municipal-level local governments can have multiple types of jurisdictions including city, town, borough, and village. Some rural or suburban areas have no local government below the county level.

Mitigation: Climate change mitigation refers to any action taken by governments, businesses, or people to reduce or prevent greenhouse gas emissions, or to enhance carbon sinks that remove these gasses from the atmosphere. Reducing or preventing greenhouse gas emissions can be achieved by transitioning to renewable energy sources like wind and solar, using energy more efficiently, adopting low-carbon or carbon-free transportation modalities, promoting sustainable agriculture and land use, and changing production and consumption models and diet behaviors. Enhancing carbon sinks can be achieved by restoring forests, wetlands, and marshlands, maintaining soil health, and protecting terrestrial and marine ecosystems. In order for mitigation actions to be successful, it is crucial that countries develop supportive environments through legislation, policies, and investments.

Point access block: Often called a single-stair building, this is an architectural layout for multifamily housing where multiple units on a floor are clustered around a single central core containing the stairs and an elevator. This design eliminates long, continuous hallways. Because units radiate from a central point rather than flanking a long corridor, most apartments span the width of the building. This allows for windows on multiple sides and excellent cross-ventilation. Eliminating double-loaded corridors frees up more square footage for living spaces rather than wasted hallway space. The small, efficient footprint is ideal for narrow, single-family lots or small urban development parcels, and creates lively streetscapes typical of walkable urban neighborhoods.

Renewable Energy: Renewable energy is energy derived from natural sources that are constantly being replenished, such as wind, sunlight, the flow of moving water, and geothermal heat. In contrast to energy sourced from fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas, which accounts for 75% of the harmful greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change, energy from renewable sources is cheap, clean, and sustainable, and generates more jobs. Transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy in all sectors — power, heating and cooling, transportation, and industry — is key to addressing the climate crisis. To stay under 1.5 degrees Celsius of global warming, the world needs to immediately phase out fossil fuel use and undergo a profound transformation of the energy system through rapid electrification and sourcing energy from renewable sources.

Resilience: "The ability of a system, community, or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform, and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management." (United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction) In the context of climate justice, resilience is the capacity of a community, particularly its most vulnerable members, to avert climate [...]

chaos and shape its own future through self-determination, holistic planning, and systemic power-building.

Reuse Economy: The redistribution (typically through donation), resale, or repurposing of goods like furniture, clothes, IT equipment, and other items to extend their use. The reuse economy supports the community through the provision of lower-cost or no-cost items and avoids the environmental impacts of the creation and eventual disposal of new goods.

"Safe Systems" Approach to Transportation: A transportation safety paradigm that aims to eliminate all fatal and serious traffic injuries. Operating under the belief that human error is inevitable and the transportation network must be built to forgive those mistakes, it shifts responsibility to system designers, rather than placing blame entirely on human behavior.

Social Determinants of Health (SDoH): The circumstances surrounding a person's birth, development, life, employment, and aging are shaped by the allocation of resources, power, and wealth on global, national, and local scales. The various environments and settings in which individuals find themselves, such as their school, workplace, neighborhood, or church, can influence the social, economic, and physical aspects of their lives, collectively referred to as "place." In addition to the material conditions of place, factors such as social interaction and sense of security and well-being can also be affected by an individual's place of residence.

Social Justice: The idea that all people have equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources.

Strategic Electrification: "Also referred to as beneficial electrification – is a guiding framework for advancing electrification while supporting affordability and reliability. For electrification to be considered "strategic" it must advance one of the following areas without adversely affecting the others: (1) benefits consumers over the long run; (2) enables better grid management; and (3) reduces negative environmental impacts. Language from and additional information in Strategic Electrification | Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships and Beneficial Electrification - Regulatory Assistance Project" (From Oregon Energy Strategy)

Superfund Site: A formal designation made by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the congressionally established Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) that allows the EPA to clean up contaminated sites and compel reimbursement from responsible parties or have responsible parties perform the cleanup under the supervision of the EPA.

Threat Multiplier: A widely used term by scholars and practitioners to describe climate change implications for public safety and how climate change effects interact with, and have the potential to exacerbate, pre-existing threats and other drivers of instability that contribute to public safety risks.

Weather: Atmospheric conditions at a particular time in a particular location, including temperature, humidity, precipitation, cloudiness, wind, and visibility. Weather conditions do not happen in isolation; instead, they have a ripple effect, as weather in one region can eventually affect the weather hundreds or thousands of miles away.

Wraparound Support: A holistic, team-based approach to care in which professionals, community members, and a person's support network collaborate to create a highly personalized, flexible plan to meet complex needs.

Appendix F: Artwork

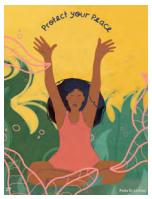
This Climate Justice Plan features artwork from a number of local artists. Thank you to these artists for sharing their work with us:

Nia Musiba @niamusiba



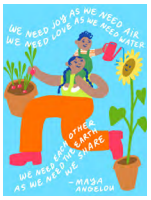


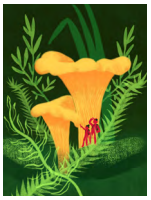
Paola De La Cruz @happynappystudio




Jax Ko @yojaxko

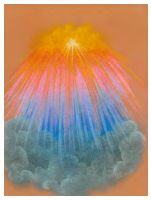





Ree Artemisa @ree.artemisa



Amirah Chatman

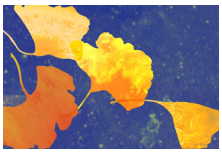


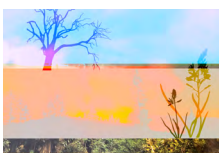

Postcards from Our Climate Resilient Future, a collaborative project by CETI Collective

A Creative and Emerging Technology Institute (CETI) hosts *Postcards From Our Climate Resilient Future*, an augmented placemaking project, that visualizes community designed actions to address Multnomah County's Climate Justice Plan through a series of interactive dynamic artworks (augmented murals, posters, postcards and artifacts) depicting imaginative, joyful and hopeful visions of a just climate future of the region. Artwork throughout the plan comes from Series 1 (2023), Series 2 (2024), and Series 3 (2026). Thank you to all artists within the CETI Collective:

Aaron Post
Amy Meyer
Bernardo Pantoja
Daniela Molnar
Fernanda D'Agostino
Francoise Lemieux
Hannah Skutt
Heather Dunaway Smith
Hilary Tsai
Jairaj Singh
John Wasiutynski
Josh Eddings
Julia Bonnheim
Knowledge Murphy
Mareika Glenn
Marin Vesely
Martin Smith
Matt Kelly
Meenakshi Rao
Michael Heavers
Monique Smiley
Nandini Ranganathan
Peter Vickery
Ran Sheng
Rebecca Watkins
Scott Nieradka
Stephen Lee
Steven Christian
Suzanne Savaria
TJ Orloski







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