

OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Office of Sustainability works to create a just, equitable, livable, resilient, and low carbon community. We center the priorities of frontline communities and advancing sustainability efforts within the County, region, and state.



CLIMATE CRISIS RESPONSE & RESILIENCE

Co-created with the Climate Justice Plan Steering Committee **12 universal goals and strategies** for each goal that lay out a shared plan for climate justice in Multnomah County.



We **connected with 250+ community members at Climate Justice Plan outreach events**, focusing on BIPOC youth, immigrants and refugees, and older adults. The events included an **open house** to gather additional feedback on the 12 goals and draft strategies.

Worked with Commissioners to research and **develop a Fuel Tank Financial Responsibility policy**, addressing potential major financial loss from a catastrophic fuel release from the CEI Hub due to a Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake.

Partnered with Weatherization, City of Wood Village, and Líderes Naturales, to **retrofit 36 homes with free, efficient ductless mini-split heat pumps to heat and cool**. Provided **28 homes free portable AC units** at Wood Village Green Mobile Home park, an urban heat island.

We must address the needs of people who experience the worst harm from the climate crisis.

Partnered with Líderes Naturales and Community Energy Project in a **successful \$99,386 application to the Oregon Department of Energy for the Energy Efficiency Community Block Grant Program**. Funds will increase access to bill discount programs and household energy efficiency through DIY weatherization workshops and culturally-specific education, outreach, and program enrollment for Latine households.

Supported Metro-led work to **develop a regional climate action plan** and multimillion-dollar grant application under EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program.

Led the application for a **\$20 million Environmental Protection Agency Community Change Grant** in partnership with Latino Network and the City of Gresham.

Planted 134 trees in East County as part of the Green Gresham / Healthy Gresham program, totaling 594 trees planted since 2017.



In memory of each person who succumbed to excessive heat in 2021, Multnomah County, the City of Gresham, and Friends of Trees **planted 72 trees in an area of East County impacted by urban heat islands**, to honor their memory and provide much needed shade for years to come.

ENERGY

Worked in coalition with customer and energy justice community advocates and **secured temporary energy utility disconnection protections for at-risk community members**, including a moratorium on electric utility disconnections in the 2024-25 heating season.

27% of households in Multnomah County are energy burdened.

An individual or family is considered energy burdened if they spend 6% or more of their income on energy costs.

Offered three written and three verbal public comments in support of consumer and environmental justice community's efforts to **minimize rate increases** requested by the three energy utilities serving Multnomah County.

Co-facilitated the second iteration of the Energy Justice Cohort that met over 15 times and **supported capacity building and advocacy of 19 community leaders**, in collaboration with Coalition of Communities of Color, NW Energy Coalition, Verde, and Oregon Just Transition Alliance.

Successfully **advocated for and supported environmental justice workshops in Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) rate-setting proceedings**, an important procedural justice improvement.

Supported PUC adoption of guidelines to **increase transparency in utility distribution system planning and expenditures**, working in coalition with energy, consumer, and environmental community advocates.

Supported the Oregon Department of Energy's work on **Oregon's Energy Strategy**.

Successfully **advocated for utilities to address procedural justice concerns in their engagement forums** related to decarbonization planning and policies that impact low-income customers.

In partnership with the Department of County Human Services, **secured a \$2 million Weatherization Innovation grant** from the U.S. Department of Energy. Funds will increase the number of low-income single-family and manufactured housing that receive deep energy retrofits through the Weatherization Program, improving healthy indoor environments and maximizing community benefits in Justice40 neighborhoods.



Partnered with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer on a pilot project to **leverage Elective Pay Clean Energy tax credits**, made available to non-taxable entities through the Inflation Reduction Act, for eligible county projects. Project on track to recoup \$670,000 in its first year.



ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

Welcomed 600 community members at the **East County Learn Share Do Fair** and offered community resources and support to build climate resilience. Co-hosted with the City of Gresham, City of Portland, and Community Services Network.



Hosted the **2024 Ross Island Lagoon Hazardous Algal Bloom symposium** to share challenges and solutions to addressing the source of toxic cyanobacteria in the lower Willamette River. Negotiated an IGA with OSU to develop engineered solutions to eliminate conditions in the Ross Island Lagoon that contribute to algal blooms.

Co-led the **Countywide team in support of CCC's MADE grant** that is developing a community-data ecosystem focused on environmental justice.

Planned, coordinated, and facilitated **11 meetings with the East County Resilience Network (ECRI)**. Developed a formal partnership agreement outlining the mission, vision, values, and organizational structure and provided technical assistance on three grant applications to support the group's ongoing operations.

Collaborated with Commissioner Jesse Beason to **co-sponsor the Black History & Futures Month Proclamation**. Organized an event showcasing Black art that explored themes of environmental justice and climate change.



Worked with **Mudbone Grown and Feed'em Freedom** to build out the **CROPS** site with the development of a barn, greenhouse, biodigester, hydroponic freight farm, and a variety of other capital improvements to support community-scale agriculture and culturally-specific food distribution programs.



In partnership with CETI, **launched Postcards from Our Climate Resilient Future**, a NEA Our Town Creative Placemaking project, showcasing interactive augmented experiences placed all around Portland.

Created content for and delivered nine newsletters to stay connected with and provide calls to action for community members, elected officials, and colleagues.

Supported **community members' participation in the Advisory Committee on Sustainability & Innovation (ACSI)**. Held 7 full committee meetings, 20 subcommittee meetings, and a presentation of their recommendations to Commissioners.

WITH COMMUNITY, FOR COMMUNITY

AIR QUALITY

Successfully partnered with the City of Portland to pass a **phase-out of polluting two-stroke gas leaf blowers**. Secured \$100,000 in funding for contractor rebates to help with implementation.

Continued to work with the **DCHS Weatherization Wood Burning & Bulk Fuel Exchange Program** to **serve 82 households in Q1 & Q2 of FY 2025 and decommission 53 wood burning devices**.

Continued to **implement the Clean Air Construction Program**, enrolling the first two MultCo projects.

Every living being
deserves to
breathe clean air.

ENTERPRISE SUSTAINABILITY



Coordinated **three campaigns for staff and the public**, including in-person and online educational opportunities, to empower County residents to build their resilience to climate-related events.

Supported County staff to address organizational and programmatic goals through the Climate Leadership Team, Green Team Employee Resource Group, and the MultCo Gives Employee Giving Campaign.

Supported Department of County Assets' **building decarbonization and fleet electrification strategy**.

Shared with the Board the **progress of Multnomah County's progress on resource conservation**, including greenhouse gas emissions, energy use, water use, and garbage and recycling.

Supported the Library Bond team in the **development of the County's first solar-powered micro grid** at the **East County Library**.