



Agenda
Planning Commission Meeting
Wednesday, August 27, 2025
Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

Regular Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call

Approval of Agenda: (Approved by Motion)

Approval of Minutes: (Approved by Motion)

1. Meeting Minutes for May 28, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting and June 11, 2025 Planning Commission Workshop
 - Carly Kirkpatrick, Administrative Assistant II

Public Hearing : Please limit public comments to 2 minutes.

2. Public Hearing to Accept Comments on the 2026 Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnership Program Funds
 - Toni Lehman, CDBG / HOME Administrator

Public Comments: Please limit public comments to 2 minutes per speaker. The public comment period is not an opportunity for dialogue with the Planning Commission, or for posing questions with the expectation of an immediate answer. Many questions require an opportunity for information-gathering and deliberation. For this reason, the Planning Commission will accept comments, but will not directly respond to comments, questions or concerns during public comment. Records intended for the Planning Commission's consideration must be submitted to the Planning Manager by 4:00 p.m. the day of the meeting for distribution.

Presentation:

3. Climate Element Discussion with Cascadia

Communications:

Adjournment



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVERSHEET

Meeting Date: 8/27/2025

Agenda Category: Approval of Minutes

Prepared By: Carly Kirkpatrick, Administrative Assistant II

Subject

Meeting Minutes for May 28, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting and June 11, 2025 Planning Commission Workshop

Strategic Priority

Strategic Priority I - High Performance Government

Recommended Motion

Approve the minutes for the May 28, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting and the June 11, 2025 Planning Commission Workshop meetings.

Summary

Meeting Minutes for the May 28, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting, and June 11, 2025 Planning Commission Workshop are attached for review and consideration.

Attachments

1. Draft May 28, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
2. Draft June 11, 2025 Planning Commission Workshop Meeting Minutes



**MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2025
Richland City Hall – Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard**

Planning Commission Regular Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call:

Attendance: Chair Richardson	Present
Vice-Chair Nicholson	Present
Member Hernandez	Absent
Member Lambert	Present
Member Leonard	Present
Member Miller	Absent
Member Samuel	Present

Also present were Councilmember VanDyke, Planning Manager Stevens, and Administrative Assistant II Kirkpatrick.

Approval of Agenda:

COMMISSIONER SAMUEL MOVED AND COMMISSIONER LAMBERT SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA AS PUBLISHED. THE MOTION PASSED 5-0.

Approval of Minutes:

1. Approval of the February 26, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER LAMBERT MOTIONED AND COMMISSIONER SAMUEL SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 26, 2025, PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED 5-0.

Public Comments:

None.

New Business:

2. 2026 – 2031 Transportation Improvement Program

Public Works Director D'Alessandro gave a brief history of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) outlining requirements and statewide coordination. Mr. D'Alessandro then presented them with the 2026-2031 TIP, reviewing details for projects that are higher priority and either fully or partially funded. Projects that are farther down and later in the schedule are mostly developer related. The Commission held a question-and-answer period.

Vice-Chair Nicholson inquired about the status of the Dallas Road project, which has been listed on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) since 2022. She referenced a letter received from the state indicating that road is failing and should be moved up the priority list. However, the project has instead been pushed further down.

Mr. D'Alessandro responded that the developer is currently working with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to develop a plan to move the project forward.

Commissioner Samuel asked about the plan to convert George Washington Way into a one-way street, noting that he did not see it listed on the current TIP.

Mr. D'Alessandro explained that the project is officially titled the Downtown Connectivity Project and has been removed from the TIP because it is actively in development. He reported that Public Works is currently 60 to 70 percent through the design phase, completing environmental review, and working with a consultant on right-of-way and land acquisition. The city is awaiting an agreement with the Federal Highway Administration for funding. The delay stems from a pause initiated by the current administration to thoroughly review all contracts. Mr. D'Alessandro expressed optimism that the contract would be signed soon. He also noted that significant public engagement and communication efforts are planned as the project approaches the construction phase.

Commissioner Aaron commended the diversity of projects currently on the TIP and the level of communication that has occurred around them.

Councilmember VanDyke addressed Commissioner Samuel's concerns regarding the Downtown Connectivity Project, stating that he was hesitant to begin but is now favorably in support of the project. He emphasized the City's efforts to improve public outreach, including the hiring of a communications consultant to engage the community.

Commissioner Leonard raised concerns about safety and traffic planning during the construction of the Downtown Connectivity Project, particularly the potential impact on north-south traffic and surrounding neighborhoods in the event of an accident. He also asked about funding certainty.

Mr. D'Alessandro responded and offered to set up a meeting with Commissioner Leonard to review the project in greater detail.

Chair Richardson asked for an update on the funding status for the top two TIP projects.

Councilmember VanDyke responded that legislative involvement will be necessary, and the City and Council are actively working to raise awareness about the importance of these projects.

Mr. D'Alessandro provided additional details on the status of both projects and the next steps required to move them forward.

VICE-CHAIR NICHOLSON MOVED AND COMMISSIONER LAMBERT SECONDED THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND TO RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL ADOPTION OF THE 2026-2031 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM. THOSE OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Communications:

Planning Manager Stevens:

- Introduced the new member to the Commission.
- Announced the resignation of Commissioner Austin.
- Noted an anticipated increase in the frequency of Planning Commission meetings due to the growing number of development projects initiated by the city.
- Reported the successful hiring of a new Senior Planner who will begin on Monday. The department is still in the process of recruiting for a second Senior Planner position.

Councilmember VanDyke:

- Provided an overview of the strategic plan adopted by the City Council.
- Highlighted the "trifecta" of capital improvement plans currently underway, which will soon be brought before the Planning Commission for review and input.
- Directed Commissioners to the City's website for more detailed information on these plans.

Chair Richardson thanked Mr. D'Alessandro for his presentation and hard work for planning and transportation.

Adjournment:

Chair Richardson adjourned the meeting at 7:00 P.M.

PREPARED BY: _____

Carly Kirkpatrick, Administrative Assistant

APPROVED BY: _____

Jet Richardson, Chair



**MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2025
Richland City Hall – Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard**

Planning Commission Regular Workshop - 6:00 p.m.

Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call:

Attendance: Chair Richardson	Present
Vice-Chair Nicholson	Present
Member Hernandez	Absent
Member Lambert	Present
Member Leonard	Absent
Member Miller	Absent
Member Samuel	Present

Also present were Councilmember VanDyke (remote via Zoom), Deputy City Manager Schiessl, Planning Manager Stevens, Senior Planner Ballard, Planner Nelson and Administrative Assistant II Kirkpatrick.

Agenda Item:

1. Off-Street Parking Regulations Discussion

Deputy City Manager (DCM) Schiessl introduced Kimley-Horn representative Robert Ferrin to present an overview of the City's parking reform project, including background, policy drivers, proposed code changes, and case studies from other jurisdictions.

A major driver of this effort is Senate Bill 5184, effective April 2025, which requires jurisdictions to reduce or eliminate parking minimums for various land uses to support affordable housing, sustainability, and urban development. The proposed reforms align with Richland's Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and Downtown Connectivity Study. Key impacts of SB 5184 include reduced parking requirements for residential, commercial, and institutional uses, the elimination of minimums for specific developments such as small housing units and childcare centers, and lowered ratios for apartments and senior housing. Initial recommendations suggest incorporating shared and off-site parking, updating bicycle parking standards, evaluating electric vehicle charging requirements, and exploring flexible solutions such as in-lieu fees and valet parking. The next steps are to continue stakeholder engagement with a community-wide workshop with an upcoming virtual meeting with the community and going to Council for a workshop.

After the initial presentation, Mr. Ferrin began the interactive portion, using menti to get feedback from the commissioners. The survey questions included the following:

1. Is there trouble currently finding parking in the downtown area?
2. How could the parking experience be improved?
3. Are there other transportation or mobility options we should consider enhancing access?
4. What is your experience with current parking minimums?

After each slide commission discussed how they answered and why.

Mr. Ferrin concluded his presentation and invited follow-up questions or comments from the Commissioners.

Chair Richardson thanked Mr. Ferrin for his time and presentation.

Mr. Stevens introduced the new Senior Planner, Jennifer Ballard, to the Commission.

Chair Richardson requested an update on the developer interested in Tracts D and E.

Mr. Schiessl confirmed that the Economic Development team is still working through the development agreement and high-level contract negotiations with Cascadia for Tracts D & E. He noted that contract review is expected to take a couple of months. Additionally, he mentioned that a second commercial cruise dock related to Tract D is in progress and advancing at a slightly quicker pace.

Adjournment:

Chair Richardson adjourned the meeting at 7:18 P.M.

PREPARED BY:

Carly Kirkpatrick, Administrative Assistant

APPROVED BY:

Jet Richardson, Chair



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVERSHEET

Meeting Date: 8/27/2025

Agenda Category: Presentation

Prepared By: Mike Stevens, Planning Manager

Subject

Climate Element Discussion with Cascadia

Strategic Priority

Recommended Motion

Summary

House Bill 1181 introduced a new Climate Change and Resiliency Element within the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70a), requiring jurisdictions to include sub-elements for greenhouse gas emissions reduction and resiliency in their updated Comprehensive Plans. Since climate change and greenhouse gas emissions are regional in nature rather than localized, Benton County and the cities of Richland, Kennewick, Pasco and West Richland have collaborated to develop a regional plan to address the state requirements.

With help from the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments, grant funding was provided to Cascadia Consulting Group to perform the work necessary to create the sub-elements. As part of their presentation, Cascadia Consulting Group will present a draft list of Climate Element Policies (attached) for Planning Commission review and discussion, outlining the steps completed to date and the next steps needed to finalize the regional Climate Element.

This finalized Climate Element will supplement the work that the Planning Commission and AHBL will perform over the next year and completes this portion of the City's Comprehensive Plan Update for inclusion into the final Comprehensive Plan document.

Attachments

1. Richland- DRAFT Tri-Cities Climate Element Policies with rationale
2. Richland Planning Commission 8.27.25



Tri-Cities Climate Element Policies – DRAFT (with rationale) Richland

July 2025



This work is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act. The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at www.climate.wa.gov.

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GUIDANCE FOR REVIEW – PLEASE READ!

Key Questions for Review

As you read through the draft policies, please consider the following questions:

- **Strong policies:** Which policies seem particularly strong or effective? What do you like about them?
- **Weak policies:** Do any policies seem weak or unnecessary? Please advise if they should be revised or removed.
- **Missing content:** Are there any major gaps in the policies? Is there something important that's not addressed? Should it be added to an existing policy or developed as a new one?
- **Feasibility:** Could the Tri-Cities Region realistically implement these policies? Please share your thoughts if any are unrealistic, or if wordsmithing is needed to ensure they are actionable.
- **Goals:** The policies are currently organized under goals. Goals are provided at both the sub element level and at the sector level. Please let us know if you like this format, or would you prefer one or the other.
- **Policy language:** Should any policies be reworded for clarity or strength?

Adding Input

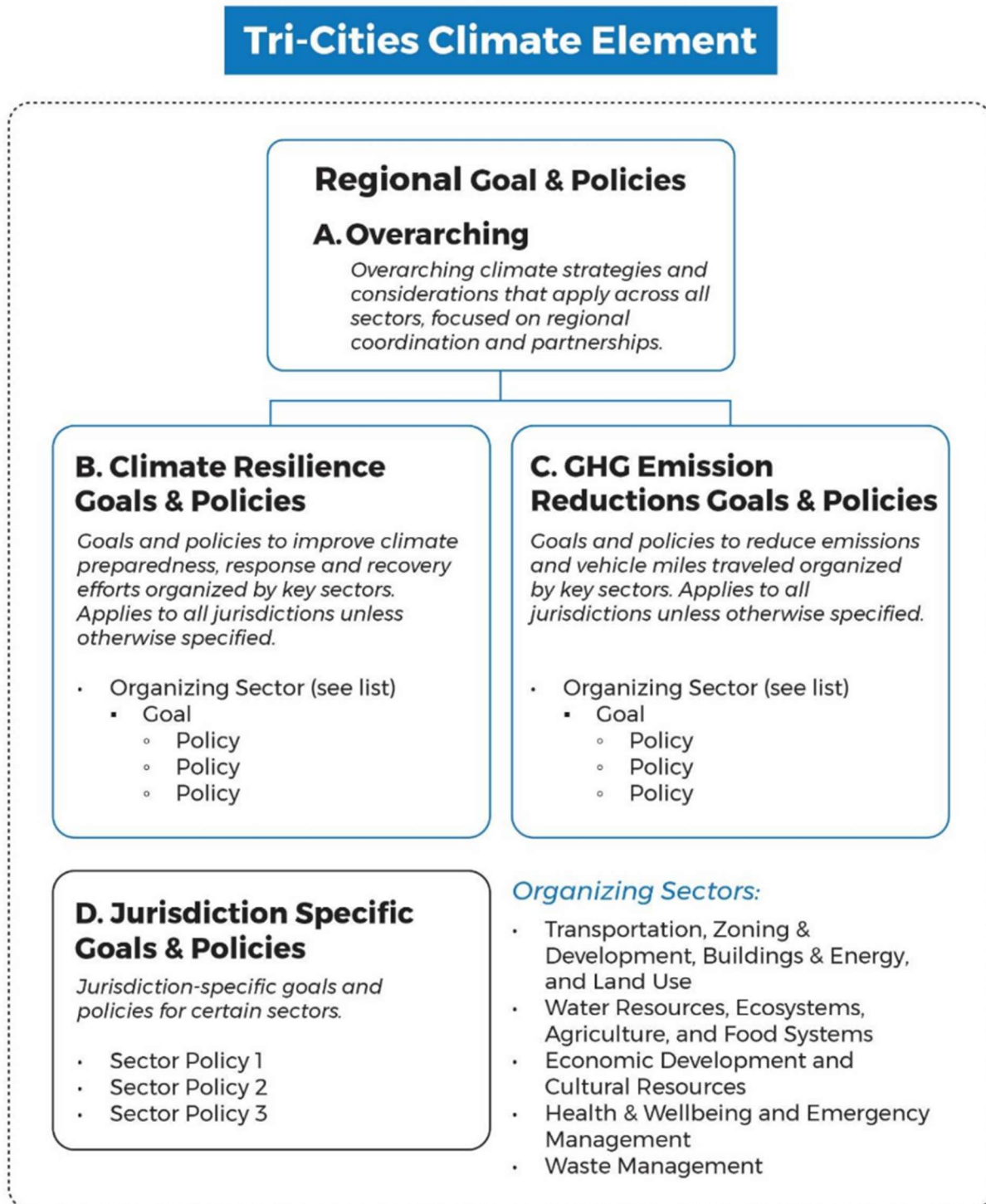
Please **add your feedback** on the draft policies by:

- Using the Word doc “comment” feature
- Adding your notes to the “feedback” column in the draft policies table with your initials or jurisdiction

Guide to Policy Tables

The following pages contain draft the ***Draft Climate Element Goals and Policies*** for the Tri-Cities Region. The draft goals and policies list is organized

by regional draft goals and policies first, followed by Benton County specific policies. See the diagram below:



DRAFT CLIMATE ELEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

Policies were drafted from existing policies identified in the policy audit and influenced by findings from engagement (Climate Policy Advisory Team (CPAT), public meetings, public survey, staff policy workshops) and reports (greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions analysis summary and vulnerability assessment (VA)). Additional policies were inspired by Commerce Policy Explorer.

Regional

Overarching

Draft CE Goal 1: Integrate climate resilience and GHG emissions reduction into local and regional planning, resource allocation, and overall strategy to ensure meaningful alignment with current and future priorities.

Draft Policy	Rationale
CE-1.1: Develop and maintain staff expertise, skills, and capacity to implement Climate Element policies equitably across the region.	Ensuring subject matter expertise/ understanding to guide climate resilience work is important in developing the most effective policies and actions to address climate change
CE-1.2: Strengthen and invest in regional capacity to track and report on climate resilience and GHG emissions reduction policy implementation across the Tri-Cities area. Develop and maintain shared progress reports, dashboards, and other tools to monitor and communicate progress on climate goals over time.	Discusses staff/government capacity, coordination, and engagement across jurisdictions for implementation of both resilience and mitigation policies.
CE-1.3: Comprehensive plan policies and implementing development regulations should be consistent with defensible science.	Based on Benton County WR Goal 3 Policy 3 - which was tagged as a policy to be amended. It was focused on water sector and seems like this policy guidance is useful for all sectors. Policy builds community knowledge.

Climate Resilience

Draft Overarching Climate Resilience Goal: Build a healthier and more resilient region by preparing for the impacts of climate change, protecting vulnerable communities and natural systems, supporting clean economic development, and strengthening infrastructure and emergency response.

TRANSPORTATION, BUILDINGS, ENERGY, AND LAND USE

Draft CE Goal 2: Ensure policies and development regulations result in land use patterns and built environments that support resilience to extreme weather and climate-related impacts.

Draft Policy	Rationale
CE-2.1: Develop and maintain programs to support retrofitting homes with low-cost cooling solutions such as air conditioning units and heat pumps, prioritizing households with residents most vulnerable to extreme temperature events (e.g., low-income seniors).	Informed by Kennewick Policy Workshop discussion - can be reworded to imply more general support / helping low income and senior access to cooling units/ removing financial and code barriers etc.
CE-2.2: Develop or modify design standards to encourage the integration of exterior building features that reduce the impacts of extreme heat and precipitation such as awnings, cool roofs, passive cooling designs, green infrastructure, and green roofs.	Helps address extreme heat and wildfire smoke impacts- concerns identified in public meetings and survey.
CE-2.3: Reduce wildfire ignition risks from utility infrastructure. -Require all new subdivisions to bury electricity transmission lines and associated infrastructure to reduce the risk of wildfire ignition and storm-related damage. -Encourage utility providers to implement wildfire mitigation best practices such as undergrounding and tree trimming. -Work with local fire departments on vegetation management and other existing efforts to reduce wildfire risk from utility infrastructure.	Public meeting priority; staff workshop priority; Specific policy opportunity and key consideration noted in the Policy Audit. However, may apply to all jurisdictions.
CE-2.4: Implement the BFCOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Active Transportation Plan as well as multimodal transportation plans developed by the cities and counties to enhance the safety and security of the region's transportation system, improve access for motorized and non-motorized users--especially currently underserved populations--and increase the resilience of the transportation network to climate hazards.	Identified as policy opportunity in policy audit community wellbeing section. CE policy opportunity: "Specifically promote and improve transportation options and access for disadvantaged communities (e.g., people with disabilities, the elderly)"
CE-2.5: Work with Benton Franklin Transit to integrate cooling infrastructure into multimodal developments such as bus shelters with fans, mist, or shade to keep residents cool and protected and enhance community wellbeing and transportation.	Identified as policy opportunity in policy audit extreme heat section.
CE-2.6: Encourage development of clean energy infrastructure that can provide reliable and affordable power, reducing reliance on	Based on opportunity in policy audit and

Draft Policy	Rationale
hydropower sources that may be impacted by lower water levels.	comments from CPAT/public meetings.

WATER RESOURCES, ECOSYSTEMS, AGRICULTURE, AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Draft CE Goal 3: Protect the viability of the region’s water resources, ecosystems, and agricultural economy by promoting resilience to extreme weather and climate-related hazards, while balancing regional water needs and ecosystem health.

Draft Policy	Rationale
CE-3.1: Promote environmentally sustainable water storage and farming practices that help agricultural producers adapt to changing conditions and reduce production losses while balancing regional water needs. Consider operational modernization and enhanced water conservation strategies in the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan and coordinate with conservation and irrigation districts.	Address adaptation measures to sustain agriculture in face of climate impacts (e.g. heat, drought, etc.).
CE-3.2: Promote innovation, investment, and management regimes that address trends for reduced precipitation and increased extreme heat, drought, smoke, and extreme precipitation. This includes supporting research and partnerships on reducing input costs, energy demand, water demand, and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as crop varieties suited to changing weather conditions.	Policy audit: Consider agricultural policies that support carbon capture and soil health. Policy audit: Policies lack recognition of the threat climate impacts have to the local agricultural economy, including crop adaptation; resilient power and water utilities; and protections for outdoor workers to avoid heat/smoke impacts
CE-3.3: Maximize carbon sequestration and conservation of agricultural and open space land through alignment of Open Space Taxation Program strategies, Voluntary Stewardship Program, and other incentives. Consider multijurisdictional tools such as conservation futures, transfers or purchase of development rights, or other strategies to enhance conservation and carbon sequestration and avoid harm to carbon-rich ecosystems.	Policy audit: Consider agricultural policies that support carbon capture and soil health. Increase the capacity of natural environments to help capture carbon
CE-3.4: Consider compatible urban and institutional lands for renewable energy infrastructure opportunities. Protect long-term viable agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive lands while allowing least conflict renewable energy siting.	Policy Audit: Consider policies that allow for co-location of compatible agricultural uses and renewable energy infrastructure.
CE-3.5: Preserve or expand natural areas that help control flooding and provide shade, prioritizing projects for locations that	Based on public survey results, informed

Draft Policy	Rationale
frequently flood, have high heat conditions, or have community groups that are more likely to be impacted by these hazards.	by/consistent with SMP policies
CE-3.6: Manage trees and other vegetation in both urban and rural areas to decrease risks from severe wildfires, preserving vegetation where possible and improving ecosystem health and habitat function.	Meets resilience requirements and improves the overall air quality and habitat health of forests
CE-3.7: Collaborate with partner agencies and groups to protect aquatic ecosystems and increase their resilience to extreme weather and climate-related impacts such as algal blooms and increased threat of invasive species.	protects regional wetlands, streams, and riparian corridors from the impacts of climate change and development that may damage the habitat and increases the resilience of the region by ensuring that ecosystem processes can continue
CE-3.8: Protect and enhance resilience of surface and groundwater quantity and quality, recognizing that water resources are essential to the public health, safety and welfare, economic growth, and prosperity of the Tri Cities Region and its jurisdictions.	Based on opportunity in policy audit. Informed by Benton County WR Goal 2 Policy 2.
CE-3.9: Coordinate with regional, state, and federal partners on plans to manage water resources and hydropower generation in the Yakima River Basin and Columbia River Basin. Advocate for long range planning that considers at least 20 years of projected demand, and needs for increased storage capacity given increasing trends in intense precipitation, reduced snowpack, and severe drought.	Based on opportunity in policy audit. Incorporates review of Yakima Basin Integrated Plan and Columbia River System Operations Plan, per feedback heard during Policy Audit Workshops. Informed by Benton County WR Goal 1 Policy 3 and Kennewick Water Comp Plan Chapter 7 Supply policies.
CE-3.10: Apply development regulations that conserve water resources and support the Tri-Cities region's ability to have a high quality of life and a vibrant economy in a semi-arid climate. This includes development regulations for water efficient buildings, irrigation systems, greywater management, and stormwater management.	Based on Benton County Goal NR 1 Policy 4, applied to full region and reframed to reflect climate element context
CE-3.11: Allow and incentivize water management practices that recycle water for uses that require less treatment than drinking water. This could include reclaiming waters used for food processing to irrigate crops or reclaiming graywater to irrigate parks or golf courses.	Informed by Benton County WR Goal 1 Policy 5. Consistent with input heard during stakeholder engagement.
CE-3.12: Ensure regulations require or incentivize native drought- and pest-resistant	Based on opportunity in policy audit and

Draft Policy	Rationale
trees, shrubs, and grasses in new developments and restoration projects, to increase resilience and reduce maintenance costs and demand for irrigation water.	comments from engagement efforts.
CE-3.13: Provide outreach and incentive programs to promote the voluntary conservation of water and energy. This could include raising public awareness of best practices such as switching from lawns to drought-tolerant landscaping or working with utilities to explore demand pricing structures that do not unfairly burden low-income households.	Based on West Richland Utilities Policy C, expanded/adapted for Climate Element. Also incorporates conservation ideas heard during public engagement and staff workshops.
CE-3.14: Develop a comprehensive, local drought resilience strategy that complements state and federal water basin plans and that factors in projected climate impacts and sets action levels for different drought stages.	Based on opportunity in policy audit. Incorporates review of Yakima Basin Integrated Plan and Columbia River System Operations Plan, per feedback heard during Policy Audit Workshops. Informed by Kennewick Water Comp Plan Chapter 7 Supply policies.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Draft CE Goal 4: Ensure that the local economy and cultural resources and practices are resilient to extreme weather and climate-related impacts.

Draft Policy	Rationale
CE-4.1: Protect, enhance, and restore ecosystems to meet tribal treaty rights and conserve culturally important consumptive and non-consumptive resources including foods, medicinal plants, and materials that could be adversely impacted by climate change impacts such as extreme heat, flooding, and drought.	Identified as policy opportunity in economic development/cultural resources section of policy audit
CE-4.2: Build on existing coordination with Tribal governments to strengthen community resilience and protect cultural resources from climate impacts. This includes supporting tribal efforts to increase knowledge collection and sharing about ways to protect cultural resources and build climate-adaptive systems related to food, health, and the economy.	Identified in policy audit
CE-4.3: Support organizations dedicated to expanding entry level jobs and career development pathways in low-emission industries that align with the needs and strengths of Tri-Cities communities. Coordinate with potential partners such as local schools, labor unions, the Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC), community-based organizations, and business leaders in	Community workshop priority

Draft Policy	Rationale
light industrial uses and nuclear, solar, and hydropower energy.	
CE-4.4: Ensure regional multijurisdictional hazard mitigation plans for Benton and Franklin counties include information about the impacts of extreme weather and climate-related hazards, and mitigation strategies for preparing for and managing post climate disaster hazards to protect community health, economies, and ecosystems.	Integrating climate considerations into emergency planning ensures a coordinated response, minimizes economic disruptions, and supports a sustainable recovery for local businesses and communities.

HEALTH & WELLBEING AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Draft CE Goal 5: Protect community health and well-being and enhance emergency preparedness, response, and recovery from the impacts of climate-related hazards, focusing resources on the people and places most at risk to these hazards.

Draft Policy	Rationale
CE-5.1: Ensure critical infrastructure is resilient to natural hazards such as flooding and extreme heat and implement related area-wide and jurisdiction-specific mitigation actions in the regional hazard mitigation plans.	Informed by Benton County HMP West Richland Flood MAI No. 1 and Richland Flood MAI No. 1. Consistent with input heard during engagement.
CE-5.2: Collaborate at the regional, state, and federal levels on updating floodplain maps to reflect best available information and update local development codes as needed to mitigate for impacts of changes in the floodplain over time.	Noted as a gap and a policy opportunity to respond to extreme precipitation risk in Policy Audit.
CE-5.3: In partnership with the community, seek to expand and raise awareness of programs that provide cooling centers and other types of emergency shelter and resource distribution during extreme weather, focusing on supporting the people who are most at risk.	Climate resilience hubs, a concept from the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, are everyday community spaces that serve broader purposes than emergency shelters alone. They are often led by community-based groups and promote social connection and offer a reliable place for accessing information, gathering, and receiving assistance before, during, and after emergencies. Washington State’s Environmental Justice Guidance emphasizes that frontline communities prioritize having trusted, accessible

Draft Policy	Rationale
	places for shelter and resources during extreme weather and disaster events.
CE-5.4: Develop and implement wildfire mitigation actions for the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), consistent with the regional multijurisdictional hazard mitigation plans for Benton and Franklin counties. This should include Firewise public education for private owners and residents in WUI areas and ensuring wildfire risk reduction strategies are incorporated into public land management practices and local development standards.	Public meeting priority; Specific policy opportunity and key consideration noted in the Policy Audit. However, may apply to all jurisdictions.
CE-5.5: Expand community outreach and training programs focused on climate emergency preparedness and response, including support for Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs).	LTRG or long-term recovery groups are vital for preparedness for wildfire risks
CE-5.6: Strengthen communication with non-English-speaking communities by continuing to build relationships with local groups and exploring the most effective methods for raising awareness and engaging people on climate issues.	City staff workshop priority; may apply to other jurisdictions
CE-5.7: Recognize that parks support climate resilience by providing public access to cool places such as water or shaded areas, and by providing public gathering places where community members can connect and support each other. Promote equitable access to parks, creating inclusive and connected recreational spaces, and supporting culturally responsive, community-driven park development that reflects local needs and values.	Noted as a consideration and priority in the Policy Audit Summary., Noted as a consideration and priority in the Policy Audit Summary. Aligns with Pasco Parks and Rec plan.
CE-5.8: Ensure all residents have access to information about climate impacts and an opportunity to participate in public decision-making processes on plans and the use of public resources to address those impacts. 1) Collaborate with community groups to connect local concerns with regional and statewide efforts and help guide policies, programs, and investments. 2) Seek input from populations that are typically most at-risk to climate impacts such as seniors, children, low-income households, and those with chronic health conditions.	Enhances resilience, enhances resilience, builds community knowledge, promotes equity and justice.
CE-5.9: Protect the health and well-being of agricultural, construction, recreation, and other outdoor workers exposed to extreme heat, poor air quality, and other weather-related hazards. Coordinate with the Benton Franklin Health	Policy audit finding: Policies lack recognition of the threat climate impacts have to the local agricultural economy,

Draft Policy	Rationale
District and the State Department of Labor and Industries to consider strategies such as conducting outreach to employers and workers to promote awareness of worker protection laws and best practices such as scheduling heavy routine outdoor work during cooler times of day and providing breaks and shelter during extreme weather events.	including crop adaptation; resilient power and water utilities; and protections for outdoor workers to avoid heat/smoke impacts

GHG Emission Reductions

Draft Overarching GHG Emission Reductions Goal: Support clean growth and climate-smart development in the region by reducing greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, advancing clean energy, and integrating sustainable land use and transportation strategies.

BUILDINGS & ENERGY

Draft CE Goal 6: Improve building performance and energy resilience by reducing energy use, supporting cleaner energy choices, and making energy-saving upgrades more accessible and affordable.

Draft Policy	Rationale
CE-6.1: Follow state building and energy code development and implementation specific to decarbonization. Educate and support building officials, partners, and staff to integrate energy and building codes for new and remodeled buildings that reduce energy use, expand EV charging infrastructure, and support a variety of energy sources, including renewable sources.	Buildings contribute 23% of Benton County’s preliminary GHG Inventory. Natural gas alone accounts for 17%. The policy audit identified a gap in regulations addressing building performance. This measure directly closes that gap. Please note that this policy has been slightly modified to specify supporting state building and energy codes, rather than requiring net zero greenhouse gas features, as originally written in the Commerce Menu of Measures.
CE-6.2: Enhance energy resilience and reduce energy consumption in existing buildings by: -Supporting public programs that incentivize or encourage energy efficiency retrofits for commercial and residential buildings. -Advancing energy efficiency initiatives across residential, commercial, and municipal sectors, such as weatherization. -Prioritize programs that serve low-income and historically marginalized communities.	Buildings contributed 23% of Benton County’s inventory. Natural gas: 17%, electricity: 4%, others (propane, fuel oil): 2%. The policy audit includes this as an opportunity to improve building energy performance in vulnerable communities. Retrofits will lower building energy use and emissions. The audit highlighted this as a clear opportunity across all jurisdictions.
CE-6.3: Promote the use of sustainable building materials to improve energy and environmental performance through:	Buildings contributed 23% of Benton County’s inventory. Natural gas: 17%, electricity: 4%, others (propane, fuel oil): 2%. The audit noted a gap in incentives for improving

Draft Policy	Rationale
-Incentivized green building certification, -Building code and other development regulations.	performance in new development. This policy encourages energy efficiency through certification (e.g., LEED), though we would need to tailor the language to better reflect local development context. (Note: Cities and counties could provide structural and financial incentives (e.g., density bonuses and tax credits) to developers to certify projects under a third-party standard)
CE-6.4: Consider creating a regional resource hub of federal, state, county, and local incentives available to residents interested in building electrification, insulation, and weatherization, to improve energy efficiency, resilience, and affordability. Prioritize low- and no-cost home retrofit packages for low-income and marginalized communities.	Combines efforts -i.e. increase knowledge and awareness of incentives/requirements at all levels and integrating into local policy + equity focused

TRANSPORTATION, ZONING & DEVELOPMENT, AND LAND USE

Draft CE Goal 7: Promote housing diversity and compact, walkable development near transit and expand safe, reliable, and low-emission transportation options for all residents, with the goal to reduce per-capita VMT 5% below 2022 levels by 2050.

Draft Policy	Rationale
CE-7.1: Implement complementary, mixed-use land use patterns at the neighborhood scale by integrating housing, retail, parks, and schools to support walkability, daily convenience, and reduce reliance on driving.	
CE-7.2: Prioritize infill development through zoning and permitting process, including reducing or minimizing regulatory burdens.	On-road vehicles contributed 33% of Benton County's 2022 GHG emissions. Reducing VMT depends on increasing housing and employment density. This policy supports that by accommodating growth within existing urban areas and reducing sprawl. Almost half of survey respondents supported "build denser communities with shorter distances between destinations." Recommended in VMT study.
CE-7.3: Foster higher-density, mixed-use development in urban villages and transit corridors by supporting transit-oriented development and aligning zoning and permitting	On-road vehicles are 33% of Benton County's GHG emissions. Increasing land use intensity reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The audit identified a gap in anti-sprawl

Draft Policy	Rationale
processes to facilitate compact growth near transit and amenities.	policies. Almost half of survey respondents supported "build denser communities with shorter distances between destinations." Recommended in VMT study. Modeling in wedge. Vetted by client team. , On-road vehicles are 33% of Benton County's GHG emissions. Increasing land use intensity reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The audit identified a gap in anti-sprawl policies. Almost half of survey respondents supported "build denser communities with shorter distances between destinations." Recommended in VMT study.
CE-7.4: Support shorter commutes and reduced reliance on driving for low-income community members by prioritizing integrating affordable and below market rate housing in developments .	Gap noted in policy audit for Benton County - policies do not explicitly address affordable housing and transit-oriented development as it relates to community wellbeing and environmental justice. However, this can apply to all jurisdictions.
CE-7.5: Create a safe, well-connected, and attractive bicycle and pedestrian transportation network that is protected from extreme heat to encourage active transportation and improve street connectivity and walkability. Ensure improvements increase accessibility for people with disabilities and the elderly.	- This policy addresses the 33% of emissions from on-road vehicles. - Aligns with policy audit feedback emphasizing mode shift via infrastructure. - Over half of survey respondents support "Increasing options for people to walk, bike, or take transit." - Recommended in VMT study.
CE-7.6: Prioritize, develop, and maintain mobility hubs in transportation-efficient locations, especially in overburdened communities experiencing a scarcity of transportation alternatives. Identify and implement protections for tenants and low-income residents (such as rent stabilization, anti-displacement measures, and affordable housing requirements) to ensure that these investments do not lead to displacement or additional cost burdens. Incorporate mobility choices (including multimodal transportation) for people with special transportation needs, including persons with disabilities,	Mobility hubs are centralized locations where people can access multiple transportation modes (e.g., bike share, transit, and micromobility devices). Mobility hubs need to be adapted to specific contexts and settings both in terms of the type of components and their scale. For example, a city center rail hub may offer more space to public transport and bike share bikes whereas a hub in a market town center or transport corridor interchange may focus on providing a smaller number of vehicles but greater choice of flexible travel options between housing and jobs. Mobility hubs should be planned as network-integrated with public transport and other active

Draft Policy	Rationale
the elderly, the young, and low-income populations.	transportation components as a key part of planning strategy for optimal impacts. The development of mobility hubs may be an incremental upgrade of sites as opportunities arise such as: new or refurbishment of middle and multifamily housing plus commercial development; upgrade of rail, trolley, bus or rapid-bus route stops; utility service work; introduction of electric vehicle infrastructure. Recommended in VMT study. Promotes equitable access to transportation; mobility choices for disadvantaged populations was flagged as an opportunity in policy audit.
CE-7.7: Implement and seek alignment with the following plans to support regional transportation GHG emissions reductions: BFCOG Regional Active Transportation Plan; BFCOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Transition 2045); BFCOG Regional Bicycle Plan; BFCOG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy; other Comprehensive Plan elements.	Align Climate Element with relevant existing documents/policy
CE-7.8: Support the improvement of transit speed, frequency, coverage, and reliability, including improving number of desirable destinations reachable by transit.	Transit emissions accounted for less than 1%, but on-road vehicles accounted for 33% of GHG emissions. Improving transit is critical as the region grows. The travel demand model preliminarily shows a 23% carpool mode share, indicating opportunity to expand transit use. Jurisdictions could invest in new routes, more frequent service, and last-mile strategies. - Over half of survey respondents support "Increasing options for people to walk, bike, or take transit." - Recommended in VMT study. Although it is going to take a lot of improvement to have a significant impact on VMT, it is going to be critical as the region grows to provide additional transit and work to increase use of transit. The travel demand model shows a less than 1% use of transit for the region. It shows that as the region grows carpooling increases and there is a 23% carpool mode share for the region. This high

Draft Policy	Rationale
	carpool indicates there is opportunity for more transit and it will be important for the cities and counties to work with Benton Franklin Transit (BFT) to improve service as well as for the jurisdictions to plan for transit with infrastructure and first and last mile connections. Modeling in wedge.
CE-7.9: Encourage the private sector and other partners to provide subsidies for low-income residents to purchase or lease electric vehicles and bicycles. Encourage these partners to provide EV charging infrastructure in areas that serve low-income populations.	On-road vehicles are a major GHG source (33% of Benton County emissions). The policy audit identifies a gap in policies supporting EV adoption. EV adoption helps reduce GHGs but may not significantly reduce VMT unless combined with broader strategies. Inclusion of e-bikes helps expand access to low-carbon travel.
CE-7.10: Encourage (or require when mandated by state building code) EV charging infrastructure in major building remodels and retrofits where feasible.	Encouraging private businesses and property owners to implement EV charging infrastructure helps encourage community-wide use of EVs and reduce GHG emissions from vehicles. Jurisdictions could reduce or waive application or impact fees for land use proposals that include EV infrastructure. - CE policy opportunity from audit: "Incorporate electric vehicle infrastructure, adoption, and education" - March public meeting participants suggested implementing charging solutions for apartment dwellers and increasing availability of public chargers.
CE-7.11: Encourage phasing out the use of gas-powered landscaping equipment and other off- or non-road vehicle and equipment types, leading by example through local government practices.	- Reduces GHG emissions from off-road vehicles and equipment. - CE policy opportunity from audit: "Incorporate electrification of off-road and non-road equipment" This measure could be implemented in phases. First, a jurisdiction could implement this in its landscaping activities (including parks). Next, a jurisdiction could provide a timeframe when a limit or ban on gas-powered equipment would go into effect communitywide.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Draft CE Goal 8: Ensure that the community can reduce, reuse, and recycle waste materials sustainably.

Draft Policy	Rationale
CE-8.1: Expand communitywide waste reduction and recycling programs to divert 40% of community recyclable waste from entering landfills by 2029.	Reduces GHG emissions from solid waste. Aligns with Benton County Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste Management Plan recommended recycling goal.

Richland

Draft Policy	Rationale
Buildings & Energy: Implement the strategies outlined in the Richland Clean Energy Implementation Plan, with a focus on supporting overburdened populations through targeted outreach, flexible billing options, and partnerships with community organizations to provide financial and energy-efficiency education.	Emissions reduction policy. Align Climate Element with relevant existing documents/policy

August 27, 2025



Comprehensive Plan Climate Element Overview

Richland Planning Commission

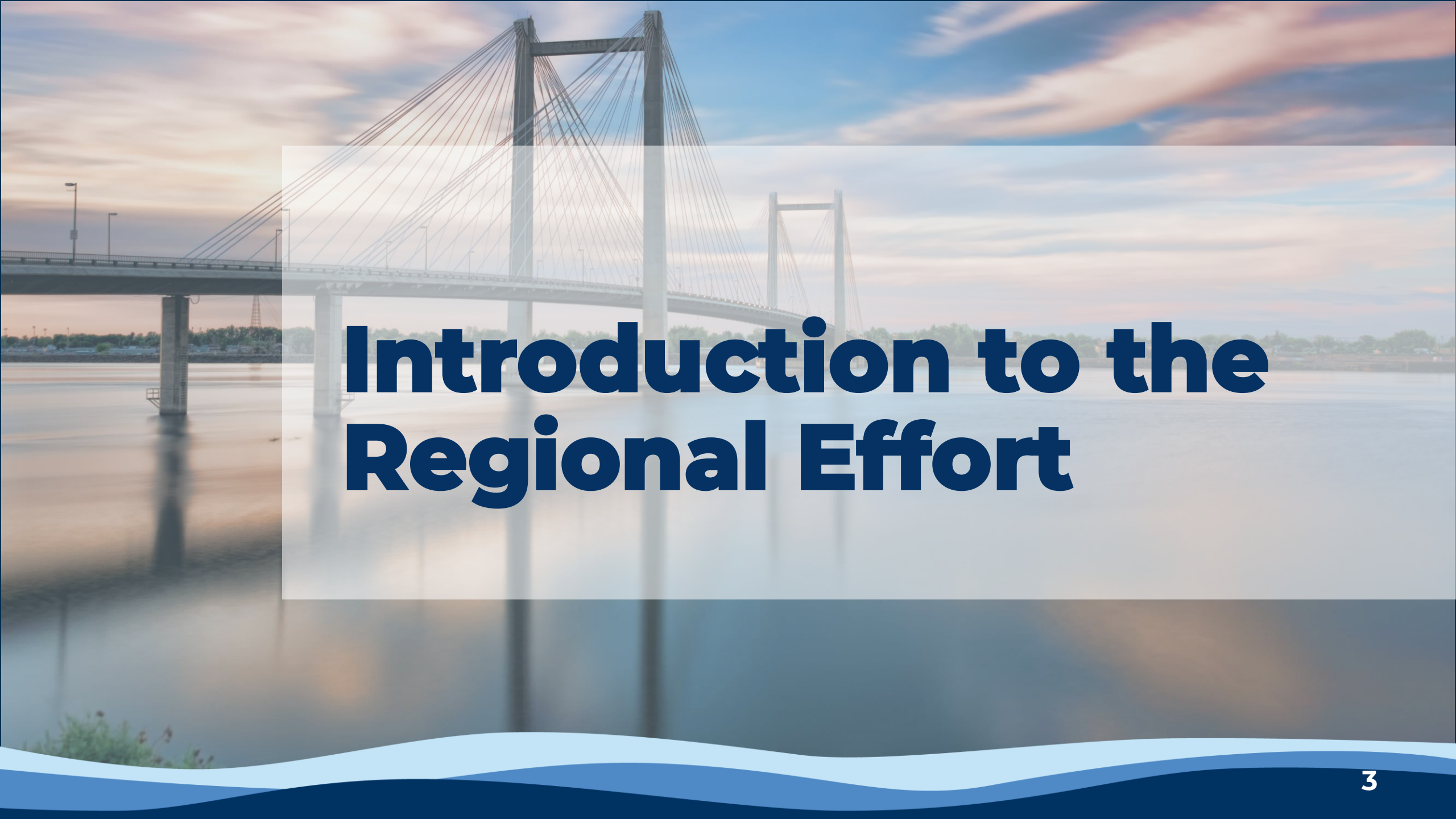
Cascadia Consulting Group
AHBL



This work is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act. The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at www.climate.wa.gov.

Agenda

- **Introduction to the Regional Effort**
- **State Requirements for Climate Planning**
- **Climate Element – Key Components**
- **High-level Key Findings**
- **Snapshot of the Draft Goals & Policies**
- **Next Steps**

A photograph of a large cable-stayed bridge spanning a wide river. The bridge has two tall, white, A-frame pylons with numerous stay cables. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of orange, pink, and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The water reflects the bridge and the sky. The overall scene is serene and modern.

Introduction to the Regional Effort

Regional Climate Change Approach

The Tri-Cities Region is developing a strategy to address natural hazards related to climate and to reduce emissions.

- Five jurisdictions are working together to do this work, with support from the Benton Franklin Council of Governments.
 - Benton County
 - Kennewick
 - Pasco
 - Richland
 - West Richland
- Climate Policy Advisory Team
 - Community members who review materials and provide feedback and insights on practical strategies.



Regional Approach → Jurisdictions

- **We anticipate each jurisdiction will adopt:**
 - Region-wide policies agreed upon by all jurisdictions.
 - Locally-specific policies and strategies for individual implementation.
- **Analysis will inform both regional and local policies:**
 - Climate impacts assessment
 - Audit of existing policies
 - Vulnerability assessment
 - GHG inventory, wedge analysis, and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) study





State Requirements

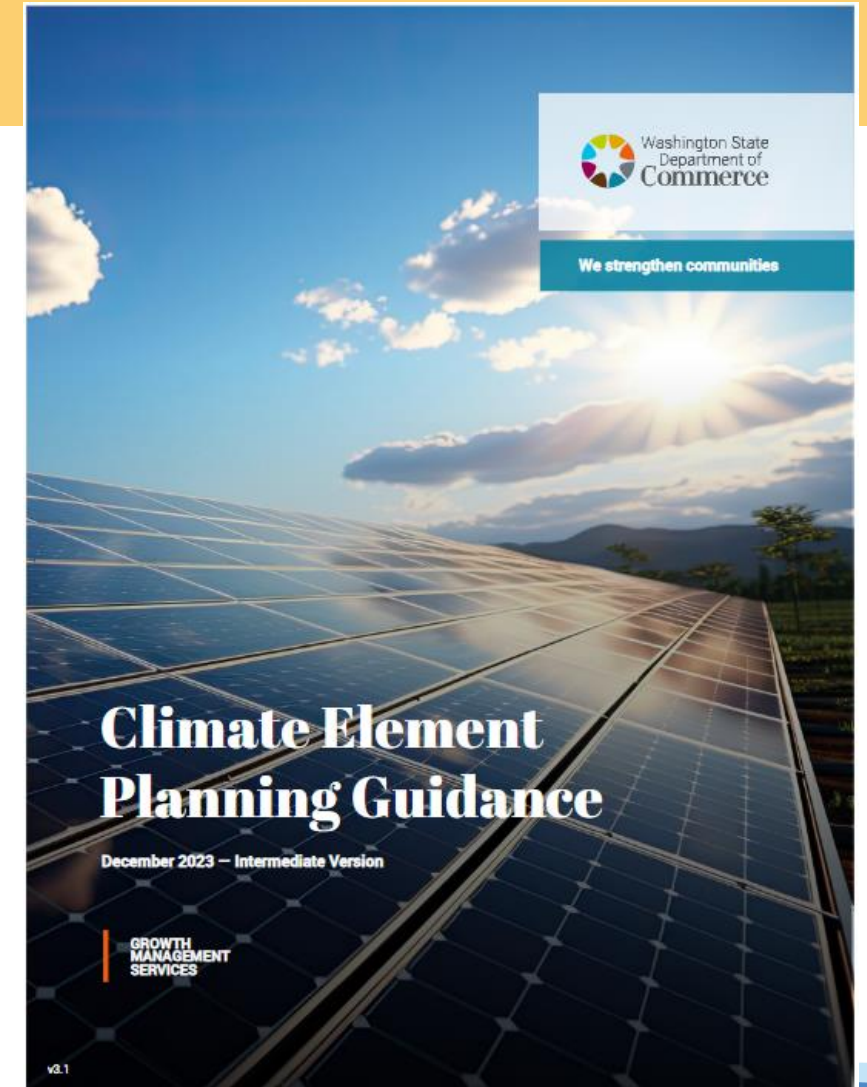
HB 1181 & the Growth Management Act (GMA)

State Climate Element Requirements

This regional project fulfills the Growth Management Act requirements of RCW 36.70A.070(9) and RCW 36.70A.095 and helps jurisdictions meet new state requirements to address climate in their long-range plans for growth and development.

Under **HB 1181**, each jurisdiction must integrate a climate element into its comprehensive plan, including:

- A **resilience sub-element** that includes goals and policies to improve climate preparedness, response and recovery efforts.
 - Required for all cities and counties.
- A **greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions sub-element** that includes goals and policies to reduce emissions and vehicle miles traveled.
 - Required for cities over 6,000 residents



Comprehensive Plans & the Climate Element

The Tri-Cities Regional Climate Element will be:

- Compliant with GMA and HB-1181 requirements.
- Informed by data and community engagement.
- Integrated with other plans & other comp plan elements.
- Supported by community, county staff, and decision-makers.
- Clear, feasible, and provides path to implement.



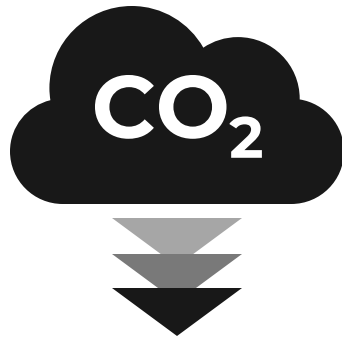
Climate Element – Key Components

An **emissions reduction sub-element** is required for 11 of the state's largest and fastest-growing counties and their cities, and includes:



A **resilience sub-element** is required for all jurisdictions planning fully under the Growth Management Act, and includes:

Emissions Reduction Measures to reduce GHG emissions and per-capita vehicle miles traveled



Adaptation Measures to improve resilience to climate impacts like flooding, heat, smoke, & wildfires



Attention to Vulnerable Populations including but not limited to: racial or ethnic minorities; low-income populations; populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms; and populations of workers experiencing environmental harms. [RCW 70A.02.010 \(14\)\(a\)\(b\)](#).

Resilience Sub-Element: Minimum Requirements



Requirement 1: Address natural hazards created or aggravated by climate change (flooding, drought, heat, smoke, wildfire, etc.).

Requirement 2: Identify, protect, and enhance natural areas to foster climate resilience, as well as areas of vital habitat for safe species migration.

Requirement 3: Identify, protect, and enhance community resilience to climate impacts, including social, economic, and built-environment factors.

GHG Emissions Reduction Sub-Element: Minimum Requirements



#1

Reduce **overall GHG emissions** within jurisdictions without increasing emissions elsewhere in WA

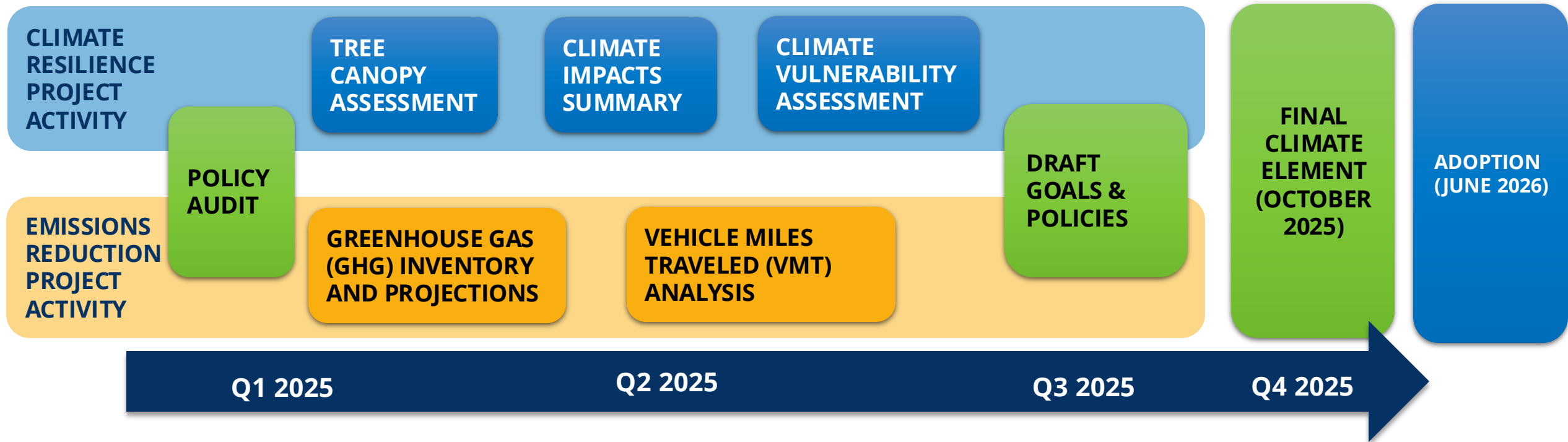
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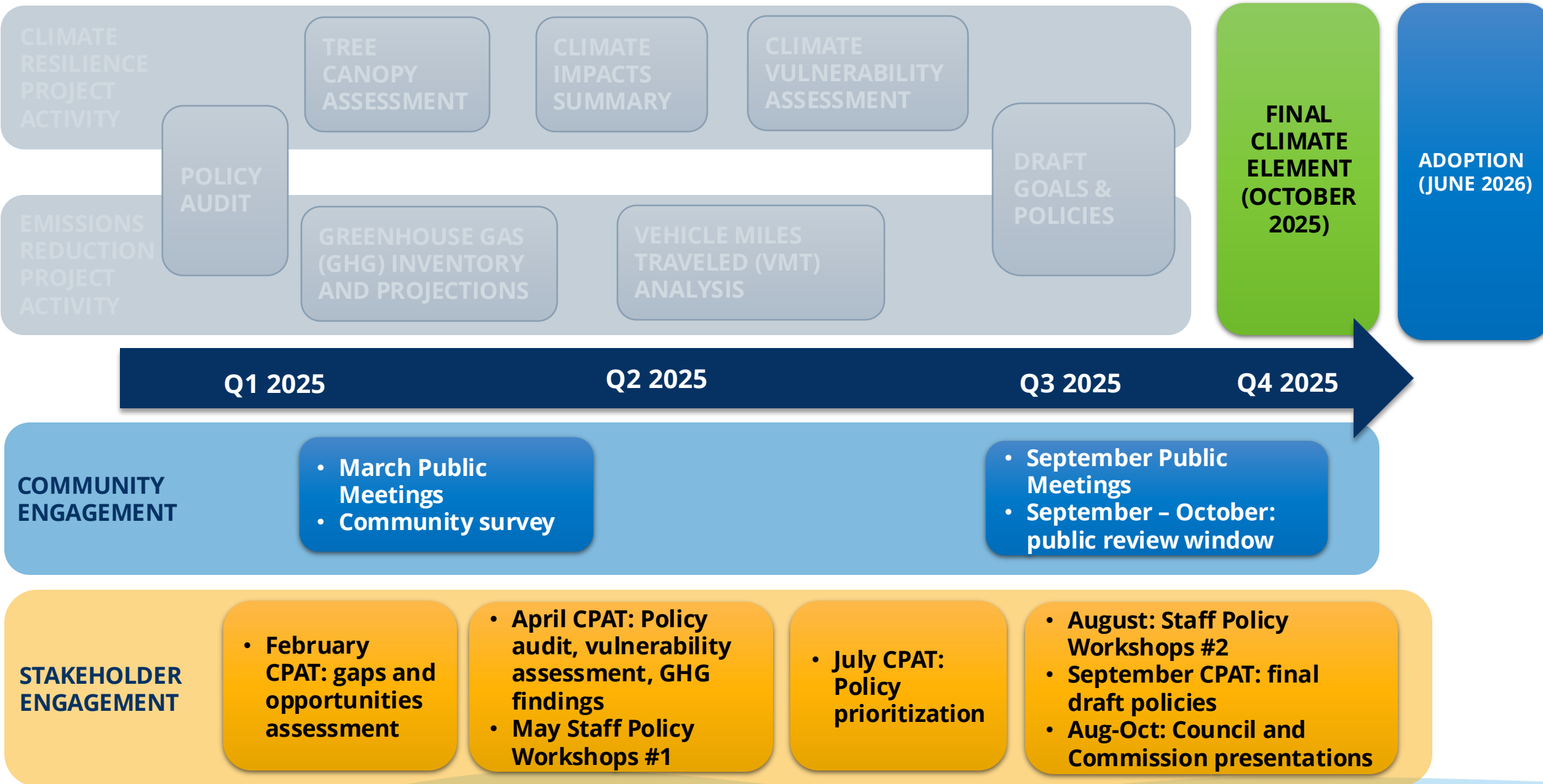
Reduce **per-capita VMT** without increasing emissions elsewhere in WA

#3

Prioritize reductions that **benefit overburdened communities** to maximize co-benefits

Climate Element Timeline





Clarifying questions on the Climate Element process?



High-Level Key Findings

Community Engagement

- **Experiences from extreme weather events:**
 - Financial impacts, changes in hobbies and activities, physical health impacts
- **Concern for weather impacts:**
 - Wildfires and wildfire smoke, increased temperatures and extreme heat, drought, wind
- **Support for resilience strategies:**
 - Increase shade and tree canopy, natural areas for flood control, affordable heating/cooling

Key Hazards Facing Benton County

Extreme Heat



Higher annual average temperatures, increased high summer temperature.

Wildfire & Smoke



Higher wildfire frequency and severity; more wildfire smoke and poor air quality.

Extreme Precipitation



Increased flooding, more frequent and intense rain events.

Drought



Less summer rain and reduced snowpack.

Richland Vulnerabilities

- **Wildfire**

- The city has experienced several larger wildland fires, mostly along and over the Red Mountain and Candy Mountain Areas.
- Growing development in the WUI increases fire suppression challenges.

- **Extreme Weather**

- Many power lines run near large trees. If a storm damages these trees, large sections of the city could lose power.

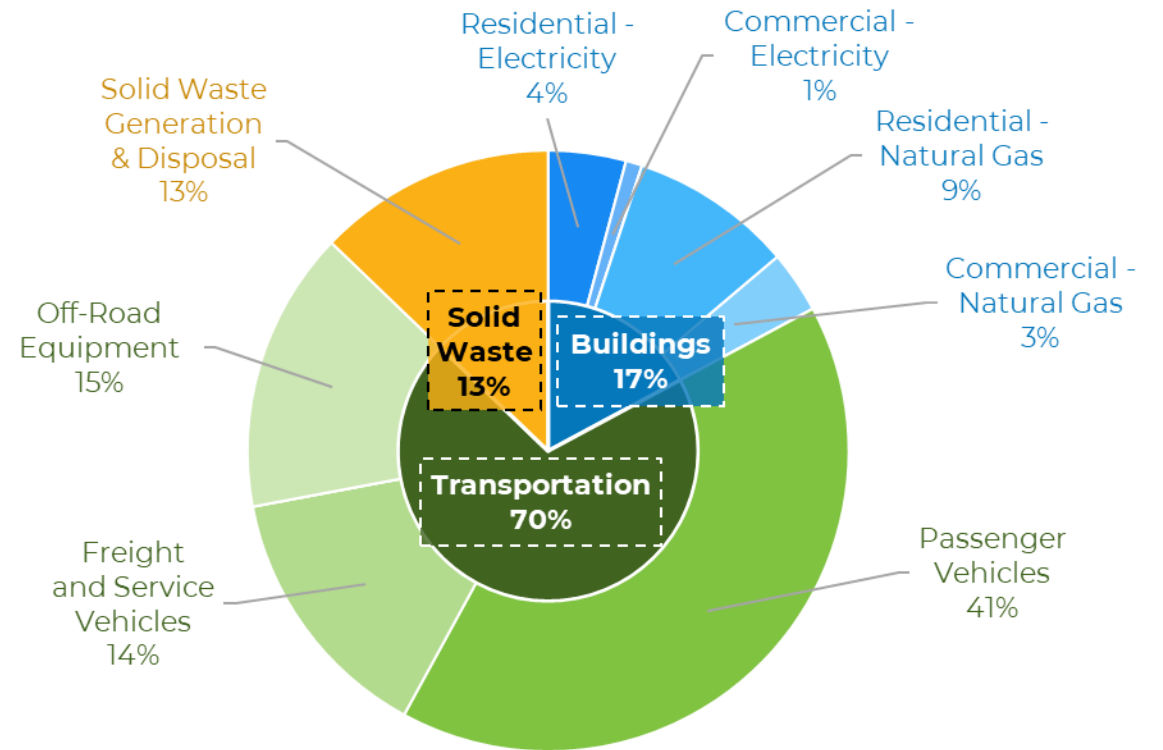
- **Flooding**

- The east approach to Van Giesen Street Bridge and the south span of the Old Twin Bridges have been historically inundated during flood events.

GHG Emissions in Benton County

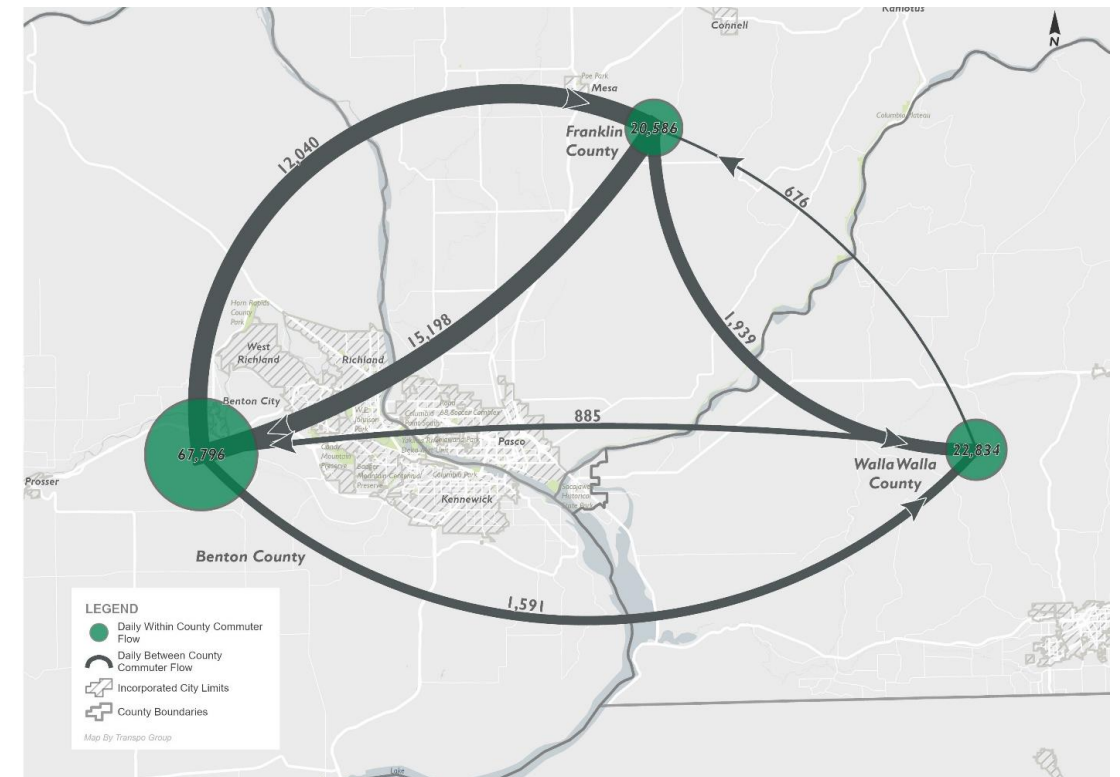
- **Largest sources of emissions:**

- On-road passenger vehicles.
- On-road freight and service vehicles.



Vehicle Miles Traveled

- **Minimal increase in VMT is predicted.**
 - Growth in jobs and housing being concentrated in the same area resulting in shorter trips.
- **Commute Trips**
 - 75% of commute trips are less than 25 minutes.



Existing Policies in Benton County

- **Policy trends:**

- Policies expand mixed-use and higher density districts near commercial centers and other services to support non-motor vehicle travel.
- Integrate energy efficiency and conservation into new and existing city facilities and housing developments
- Policies enhance community well-being by promoting responsible land use, coordinating utilities and transportation, and encouraging diverse residential options, and affordable housing.

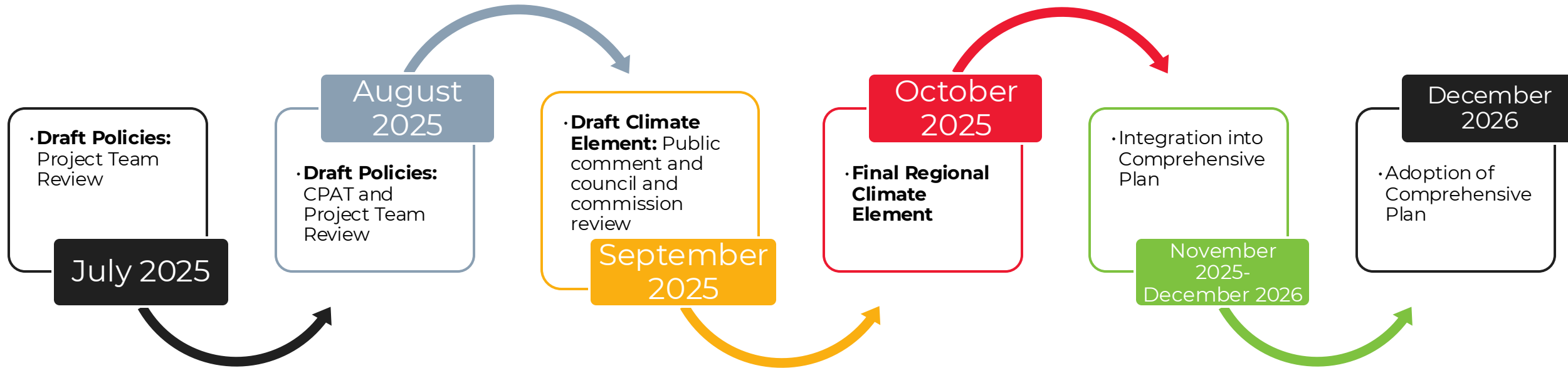
- **Policy gaps:**

- Policies directly addressing water management, water conservation, water storage, and other drought resilience and management strategies
- Ecosystem protection particularly with Tribal involvement.
- Policies that promote diverse housing types are limited to higher density areas.



Snapshot of Draft Goals and Policies

Policy Drafting Timeline



Resilience Sub-Element: Policy Requirements



- **Develop at least one climate resilience goal and policy:**
 - For each **climate-exacerbated hazard** that is relevant to **the Tri-Cities Region**.
 - Within each of the 11 of **Commerce-identified priority sectors**.

Priority Sectors	Includes...
Zoning & Development	Site use, design, and other development facets
Water Resources	Water quality and quantity
Ecosystems	Land and water species and habitat
Transportation	Multimodal travel and infrastructure
Emergency Management	Preparedness, response, and recovery
Health and Well-being	Community well-being and engagement
Buildings & Energy	Generation, transmission, and consumption
Cultural Resources & Practices	Historic sites and cultural resources and practices
Economic Development	Business continuity, opportunities
Agriculture & Food Systems	Production and distribution
Waste Management	Materials recycling and disposal

GHG Emissions Reduction Sub-Element: Policy Requirements



- **Develop goals and policies to:**
 - **Reduce emissions** (both total and per-capita emissions).
 - Utilize **mitigation strategies** to address the following sectors: Transportation, Buildings & Energy, Zoning & Development.

Mitigation Strategy

VMT reduction

Multimodal transportation/TOD

GHG Emission Reduction Crosscutting

Building decarbonization

Carbon Sequestration

Waste reduction/diversion

Examples of Draft Goals and Policies

Water Resources, Ecosystems, Agriculture, and Food Systems



Draft CE Goal 3: Protect the viability of the region's water resources, ecosystems, and agricultural economy by promoting resilience to extreme weather and climate-related hazards, while balancing regional water needs and ecosystem health.

CE-3.6: Manage trees and other vegetation in both urban and rural areas to decrease risks from severe wildfires, preserving vegetation where possible and improving ecosystem health and habitat function.

Health & Wellbeing and Emergency Management



Draft CE Goal 5: Protect community health and well-being and enhance emergency preparedness, response, and recovery from the impacts of climate-related hazards, focusing resources on the people and places most at risk to these hazards.

CE-5.1: Ensure critical infrastructure is resilient to natural hazards such as flooding and extreme heat and implement related area-wide and jurisdiction-specific mitigation actions in the regional hazard mitigation plans.

Transportation, Zoning & Development, and Land Use



Draft CE Goal 7: Promote housing diversity and compact, walkable development near transit and expand safe, reliable, and low-emission transportation options for all residents, with the goal to reduce per-capita VMT 5% below 2022 levels by 2050.

CE-7.4: Support shorter commutes and reduced reliance on driving for low-income community members by prioritizing integrating affordable and below market rate housing in developments

Discussion:

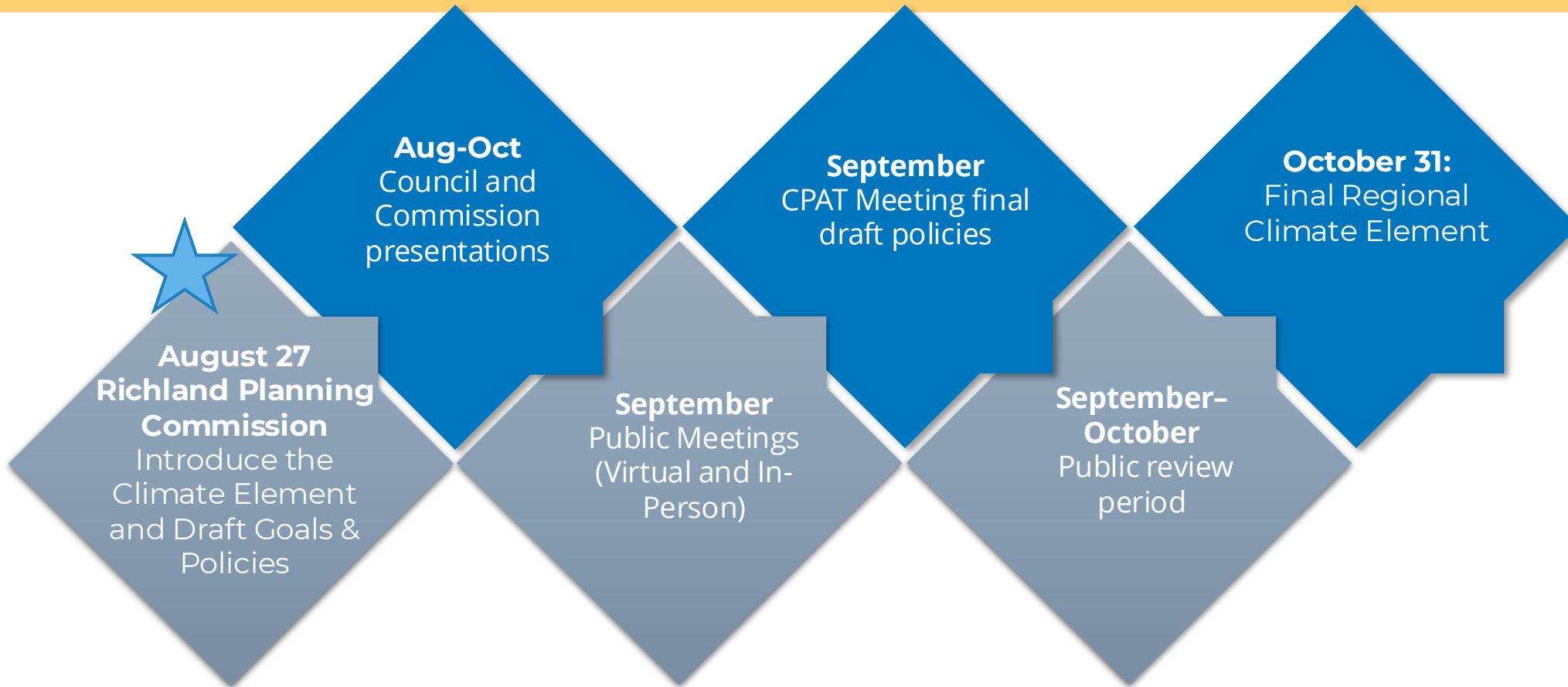
Are there any major gaps in the goals or policies? Is there something important that's not addressed?

Are there groups of people that would be most benefited or burdened by a particular policy?



What's Next?

Upcoming Activities



Collaboration with Comp Plan

