



Climate and Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting, May 22, 2025

Committee Members in Attendance: Jay Kimball– Chair, Chris Greacen-Vice Chair, Kendra Smith, Janet Alderton, Vince Dauciunas, Barbara Marrett, Grant Carlton, Matilda Twigg

Committee Liaisons in Attendance: Tim Clark, Lynn Bahrych

Ex-officio and County Staff: Angela Broderick

Committee Members absent: Adrian Kilpatrick

Convene meeting

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jay Kimball at 5:33pm. Quorum was confirmed.

- **Public Comment** Bill Bangs submitted written comment in advance of the meeting (attached).

Business Operations

- The Agenda for the meeting was approved. **MOTION: Janet moved, Vince seconded and the motion passed.**
- The March 27 2025 Meeting Minutes were approved. Chris proposed a friendly amendment to expand the detail of the public comment, and add some detail to the information about Edge Lane Roads. Janet proposed a friendly amendment to spell out “CVA”. **MOTION: Chris moved to pass the minutes with the suggested amendments, Vince seconded, and the motion passed.**
- Membership update: Jerry Whitfield and Michael Shanks are now termed out of the committee; the committee recognized their service with gratitude. These two positions are now open through May 31st. Angela reminded the committee of the new dashboard on the SharePoint site, and mentioned the committee had previously expressed interest in site visits, looking for a volunteer in the committee to head that effort.

Climate and Sustainability Program Update

Angela updated the group on the status of the draft Climate Element and the next steps by Community Development for the Comp Plan update process. Committee members invited to submit feedback on current draft to Angela for June 3rd recommendation to DCD. Vince raised the concern that there was inconsistency across different elements of the Comp Plan. Kendra indicated that staff would raise this with DCD so that they can address with their consultants. Grant highlighted the need for accountability and implementation for these kinds of plans, and Kendra agreed mentioning the upcoming roundtables will try to support that.

Community engagement continues to be successful, recently focus group events were held on Orcas, Lopez and San Juan with the target communities: lower income, Latinx and youth. Very fortunate to partner with Climate COMPASS project on these interactive sessions. Matilda and a youth cohort have joined Angela to co-facilitate youth sessions on the 3 islands to high success. Matilda shared that students are enjoying the format, and it is interesting to hear students' conversations around local solutions. She said students enjoy considering the advantages and disadvantages of ideas, typically with a focus on environmental justice. Engagement report will have compiled results of the focus groups.

Angela shared that Commerce recently rescinded the ability to extend the current grant contract past June 30 as originally indicated. Working with Cascadia Consulting on an amended scope in order to meet this new deadline. Unused funds awarded may be recaptured by applying for the next grant cycle, which is in progress. In light of the complicated funding landscape, alternative funding sources need to be explored. Angela shared examples of visitor-focused funding models and some data around visitor numbers and spending. The group discussed locally based funding mechanisms,

including how lodging tax revenues can be spent and how it can support sustainability goals. There was also discussion about peak season pricing, parking fees and impact fees. A working group to brainstorm fundraising tactics for the continuation of climate and sustainability work was called for; Jay, Chris and Grant stepped up.

Angela shared the concept of the upcoming roundtable series being planned for this summer around the topics of Transportation, Energy, Water, and Housing/Development. She also mentioned additional stakeholder conversations planned around agriculture, forest management and business. These sessions will be a deeper dive into complex issues and start to work out details around implementation to stage the Climate Action Plan. Multiple members expressed a preference to invite local government staff or subject matter experts to be a part of these roundtables, particularly to give guidance on possible code restrictions. Kendra Smith added that the Conservation District is handling a community wildfire plan and separately, sea level rise community conversations are scheduled for the fall.

Liaison Updates

Tim Clark, Land Bank: Dr. Frances Roberston visited Land Bank to speak about tribal communications. Land Bank hosted several tribal members at the Watmough Head Preserve on the recent canoe journey.

Lynn Bahrych, Clean Water Advisory Committee: The committee recently spoke about testing for the presence of fish in locations such as Cascade Creek. The Water Element for the Comp Plan has been tightened up and condensed. Kendra added that water rights were a recent topic of conversation as well and if the County should be handling those.

Matilda Twigg, Youth Representative: Expressed gratitude towards Angela and the committee for making the recent youth sessions possible. Jay Kimball asked if there were any standout comments from the sessions. Matilda stated each island's group had different preferences for climate action e.g. Lopez was more into the idea of biking than Orcas. Angela added that the teachers were very engaged with the subject as well and seem to be open to continued conversations in the fall.

Closing Comments

Appreciation was expressed for the collaborative work of the group.

Jay emphasized increasing collaboration between counties and learning from best practices, including innovations by WSDOT and ferry systems such as the walk-on ferries.

Angela Broderick announced an upcoming leadership transition in July, Chris Greacen will assume the Chair role, succeeding Jay Kimball. The committee is seeking nominations for the Vice Chair position.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.

The next meeting will be held on July 24th at 5:30pm.

From: Bill Bangs (Orcas Island)

May 21, 2025

To: Climate and Sustainability Committee

cc: Angela Broderick, Kendra Smith, Tyler Davis, Sophia Cassam, Bob Eagan

Subject: Public Comment at your 5/22/25 Meeting re **Water Supply Assessment**

Dear C&S Committee: I am unable to attend your May 22 meeting while I am in Austin, TX attending my grandson's graduation. Please distribute this memo to your members and ask that someone read the first three minutes worth for the record.

Counties, per the GMA, must know their water supply, assess whether it's sustainable, and Plan accordingly to support growth. Without monitoring, it is impossible to demonstrate compliance with the GMA's requirements for adequate and sustainable water supplies. It appears that San Juan County is not committed to this monitoring. No County department has the responsibility and there is no budget line item to fund the required effort.

Water Supply Assessment: Underfunded and Outdated

Despite the county's reliance on groundwater and precipitation-dependent surface water, the budget lacks dedicated funding for comprehensive water supply assessments. Key concerns include:

- **Aging Data:** The most recent countywide water resource management plan dates back to 2004, with limited recent updates.
- **Monitoring Gaps:** While some groundwater monitoring reports exist, there is no indication of a systematic, countywide approach to assess current water availability and future demand.
- **Climate Change Impacts:** The budget does not address the increasing frequency of droughts and their potential effects on water resources, despite projections indicating significant changes in precipitation patterns.

County Council has commented during review of the draft Updated Comprehensive Plan that some of that draft failed to identify County departmental responsibilities or budgets required to implement the plan. Please find below some proposed updates to the Water Resources Element draft that assigns responsibility for Water Supply Assessment to the Department of Environmental Stewardship and offers a sample budget for start-up and annual costs.

Proposed Comprehensive Plan Language: Water Resources Element

Goal WR-6:

Ensure the long-term sustainability of the County's groundwater and surface water resources through systematic monitoring, analysis, and public reporting.

Policies under WR-6:

WR-6.1

Designate the **Department of Environmental Stewardship (DES)** as the lead agency responsible for developing and managing a countywide water resource monitoring program.

WR-6.2

Require DES to coordinate with the Department of Community Development (DCD), Department of Public Works (DPW), and the County Auditor's Office to ensure alignment with land use planning, infrastructure management, and fiscal accountability.

WR-6.3

Establish and maintain a system of groundwater, surface water, and precipitation monitoring wells and instruments across all major islands and watersheds.

WR-6.4

Require DES to publish an **Annual State of Water Resources Report**, summarizing monitoring data, identifying risks or trends, and recommending actions for land use and infrastructure planning.

WR-6.5

Develop and maintain a publicly accessible online dashboard that displays water resource data and maps to inform residents, utilities, and policy makers.

Implementation Section: Water Monitoring and Reporting

Action Item WR-6.A

Allocate funding in the County budget to hire a full-time Hydrogeologist or Water Resource Specialist within DES and to procure necessary monitoring equipment.

Action Item WR-6.B

By 2026, install and activate a minimum of 20 groundwater level loggers and 10 precipitation gauges, with data feeding into a centralized GIS platform.

Action Item WR-6.C

Produce the first **Annual State of Water Resources Report** by the end of 2026, and update it annually thereafter.

Action Item WR-6.D

Use monitoring data to support updates to land capacity analysis, drought response plans, capital facilities planning, and land use decisions.

Proposed New Budget Line Item (for 2026)

New Budget Line Item: *Water Resource Monitoring and Reporting Program*

Component	Estimated Annual Cost	Purpose
Hydrogeologist or Water Resource Specialist (1 FTE)	\$110,000 (salary + benefits)	Lead technical monitoring, analysis, and data integration
Monitoring Equipment & Maintenance	\$60,000	Install dataloggers, flow meters, rain gauges, and telemetry for real-time monitoring
Consultant Services (initial setup and modeling)	\$75,000 (one-time)	Contract hydrologists to establish baselines, recharge models, and risk assessments
Data Management System	\$25,000	Set up a GIS-based database and public dashboard for accessible water data
Annual Public Reporting & Outreach	\$15,000	Prepare countywide reports and briefings for public and council use

Total First-Year Cost: ≈ \$285,000

Ongoing Annual Cost (after setup): ≈ \$210,000