

Snohomish County Ad Hoc Climate Action Advisory Committee (CAAC)

Thursday April 22, 2021
5pm-7pm

Join Zoom Meeting

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Agenda

1. Roll-call (5 min)

Committee members present: Jake Salvador, Margaret Seaney, Tom Campbell, Pat Sisneros, Jeanine SanClemente, Stan Gent, Linda Lyshall, Ian McCluskey, Suzy Oversvee, Jonathan Witte

Committee members not in attendance: Anthony Gromko, Ryan Miller

County staff: Lisa Dulude, Kevin Ruuhela

Guests: Rachel Brombaugh (King County – Climate and Energy Initiatives), Becka Johnson Poppe (King County – Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget), Eileen Canola (Snohomish County Planning & Development Services), Janet Wright (Snohomish County Planning & Development Services)

2. Presentation from King County – Internal price of carbon (30 minutes for presentation and Q&A)

- Challenging process, no clear road map
 - Consensus on right approach has been difficult
- King County's work is based on existing work from State DNR

Social Cost of Carbon (SCC)

- A measure of the harm of emitting 1 ton of CO₂
- Not an actual fee
- Used to inform decisions
- SCC a part of Life Cycle Cost Analysis (LCCA) (most cost effective alternative over a time frame)

- Future costs can be higher than current ones.

Why do we care about SCC?

- We are required to use SCC in life-cycle cost analysis and decision making:
 - The County's Strategic CLimate Action Plan (SCAP)
 - The Comprehensive Plan
 - Auditor's report

What is needed? (to bring SCC into decision making)

- Education and training across departments and divisions with a capital portfolio
- Simplified tools and guidance for project managers asked to incorporate SCC into their analysis.
 - Need to be able to be translated to consultants and contractors.
- Consistency in policy
 - Stable framework that is broadly applicable
- Rachel - cognizant that capital managers are busy people, this is another ask of them. A need for it to be simple as possible and that the change was as simple as possible. Change management is a difficult part of the work.

Project Overview:

- Identified the Social Cost of Carbon created by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission as the preferred cost.
- Initial "pilot" project convened in Q1 2020, and tested approached to a SCC on several Wastewater Projects.
 - Wastewater chosen off preference by the team and the vast amount of projects available.
- The group was expanded in Q3 2020 to run the initial findings by other capital programs and develop guidance for implementation.
- The project group developed guidance, but there was general recognition the implementation as a standalone initiative was unlikely to succeed.
- Many projects didn't see significant impacts in what alternative would have been selected.
- One possible reason for the limited impact was the size of WTF projects.
- SCC might be more impactful at the component level as opposed to comparing alternatives.
- Becka - in the table, what was muting the effects of SCC was the size of the project and "soft costs".

Preliminary Recommendations/Guidance

- Except projects that are achieving LEED Platinum and full SCAP compliance
 - Projects with a high-performance standard (and other standards allowed through the plan and green ordinance) were already selected.
- Focus on project alternatives/components that:
 - Use fossil fuels as an energy source
 - Have fugitive emissions
 - Have alternatives that vary in the amount of high embodied carbon materials (CSO vs. GSI for example)
 - Are not achieving platinum on the Green Infrastructure Scorecard
 - If you're not going for that, go for as efficiently as possible.
- Do the initial analysis **before** an alternative is selected and repeat as necessary.

Next Step: Implementation

- Education: Update the Capital Project PM Manuals to include this process.
- Education: "Roadshow" of training with capital programs
- Tools: Lifecycle Cost Analysis Calculator (needs to be updated)
- Tools/Consistent Policy: Fold this process into part of the Green Infrastructure Scorecard update
- Need to get buy-in from senior executive level (top down accountability)

Q&A

- Tom - Is the life cycle cost analysis the same as the social cost of carbon? Is that the tool that we need consistency with to determine the social cost?
- Becka - The Life Cycle Cost Analysis tool has been used by some agencies (not all agencies) is an important tool in understanding the up-front costs are of a building/project but the life cycle costs as well. That tool typically doesn't have a SCC built into it. What we are doing is adding the SCC into that so it will be multiplied into (dollar amount/metric ton of CO2 emissions) into the life cycle cost analysis tool.

Rachel - example: Building A vs. Building B

- Cost is independent of SCC
- Building A - \$40 million net cost (after SCC added)
- Building B - \$35 million net cost (after SCC added)
- Building A may have a higher cost than building B with SCC implemented into life cycle cost analysis.

Linda Lyshall - Finding the cost of gas vs. the cost of an EV

- Considering healthcare cost of gas powered vehicle (social cost)

Becka - if an agency already uses an Life Cycle Cost Analysis (LCCA), adding the SCC into that is a relatively light lift for the agency. Biggest challenge is having consistent use of the LCCA tool.

Johnathan Witte - How do you calculate health costs with respect to SCC?

Linda - Several resources/formulas to use to calculate these costs.

Rachel - There is a huge body of work that goes into factoring those costs in.

Linda - There is a formula that is used for these health costs.

Becka - This is meant to be captured in the dollar amount agreed upon to use across all the projects

Stan - I watched King County produce this body of work, I'm not quite sure the relationship. I'd be interested to see what your annual budget is for your department to move these goals forward.

Rachel - We have a different model, a cost shared budget, that supports the salaries of a few people. All other climate positions are all within the divisions of the departments. In some ways it is flexible/broad, but can be difficult with a "matrix" type of system.

Stan - How do you cover your costs?

Becka - This is part of our regular day to day support of agencies and executive priorities and are paid out of King County general fund as a central function of government.

Tom - We could calculate what the cost sharing would need to be to support our functions.

Lisa - It doesn't put the burden on any one department/division. Rachel pointed out a lot of the challenges with having several divisions with limited people in those divisions.

Ian - Could be difficult to have the exact same accounting methods for all functions, but could provide economic growth (new jobs).

Suzy - I felt that the state price of carbon was one of the more aggressive numbers out there.

Becka - When we were doing this it was during a different presidential administration and the numbers that were being considered at the federal level weren't as competitive at the state level. We felt that it would be difficult to point to any others and have a good amount of buy-in. When we saw some of the results of the analysis that Rachel showed earlier, only one of the projects had a shift in which alternative would've been selected. We looked back and wondered if we went higher on the SCC would it have made a difference. There is value in looking at what else is out there though. There may be some new bodies of work that brought about other options.

Suzy - Is it difficult to put prices to "soft" costs

Becka - if you start looking at individual project components (HVAC system choices, concrete choices, etc.) choices for a project instead of the project a whole you can isolate those soft costs. Additionally, may find some contradictory elements within a project.

Becka - We looked at what guidance can we give that can be the most impactful, project components that would have high embodied carbon. It would get pretty intense looking at every single component.

Jeanine - How deep does the social cost go? (impacts to income, health costs, etc.)

Becka - There are several nuances for societal impact that gets more varied as cost increases for SCC.

Tom Campbell - The comprehensive plan and how you apply this, are you going down that road?

Becka - It fits into the comprehensive plan in a way but is only really being applied to capital projects. Not used for land use or zoning policies.

Comment by Lisa - Snohomish County has a clean energy commitment similar to King County. They should be making that decision to transition off fossil fuels for HVAC equipment.

3. Updates from committee members & working groups (20 min)

Brief Legislative Update:

- Low carbon fuel standard passed
- Cap and invest – looking like it may pass
- 5192: Provided access to EV equipment (more funding for charging stations)
- 5126 Washington Climate Commitment Act (expecting a day of discussion)
- 1099 GMA plan

Discussion:

Tom - Need to push for creating consensus across counties/jurisdictions

Janet - This was different from the way CCPs are updated. There hasn't been a public process at this stage. It is a sub-committee looking at public comments. The goal is to have council hear by this summer (public hearing).

Tom - Maybe we can have a list of comments so that we can put more meaningful regulations into the process. Maybe we can bring something forward before their summer public hearing.

Janet - You have large and small directors from different jurisdictions, all trying to come up with a consensus on a guiding framework. It's how this gets implemented into general policy plans for each jurisdiction and development regulations.

Jeanine - My understanding is that part of the teeth of the PSRC has is that if the counties don't agree, the county will have a cut to transportation fundings. Will cities have this same impact? Would that city not get some of that funding or just the county?

Eileen - The PSRC approves transportation for jurisdictions.

Lisa - Update on Carbon working group

- Suggested that we halt work until the legislative session is over.

Lisa - Update on equity working group

- Working group put on hold due to distance from countywide action plan

Lisa - Update on transportation sub-committee

- Stretched too thin at the moment, could have more momentum for this work after the SOAP
- Linda Lyshall & Ian McCluskey volunteered to work for the sub-committee

4. Overview of SOAP Survey Results (20 min)

- SOAP Survey Results
 - Survey ran for 29 days
 - One kick-off email and 3 reminder emails went to all employees
 - 592 responses from employees
 - 25 different departments represented
 - 9 responses from CAAC members
- Purpose of survey:
 - Give employees a chance to tell us if we are on the right track or not with SOAP structure
 - Get employees thinking about different topics (GOAL AREAS) and brainstorm ideas and specific actions they would like to see included.
- How important do you think it is for the county to address climate change and conserve natural resources in its government operations?
 - 82% think it is important
 - 10% do not think it is important to address climate change
- Do you agree that the GOAL AREAs capture the primary focus areas for the SOAP
 - 88% agree
 - ~10% disagreed
- Responses & Insights
 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions - 75% agree
 - Comment - County should go further and faster
 - Transportation and Mobility - 82% agree
 - Comment - make working remote permanent
 - Energy and Water - 89% agree
 - Comment - be more aggressive
 - Consumption and Materials Management - 89% agree
 - Comment - consider lifecycle costs, centralize more purchasing decisions.
 - Green Building - 86% agree

- Use established standards (LEED, Living Building, etc.), Consider new ways to configure w/ remote work options.
 - Ecosystems and Open Space - 89% agree
 - Comment - Confusions on terms and what is included/excluded in this category.
 - Climate Adaptation and Resilience - 86% agree
 - Comment - Confusion on terminology.

Thinking of the GOAL you selected as Highest Priority, what is one action the County could take to achieve that goal?

- Convert to electric vehicles
- Make working remote permanent
- Preserve/restore critical areas, wetland, shorelines, floodplains
- Provide employees pathways to better understand and incorporate sustainable practices.
- Adopt more solar or other renewable energy sources.

Select the GOAL where you think your Department/Division/Office can have the most impact: (highest responses)

- Consumption and Materials management - 41%
- Most transportation and mobility - 19%

General feedback from respondents:

- Employees would like to see a more developed plan with concrete goals
- Costs vs. benefits are very important to weigh
- Include interim goals
- Be more aggressive with goals
- Continued education and involvement of employees needs to happen

Note: Important to keep in mind that the SOAP is still early in development - specific goals and actions have not been determined yet.

Questions -

Jonathan - I look at this as good news and bad news. The good news is that roughly 80% are positive on this subject. What is concerning is that 80% of employees did not respond and could potentially be apathetic towards the survey. Is this a fair assessment?

Lisa - We do wish that we would have gotten more responses. However, we did get a 16% response rate which for surveys is a good percentage. What I'm hoping is that as we get more involved in the strategic planning process, we will get the engagement that we really want.

Tom - It strikes me as how much education it appears that Snohomish County needs on this.

Lisa - emails were sent out and webinar invitations were sent out via calendar notifications.

Pat - Any surprises from the survey?

Kevin - It was surprising to see how many people were not enthusiastic about the work. However there are contrary thoughts that need to be considered.

Lisa - I thought it was a great surprise that there was a trend from some people that wanted us to be more aggressive. On the flip side of this, we defined our terminology in terms of goals instead of targets. As we move forward we will have quantifiable targets. There was a lot of confusion with terminology. We will have some more repeat education on terminology as we move forward.

Pat - Is there any intention to continue remote work?

Lisa- No formal announcement on this.

Linda - Any idea on hybrid approach?

Lisa - It would likely be a hybrid approach. Ultimately it is up to a division director.

Kevin - Comment out of council said that the office for the Department of Energy and Sustainability needs more funds.

Stan - update on budget support

Lisa - It has been tough, but will continue to ask for resources that we need.

Lisa - Land use conservation initiative

- We will see if the county leadership wants to move forward with LCI

Tom - Could send us information to make recommendations in response to the conservation initiative?

5. SOAP Action Items: Break-out Groups (20 min)

-No notes: did not reach this point in the agenda

6. Report Out (20 min)

7. Wrap-Up (5 min)