



City of Portland Bureau of
Planning and Sustainability

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City of Portland – Multnomah County 2009 Climate Action Plan
Summary of Public Comments and Resulting Revisions

October 2009

Public Comment Process

- A draft Climate Action Plan was released for public comment in April 2009.
- Eight town hall meetings were held to discuss the draft plan with residents, businesses and community organizations.
- More than 400 people participated in the public meetings, and an additional 175 sets of comments were received through an on-line comment form, by email, or in letters, totaling more than 2,600 comments and suggestions (see comment summary details starting on page 3 of this document for more information).
- Overall, comments tended to express broad support for the direction of the Climate Action Plan.

Major Public Comment Themes and Resulting Changes to the Climate Action Plan

A summary of the primary themes of the comments follows, along with a brief description of the response in terms of edits to the document.

- **Equity.** Many comments called for increased focus on underrepresented communities, both from the perspective of the impacts of climate change on these communities (e.g., severe weather events) and the efforts necessary to address the challenges (e.g., improving sidewalk infrastructure and access to transit). Similarly, a number of comments suggested the need for a clearer emphasis of all three legs of the “triple bottom line” and not just focusing on the environment and economy.
 - *Response in Narrative Text:* Clearly state the intent to address social equity, particularly for low-income and vulnerable citizens, in the Executive Summary (page 7), the Introduction (page 15), the Vision (page 16), and the Quality of Life overview (page 18).
 - *Response in Objective/ Actions:* Incorporated equity more explicitly in several actions in the “Climate Change Preparation” action area (page 56), particularly in the area of addressing vulnerable populations in climate change impact assessments and action plans.

- **Health.** Many respondents asked that the Climate Action Plan emphasize public health and how climate change and our responses to it affect the health of all residents, particularly those most vulnerable and/or currently underserved. Several comments called for the Plan to highlight more explicitly the health co-benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions (e.g., more biking/walking leads to more active and healthier residents).
 - *Response in Narrative Text:* Incorporated language about the health impacts of climate change and co-benefits of climate mitigation into the Executive Summary (page 7), the Introduction (page 15), the Vision (page 16), and the Quality of Life overview (page 18) and the Urban Form and Mobility section narrative (page 38).
 - *Response in Objective/Actions:* Incorporated health more explicitly in several actions in the “Climate Change Preparation” action area (page 56), particularly in the area of addressing vulnerable populations in climate change impact assessments and action plans (e.g., vulnerabilities of public health system).

- **Adaptation/Vulnerabilities.** Many comments suggested that the plan be more attentive to the importance of adapting to the changes. Comments also stressed the need to integrate the role of natural systems in terms of mitigation as well as adaptation and resiliency in the face of climate impacts.
 - *Response in Narrative Text:* Added language around adaptation, particularly with respect to the role of natural systems, into the Executive Summary (page 7), the Introduction (page 15), the Vision (page 16), and the Quality of Life overview (page 18) and the “Climate Change Preparation” section narrative (page 56).
 - *Response in Objective/Actions:* Incorporated more detailed actions related to adaptation and natural systems/green infrastructure in several actions in the “Urban Forestry and Natural Systems” action area (page 51) and “Climate Change Preparation” (page 56) action area, particularly in the area of addressing protecting and restoring natural systems, evaluating vulnerabilities and strengths of natural systems, and incorporating “green infrastructure.”

- **Regional Context and Role of Business, Other Governments and Individuals.** Many suggested the value of broadening the scope of the plan to include more community engagement, including outlining more specific opportunities and actions for the City and County to work collaboratively with other public agencies (particularly the state of Oregon, Metro and TriMet), businesses, non-profits, community organizations and individuals.
 - *Response in Narrative Text:* Incorporated more language around collaboration with non-City/County entities, organizations and the community into the Framework for Local Climate Protection (page 23) and the Community Engagement narrative text (page 54). In the Plan Development section, included quotes from submitted comments that express the willingness of business, government and individuals to work together with the City and County toward the carbon goals.
 - *Response in Objective/Actions:* Incorporated more detailed highlighting specific engagement and collaboration opportunities: with Metro, ODOT, TriMet, local cities and counties in “Urban Form and Mobility” (page 38); with Metro and DEQ in the “Consumption and Solid Waste” (page 47); with the Portland Sustainability Institute, neighborhood and community groups, and other existing efforts in “Community Engagement” (page 54).

Other Changes of Note

- **Changes to Narrative**

- 1) Incorporated a brief overview of public comment process and key findings (page 24).
- 2) More explicitly linked to the City's five-year economic development strategy.
- 3) Included a graph outlining the potential contribution of the various actions (by Objective area) toward achieving the 2030 emission reduction goal (page 13).
- 4) Added maps to convey data on carbon-related issues by geographic area:
 - a) Natural gas use by neighborhood, compared to home size (page 32).
 - b) Map of neighborhood "walkability" for different areas of Portland (page 41).
 - c) Average Vehicle Miles Traveled estimates, by geography (page 44).
 - d) Residential recycling rates, by garbage and recycling hauler (page 50).
- 5) Incorporated an "energy hierarchy" (page 36) and a "transportation hierarchy" (page 44).
- 6) Added a text box to explained what Green Infrastructure is (page 57).
- 7) Updated 2007 emissions data throughout the document with 2008 data, where possible. In addition, historical emissions data (going back to 1990 in some cases) were updated to be consistent with recently released federal data series.
- 8) Incorporated recently released information from the US Environmental Protection Agency related to a "systems view" of inventorying emissions from the demand side of the economy (page 22).

- **Changes to Objectives and Actions**

- 1) Objective/Action Area name changes: "Land Use and Mobility" changed to "Urban Form and Mobility" to reflect the fact that several other objective areas also include land use elements; "Urban Forestry" changed to "Urban Forestry and Natural Systems" to reflect the changes in that section to consider the role of natural systems more broadly.
- 2) Added new Objective and Action to "Buildings and Energy" section focused on ensuring that new buildings can adapt to the changing climate (stronger storms, higher temps).
- 3) Expanded and reorganized the "Urban Form and Mobility" section to include more language around partnering with other entities; to address the funding of transportation-related actions; to highlight additional transportation projects, policies and programs that will be undertaken in the next three years; and to add a new Objective and Actions related to freight.

Public Comment Highlights

Six hundred four respondents provided comments to both quantitative and qualitative questions. Approximately 2,500 individual narrative responses were submitted to questions presented through each method. Responses ranged from one-word comments to letters several pages in length. Comments were received in the following ways and in the quantities indicated:

- **Respondents (604) and Narrative Responses (2,501)**

- 118 – On-line TrackIt surveys (1,652 narrative responses)
- 58 – Emails/Letters
- 133 – Comment cards (496 narrative responses)
- 295 – Town Hall questions/comments (all short narrative)

Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Overall, comments expressed general community support and enthusiasm for the Climate Action Plan. A sampling of responses to quantitative questions in the on-line TrackIt survey follows; complete results are available from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability:

- **Survey Question 1:** Which statement most accurately reflects your overall opinion about the proposed actions and objectives of the Climate Action Plan?

A. They are appropriate.	68	58.6%
B. They are inappropriate because climate change is not a sufficiently important issue.	8	6.9%
C. They are inappropriate because they are not ambitious enough to address climate change sufficiently.	25	21.6%
D. Climate change is not a problem that local governments should be addressing.	7	6.0%
E. I'm not sure.	8	6.9%
	116	

- **Survey Question 4.2:** The proposed Climate Action Plan identifies the most important actions to reduce emissions.

A. Strongly agree.	20	16.9%
B. Agree.	49	41.5%
C. Neither agree nor disagree.	19	16.1%
D. Disagree.	19	16.1%
E. Strongly disagree.	11	9.3%
Total	118	

- **The highest percentage of respondents agreeing to any one response was to Survey Question 26:** How important is it for the City and County to “lead by example” in its own operations?

A. Very important.	89	80.9%
B. Somewhat important.	13	11.8%
C. Unimportant.	-	-
D. Inappropriate.	8	7.3%
Total	110	

- **Survey Question 29:** Of all the objectives and actions proposed in the Climate Action Plan, is there one that most appeals to you? What is it and why?

Category	# responding
Land Use & Mobility	31
Food & Agriculture	11
Building & Energy	8
Negative Response	8
Other	8
Community Engagement	5
Climate Change Prep	3
Urban Forest	3
"All"	1
Consumption & Solid Waste	1
Local Government	1