



**TO:** Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager  
**FROM:** Council Member Kristina Walker and Christina Caan, Policy Analyst  
**COPY:** City Council and City Clerk  
**SUBJECT:** Resolution Adopting the 2025 Climate Action Plan Update – July 8, 2025  
**DATE:** June 25, 2025

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## SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

A resolution adopting the 2025 Climate Action Plan Update as the City's guide to bolstering our preparedness and ability to reduce the impact of immediate threats to our community that are created and amplified by climate change.

## COUNCIL SPONSORS

Council Member Kristina Walker, Council Member John Hines, Council Member Olgy Diaz, and Council Member Sandesh Sadalge

**Background:** Our planet is warming at an unprecedented rate, creating irreversible changes in our natural environment that threaten the health, safety, and economic vitality of our residents. While we have lowered our own greenhouse gas emissions, Tacoma cannot isolate itself from the global environment and the damaging impacts of global climate change and environmental degradation. Instead, we must build our resilience to climate change to ensure that we are protecting and strengthening our local economy, infrastructure, and the health and well-being of our residents for generations to come.

Tacoma's history, coastal location, and urban topography make our city and its residents particularly susceptible to specific challenges that are created and amplified by climate change, including air pollution, flooding and rising sea levels, and urban heat islands.

- **Air pollution:** Our air quality is being diminished by the presence of harmful gases and particles in the environment. Tacoma's air quality is particularly affected by greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, which accounted for 44 percent of the City's emissions in 2019, and smoke from wildfires happening across the Pacific Northwest. When the air we breathe is polluted, members of our community face a greater risk of respiratory and heart problems and other diseases that can shorten lifespans.
- **Flooding and rising sea levels:** Soaring temperatures are melting glaciers and ice sheets at an accelerating pace, causing our sea levels to rise. As a coastal city, Tacoma's Port, along with vital infrastructure, habitat, and tribal lands, are at increased risk of costly damage from storm surges, flooding, and erosion.
- **Urban heat islands:** Climate change is causing frequent and extreme heat waves, amplifying urban heat island effects in our city. Urban heat islands increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases, respiratory illness, and heat stroke, as well as mortality rates for our residents. In addition, extreme heat can damage power infrastructure and impede our ability to reap the benefits of a more walkable and connected community.

The 2025 Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update can serve as a guide to bolstering our preparedness and ability to reduce the impact of air pollution, flooding and rising sea levels, and urban heat islands, while also reducing our contributions to global climate emissions. In addition, the near-term actions in the 2030 CAP have expired, creating a need for this update. While the CAP adopted in 2021 still serves as our guiding foundation and the goals remain the same, the 2025 CAP Update is streamlined to increase readability and accountability. This update attempts to



balance doing the most we can to impact our residents' lives today with the resources available, while also looking for opportunities to advance the transformational actions necessary to achieve our broader goals.

## RESOLUTION

This resolution would adopt the 2025 CAP Update as the City's guide to bolstering our preparedness and ability to reduce the impact of immediate threats to our community that are created and amplified by climate change.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability undertook a variety of community engagements for the 2025 CAP Update, with a particular focus on how, if at all, community priorities have shifted since 2021. Because the Pierce County Sustainability 2030 Plan also scheduled a 2025 update, staff from Pierce County and the City of Tacoma collaborated on much of the community engagement process.

- Along with broader engagement, such as tabling at large events, staff held focused Community Dialogues with representatives of communities and organizations throughout Tacoma. Tacoma and Pierce County received further feedback through interviews with community members from a University of Washington Tacoma nursing class.

In addition to working with Pierce County, City staff inventoried engagement appendices from a variety of plans, documents, and Environmental Impact Statements since 2021. This provided a broader lens for understanding community needs. The Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability also held multiple workshops with subject matter experts for each of the CAP's sectors of focus and released a survey focused on CAP priorities to Tacoma residents.

- The Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability provided public updates to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) Committee on April 9 and to City Council's Study Session, during a joint meeting with the Public Utilities Board, on May 20.<sup>1</sup> City Council Members have also received community feedback on the importance of Tacoma's urban forest for addressing issues like air pollution, flooding, and urban heat islands.

## 2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**Equity and Accessibility:** The impacts of climate change and climate solutions are not distributed equally across our city due to history, coastal location, and urban topography. For example, some neighborhoods face far greater risks from urban heat islands due to historical marginalization and underinvestment, especially regarding tree canopy, while businesses along the coastline face greater risks from rising sea levels. The 2025 CAP Update is vital to improving equitable outcomes for community health and safety, as well as economic opportunity and job growth, across our city.

**Civic Engagement:** *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity

Increase the percentage of residents who believe they are able to have a positive impact on the community and express trust in the public institutions in Tacoma.

**Livability:** *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

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<sup>1</sup> [City of Tacoma - File #: 25-0273](#); [City of Tacoma - File #: 25-0471](#)



How does your policy, program, or service help or harm the health of the natural environment?<sup>2</sup> (e.g. reduction in carbon emissions, open space conditions, sustainability, clean air, water and soil, and noise and light pollution).

#### ALTERNATIVES

Alternative	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
Do not adopt the 2025 Climate Action Plan Update.	The City Council could have the City Manager focus on other Council priorities.	The City would lack an up-to-date pathway for building greater resilience to the impacts of climate change, undermining the ability of the City to take decisive climate action.

#### EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP

If approved, the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability will continue to provide CAP progress updates to the City Council at regular intervals.

#### SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION

Sponsors recommend approving this resolution.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

If approved, this resolution does not bind the City to any financial expenditures beyond staff time, which is already factored into Department fiscal calculations. However, implementation of some recommended actions in the 2025 CAP Update would require the allocation of additional resources. There are also likely financial benefits related to efforts that improve Tacoma's climate resilience. For example, steps to reduce urban heat islands are likely to help decrease impacts on our stormwater infrastructure, reduce flood damage, and lower heating and air conditioning costs for residents.

#### What Funding is being used to support the expense?

N/A

#### Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium's current budget?

N/A

#### Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?

NO

#### Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?

NO

#### Will the legislation change the City's FTE/personnel counts?

NO