



Climate Change Commission

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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COMMISSIONERS

Victoria Keener, Ph.D., Chair
Rosanna Alegado, Ph.D., Vice Chair
Bettina Mehnert, FAIA, LEED AP
Makena Coffman, Ph.D.
Charles Fletcher, Ph.D.

Climate Change Commission Monday, January 25, 2021 1:00 p.m. Zoom Virtual Meeting Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Victoria Keener, Rosie Alegado, Bettina Mehnert, Makena Coffman, and Charles Fletcher

Members Absent: None

Public: Uyen Vong, Josh Stanbro, Sophie Lee, Hayley Cook, and Matt Gonser (Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency); Rachael Han, Brad Romine, Cari Ishida, State Senator Chris Lee, Courtney Talbot (ASU), Darren Lerner, Dave Martin, Diana Lopera (DLNR VISTA), D Nakano, Erinn Byrd, Hannah Thompson, Hawaii Green Growth, Shichao Li, Henry Curtis, Jacob Taddy, James McCallen, Josh Taitano, Katie Rooney, Layla Kilolu (PUC), Maila (HBR), Matt Trevino (HIEMA), Melissa May, Nancy McPherson, Pane Meatoga, Parker Kushima, Reyna Cohen, Roberto Porro, Shellie Habel, Courtney Sue-Ako, Tenaya Jackman, Revere Wood, Theresa Woznick, Justine Nihipali, Brittany Key, Diana Lopera, James McCallen, Dane Sjoblom

Call to Order: Chair Keener called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

Roll Call: Five Commissioners were present. Quorum was established.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes of December 8, 2020: The December 8, 2020 meeting minutes were adopted as amended (**AYE:** All; **NAY:** None; **ABSTAIN:** none)

Report on the Activities of the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR):
Executive Director Matthew Gonser presented the following:

- At the end of last year, the City Council passed a number of bills related to the O'ahu Resiliency Strategy, along with Bill 65, which was adopted as Ordinance 20-47. Ordinance 20-47 further defines the responsibilities of CCSR, codifies specific programs of work within the office, and establishes a couple of new City policies. In particular, Ordinance 20-47 includes a new climate action policy that puts the City in lockstep with the State's climate action target of net negative emissions no later than 2045. Ordinance 20-47 additionally codifies the City requirement to electrify its fleet by 2035 and CCSR's obligation to create, adopt, and update a Climate Action Plan (CAP).
- The draft of the City's first Climate Action Plan was released at the end of December 2020. The draft is open to public comment until the end of January. CCSR will host a public meeting on Tuesday, February 2, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. to present an overview of the draft CAP, address comments received, and hear additional input before finalizing the plan. Pursuant to Ordinance 20-47, CCSR will present the final proposed CAP to the City Council, which then has 90 days to take action for final adoption and approval.
- The office has been working on the Climate Ready O'ahu Initiative. While the CAP is focused on charting emissions down to zero, the Climate Ready O'ahu Initiative prepares communities for climate change impacts coming in the future. CCSR is currently conducting Round 3 of

community workshops this week and entering phase two of the work, which hones in on actions to address climate hazards prioritized in the first phase of the project. The link to the project page is available here: www.climatereadyoahu.org.

- Related to Resilience Action 13, CCSR has been working on participating in the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS), an incentive-based program that provides benefits to flood insurance policy holders (such as discounts to annual premiums) if communities go above and beyond minimum standards of the NFIP. Currently 50 percent of the State (Hawai'i County and Maui County) are participating, and these communities have realized 15 percent premium reductions annually for policy holders. CCSR is in the process of developing a CRS application, and a FEMA representative will be conducting a pre-screen verification visit. Under the current timeline, the City will be a new participating jurisdiction within CRS by October 1, 2021.
- Director Gonser stepped out of the Coastal and Water Program Manager role to become the Executive Director of CCSR, and staff have been evaluating candidates to fill the empty Coastal and Water Program Manager position, as well as the positions of Deputy Director and Communications and Outreach Manager. The CCSR team will make recommendations to the City Administration for these positions.

Questions and Comments that followed:

1. Commissioner Mehnert congratulated Director Gonser on his new position as Director.
2. Chair Keener asked Director Gonser about future priorities for the CCSR team. Director Gonser responded that actions for COVID-19 support and budget discussions are underway, and departments will be working towards actions in Mayor Blangiardi's Roadmap to Recovery, which is available here: www.rickblangiardiformayor.com/ricks-roadmap/. There is a big need to ensure CCSR is attuned and tapped into potential federal funding, which is something CCSR has already helped coordinate to date, particularly through FEMA. CCSR will additionally be looking for further opportunities to drive action for the draft CAP and infrastructure needs, while ensuring lockstep coordination with the State and demonstration of action to the community.

Comments and Public Testimony that Followed: No public comments or testimony was received.

Communication and Correspondence from the Public: No communication or correspondence from the public was received.

Comments and Public Testimony that Followed: No public comments or testimony was received.

Update from the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Coordinator Anu Hittle on 2021 State Priorities:

- Hittle congratulated Matt Gonser on becoming the new director of CCSR. Hittle's presentation summarized the State Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission's ("Climate Commission") priorities for 2021, which follow the Climate Commission's mission that every strategy should be clean, equitable, and resilient.
- In 2021, the State's Climate Ready Hawai'i initiative is focused on active transportation and multimodal mobility hubs as a way to help reduce total vehicle miles traveled.
- Climate Ready Hawai'i has been working with the Honolulu Climate Change Commission ("Commission") on the recommendations of operationalizing the Social Cost of Carbon into government activities.
- The first Climate Ready Hawai'i AmeriCorps VISTA cohort has placed six VISTAs within four State offices (Department of Health, Office of Planning, State Energy Office, and Department of Land and Natural Resources) who are focused on equity work.
- Additional work includes development of a framework for resilience using nature-based solutions and bio-cultural approaches. Most recently, Climate Ready Hawai'i has developed guidance tools for operationalizing sea level rise recommendations. Climate Ready Hawai'i has two websites, www.climate.hawaii.gov and www.koloaiki.org, as well as active Instagram and Facebook accounts for updates throughout the year.

Questions and Comments that followed: No questions or comments were received.

Comments and Public Testimony that Followed: No public comments or testimony was received.

Update from Dr. Brad Romine and Dr. Shellie Habel on Sea Level Rise Guidance and Tool:

- Dr. Romine presented on the document *Guidance for Using the Sea Level Rise Exposure Area in Local Planning and Permitting Decisions*, which was developed by the University of Hawai'i (UH) Sea Grant College Program and the State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) under the Climate Ready Hawai'i Initiative of the Climate Commission.
- The guidance document is intended to be a supplement to the 2017 *Hawai'i Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Adaptation Report* ("SLR Report") and Hawai'i Sea Level Rise Viewer ("SLR Viewer"). The primary purpose is to assist planners and natural resource and infrastructure managers to understand the sea level rise exposure area (SLR-XA). The document was developed in response to county planners' questions in using the SLR-XA for permitting.
- During the November 27, 2018 Climate Commission meeting, it was determined that the results and methodology used in the Hawai'i SLR Vulnerability and Adaptation Report have been peer-reviewed and published and are considered appropriate for use in land management decisions. The referenced publication is available here: www.soest.hawaii.edu/coasts/publications/Anderson_et_al_SciRep_2018_SLR_modeling.pdf. In addition, the Climate Commission agreed to a statement that included support for the establishment of a State initiative, now called Climate Ready Hawai'i, to provide resources to assist in planning for sea level rise.
- A working group of county and State agency representatives have met in 2019 and 2020 to develop the SLR-XA guidance for use in planning and permitting decisions. The working group discussed challenges with and opportunities for applying the SLR-XA map data with regular discussions with Climate Ready Hawaii and UH Sea Grant regarding ongoing development. Following development of the draft guidance, the working group met again in 2020 to provide comment and further direction. Feedback from this discussion was included in the final draft of the guidance.
- The guidance is intended to address needs and challenges surrounding the interpretation, application, and incorporation of the SLR-XA model in planning and permitting.
- Dr. Romine addressed updates made to the SLR Viewer, which were completed to stay current with most available data. Diana Lopera, Climate Ready O'ahu AmeriCorps VISTA, developed an SLR Guidance Tool, which walks users through the SLR Viewer.
- Additionally, *Guidance for Addressing Sea Level Rise in Community Planning in Hawai'i*, completed in 2020 in partnership with DLNR and State Office of Planning with funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is available on the UH Sea Grant website here: <https://seagrant.soest.hawaii.edu/guidance-for-addressing-slr-in-community-planning-in-hi-2/>.

Questions and Comments that followed:

1. Commissioner Coffman asked about the feedback received from county planners. Dr. Romine responded with one example of how Climate Ready Hawai'i has been working with the City to update its Sustainable Communities Plans. Dr. Romine was pleased to hear from planners working on the Primary Urban Center Development Plan Update that they've been looking at the guidance and are considering inclusion of one of the figures from the document.
2. Commissioner Fletcher clarified that the 3.2 feet of SLR is depicted typically as being at the end of the century and noted interest in the guidance document's wording of "later in the century." Climate scientists have learned in the past couple of years that, for global gravity reasons, 3.2 feet of SLR may occur as early as 2070 or 2080. Since Hawai'i will experience more SLR than the global mean, if global mean is 3.2 feet, Hawai'i will see around 4 feet of SLR at the end of the century. The Climate Commission may consider this as a supplement to the SLR guidance document. Dr. Romine responded that updates in SLR science are included in the document's appendix.
3. Vice Chair Alegado noted her like for the added community features (like ahupua'a boundaries) to the SLR Viewer.
4. Chair Keener asked about the mandatory versus voluntary nature of using the guidance information for planning and permitting at State and county levels. Dr. Romine stated that the guidance document is voluntary and noted new requirements under Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343 to consider climate change and SLR in environmental assessments.

5. Commissioner Fletcher updated that Maui County is revising their setback rules based on similar modeling that Dr. Romine and Dr. Habel presented.
6. Commissioner Mehnert stated the guidance is a wonderful tool that is very useful for the design industry. Commissioner Mehnert likes that the improvements are in the updated version of the SLR Viewer and stated that it is a very useful tool for the design industry, as it allows for the provision of better designs and services to clients.
7. Chair Keener asked if there were considerations for including socioeconomic vulnerability data layers into the SLR Viewer. Dr. Romine said potentially yes, similar to NOAA's tool, and Climate Ready Hawaii wants to continue to support counties with GIS tools.
8. Commissioner Fletcher asked Director Gonser about how the guidance information can be used in various City departments. Director Gonser responded that the guidance is an important additional resource, especially for early planning stages, review of project proposals, and City infrastructure planning. Additionally, CCSR has the guidance from the Commission for updates to shoreline setbacks, which, along with Act 16 from the State, require CCSR to update the Special Management Area chapter of the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu (ROH) for consistency. Guidance documents like the one presented by Dr. Romine help to accelerate discussion on fuller amendments. Through a federal project proposal, CCSR recently received confirmation to systematically update ROH Chapters 23 and 25.

Comments and Public Testimony that Followed:

1. Jodi Malinoski asked if the Realtor Association has been briefed on the updates made to the SLR Viewer given their previous opposition to state-wide SLR disclosure bills for real estate transactions due to SLR-XA maps not being down to Tax Map Key (TMK) level. Dr. Romine said he recently briefed a group of stakeholders from the real estate industry and the new TMK layer and address search tool in the SLR Viewer was included in part as a response from past concerns from real estate agents. There is state legislation this year again proposed for disclosure of SLR hazards for real estate transactions.

Update from Planning and Policy Analyst Justine Nihipali (State of Hawai'i Office of Planning) on Hawai'i Revised Statutes, Chapter 205a (Coastal Zone Management):

- Nihipali was joined by Shichao Li, the State's SMA Coordinator.
- Nihipali provided background on Coastal Zone Management (CZM), shoreline setbacks, and SMA and then presented on the recent changes in state legislation after Governor Ige signed Act 16 into law in 2020, relating to HRS Chapter 205A.
- Under Act 16, the lists for "development" and "not development" are amended. Additionally, the minimum shoreline setback was increased from 20 to 40 feet and SLR was added to the definition of coastal hazards, and "beach" was defined to enhance beach protection. Act 16 also restricts and/or prohibits shoreline hardening structures at sites with beaches.
- Nihipali described the specifics of each new amendment, including which "developments" need an SMA permit, the minimum 40-foot shoreline setback and variances, and new beach protection laws provided by HRS 205A-46(a)(9), where hardening structures are prohibited from private property owners, and seawalls and revetments are no longer allowed in areas with beaches.
- CZM's last five-year strategy has been integrated into City planning to strengthen the City's resilience to tsunami hazards by shifting from episodic tsunami to chronic.

Questions and Comments that followed:

1. Commissioner Fletcher asked if discussions with the counties regarding the changes have started yet. Nihipali responded that she meets with the counties monthly where application of updated CZM laws has been a topic of discussion. Additionally, guidance has been issued to planning departments, and the counties are aware of the need to update rules relating to CZM.
2. Commissioner Fletcher noted his worry that that counties' reactions to the updated CZM laws could lead to different levels of CZM ordinances and rules from one county to another and asked if there's a need for the counties to come together for a meeting formally dedicated to the changes to 205A and discuss how they're applied for cross-county awareness. Nihipali responded that implementation is already discussed in monthly meetings.
3. Commissioner Fletcher asked if the guidance to county planning departments is available online. Nihipali responded that the guidance is not currently online.

4. Commissioner Coffman asked for a copy of the presentation. Nihiipali will send it to Uyen to distribute to Commissioners.

Comments and Public Testimony that Followed: No public comments or testimony was received.

Update on Outstanding Guidance Documents:

a. Climate Change and Construction Industry Guidance Document:

- Chair Keener reminded Commissioners to return comments and edits to the document to Rachael before the end of the day. The next step will be integrating the comments.
- Commissioner Mehnert reiterated how grateful she is for the spirited feedback during the December 8, 2020 meeting. Edits were delayed because of the holidays, but are in process. Commissioner Mehnert is in the process of figuring out the details of a stakeholder meeting, which is not a small undertaking, as she wants to include everyone and be as comprehensive as possible.

b. Climate Change Brief:

- Commissioners Fletcher and Coffman have been meeting with Rachael to make edits to specific sections of the brief and have turned responsibility over to Commissioner Fletcher to make further edits before bringing the draft back to the group to create the final draft. It is hoped that finalization and adoption of the draft will occur in the March or April meeting.

c. Social Cost of Carbon:

- Commissioner Coffman provided an update that there is a skeleton of a draft. The paper was put on pause due to Commissioner Coffman's work on a state carbon analysis, but is turning attention back to the document and rethinking literature for the City's purposes. Commissioner Mehnert is the second reader, and the draft paper will be sent to Commissioner Mehnert in the next couple of weeks for review. Commissioner Coffman is thinking the paper will be brought to Commission for conversation and then a follow-up before publication.

Questions and Comments that followed: No questions or comments were received.

Comments and Public Testimony that Followed: No public comments or testimony was received.

Public Input for Matters Not on the Agenda:

- State Senator Chris Lee provided an update that even due to the changes to the State Legislature due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is opportunity to make some progress on the transportation side of the climate equation. There are a number of measures introduced this year that would rethink the way transportation emissions are addressed, as well as a number of bills that deal with all aspects of climate integration and consideration in planning for infrastructure projects. Chair Keener asked if there were other State-level updates. Senator Lee responded that due to changes at the federal level, there will be more support coming to the State that will trickle down and be distributed accordingly to the counties.
- Henry Curtis shared that the Biden Administration is looking at the social cost of carbon from a damages perspective, which is different from the traditional economic perspective.

Tentative Next Meeting Date: The next meeting date is scheduled for March 1, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom.

- Chair Keener reviewed potential agenda items for the next few months, and asked for feedback from Commissioners. Chair Keener is interested in connecting with the City's Office of Economic Revitalization to get an update on recovery during COVID-19 and lessons learned with respect to climate change mitigation and crisis response, including federal procurement issues and CARES Act.
- The Commission is also interested in asking for an update from the City's Managing Director to discuss climate resiliency priorities, in addition to someone who can discuss the Biden Administration's climate recovery plan from the federal level.
- Chair Keener, Vice Chair Alegado, and Director Gonser are also interested in continuing the discussion on financing and implementation of climate adaptation strategies and looking at how other cities are funding and planning climate adaptation projects. There is also interest in looking

at nature-based solutions and different evaluation measures for restoration of ecosystems in Hawai'i. Commissioner Coffman suggested identifying public finance cases with similar population numbers to O'ahu. Chair Keener responded that there aren't many cities that have implemented adaptation projects.

Announcements: There were no announcements.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.