

Extreme Heat Mitigation Strategy and Wildfire Risk Reduction

Strategy Accomplishments to Date

(Provided by Executive staff)

Extreme Heat Mitigation Strategy (published 2024)

Key accomplishments to date on key priorities and actions supported by the Heat Strategy include the following:

- *Action 2 (Energy Efficiency and Utility Bill Assistance):* This action includes connecting households to energy efficiency programs, such as the King County Energize program, that improve heat resilience. Energize has provided weatherization for 70 households, either directly or by connecting them to other weatherization programs.
- *Action 3 (Heat Pump Installations):* This action focuses on increasing access to cooling technology through heat pump installations. The King County Energize program has installed 83 heat pumps to date in 2025 and is on track to install over 100 by the end of this year.
- *Action 13 (Open Space Access):* This action focuses on increasing access to green space and preventing the creation of new heat islands. King County's Land Conservation Initiative (LCI) seeks to protect the county's remaining high conservation value lands while closing gaps in equitable access to open space. The LCI is on track to protect at least 1,000 acres of green space this year.
- *Action 14 (Cool Schools):* This action focuses on increasing heat resilience in schools and early learning centers, including childcare centers. Public Health-Seattle & King County and Best Starts for Kids launched a pilot project to provide approximately 103 sun shades to 53 family home child care and family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) caregiver sites located in underserved communities in local heat islands. The project team is working with ECO to identify FFN sites and with DNRP to support installation of sun shades at certain sites. This project will provide shade to approximately 485 children in summer 2025.
- *Action 19 (Partnerships for Implementation):* This action focuses on supporting partners and coordination around strategy implementation. In July 2025, ECO [released the Heat & Health Data Explorer](#) mapping tool to help partners visualize heat islands in King County (mapped by census block), understand what factors contribute to heat exposure and risk, and better plan for extreme heat before it

happens. This tool aims to strengthen data-driven decision-making and coordination for heat action implementation.

- *Action 20 (Support Community Solutions):* This action focuses on providing funding and technical assistance for community-led heat solutions. Consistent with the goals of PREP 21, \$30k of the Climate Preparedness budget went directly to community-based organization heat mitigation work through the County's Community Climate Resilience (CCR) Grant program administered by ECO.

Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy (published 2022)

The following updates are based on staff input and Wildfire Strategy implementation surveys conducted in 2023 and 2024 to assess progress on King County and partner implementation of the strategy. A repeat survey is planned for fall 2025.

Areas of notable progress include outreach and education around wildfire awareness, partner coordination and collaboration, and increasing capacity for assistance to homeowners on wildfire mitigation best management practices. Challenges include capacity for homeowner assistance (demand still outpacing capacity), funding for implementation of small forest landowner forest stewardship plans, an evolving and uncertain policy and code landscape (e.g., state wildland urban interface codes, vegetation management policies and codes), funding for implementing wildfire response training, and the actual or potential loss of federal hazard mitigation funds for implementing forthcoming Community Wildfire Protection Plan actions (a circumstance that wasn't anticipated when the strategy was written). For example, King County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) submitted an application for federal grant funding to build capacity for home risk assessment programs across the county through the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program; however, the BRIC program was canceled by the current administration in April 2025.

- *Action 1 - Promote species and structural diversity within King County forests to improve wildfire resilience. Steady progress since Wildfire Strategy release in 2022. King County Parks is accelerating proactive stewardship and restoration of King County-owned forest lands. This includes selectively thinning overcrowded areas; planting native and climate-tolerant tree seedlings; performing ongoing maintenance based on site-specific conditions (e.g., vegetation management); and monitoring. New projects in the first half of 2025 already match the acreage of all new projects in 2024 (~160 acres). Three new Forestry FTE hires since 2024 account for the faster rate of work. King County also planted 6,900 climate-adapted*

seedlings at four sites for a long-term trial to grow seedlings that will contribute to more resilient forests. Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is conducting planned thinning and Firewise treatments around critical infrastructure (Landsburg, Cedar Falls), and conducting research on climate-adaptive reforestation in Tolt watershed (the Stossel Creek project). Multiple actions in the Forest Resilience and Urban Tree Canopy Expansion focus area of the Executive-proposed 2025 SCAP supports work on this action.

- *Action 2 - Develop post-fire response plans to support forest recovery and reduce near-term wildfire impacts on natural resources. County and partner work on this action is in the early stages. SPU has developed a Post-Wildfire Response and Recovery Plan, covering analyses and actions that should occur in the first year after a wildfire event. A new WA DNR Post-Fire Recovery program was launched in 2021 and is now available to assist with this action. Prep 35 in the Executive-proposed 2025 SCAP, Prepare and plan for post-wildfire recovery on King County-owned forestland, will support County work on this action.*
- *Action 3 - Increase technical and financial support for small forest landowners for wildfire risk reduction. Seeing sustained or expanded technical assistance via King Conservation District (KCD), WA Dept. of Natural Resources (WA DNR), and DNRP's Forestry program since July 2022, although demand still exceeds capacity. All forest stewardship plans reviewed/approved by DNRP address climate change and wildfire risk. King County hired a new stewardship forester & National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)-certified wildfire mitigation specialist (Mike Lasecki) in June 2024 to provide increased capacity for technical and planning support to private forest landowners, including wildfire mitigation technical assistance.*
- *Action 4 – Develop community wildfire preparedness, response, and recovery plans. Notable increase in activity and/or level of interest. King County OEM is working with Eastside Fire & Rescue and other partners to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) by the end of 2025. In 2024, KCD completed a neighborhood hazard evaluation for Trilogy Community (1,522 homes and 1,435 acres). The Executive proposed 2025 SCAP includes an action to plan for post-wildfire community recovery (Prep 34).*
- *Action 5 – Advance wildfire risk reduction through effective policies, plans, and codes. Seeing progress on this action but delays in state implementation of wildland-urban interface codes has kept some aspects of the work on hold. King County added a new wildfire section and policies to Chapter 3 of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update and a new focus area on wildfire risk reduction in the*

Executive proposed 2025 SCAP. Additionally, the County adopted code changes to clearing and grading requirements that will make it easier for residents to create and maintain defensible spaces around their homes. Seattle City Light and PSE have updated their wildfire risk reduction strategies based on new state requirements for electric utilities.

- *Action 6 – Create King County-specific wildfire mitigation best management practices and expand household-level wildfire mitigation assistance. Clear increase in activity. Through the King County Wildfire Mitigation Working Group, local partners are working together to: develop a consistent approach to home risk assessments across agencies, standardize recommended wildfire mitigation best management practices, and help more local fire districts (Bellevue Fire, Valley Regional Fire Authority, Vashon Fire and Rescue) launch their own home risk assessment programs. While not specific to households, SPU is implementing Firewise-like treatments around critical infrastructure and PSE is continuing hazard abatement fuel pullback within 100 feet of public roads. In 2025 SHB 1539 created a wildfire mitigation and resiliency standards workgroup that is currently working on developing a report for the state legislature that will include recommended state wildfire property mitigation standards that are aligned with nationally recognized, science-based, wildfire mitigation standards. The Executive proposed 2025 SCAP includes an action to pilot the development of a wildfire adapted community coalition in a higher wildfire risk area as a way of growing community capacity for wildfire mitigation (Prep 32).*
- *Action 7 – Increase monitoring and control of invasive species that increase wildfire risk in the wildland-urban interface. Steady level of activity related to this action. King County’s Noxious Weeds Program is active in reducing invasive species of concern. Manulife Forest (a private timber company) is increasing invasive species removal projects to cover larger areas each year. King County Stewardship Foresters are working to increase landowner awareness for no cost (via the King County Healthy Lands Program) and cost share (e.g., with KCD, WA DNR) options to reduce/control. King County Parks completed a qualitative landscape assessment (FLAT method) inclusive of invasive species for Parks properties and is in the process of surveying all newly-acquired lands from 2024.*
- *Action 8 – Implement the “Ready, Set, Go!” public education evacuation program in the wildland-urban interface. Action complete and ongoing. King County OEM initiated a multicounty approach to this campaign, beginning with five counties in 2023. Now in its third year, it has grown to 12 western Washington counties and one*

tribal entity. King County OEM also recently procured new Ready, Set, Go! Outreach materials that have been shared widely with partner agencies and jurisdictions.

- *Action 9 – Implement countywide training standards for all levels of wildfire response. Progress being made. The South King County Fire Training Consortium (SKCFTC) Wildland Cadre has adopted training standards with a projected five year implementation timeline. The SKCFTC also added the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Responding to the Interface curriculum into fire academies. All new firefighters are receiving training immediately after graduating from the fire academy. Finally, multi-company operations drills completed based on IAFF Responding to the Interface curriculum.*
- *Action 10 – Establish partnerships and agreements to ensure timely and cost-effective access to wildfire firefighting resources. Some progress has been made with development of mutual aid agreements for wildland firefighting resources. Examples: Valley Regional Fire increased its aerial firefighting resource capability by establishing a formal request procedure with KC Sheriff's Office (KCSO) and WA DNR; KCSO purchased and has since successfully deployed a "bambi bucket" for wildland fire fighting; SPU has agreements in place with the US Forest Service, WA DNR, and WA State Patrol (State Mobilization) for wildland resources. Eastside Fire & Rescue is continuing to build a stronger understanding of the Fire Defense Board and State Mobilization Plan utilization.*
- *Action 11 – Implement a coordinated approach to public education and outreach on wildfire risk reduction in King County. Notable increase in activity. King County has created education campaigns (<https://vimeo.com/599699500>) and offers home visit program to help homeowners identify places where they can make improvements on their properties. King County OEM developed a home mitigation guide to share with communities, and ECO is working with OEM, Forestry, and external partners to develop a King County-specific wildfire action plan guidebook for residents (work getting underway summer 2025). Partner work includes: six wildfire readiness video segments created by Valley Regional Fire; WSU Extension Forestry public events and programming related to wildfire risk reduction (Forest Stewardship Coached Planning, field days, webinars, etc.); and SCL outreach to customers on wildfire strategy and fire safety tips.*
- *Action 12 – Enhance and expand opportunities for shared learning and coordination related to wildfire risk reduction. Steady progress. KCD created a Wildfire Mitigation Workgroup that meets bi-monthly for information sharing and coordination. King County OEM is facilitating a CWPP Workgroup and includes wildfire preparedness*

topics in its annual Summer Hazards Seminar. Partner work includes SPU coordination with other groups (Seattle City Light, regional municipal watersheds, USFS, WADNR, local Tribes, and several universities) on wildfire risk reduction.