



# 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

fact sheet

## CLIMATE CHANGE Related Amendments in 2016 Proposed Plan

Climate change is one of the paramount environmental and economic challenges for this generation. King County's 2015 Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) is the County's comprehensive legislative and policy plan for climate action. It provides the blueprint for county decision-makers, employees, and the general public to learn about the County's climate change commitments. A subset of the policies and commitments from the SCAP are reflected in the proposed 2016 Comprehensive Plan.

Impacts from climate change have the potential to dramatically impact ecosystems, agriculture, economy, biodiversity, and public health and safety in myriad and interrelated ways. Impacts of a changing climate will be experienced differently by King County residents, influenced by factors such as income, age, health, and where they live. However, by working collaboratively to develop and implement strategies to prevent, respond to, and prepare for climate change, the County has many opportunities to address broader inequities. Sustaining quality of life and the environment requires a significant commitment on the part of the County to both reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for climate change impacts in an ever-changing and increasingly dynamic landscape.

The first two sections of this document outline amendments proposed in the Climate Change Section in Chapter 5 of the proposed 2016 Comprehensive Plan, with the goal of alignment and consistency with the 2015 SCAP. The last section of this document outlines key climate change related issues covered in other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan focuses on policy direction and avoids providing as much detail on implementation strategies compared to what is contained within the SCAP. To learn more about the SCAP: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/climate>.

### 1. Text changes in Environment Chapter

Minor changes in the Climate Change Section in Chapter 5 that provide:

- **New scientific information** about local climate change related environmental observations and potential future climate change impacts
- Background about how **goal area targets adopted** in the 2015 SCAP will contribute to achieving comprehensive long term greenhouse gas reduction targets, at both the government operations and countywide scales
- Background about how the SCAP and Comprehensive Plan proposed policies integrate and align with **commitments made in partnership with local cities** through the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration
- Background about the **roles King County government can play** in climate change preparedness work
- Minor changes to policy E-224 to provide examples about **how floodplain restoration can help address climate change impacts** on rivers and river ecosystems

### 2. Policy changes in Environment Chapter

Key proposed changes in the Climate Change Section, **Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions subsection**, include:

- Updating government operations related greenhouse gas reduction policies to be consistent with the SCAP (E-206; E-206a; E206b) and deleting existing policies that directed King County to develop such policies (E-207).
- Reflecting SCAP **direction to develop and implement an operational “cost of carbon”** to support decision making and planning efforts (E-206c).
- Updating countywide greenhouse gas reduction policies to be consistent with **shared targets developed and unanimously adopted by the Growth Management Planning Council** (E-210) and deleting outdated policies.

Key proposed changes in the Climate Change Section, **Preparing for Climate Change Impacts subsection**, include:

- New proposed **policies to collaborate regionally on climate change preparedness** and to plan and prepare for climate impacts on County built and natural assets (E-215a; E215b; E215c; E215d; E221b).
- Direction to **integrate climate change impacts** considerations **into emergency management** efforts (E215e).



- Direction to **apply the Equity Impact review process** to support climate preparedness efforts (E-221a).
- Deletion of redundant existing policies (E-218; E219; E220).

And, in the subsection on Collaboration with Others, existing policy E-227, which focused on King County support for comprehensive approaches to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, is proposed to be replaced by E-226a which covers similar issues, but is consistent with SCAP policies. For example, the new policy indicates that King County supports reinvestment of potential carbon market revenue into local strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as for transit service, energy efficiency and forest protection and restoration.

In addition to the stand-alone Climate Change Section detailed above, climate change direction related to natural resource issues are included, such as **directing consideration of climate change information into biodiversity conservation** approaches (E-405) and native plant restoration (E-427).

### **3. Climate Change Policies throughout the Executive's Recommended 2016 Comprehensive Plan**

Climate change is an issue and priority that cuts across many different topics, and climate related policies are included across almost every chapter of the proposed 2016 Comprehensive Plan:

#### *Chapter I: Regional Planning*

- Direction to **participate in regional planning efforts** about climate change, such as the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (RP-109).

#### *Chapter II: Urban Communities*

- Direction to **focus employment and population growth in the contiguous Urban Growth Area** to help reduce sprawl and associated transportation related greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. U-106). Importantly there were no substantive urban growth area boundary amendments in the proposed 2016 Comprehensive Plan.

#### *Chapter III: Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands*

- Direction to **manage and restore King County forested parks and natural lands** in ways that maximize biological carbon storage and sequestration, and increase resilience to changing climate conditions (e.g. R-641).

#### *Chapter IV: Housing and Human Services*

- Direction to **require the Evergreen Sustainable Development green building standard** for County supported housing projects (H-145).

#### *Chapter VI: Shoreline Master Program*

- Direction to **plan for sea level rise** and other climate change impacts as it relates to King County owned infrastructure (S-650) and habitat projects (S-651).

#### *Chapter VII: Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources*

- Direction related to **forest land protection and restoration**, important for both carbon sequestration and reducing local climate impacts (e.g. P-116 and P-117).

#### *Chapter VIII: Transportation*

- Transportation is the region's number one source of greenhouse gas emissions. Many policies in this chapter relate to climate change such as **policies on transit service, multi-modal transportation options, and land use and growth strategies**.

#### *Chapter IX: Services, Facilities and Utilities*

- Climate change related policies are included related to **flood preparedness issues** (F-289; F-291), **sea level rise impacts** on Vashon-Maury Island (F-292) and importantly related to **energy efficiency and renewable energy** considerations (F-304 through F-323).

These edits align the Comprehensive Plan with the SCAP and other work at the County, and put the region on a path towards addressing and responding to a changing climate.