## STAFF REPORT

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| **Agenda Item:** | 5 | **Name:** | Jake Tracy |
| **Proposed No**.: | 2020-0227 | **Date:** | September 2, 2020 |

**SUBJECT**

Proposed Ordinance (PO) 2020-0227 would approve and adopt the 2020-2025 King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

**SUMMARY**

Proposed Ordinance 2020-0227 would adopt the 2020-2025 King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (RHMP), which is Attachment A to the ordinance. The federal government requires local governments such as King County to create a local mitigation plan and update the plan every five years in order to be eligible for funding through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and other mitigation grant programs. The Code of Federal Regulations contains specific requirements for plan elements. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has given pre-adoption approval for the 2020 RHMP.

This plan, in addition to being the plan for unincorporated King County, would also serve as the base plan for other jurisdictions in King County. These jurisdictions would then develop their own annexes to the RHMP, with a focus on hazard mitigation in their own areas. The 2020 update to the plan included multiple inter-jurisdictional workshops and public outreach events.

The plan contains discussion of eight natural hazards and six human-caused hazards that threaten King County, identifies community goals, and develops mitigation strategies to advance those goals and reduce vulnerability to hazards. The plan also lays out a process for evaluating and prioritizing individual projects within the mitigation strategies.

King County first adopted a hazard mitigation plan in 2004, with updates adopted in 2009 and 2015. The 2015 plan expired on April 30, 2020.

**BACKGROUND**

Hazard mitigation is defined as "any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from hazards."[[1]](#footnote-1) The federal government requires local governments such as King County to create a local mitigation plan and update the plan every five years in order to be eligible for funding through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and other mitigation grant programs.

The Code of Federal Regulations requires that these local hazard mitigation plans be created through a public process and contain the following elements:

* A risk assessment that includes a description of the hazards a jurisdiction faces and its vulnerability to those hazards;
* A mitigation strategy describing hazard mitigation goals, specific actions that can be taken to reduce vulnerability, and a plan for how to implement these actions;
* Documentation of the planning process used to develop the plan; and
* A plan maintenance process describing the method and schedule of updating the plan on a five-year basis, ongoing public participation, and integration of plan elements into other jurisdictional plans.

The plan must also be formally adopted by the governing body of the jurisdiction.[[2]](#footnote-2)

In 2004, King County adopted its first Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (RHMP), after a collaborative regional planning effort.[[3]](#footnote-3) The King County Council adopted updates to the plan in 2009 and 2015.[[4]](#footnote-4) The 2015 plan expired on April 30, 2020.

**ANALYSIS**

Proposed Ordinance 2020-0227 would adopt the 2020-2025 King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, which is Attachment A to the Ordinance. This plan, in addition to being the plan for unincorporated King County, would also serve as the base plan for other jurisdictions in King County. These jurisdictions would then develop their own annexes to the RHMP, with a focus on hazard mitigation in their own areas.

According to the executive, the plan has received pre-adoption approval from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Update Process and Public Outreach

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the County agency responsible for hazard mitigation planning, conducted an inclusive planning process to complete this update, leading a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional team that included representatives of various King County agencies, cities, and water and utility districts. The committee met fourteen times between February 2019 and June 2020, and also received input from the King County Emergency Management Coordinating Committee. More than sixty planning partners from neighboring jurisdictions participated in a series of workshops and meetings to develop the base plan and support those jurisdictions in developing their own annexes to the plan.

For public outreach on the plan, King County OEM partnered with the Department of Local Services at King County's 2019 Community Service Area Town Halls. OEM estimates that sixty to one hundred attendees were present at each of the four meetings. A list of County planning and outreach meetings can be found beginning on page 17 of the RHMP.

In addition to the County's outreach, participating jurisdictions were encouraged to hold at least two outreach events on their own annexes to the plan. A list of jurisdictional meetings at which King County provided support can be found beginning on page 24 of the RHMP.

Continued outreach on the RHMP is planned, but according to OEM this outreach has been put on hold for the time being due to the response effort to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Risk Assessment

The 2020-2025 RHMP contains a risk assessment for eight natural hazards and six human-caused hazards. These are:

* Avalanche
* Earthquake
* Tsunami
* Volcano
* Landslide
* Wildfire
* Flood
* Severe Weather
* Hazardous Materials
* Health Incident
* Terrorism
* Civil Disturbance
* Cyber Incident
* Dam Failure

A table on page 43 and 44 of the RHMP summarizes the probability of, and risk from, six of the natural hazards to individual King County jurisdictions.[[5]](#footnote-5) The plan also includes detailed discussion of the overall risk to the County from each of the fourteen hazards listed above.

Mitigation Goals, Strategies, and Project Prioritization Process

The RHMP identifies community goals, hazard mitigation strategies to support these goals, and a process to evaluative individual hazard mitigation projects based on their likely effect in support of the goals and strategies. The base plan includes goals and strategies for areas, assets, and services under King County's jurisdiction. According to the executive, most jurisdictions chose to use the same goals as King County (shown below), although a few chose to develop different goals. Each other jurisdiction developed its own mitigation strategies as part of the series of workshops described above, to be included in each jurisdiction's annex to the plan.

Mitigation Plan Goals

Mitigation plan goals are intended to be "broad policy statements of the community's vision for the future."[[6]](#footnote-6) For King County, the Regional Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee adopted the fourteen determinants of equity as goals. These determinants, as defined in County code, are "the social, economic, geographic, political and physical environment conditions in which people in our county are born, grow, live, work and age that lead to the creation of a fair and just society."[[7]](#footnote-7) These determinants, and mitigation plan goals, are:

1. Access to Affordable, Healthy Food
2. Access to Health and Human Services
3. Access to Parks and Natural Resources
4. Access to Safe and Efficient Transportation
5. Affordable, Safe, Quality Housing
6. Community and Public Safety
7. Early Childhood Development
8. Economic Development
9. Equitable Law and Justice System
10. Equity in Government Practices
11. Family Wage Jobs and Job Training
12. Healthy Built and Natural Environments
13. Quality Education
14. Strong, Vibrant Neighborhoods

Additionally, two supplemental goals were added to comply with grant program requirements:

1. Resilient and safe high and significant-hazard dams
2. Proactive and innovative floodplain management to reduce Repetitive Loss and Severe Repetitive Loss properties

Mitigation Plan Strategies

The RHMP defines mitigation plan strategies as "sets of coordinated actions that, taken, together, address a risk or vulnerability. They are comprehensive, long-term, and designed to be regularly updated as actions are completed."[[8]](#footnote-8)

As part of the update process, OEM developed a template for jurisdictions to use in describing each hazard mitigation strategy. This template can be found on page 201 and 202 of the RHMP.

OEM worked with the following King County agencies to develop and prioritize mitigation strategies for King County:

* Department of Natural Resources and Parks – Water and Land Resources
* Department of Natural Resources and Parks – Wastewater Treatment
* Department of Local Services – Permitting
* Department of Local Services – Roads
* King County Information Technology
* Department of Executive Services - King County International Airport
* Department of Executive Services – Facilities Management Division
* Public Health Seattle – King County

This process resulted in thirty-five mitigation strategies, which are summarized on pages 222 through 226 of the RHMP. The table on those pages highlights each department's top-priority strategy. Additionally, the three top countywide priorities were:

* Integrate equity and social justice into planning, outreach, mitigation, response, and recovery
* Integrate hazards and vulnerability information into comprehensive planning
* Establish a resilient seismic transportation lifeline

Pages 227 through 272 of the RHMP contain the completed strategy templates for each of the thirty-five strategies identified by King County. Each of these forms identifies key agencies and partners; hazards mitigated and goals addressed; funding sources and costs; short, medium, and long-range objectives; implementation plans; and performance measures.

Mitigation Plan Projects

The RHMP also contains a process for evaluating and prioritizing specific hazard mitigation projects that align with the mitigation plan strategies and support achievement of the plan's goals.

Each potential project would be evaluated using the following criteria:

* Equity, Social Justice, and Vulnerability (project is designed to benefit, account for, and include vulnerable populations, especially those in the community most likely to suffer harm from a disaster and those likely to take longest to recover after a disaster)
* Collaborative (project is supported by multiple jurisdictions or agencies)
* Multiple-Benefit (project has benefits beyond hazard risk reduction, including environmental, social, or economic benefits)
* Adaptation and Sustainability (project helps people, property, and the environment become more resilient to the effects of climate change, regional growth, and development)
* Effectiveness (project is designed to attain the best-possible benefit-cost ratio)
* Urgent (project is urgently needed to reduce risk to lives and property)
* Shovel-Ready (project is largely ready to go, with few remaining roadblocks that could derail it)

For each of these criteria, each member of the RHMP steering committee would give a project a score of 4, 3, 2, 1, 0, or -4, with 4 being "outstanding or beyond expectations," 0 being "unsatisfactory," and -4 being "actively harms or is detrimental." The scores for each criterion are then summed to get a final score for the project for that reviewer, and an average of all reviewers is taken to get the final project score.

For projects from non-King County jurisdictions, the jurisdiction would use this process to prioritize projects within mitigation strategies, and are encouraged to use the same criteria listed above to do so. The jurisdiction would then submit project proposals to the RHMP Steering Committee for final prioritization and inclusion in an annual submission for FEMA BRIC[[9]](#footnote-9) funding.

Projects that have been approved for BRIC funding would be included in a future budget supplemental.

**AMENDMENT**

There is a technical amendment, Amendment 1, which was recommended by legal counsel.

**INVITED**

* Brendan Mccluskey, Director, Office of Emergency Management

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed Ordinance 2020-0227 (and its attachment)
2. Amendment 1
3. Revised Signed Transmittal Letter

1. 44 CFR 201.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 44 CFR 206.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ordinance 15038 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ordinances 16715 and 17996, respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Avalanche and tsunami are not included. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. RHMP Pg. 200 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. K.C.C. 2.10.210.B [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. RHMP, Pg. 201 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities [↑](#footnote-ref-9)