

Climate Change

Climate impacts are considered by the division when planning for future programs, facilities, and operations, in accordance with the state's Beyond Waste project and the county's climate plan. Climate change is manifest in the long-term trends in average weather patterns, including the frequency, duration, and intensity of wind and snow storms, cold weather and heat waves, drought, and flooding. Planning for climate change means taking into account both how we might reduce our effects on the climate, today and in the future, and how changes in climate might affect our facilities and operations.

Cities in King County Support Climate Protection

As of this writing, 16 cities in King County's service area have signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Former Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels launched the initiative to promote the participation of U.S. cities in the goals of the Kyoto Protocol. Among the more than 900 cities that have signed on nationwide, local cities have committed to meeting or exceeding targets of the Kyoto Protocol in their own communities and advocating for the reduction of GHG emissions at all levels of government.

Participating cities within the King County service area:

Auburn
Bellevue
Burien
Carnation
Clyde Hill
Issaquah
Kirkland
Lake Forest Park
Pacific
Redmond
Renton
Sammamish
Shoreline
Snoqualmie
Tukwila
Yarrow Point

Commented [HB1]: May make changes to this sidebar. New sidebar would highlight the efforts of the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration

At a regional level, the division and its planning participants continue to strengthen and broaden waste prevention and recycling programs to continually improve our long-term, positive effects on the environment (discussed in detail in Chapter 3, Waste Prevention and Recycling). As discussed in Chapter 3, the benefits are tangible in terms of reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, resource conservation, and energy savings.

Considerations of how division activities and operations might affect climate change involve both positive and negative impacts on GHG emissions. If areas where GHG emissions can be expected to occur are identified, strategies to mitigate those emissions can be developed, for example:

- The division is building facilities (such as the Shoreline and Bow Lake Recycling and Transfer Stations) that are more energy efficient and use green power, including solar power, to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards and protocols. Both facilities have earned a Platinum rating.
- Garbage compactors are being installed at all new stations, which will decrease truck trips, saving fuel and decreasing emissions.
- In day-to-day operations, the division looks for ways to reduce resource use and increase the use of environmentally friendly products.
- The division contracts with Bio Energy (Washington) LLC to turn landfill gas into pipeline-quality natural gas for the energy market.
- The Food: Too Good to Waste program is one example of a program that the division has started to help curb the effects of climate change. Uneaten food accounts for twenty three percent of all methane emissions – a potent climate change contributor. When food is thrown away, all the water and energy used to produce, package and transport food is also wasted. The program educates people about how to plan and prepare meals to decrease the amount of wasted food.
- The division teamed up with the City of Seattle to produce *Greenhouse Gas Emissions in King County*, a report that looked at greenhouse gas emissions from several different perspectives including undertaking a consumption-based inventory. The inventory offers a more complete picture of the County's environmental footprint, taking into account emissions associated with the production and consumption of food, goods and services. The report's research shows that efforts such as reducing waste food or purchasing sustainable and low-impact products can help to create a broader and deeper impact on global greenhouse gas emissions.
- The division has planted poplar and conifer trees on the Duvall and Puyallup/Kit Corner closed landfills to create a carbon "sink" by capturing carbon dioxide through the process of photosynthesis.

We also look at the potential impacts of climate change on division facilities and operations and determine strategies for adapting to those impacts. For example, the division is using more

drought-tolerant plants in facility landscapes and identifying alternate transportation routes to avoid areas where there may be an increase in seasonal flooding.

