



King County

Dow Constantine
King County Executive
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104-1818
206-263-9600 Fax 206-296-0194
TTY Relay: 711
www.kingcounty.gov

RECEIVED
2015 JUN 29 PM 3:44
CLERK
KING COUNTY COUNCIL

June 29, 2015

The Honorable Larry Phillips
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember Phillips:

I am pleased to transmit the 2015 update of the King County Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP), consistent with Ordinance 17270 and recommendations in the 2014 Council Auditor's Office performance audit of the 2012 SCAP. The 2015 SCAP Update guides County work to achieve ambitious climate goals and prepare for the impacts of climate change, while ensuring that King County continues to lead by example. The 2015 SCAP Update also meets the annual reporting requirements of King County Code 18.50.

Climate change is one of the paramount challenges of our generation. King County is already experiencing the impacts of a changing climate: warming temperatures, acidifying marine waters, rising seas, increasing flooding risk, decreasing mountain snowpack, and less water in the summer. Climate change will have long-term consequences for the economy, the environment, and public health and safety in King County.

King County has a long record of innovation, leadership, and investment in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change. Consideration of climate change impacts and opportunities to reduce energy use and GHG emissions are deeply embedded throughout the work plans and capital investments of County departments and lines of business. Since 2010, the investments in energy efficiency and changes in operations have reduced normalized building energy use by over 15 percent, generating over \$3 million in annual savings. King County Metro has pioneered the use of hybrid bus technology, and the County is on track to have an all hybrid or electric bus fleet by 2018. King County is now producing renewable energy equivalent to 57 percent of its government operational energy needs.

However, to make significant reductions in GHG emissions and ensure that our built and natural environment are resilient in the face of a changing climate, even bolder action and stronger collaboration with cities, businesses, and county residents is required.

The 2015 SCAP Update:

- Builds on work over the last two years with the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) and Growth Management Planning Council to establish a shared, countywide GHG emissions reduction goal and measurement framework;
- Maps specific pathways and actions needed to achieve the ambitious countywide climate goal of reducing GHG emissions by 80 percent by 2050;
- Quantifies the GHG emissions reduction benefits and cost effectiveness of key SCAP commitments, consistent with King County Auditor Office recommendations;
- Integrates the County's energy efficiency and renewable energy commitments creating a "one-stop" source for County actions related to energy and climate;
- Outlines how the County will partner with cities and businesses to lead the nation in demonstrating successful climate solutions, and
- Is informed by engagement with subject matter experts, community groups, and county residents.

The 2015 SCAP Update advances King County Strategic Plan goals for public safety, economic growth, and environmental sustainability by reducing GHG emissions and preparing for climate change impacts. Consistent with Equity and Social Justice goals, the SCAP Update highlights how the County's response to climate change can create opportunities to address inequities. For example investments that better integrate transit and land use, and expansion of commute options, will increase access to work, education, health care, and recreation.

King County's innovative funding approaches for climate change initiatives include establishing a framework for self-financing of energy efficiency projects through the 2015-2016 budget process, piloting a Carbon and Energy Investment Program as part of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks' commitment to go beyond carbon neutral, and partnering with utilities and businesses to fund projects. The Departments of Natural Resource and Parks, Transportation, and Executive Services use a cost-share model based on relative GHG emissions to support shared climate work, including technical analysis that supported the development of the 2015 SCAP.

I will continue to direct County agencies to integrate climate change and energy efficiency actions into their diverse lines of business. However, state and county-level action is required to address structural funding issues for transit, transportation, and county General Fund services. Since transportation accounts for over half of the region's GHG emissions, it is critical that we meet our goal, consistent with Puget Sound Regional Council's 2040 Vision, to double transit service by 2040. However, today we do not have the state funding authority to meet this important goal. The Road Services Division of the Department of Transportation, which has drastically reduced its capital program and limit maintenance primarily to essential critical safety repairs, currently does not have resources to evaluate and react to vulnerabilities of county roads to climate impacts like sea level rise. Other actions which link

The Honorable Larry Phillips

June 29, 2015

Page 3

transportation and land use planning and limiting sprawl are dependent on other Council policy decisions through the King County Comprehensive Plan update. I look forward to our continued partnership to address broader, long-term funding and policy issues that are essential to achieving long-term climate goals for King County.

The SCAP also recommends a limited number of dedicated, ongoing bodies of work related to climate change community engagement, climate preparedness, and community energy efficiency as well as renewable energy partnerships. Depending on the Council's recommendations on the 2015 SCAP Update, I will seek to support these bodies of work through reprioritization of existing work and resources in the 2015-2016 budgets. Upon adoption, the 2015 SCAP update will serve as guidance for the 2017-2018 budgets.

It is estimated that the 2015 SCAP cost approximately \$175,000 to develop and produce. This includes data collection, technical research such as cost effectiveness analysis, outreach and engagement costs in partnership with organizations such as the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) and the Environmental Coalition of South Seattle (ECOSS), and King County staff time. The 2015 SCAP Update also serves as King County's consolidated annual environmental report.

I look forward to working with the Council to implement the 2015 SCAP Update. Thank you for your support of this vital work. Together we will ensure that King County remains a safe and vibrant region and continues to lead the nation in confronting climate change.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Megan Smith, Environmental Policy Advisor, in my office at 206-263-9605.

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers
ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff
Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council
Carrie S. Cihak, Chief of Policy Development, King County Executive Office
Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget
Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Megan Smith, Environmental Policy Advisor, King County Executive Office