June 29, 2018

The Honorable Joe McDermott
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember McDermott:

This letter transmits a report that provides an update on implementation of the 2015 Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP), as required by Ordinance 17270 and K.C.C. chapter 18.50.

King County government has a long record of action to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change, but we must do much more. The 2015 SCAP is our blueprint for reducing GHG emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change. It sets the County’s goals, targets, measures, and priority actions.

I am committed to transparency and making King County the Best Run Government in the United States. This biennial report assesses our progress in meeting SCAP goals and delivering priority actions at two scales: County operations and community (across King County). While there is much that King County does not control—like federal fuel economy standards for vehicles—it is essential that we monitor our progress and collaborate at the community scale. Color coding in the report shows where actions are on track, in progress, or needing attention. We use this performance information to focus our programs, policies, and investments. Where the County has direct responsibility, the report shows we are mostly on track to meet our targets. The report also details that more action is needed to achieve the SCAP’s ambitious target to reduce community-wide GHG emissions by at least 80 percent by 2050.

I am proud of the work King County employees have done to make government operations more efficient and sustainable as we provide essential local and regional services. I am also honored to work in partnership with cities, energy utilities, businesses, and residents as we confront climate change. Here are just a few of the 2016–2017 successes highlighted in the report:

The Honorable Joe McDermott
• Our growth in transit ridership is among the fastest in the country, and we are leading the nation in electrifying our transit fleet.
• We exceeded our building energy efficiency goals for County-operated buildings and facilities and are meeting our goals for producing renewable energy.
• Through partnership with Puget Sound Energy (PSE), cities, and businesses, we secured clean, in-state wind power to meet our operational electricity needs in PSE service territory.
• King County and partners have planted 330,000 trees toward our community goal of planting 1 Million Trees by 2020.
• We formed new climate partnerships with immigrant, refugee, and frontline community organizations.
• We partnered with Tribes, cities, counties, and regional governments to launch the Puget Sound Climate Preparedness Collaborative, a new forum for regional preparedness.

These accomplishments are notable, but the 2017 SCAP Biennial Report also points to important areas where more work is needed to achieve the SCAP’s ambitious climate goals. As in the current biennium, my proposed 2019–2020 budget will include focused investments based on performance against our climate change goals. We are also beginning to develop the 2020 SCAP update, which I will recommend to the Council by June 2020. The 2020 update will involve deep community engagement and partnership and will build on successes and challenges in implementing our current SCAP.

The report also furthers the goals of key County plans and initiatives as follows:

• The report furthers the King County Strategic Plan goals focused on healthy environment; mobility; and efficient, accountable regional and local government.
• The report and related SCAP implementation efforts further the King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative goals by implementing climate solutions through shared decision-making and ways that are shaped by ESJ objectives for process equity, distributional equity, and cross-generational equity.

It is estimated that the report required approximately 375 staff hours to produce, costing approximately $50,000. Minimal printing costs are associated with the report. Expenses associated with King County’s climate change program are detailed in 2017–2018 Budget Policy Paper: Strategic Climate Action Plan and adopted in the 2017–2018 County budget.
If you have any questions about this report, please contact Megan Smith, Director of Climate and Energy Initiatives in the King County Executive Office, at 206-263-9605, or Christie True, Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-477-4550.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers  
     ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff  
        Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council  
        Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget  
        Carrie Cihak, Chief of Policy, King County Executive Office (KCEO)  
        Megan Smith, Director of Climate and Energy Initiatives, KCEO  
        Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks  
        Harold Taniguchi, Director, Department of Transportation  
        Caroline Whalen, County Administrative Officer, Department of Executive Services  
        Patty Hayes, Director, Seattle-King County Department of Public Health  
        Jim Chan, Interim Director, Department of Permitting and Environmental Review