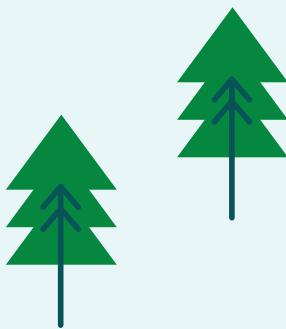


# INTRODUCTION TO THE SCAP

# INTRODUCTION

From the shores of Puget Sound to the crest of the Cascades, King County's communities are as unique and varied as its landscapes. As the most populous county in Washington State and 12th nationwide, it serves as home to an increasingly diverse population. The backgrounds, needs, and dreams of long-time locals, new residents, intergenerational families, young professionals, and everyone in between are not one-size-fits-all. Nor is King County's approach to climate action. The approach serves rural lands and urban areas; unincorporated neighborhoods and bustling cities; commuters who drive or take regional trains long distances to work or school and others who can get to their destinations by walking or biking. Some people can afford electric vehicles and heat pumps with air conditioning; others want to reduce their carbon emissions and stay safer with more frequent and intense heatwaves, but don't have the time or resources to invest in these climate mitigation and adaptation measures.



Today's reality is rooted in the way resources drove the region's history. Tribes and bands of Coast Salish people have called these lands home since time immemorial, and the waterways and forests they nurtured also drove settlers to establish the area as a logging outpost in 1852. Now, nearly 2.3 million people call King County home, spread across 39 cities and towns, from the farmlands of Algona to the lakeside neighborhoods of Yarrow Point.

As King County has grown into a global hub for technology and business, its communities and natural environment have come under increasing strain. King County's rivers, coastlines, and mountain ranges- and the communities that surround them- face heightened risks in the era of climate change: more frequent and severe flooding; wildfire smoke and extreme heat; shrinking salmon runs and struggling orca populations; and diminishing snowpack in the Cascades. Since the mid-2000s, the County has advanced bold policies to cut greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen community resilience, and protect the natural systems that sustain life here. The 2025 Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) builds on this legacy, charting a course for accelerated, community-driven climate action in the years ahead.



## KING COUNTY'S ROLE IN CLIMATE ACTION

King County's role is to take stock of those challenges and innovate, support, and lead in a way that both connects all people living here and honors their differences. From convening regional partnerships and taking direct action to reduce emissions, to partnering with frontline communities and preparing geographically diverse areas for climate impacts, King County can set an example for other regions and cause a ripple effect of impact.

The County's role also includes implementing climate action throughout its programs and services, which are shared with a wide breadth of rural and urban lands and neighborhoods where it serves as the local government. These include Bear Creek/Sammamish, Four Creeks/Tiger Mountain, Great Maple Valley/Cedar River, Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County, SE King County, Vashon/Maury Island, West King County, East Federal Way, East Renton, Fairwood, Klahanie, North Highline, and West Hills.

Beyond its geographic boundaries, King County plays a critical role as a convener, collaborator, and partner in the greater Puget Sound region with Washington State agencies and other county and city governments, such as the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA), Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), King County–Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C), Coalition for Climate Careers (C3), and the Puget Sound Climate Preparedness Collaborative (PSCPC), on efforts ranging from joint state legislative advocacy to coordinated grant proposals and implementation.

King County also relies on state and federal partnerships to improve people's lives and well-being, while remaining a leader and responsible steward through changes in political and funding landscapes. Supporting sustainability, equity, and resilience remains key to County values, and the County and its partners will continue pushing toward progress to combat climate change.

# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE

## King County Residents, Visitors, and Partners,

Bold action to confront climate change is nothing new for King County, but this plan marks a fresh chapter in our work to ensure King County continues to lead.

For more than twenty years, we have listened to experts, made science-based decisions, embraced innovation, advanced clean energy solutions, and forged strong partnerships in pursuit of climate preparedness, resilience, and equity. From adopting cutting-edge technology that reduces greenhouse gas emissions to launching a climate justice framework for strategic planning, we've broken new ground and surpassed our goals. Even as we celebrate that progress, we know that the toughest work is still ahead, and new obstacles continue to surface.

In challenging times and in inspired moments, King County leads with its values. Our compass is fixed on our True North: making King County a welcoming community where every person can thrive. Advancing a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient King County bolsters this vision.

The 2025 Strategic Climate Action Plan defines near-term actions, long-range goals, and performance measures to advance King County's climate action leadership. This five-year strategy advances the three main sections of the 2020 SCAP and introduces a new flagship section. The flagships show how our climate actions are integrated with our commitments to prioritize and empower those most impacted by climate change; ensure every home and workplace can withstand climate risk; create pathways for economic stability and growth; support farms, farmers, and access to nutritious food; reduce consumption;

maintain roads, utilities, and services that work now and in the future; and work together for climate action and innovation. This framework is focused on making the whole of our climate action greater than the sum of its parts.

The 2025 SCAP is the fourth climate plan during my tenure as King County Executive. Each SCAP has been developed during a challenging time, but King County has always found a way to keep moving forward. I want to thank everyone who has contributed to this plan and the 2012, 2015, and 2020 climate plans. Countless people have joined together to make King County a climate action trailblazer.

Our charge to ensure the planet and people can thrive for generations is greater than one person; it is about collective action. Everyone has a role in reducing our collective carbon footprint, whether it's choosing transit, buying from local farms, checking on neighbors during a heat wave, or empowering the next generation to lead on climate action. To see and help our commitments and innovations mature over the last 16 years has been a true honor.

We have provided the roadmap for King County to continue advancing climate action over the next five years and beyond. The next page in this plan is intentionally left blank to give King County's next Executive the space to articulate their commitment to climate action as the next chief steward of this essential work.

With Gratitude,



Dow Constantine,

King County Executive (2009-2025)

# LETTER FROM THE FUTURE EXECUTIVE

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