



Joint Letter of Commitment: Climate Change Actions in King County

Climate change is a paramount challenge of this generation and has far-reaching and fundamental consequences for our economy, environment, public health, and safety.

Across King County and its cities, we are already experiencing the impacts of climate change: warming temperatures, acidifying marine waters, rising seas, decreasing mountain snowpack, and less water in streams during the summer. These changes have the potential for significant impacts to public and private property, resource based economies like agriculture and forestry, and to residents' health and quality of life.

The decisions we make locally and regionally, such as where our communities will grow and how they will be served by transportation, will set the stage for success or failure in reducing carbon pollution, making sound long-term investments, and ensuring our communities are livable and resilient to climate change impacts.

Current science indicates that to avoid the worst impacts of global warming we need to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions sharply. The King County Growth Management Planning Council – a formal body of elected officials from across King County - voted unanimously on July 23, 2014 to adopt a shared target to reduce countywide sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, compared to a 2007 baseline, by 25% by 2020, 50% by 2030, and 80% by 2050. Based on our shared assessment of emissions in King County, and review of potential strategies to reduce emissions, we believe that these targets are ambitious but achievable.

Building on the work of the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) - a partnership between the County and cities to coordinate and enhance local government climate and sustainability efforts – more than a dozen cities and the County came together in the first half of 2014 to chart opportunities for joint actions to reduce GHG emissions and accelerate progress towards a clean and sustainable future.

The attached *Principles for Collaboration* and *Joint County-City Climate Commitments* are focused on practical, near-term, collaborative opportunities between cities and King County. These shared commitments build on the significant work that many of our cities and County are already taking. By signing this letter, we pledge our support for the shared vision that these principles and actions represent. Our cities commit to actively pursue those strategies and catalytic actions where our jurisdictions can make the most impact given our size, location, and development patterns.

Through focused, coordinated action, we will maximize the impact of our individual and shared efforts.

Elected Officials of King County and King County Cities

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Dow Constantine
King County Executive



PRINCIPLES FOR COLLABORATION

1. Climate change is the paramount challenge of our generation, and has fundamental and far-reaching consequences for our economy, environment, and public health and safety.
2. Strong action to reduce GHG emissions is needed, and the time is now.
3. Local governments can reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through many decisions related to transportation and land use, energy and green building, forests and farms, and consumption and materials management.
4. Many cities in King County have set individual climate goals and are taking steps to reduce local GHG emissions, and we need to build on this leadership.
5. Local solutions need to be implemented in ways that build a cleaner, stronger and more resilient regional economy.
6. Progress will require deeper engagement with communities of color and low income, immigrant, and youth populations. These communities can be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change—from increasing flood risks to rising costs of fossil fuels – and historically less likely to be included in community-scale solutions or as leaders. We are committed to work in ways that are fair, equitable, empowering, and inclusive and that also ensure that low income residents do not bear unfair costs of solutions.
7. Federal and state policies and laws can help us achieve our goals, but countywide and local policy, programs and partnerships are needed to fill the existing gap to achieve local GHG targets.
8. Progress will require deep partnerships between the County, cities, utilities, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other public sector agencies.
9. King County and nine cities have formed the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C), and we will work to build on this initial pledge, both in increased action and increased participation from additional cities.
10. We can accomplish more with a shared vision and coordinated action; collaboration will increase the efficiency of our efforts and magnify the impact of our strategies beyond what each of us could achieve on our own.
11. Our cities support the shared vision that the Joint County-City Climate Commitments represent, but it is not the intention that each city will pursue every catalytic action. Cities and King County will actively pursue strategies where they have the most impact and influence.
12. We will reconvene at least annually to share progress. We also dedicate a staff point person from our cities and from the County to help coordinate implementation of the following Joint County-City Climate Commitments, and to serve as a point person to the K4C.

JOINT COUNTY-CITY CLIMATE COMMITMENTS

I. Shared Goals

Pathway: Adopt science-based countywide GHG reduction targets that help ensure the region is doing its part to confront climate change.

Catalytic Policy Commitment: Collaborate through the Growth Management Planning Council, Sound Cities Association, and other partners to adopt countywide GHG emissions reduction targets, including mid-term milestones needed to support long-term reduction goals.

Catalytic Project or Program: Build on King County’s commitment to measure and report on countywide GHG emissions by sharing this data between cities and partners, establishing a public facing dashboard for tracking progress, and using the information to inform regional climate action.

II. Climate Policy

Pathway: Support strong federal, regional, state, countywide and local climate policy.

Catalytic Policy Commitment: Advocate for comprehensive federal, regional and state science-based limits and a market-based price on carbon pollution and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. A portion of revenue from these policies should support local GHG reduction efforts that align with these Joint County-City Climate Commitments, such as funding for transit service, energy efficiency projects, and forest protection and restoration initiatives.

III. Transportation and Land Use

Pathway: For passenger vehicles and light trucks, reduce vehicle miles traveled by 20% below 2012 levels by 2030 and GHG emissions intensity of fuels by 15% below 2012 levels by 2030.

Catalytic Policy Commitment: Partner to secure state authority for funding to sustain and grow transit service in King County.

Catalytic Policy Commitment: Reduce climate pollution, build our renewable energy economy, and lessen our dependence on imported fossil fuels, by supporting the adoption of a statewide low carbon fuel standard that gradually lowers pollution from transportation fuels.

Catalytic Policy Commitment: Focus new development in vibrant centers that locate jobs, affordable housing, and services close to transit, bike and pedestrian options so more people have faster, convenient and low GHG emissions ways to travel.

Catalytic Project or Program: As practical, for King County and cities developing transit oriented communities around high capacity light rail and transit projects, adopt the Puget Sound Regional Council’s Growing Transit Communities Compact. For smaller cities, participate in programs promoting proven alternative technology solutions such as vehicle electrification, as well as joint carpool and vanpool promotional campaigns.

IV. Energy Supply

Pathway: Increase countywide renewable electricity use 20% beyond 2012 levels by 2030; phase out coal-fired electricity sources by 2025; limit construction of new natural gas based electricity power plants; support development of increasing amounts of renewable energy sources.

Catalytic Policy Commitment: Build on existing state renewable energy commitments including the Washington State Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to partner with local utilities, state regulators and other stakeholders on a countywide commitment to renewable energy resources, including meeting energy demand through energy efficiency improvements and phasing out fossil fuels.

Catalytic Project or Program: In partnership with utilities, develop a package of county and city commitments that support increasingly renewable energy sources, in areas such as community solar, green power community challenges, streamlined local renewable energy installation permitting, district energy, and renewable energy incentives.

V. Green Building and Energy Efficiency

Pathway: Reduce energy use in all existing buildings 25% below 2012 levels by 2030; achieve net-zero GHG emissions in new buildings by 2030.

Catalytic Policy Commitment: Join the *Regional Code Collaboration* and work to adopt code pathways that build on the Washington State Energy Code, leading the way to “net-zero carbon” buildings through innovation in local codes, ordinances, and related partnerships.

Catalytic Project or Program: Develop a multi-city partnership to help build a regional energy efficiency retrofit economy, including tactics such as: collaborating with energy efficiency and green building businesses, partnering with utilities, expanding on existing retrofit programs, adopting local building energy benchmarking and disclosure ordinances, and encouraging voluntary reporting and collaborative initiatives such as the 2030 District framework.

VI. Consumption and Materials Management:

Pathway: By 2020, achieve a 70% recycling rate countywide; by 2030, achieve zero waste of resources that have economic value for reuse, resale and recycling.

Catalytic Policy Commitment: Partner through the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee on policy, projects and programs focused on (1) waste prevention and reuse, (2) product stewardship, recycling, and composting, and (3) beneficial use.

Catalytic Project or Program: Develop a regional strategy through the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan process to reach 70% recycling through a combination of education, incentives and regulatory tools aimed at single-family, multi-family residents, businesses, and construction projects in King County.

VII. Forests and Farming

Pathway: Reduce sprawl and associated transportation related GHG emissions and sequester biological carbon by focusing growth in urban centers and protecting and restoring forests and farms.

Catalytic Policy Commitment: Partner on Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) initiatives to focus development within the Urban Growth Area, reduce development pressure on rural lands, and protect our most valuable and important resource lands.

Catalytic Project or Program: Protect and restore the health of urban and community trees and forests, for example through public-private-community efforts such as Forterra's Green Cities Partnerships.

Catalytic Project or Program: Partner on collaborative efforts to expand forest and farm stewardship and protection, for example through King Conservation District's farm management planning, landowner incentive, and grant programs.

Catalytic Project or Program: Expand our local food economy, for example by supporting urban and community farming, buying locally produced food, and participating in the Farm City Roundtable forum.

VIII. Government Operations

Pathway: Reduce GHG emissions from government operations in support of countywide goals.

Policy Commitment: Develop and adopt near and long-term government operational GHG reduction targets that support countywide goals, and implement actions that reduce each local government's GHG footprint.

Catalytic Project or Program: In support of the *Section V. Green Building and Energy Efficiency* pathway targets to reduce energy use in existing buildings 25% below 2012 levels by 2030 and achieve net-zero GHG emissions in new buildings by 2030: execute energy efficiency projects and initiatives at existing facilities, measure existing building performance through EPA's Energy Star or equivalent program, implement high-efficiency street and traffic light replacement projects, and construct new buildings to LEED or Living Building Challenge standards and infrastructure to equivalent sustainability standards.

IX. Collaboration

Policy Commitment: Participate in or join the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) – focused on efforts to coordinate and enhance city and County climate and sustainability efforts – to share case studies, subject matter experts, resources, tools, and to collaborate on grant and funding opportunities.

Catalytic Project or Program: Engage and lead government-business collaborative action through efforts such as the Eastside Sustainable Business Alliance.