



## Fact Sheet Snohomish County

### Climate Change Vulnerability & Risk Assessment

Snohomish County is seeking your input on its [2024 Comprehensive Plan Update](#) including its Climate Change Vulnerability & Risk Assessment. This Fact Sheet describes the effects of climate change in Snohomish County, and offers ways you can learn more and share ideas to make the county more resilient (See page 2).

#### What is climate change?

Climate is the average weather for a region expected at different times of the year. Climate is usually reported over a span of 30 years. **Climate change means a difference in the average conditions in a region** such as temperature and rainfall.<sup>1</sup>

#### What is a climate change vulnerability and risk assessment?

A study that identifies:

- A community’s assets – its people, resources, ecosystems, infrastructure, and services.
- Potential impacts to community assets due to climate changes or related natural hazards.
- Vulnerability to impacts considering exposure to climate stressors, sensitivity to hazards, and adaptive capacity to adjust to a hazard, take advantage of new opportunities, or cope with change.<sup>2</sup>

### How climate change affects Snohomish County:

Snohomish County will continue to experience extreme heat, greater wildfire danger, and more intense rainfall and flooding through 2050 and beyond.

Climate Change	Effects in Snohomish County
 <p><small>Created by Adrian Coquet from the Noun Project</small></p> <p><b>Extreme Heat</b></p>	<p>An increase in average summer temperatures is expected. This could affect people, landscaping, agriculture, and natural areas like wetlands, wildlife habitats, and other ecosystems.</p>
 <p><small>Created by Laynk from the Noun Project</small></p> <p><b>Wildfire &amp; Smoke</b></p>	<p>There would be more fire-danger days that could affect homes and businesses where forests and wildland vegetation meet or intermingle.</p> <p>More wildfire smoke can result in particulates affecting those with health conditions (e.g. heart and lung disease, pregnancy, etc.).</p>
 <p><b>Extreme Precipitation</b></p>	<p>More frequent and intense storms are expected. This could affect flooding, erosion, and runoff and impact stormwater systems, transportation, and emergency responses.</p>
 <p><small>Created by Adrian Coquet from the Noun Project</small></p> <p><b>Flooding &amp; Sea Level Rise</b></p>	<p>The county would experience increases in peak stream flows, more areas flooded with an increase in frequency and extent of coastal flooding. This could impact more homes, businesses, farms, and infrastructure.</p>
	<p>In winter, there would be less stored water in snow, and less water available for streams, soil, and reservoirs.</p>

<sup>1</sup> See NASA Climate Kids: <https://climatekids.nasa.gov/climate-change-meaning/#>. Also see definitions in UW Climate impacts Group, 2023: Climate Mapping for a Resilient Washington, <https://cig-wa-climate.nkn.uidaho.edu/>.

<sup>2</sup> See US Climate Resilience Toolkit Glossary: <https://toolkit.climate.gov/content/glossary>.

<b>Reduced Snowpack</b>	This could affect aquatic species, trees, vegetation, and water supply.
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See: <https://cig-wa-climate.nkn.uidaho.edu/>.

**Examples of places and people more likely to be affected by climate stressors include:**

People that are older or very young, or those with pre-existing health conditions like heart and lung disease. These community members are more susceptible to heat, smoke, and other climate stressors.



Homes or businesses in floodplains. Residents or employees may have to evacuate. Businesses may have difficulty continuing to operate. Residents, especially those that are lower income,

may have more difficulty recovering post-hazard.

Areas with more impervious surfaces like parking lots and streets. Places that lack trees or shade are where people are more likely to be at risk of health impacts due to increased heat.



Snohomish County and its consultants are developing an interactive map, assessment, and strategies to increase community resilience to climate change. Early information and ideas will be shared at discussion sessions (see box).

**How is Snohomish County preparing for climate change?**

- The Comprehensive Plan includes climate change goals and is under review and required to be updated by 2024.
- Snohomish County and Planning Partners maintain a Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). It

was last updated in 2020 and is under review now.

- Snohomish County’s Office of Energy and Sustainability (OES) is in the process to updating the existing Sustainable Operations Action Plan (SOAP).
- Snohomish County formed a Climate Action Advisory Committee in 2019.
- Snohomish County Maintains a Public Safety hub advertising information on sheltering, evacuations, real-time response, and other information in multiple languages.

**How can you participate in climate change planning efforts?**

Snohomish County is seeking your input on its Climate Change Vulnerability & Risk Assessment. You can:

- Attend discussion sessions on the Change Vulnerability & Risk Assessment on March 13 and March 29, 2023 (see box.)
- Submit comments online anytime or attend Comprehensive Plan events in fall 2023. See the County’s 2024 Update webpage: [www.snohomishcountywa.gov/5597](http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/5597).

**Climate Vulnerability & Risk Assessment Discussion Sessions**

**March 13, 6-7 PM**  
Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81909327238>

**March 29, 6-7 PM**  
Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81763240539>

**For questions, please contact:** Eileen Canola, Senior Planner, Snohomish County Planning & Development Services | 425-262-2253 | [eileen.canola@snoco.org](mailto:eileen.canola@snoco.org)

Or go to: [www.snohomishcountywa.gov/5597](http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/5597)