

# Natural Environment

Snohomish County's natural features combine to create a unique environmental setting in the Puget Sound Basin. The Cascade Mountains, parts of five major river watersheds, lowland forests, estuaries, marine shorelines, numerous lakes, wetlands, and streams all combine to create the special character that is Snohomish County. These features also contribute to the county's economy and quality of life to its citizens.

The Vision Statement for the 2024-2044 Comprehensive Plan ("the Plan"), reflects the importance of the natural environment and the need for its protection. One of the Vision Statement's guiding principles reads:

**Natural Environment:** *The County values its beautiful landscapes and fiercely protects the natural environment for its ecosystem services, recreational opportunities, and habitat. There are many connected greenways, open spaces, and wildlife corridors throughout the county providing habitat, flood mitigation, and tree canopy. Regional and neighborhood parks, trails, and open space offer recreational opportunities that are accessible and affordable to all.*

In addition to the obvious aesthetic and habitat functions and values provided by the natural environment, the natural environment performs several ecosystem services benefitting Snohomish County communities and mitigating the impacts of climate change, including but not limited to stormwater management, carbon sequestration, flood attenuation, slope stabilization, microclimate and temperature moderation, and improvements to air and water quality. When the natural environment is not intact, many of these ecosystem services must typically be replaced by constructed structures and facilities at significant cost. There has also been substantial research supporting the role the natural environment plays in human physical and mental health. Equitable access to a healthy natural environment should be available to all county residents.

Protection of the natural environment is fundamental to achieving and preserving the quality of life for Snohomish County residents. People and businesses choose to locate in Snohomish County due in large part to the quality of the natural environment. The ((natural environment element)) Natural Environment Element of the ((comprehensive plan)) Plan provides the framework to realize the vision of thriving communities while protecting and preserving natural resources and the environment. It also provides for protection from various forms of pollution and natural hazards such as flooding, landslides, and other natural disasters. To be effective, in our efforts to protect and enhance the natural environment, the various policies, plans, and programs must be coordinated and focused through a consistent policy framework that has a multi-faceted approach. Our guiding principle is that the cumulative effect of all of the county's programs and efforts should result in no net loss of ecological functions and values consistent with the requirements of state law.

This multi-faceted approach includes planning; intergovernmental coordination; development of regulation; enforcement; and improved protection of ecological functions and values through

non-regulatory incentive-based means, such as voluntary enhancement and restoration, public education and other voluntary activity; and monitoring and adaptive management. The ~~((plan))~~ Natural Environment Element provides policies in each of these areas to direct the county's efforts to protect the natural environment of Snohomish County and to achieve the outcome of no net loss of functions and values to the extent mandated by state law.

The need for a rigorous protection program is balanced by providing a fair and equitable distribution of the impacts of regulation, flexibility and clarity in approach, and fast service delivery. The public must be educated to understand the county's regulatory approach and the reasons for the regulation. Vital to the success of the county's program is careful consideration of how the ~~((burdens))~~ goals of environmental protection may impact property owners and business. Severe financial impacts, unclear government purposes, or circumstances where a less intrusive means for accomplishing the identified purpose are factors that must be avoided in developing policy and regulation that may adversely affect property rights. In developing policy and regulation affecting property rights, as well as issuing permits, county decision makers must evaluate constitutional principles relating to the taking of property and the application of substantive due process. Tools available to aid this evaluation process include the Washington State Attorney General's Advisory Memorandum on Avoiding Unconstitutional Takings of Private Property.

**GOAL NE 1** Continue existing and develop new county plans and programs which establish priorities to protect and enhance the natural environment through a coordinated policy framework to maintain and improve the quality of life for Snohomish County. The policy framework below provides a non-exclusive list of the core priorities and strategies that must be addressed in all plans and programs that affect the natural environment.

**Objective NE 1.A** Balance the protection of the natural environment with economic growth, housing needs and the protection of property rights.

#### NE Policies

- 1.A.1 Regulatory programs developed for the protection of the natural environment shall provide certainty, clarity, flexibility, efficiency, public outreach and education so that ~~((citizens))~~ people understand the requirements, permits are processed quickly, and alternative approaches that provide equal or greater protection to the environment may be considered.
- 1.A.2 The county shall seek to maintain a sufficient inventory of developable land to meet economic, housing and agricultural needs.
- 1.A.3 The county shall provide flexibility in policies and programs so as to protect property rights and minimize impacts to development of property.
- 1.A.4 The county's plans and programs shall not contain provisions that violate federally-protected treaty rights.

- 1.A.5 The county shall encourage and accommodate economic growth through plans and programs in a manner that minimizes impacts to the natural environment.
- 1.A.6 The county shall incorporate provisions and incentives for flexibility in environmental plans and programs to promote growth and viability of natural resource industries.
- 1.A.7 The county shall establish criteria for prioritizing natural resource industry uses and natural environment protection enhancement and/or restoration based on the land's potential for resource productivity, ecological function and investment-to-return ratio.
- 1.A.8 Recognizing the ecosystem services of trees, including air quality, habitat value, and temperature and flood attenuation, the county shall require tree retention on county-owned property and within newly proposed developments to the greatest extent feasible considering public safety, interference with utilities, barriers to housing, urban development density standards, reasonable use, and other factors as relevant.
- 1.A.9 The county shall plan for equitable access to clean air and water, a healthy environment, and open spaces, and prioritize reduction of impacts to vulnerable populations that have been disproportionately affected.

Objective NE 1.B Accommodate population growth in a manner that maintains and protects elements of the natural environment.

#### NE Policies

- 1.B.1 The county shall consider comprehensive land use plan designations and development regulations that take into account:
- Subsection (a) environmental sensitivity and ecological functions and values;
  - Subsection (b) limitations of ground and surface water quantities; and
  - Subsection (c) potential impacts on surface and ground water quality.
- 1.B.2 The county shall consider air pollution and nuisance odors associated with land uses and development in plans and programs to assure compatibility with the surrounding environment, provided that odors occurring as a result of accepted agricultural or forest practices on natural resource lands shall be presumed reasonable and not a nuisance.
- 1.B.3 The county shall consider noise associated with land uses and development in plans and programs to assure compatibility with the surrounding environment, provided that noise occurring as a result of accepted agricultural or forest practices on natural resource lands shall be presumed compatible with the surrounding environment.

1.B.4 The county shall plan for growth in a manner that encourages reduction of sprawl, meets GMA housing goals and places employment and residential uses in close proximity to reduce impacts to air quality.

Objective NE 1.C Protect and enhance natural watershed processes, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, shorelines, and water resources with the long-term objective of protecting ecological function and values.

#### NE Policies

1.C.1 The county shall continue to protect water resources and natural watershed processes by maintaining the quality, rates and supplies of water, sediment, and woody debris through the use of a variety of strategies, such as:

Subsection (a) maintaining the natural hydrologic cycle and minimizing alterations of natural drainage patterns;

Subsection (b) encouraging alternative impervious surface techniques;

Subsection (c) providing for the retention of natural vegetation;

Subsection (d) developing and implementing watershed management plans that protect water quality and address non-point pollution and the cumulative effects of land management on ecological systems;  
~~((and))~~

Subsection (e) utilizing low impact development (LID) techniques and site planning~~((.)); and~~

Subsection (f) promoting innovative and environmentally sensitive development practices in siting, design, materials selection, construction, and maintenance.

1.C.2 The county shall continue to protect and enhance wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas through the use of a variety of strategies, such as:

Subsection (a) including best available science in plans and programs;

Subsection (b) supporting the development and implementation of watershed management plans and identifying areas where voluntary restoration and enhancement should be used to improve water quality, water quantity, fish habitat and overall hydrologic function;

Subsection (c) coordinating the use of agricultural resource lands with the protection, restoration and/or enhancement of ecological functions and values;

Subsection (d) developing incentive-based, voluntary restoration and enhancement programs to offset impacts to overall ecological functions

and values resulting from development projects or the use of agricultural resource lands and encouraging creative on-site, and reach scale restoration/enhancement proposals that optimize natural and/or agricultural resource values and ecological function; ~~((and))~~

Subsection (e) including strategies for monitoring and adaptive management in plans and programs~~((-))~~;

Subsection (f) acquiring land for habitat restoration or for open space, recreation, and conservation; and

Subsection (g) conserving habitat and open space through incentive programs like transfer of development rights.

1.C.3 The county shall protect and enhance the ecological functions of shorelines through the Snohomish County Shoreline Management Program.

~~((Objective NE 1.D — The county shall protect the health, safety, welfare and the economy of the community by minimizing the risks associated with natural hazards.~~

#### NE Policies

~~1.D.1 — The county should consider natural hazards in all land use planning.~~

~~1.D.2 — The county should develop comprehensive floodplain management plans. Where cities and the county share common floodplains, joint flood hazard planning and interlocal agreements should be used to ensure consistent floodplain management.~~

~~1.D.3 — The county should develop and update drainage basin plans that document urban flooding problems and potential solutions.~~

~~1.D.4 — The county should adopt and implement a Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan to reduce the vulnerability to natural hazards.~~

~~1.D.5 — The county shall develop programs that provide for notification of the presence of geologic hazards.))~~

GOAL NE 2 Provide for the protection and encourage restoration of ecological functions and values across the landscape by coordinating planning efforts among jurisdictions, tribes and ~~((citizens))~~ the public.

Objective NE 2.A Coordinate and support watershed planning and the adoption of programs to protect, restore and enhance ecological functions with other jurisdictions, agencies, tribes and non-governmental organizations.

#### NE Policies

- 2.A.1 The county should coordinate with and participate in the watershed-based planning processes within the region to provide an ongoing opportunity for tribes, municipalities, regional, state, federal agencies, and nongovernmental organizations to develop compatible environmental protection and restoration approaches.
- 2.A.2 The county should coordinate scientific data collection and monitoring activities with other affected governments, agencies, and tribes, and collaboratively exchange data with such entities. Monitoring data from approved land use applications should also be considered.
- 2.A.3 The county should work with other jurisdictions, agencies, and tribes to protect and enhance water quality at commercial and recreational shellfish beds.
- 2.A.4 The county should coordinate with the ~~((state department of fish and wildlife))~~ Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and other agencies and tribes to protect, manage, and monitor water quality and quantity as needed to support in-stream flows and habitat for fish and wildlife.
- 2.A.5 The county should work with other jurisdictions and state or federal agencies to ensure adequate flood protection from forestry and development activities outside of county control.
- 2.A.6 The county should participate in regional salmon recovery planning efforts and aggressively pursue funding that can provide multiple environmental benefits.
- 2.A.7 The county should coordinate environmental protection programs and acquisition priorities with the conservation needs identified in the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan to improve equitable access to open space.
- 2.A.8 The county should coordinate with other jurisdictions, tribes, agencies, and local communities to identify, protect, restore, and enhance habitat corridors and primary association areas necessary to support critical species.
- GOAL NE 3 Comply with the requirements of state, federal and local laws for protecting and managing critical areas, shorelines, and water.
- Objective NE 3.A Develop regulatory policies that apply to elements of the natural environment.

#### NE Policies

- 3.A.1 The county shall designate and protect critical areas including fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, frequently flooded areas and geologically hazardous areas and include best available science in the development of programs, policies and regulations relating to critical areas.

- 3.A.2 The county shall establish development regulations that offer flexibility in site design to accommodate innovative solutions for critical area protection where site constraints or critical area characteristics warrant use of a creative approach. Flexibilities may be considered on a site-by-site basis. Examples of innovative options include but are not limited to buffer width averaging, on- or off-site enhancement or restoration projects, use of best management practices, or a combination of creative solutions.
- 3.A.3 The county shall evaluate immediate and cumulative effects on the natural environment, critical areas, shorelines and buildable land inventory when formulating development regulations, including but not limited to, stormwater management, clearing, and grading.
- 3.A.4 The county shall evaluate the level of risk of damage or injury to people, property and the environment when formulating development regulations.
- 3.A.5 The county shall design development regulations to avoid or minimize impacts to the ecological functions and values of critical areas.
- 3.A.6 The county should generally require that mitigation for impacts to the natural environment be located in the following sequential order of preference: on-site, in the same sub-basin, in the same watershed, or in another appropriate ecosystem.
- 3.A.7 The county shall consider a variety of strategies for the permanent protection of critical areas.
- 3.A.8 The county shall consider the recommendations contained in watershed management plans and salmon recovery plans in drafting development regulations.
- Objective NE 3.B Designate and protect fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas and wetlands pursuant to the Growth Management Act.

#### NE Policies

- 3.B.1 Vegetated areas in and adjacent to wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas shall be established to protect their ecological functions and values and include special consideration for the protection of water-dependent and riparian-dependent fish and wildlife.
- 3.B.2 The county should maintain a fish and wildlife corridor map for critical habitat.
- 3.B.3 The county shall adopt special provisions for the protection of unique wetlands such as bogs, fens, estuarine wetlands, coastal lagoon wetlands, wetlands with old growth forests, and wetlands with unique or rare wildlife or plant communities.

- 3.B.4 The county shall adopt vegetation retention standards to protect fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas and ~~((limit))~~ avoid the use of invasive and non-native plant species that may adversely impact such habitat.
- 3.B.5 The county shall protect state and federal officially designated threatened and endangered species and their habitat conservation areas, as prescribed by state and federal law.
- 3.B.6 The county should develop a legislative approval process for the purpose of nominating and protecting species and habitats of local importance.
- 3.B.7 The county shall protect critical saltwater habitats such as eelgrass and kelp beds, shellfish areas, forage fish spawning areas and coastal lagoons.
- 3.B.8 The county shall include special consideration to conserve, protect and enhance anadromous fish and their habitat in policies and regulations.
- 3.B.9 The county ~~((should adopt))~~ shall maintain a water typing system and wetland classification system consistent with state guidelines.
- 3.B.10 The county shall require that alterations to wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas be avoided or minimized to protect ecological functions and values consistent with the GMA's requirement of ensuring no net loss of the functions and values of critical areas.

Objective NE 3.C Designate and protect critical aquifer recharge areas pursuant to the Growth Management Act.

#### NE Policies

- 3.C.1 The county shall establish a groundwater management program to protect groundwater quality, assure groundwater quantity, and provide efficient management of water resources for meeting future needs while protecting existing water rights.
- 3.C.2 The county shall establish development regulations that include a variety of strategies for protecting groundwater, including but not limited to:
- Subsection (a) requiring new development to connect to existing public water systems where available in coordination with water provider service delivery policies; and
- Subsection (b) limiting overall reliance on new groundwater wells in rural and resource areas where connection to existing public water systems is available, particularly within sole source aquifers, public water providers' wellhead protection zones, and areas providing recharge to streamflow consistent with state instream flow rules.



3.C.3            The county shall adopt and maintain standards addressing groundwater protection based on the best available information for aquifer location, sensitivity to and potential for contamination, and designation as a critical aquifer recharge area.

Objective NE 3.D      Designate and protect frequently flooded areas pursuant to the Growth Management Act.

#### NE Policies

3.D.1            To protect public health, safety and welfare, the county shall preserve natural floodplain and watershed processes to:

Subsection (a) Maintain natural flood storage capacity;

Subsection (b) Preserve natural drainage and conveyance systems;

Subsection (c) Avoid increases in flood elevations; and

Subsection (d) Prevent downstream flooding.

3.D.2            The county shall allow only those developments and land uses in floodplains that are compatible with floodplain processes.

3.D.3            The county should meet the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program.

3.D.4            The county should participate in the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System (CRS).

3.D.5            The county ~~((should))~~ shall incorporate ~~((new))~~ best available science and analysis of flood hazards into its regulations and mapping as they become available, including accounting for increases in future flood flows, sea level rise and tsunami risk.

3.D.6            Within ~~((Flood))~~ flood regulations, the county should allow for volume of on-site or in-floodplain excavation to offset volume or fill. Where ESA-listed fish may be present during flood events, excavation designed to provide compensatory storage of flood water must not result in fish entrapment.

~~((3.D.7            The county should promote programs that assist private landowners with projects that reduce damage from stream and river bank erosion and flooding.))~~

3.D.7            The county shall rely on hazard reduction recommendations from integrated floodplain management and hazard mitigation plans, prioritizing recommendations that improve human safety and also benefit salmon.

3.D.8            The county shall support and promote county projects designed to restore natural floodplain processes, increase floodplain storage, and improve habitat conditions

for anadromous fish in key habitat areas needed for spawning, rearing, flood refuge, and/or osmoregulation as prioritized in salmon recovery plans.

3.D.9 The county shall require that placement of flood control structures and other development activities in the 100-year floodplain are based on recommendations from best available science and follow the mitigation sequence of avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts on floodplain salmon habitat.

3.D.10 The county shall require that proposed development activities in the 100-year floodplain assess potential impacts on Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed anadromous fish to preserve fish access to and from rearing, spawning and refuge areas.

3.D.11 The county shall provide access to educational materials and maps showing potential future expansion of the 100-year floodplain caused by climate change and channel migration, and recommendations for site design and construction to help reduce future risk from floods and preserve floodplain processes.

Objective NE 3.E Designate and protect geologic hazard areas pursuant to the Growth Management Act.

#### NE Policies

3.E.1 The county should avoid development in landslide hazard areas and minimize development in erosion hazard areas commensurate with the level of risk.

3.E.2 The county shall develop regulations that are consistent with geologic constraints and the All Hazards Vulnerability Assessment and the Snohomish County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan.

3.E.3 The county shall require that development proposals include where appropriate a geotechnical assessment of the site's susceptibility to known geologic hazards.

3.E.4 The county shall require that development standards incorporate practices and techniques to reduce potential damage from seismic, tsunami, mine, erosion, landslide and volcanic hazards.

3.E.5 ~~((The county should only allow development in the channel migration zone that has a low risk to public health, safety and property))~~ The county shall limit development in channel migration zones to protect public health, safety, and property.

Objective NE 3.F Protect ecological functions of shoreline natural resources through the Snohomish County Shoreline Management Program.

#### NE Policies

- 3.F.1 The county's Shoreline Management Program shall address no net loss of ecological functions of shoreline resources, provide opportunities for public access to shoreline areas and promote water dependent uses and development which cannot be located anywhere else.
- 3.F.2 The county shall develop shoreline environment designations that are based on existing use patterns, and the biological and physical character of the shoreline.
- 3.F.3 Critical areas in those areas subject to the jurisdiction of the Shoreline Management Act shall be regulated consistent with critical areas outside of shorelines.
- 3.F.4 The county should protect, restore, and enhance native vegetation as vital to support and improve shoreline and critical area ecological functions, attenuate storm-water flows, and offset or mitigate potential impacts from development.
- 3.F.5 The county shall seek grant funding opportunities to implement restoration priorities identified in the Shoreline Management Program Restoration Element, watershed management plans, or salmon recovery plans to restore and enhance shoreline hydrologic functions, nearshore or backshore habitats, and estuaries.

Objective NE 3.G Adopt regulations and development standards as required by the Forest Practices Act (chapter 76.09 RCW).

#### NE Policies

- 3.G.1 The county shall ~~((develop))~~ maintain regulations for Class IV General forest practices and for conversion option harvest plans.
- 3.G.2 The county shall ~~((develop))~~ maintain a process and criteria for lifting forest practices moratoria, which shall include public notification and procedures for appeals and public hearings.
- 3.G.3 County forest practice regulations shall be consistent with critical areas and shoreline regulations to the maximum extent possible.

Objective NE 3.H Comply with the county's Phase I Municipal Stormwater Permit issued by the Washington State Department of Ecology pursuant to the Clean Water Act and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

#### NE Policies

- 3.H.1 The county shall protect properties and water from adverse impacts by eliminating illicit discharges ~~((and sediment transport,))~~ and regulating stormwater and land disturbing activity to reduce the discharges of pollutants and impacts to receiving waters.

3.H.2 The county shall develop inspection and enforcement procedures to prevent water quality degradation.

3.H.3 The county shall adopt programs, development regulations and standards regulating drainage and land disturbing activity that require low impact development techniques, where feasible, consistent with the Phase I Municipal Stormwater Permit.

~~((3.H.4) REPEALED BY AMENDED ORDINANCE NO. 14-070.))~~

~~((3.H.5))~~ 3.H.4 The county shall adopt comprehensive site planning requirements that minimize land disturbing activity and promote on-site stormwater management on new development and redevelopment project sites.

((3.H.6)) 3.H.5 The county shall adopt water pollution control requirements intended to ensure that receiving waters, groundwater, and stormwater in Snohomish County meet or exceed state water quality standards.

Objective NE 3.1 Develop and implement an enforcement program to protect, and prevent and remediate damage to, the natural environment.

#### NE Policies

3.1.1 The county should establish inspection and enforcement priorities based on health, safety and welfare; the environmental significance of the violations; the impact to ecological functions and values; and the impacts on public resources.

3.1.2 The county should establish an enforcement system that imposes penalties and fines commensurate with the severity of the violation. For minor violations that do not significantly harm the environment or endanger public health and safety, enforcement should focus on educating landowners on regulatory requirements rather than monetary penalties. The amount of penalties and fines should increase with the severity of the violation.

3.1.3 The county should impose punitive consequences on flagrant or repetitive violators.

3.1.4 The county shall require that remediation in code enforcement actions be focused on restoration of ecological functions and values compromised by the violation.

3.1.5 The county should coordinate its environmental enforcement efforts with other regulatory agencies to ensure that enforcement actions are effective in quickly remediating damage to the natural environment.

GOAL NE 4 Balance the goals of protecting elements of the natural environment while promoting the long-term viability of commercial agriculture.

Objective NE 4.A Provide flexibility in regulations to provide protection of the natural environment while recognizing the need to promote viability in the commercial agricultural industry.

#### NE Policies

4.A.1 The county shall allow innovative strategies that protect surface and groundwater quality ~~(,)~~ and quantity and minimize impacts to wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas on land used for commercial agriculture through actions such as encouraging the use of farm conservation plans or best management practices equivalent to those set forth in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTOG Manual, most recent edition), and other state and federal guidance on best management practices.

4.A.2 The county shall require that the implementation of strategies described in policy NE 4.A.1 occurs within a reasonable period of time.

4.A.3 The county should develop and pursue funding resources and provide technical assistance to implement strategies described in policy NE 4.A.1.

4.A.4 The county should ~~((consider establishing))~~ maintain a permit assistance center to assist farmers in complying with natural environment regulations.

4.A.5 The county shall protect agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance from the impacts of upland development.

4.A.6 The county shall develop and implement actions to conserve agricultural resource lands ~~((and restore))~~ while protecting and restoring salmon habitat and other ecological functions and values, ((seeking)) and shall seek to increase both ecological and agricultural ((and)) resource viability and productivity.

Objective NE 4.B Use incentives to encourage protection of the natural environment and the continued operation of working farms.

#### NE Policies

4.B.1 Wetland and habitat mitigation banks should not be allowed on land that meets the criteria for agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance.

4.B.2 The county should provide technical assistance to manage, maintain or enhance critical areas on or in proximity to lands used for commercial agriculture.

4.B.3 The county should consider incentives for farming practices that protect elements of the natural environment.

4.B.4 The county shall support habitat restoration projects that reestablish critical habitat functions while also supporting agricultural viability.

GOAL NE 5 Improve and protect ecological functions and values of the natural environment through non-regulatory programs.

Objective NE 5.A Implement environmental restoration, enhancement and acquisition plans.

#### NE Policies

5.A.1 The county should eliminate human-made barriers to fish passage, such as blocking culverts and broken tide-gates; prevent the creation of new barriers; and provide for natural rates of the transport of water, sediment and organic matter.

5.A.2 The county shall support efforts to maintain and restore natural stream bank conditions and achieve improved stream bank functions in each sub-basin while protecting critical facilities and infrastructure.

5.A.3 The county shall, where appropriate, restore and enhance ecological functions on lands owned and managed by the county. Properties acquired for habitat conservation should be managed to preserve and enhance ecological functions and values ~~((while providing))~~ and provide public access and recreational opportunities only where appropriate.

5.A.4 The county should develop acquisition and conservation easements programs directed at lands that have unique ecological values, support critical species or cannot be protected by any other methods.

5.A.5 The county shall aggressively seek funding from state, federal, private and other sources to implement restoration, enhancement, and acquisition projects.

5.A.6 The county shall leverage opportunities for restoration, enhancement, and acquisition to maximize the benefits realized from funding attained, through the following:

Subsection (a) prioritizing funding of those projects that provide maximum benefit to the environment;

Subsection (b) working with other jurisdictions to maximize opportunities to restore across jurisdictional boundaries; and

Subsection (c) targeting enhancement and restoration to achieve the goal of no net loss of ecological functions and values, consistent with state law requirements.

5.A.7 The county ~~((should consider))~~ shall use the recommendations contained in the watershed management plans and salmon recovery plans as ~~((the))~~ a basis for prioritizing restoration and enhancement projects.

Objective NE 5.B Provide incentives for voluntary environmental restoration, enhancement and protection.

NE Policies

5.B.1 The county should create a separate and expedited review process that would facilitate and reduce the costs of environmental restoration or enhancement projects that are independent of mitigation for development activity.

5.B.2 The county shall promote innovative land use techniques, where appropriate, such as transfer and purchase of development rights and other incentives for voluntary practices to protect the natural environment.

5.B.3 The county shall, where possible, provide incentives for protection of critical areas such as, designating lands permanent open space, conservation easements, donations to land trusts or similar organizations, and open space tax incentives.

5.B.4 The county shall develop incentives to voluntarily protect or enhance:

Subsection (a) aquatic ecosystems and aquifers;

Subsection (b) existing or degraded habitat areas;

Subsection (c) native top soils;

Subsection (d) water quality through use of low impact development techniques;

Subsection (e) a healthy diversity of native plants and plant communities; and

Subsection (f) rare plant species listed by the state department of natural resources' natural heritage program.

5.B.5 The county should encourage and create incentives for connection of areas of native vegetation within and between land parcels through the adoption of development regulations such as the rural cluster subdivision ordinance and through voluntary programs.

5.B.6 The county should encourage (~~citizens~~) the public and conservationists to be water resource stewards through participation in decision-making, volunteer activities, and technical assistance programs.

GOAL NE 6 Educate (~~citizens~~) the public regarding the natural environment and encourage voluntary environmental protection and stewardship.

Objective NE 6.A Provide programs for education about the natural environment.

NE Policies

6.A.1 The county shall develop public education programs to increase understanding of, and best management practices for, stream habitat, wetlands, stormwater

management, water quality, lake stewardship, marine shoreline processes and habitats, and other aspects of the natural environment.

- 6.A.2 The county shall develop an education program aimed at informing landowners about regulatory applicability and required provisions for protecting critical areas.
- 6.A.3 The county shall provide ongoing education and information to floodplain residents on flood preparedness and recovery in order to help them avoid preventable losses.
- 6.A.4 The county shall develop public and agency awareness of geologic hazards and development practices that increase the risk of damage to life, natural resources, and property from seismic, volcanic, landslide, tsunami, and erosion hazards.
- 6.A.5 The county should assemble and distribute information concerning emergency management procedures relating to volcanic, tsunami and seismic hazards.
- 6.A.6 The county should provide ((citizens)) the public with information concerning species and habitats and voluntary methods for protecting and restoring habitat areas.
- 6.A.7 The county shall provide access to educational materials that describe ecologically friendly options for protecting property from damage due to shoreline erosion, and require use of soft shore armoring instead of hard armoring wherever feasible.

Objective NE 6.B Provide programs and opportunities for voluntary environmental protection and stewardship.

#### NE Policies

- 6.B.1 The county shall encourage voluntary protection and restoration of natural areas and assist in establishing stewardship programs to allow ((citizens)) the public to participate in the protection and preservation of ecologic systems important in their own communities. This effort may include participation in environmental planning and programs, volunteer activities, monitoring projects, and technical assistance and education programs.
- 6.B.2 The county should encourage voluntary programs for businesses and residents to decrease use of hazardous products that contribute to nonpoint contamination of groundwater and surface water, especially those products applied to yards and gardens.
- 6.B.3 The county should promote the use and salvage of native plant species for use in landscaping, buffers, and revegetation projects.



GOAL NE 7 Monitor elements of the natural environment and use adaptive management strategies to protect the natural environment.

Objective NE 7.A Develop and implement a monitoring program to assess the effectiveness of the county's approach to protection of the natural environment.

NE Policies

7.A.1 The county shall develop a monitoring program which establishes a baseline from which to evaluate ecological functions and values, identifies measurable variables indicative of changes in ecological functions, and establishes performance measurement standards.

7.A.2 The monitoring program should focus on elements of the natural environment that are most at risk of net loss of ecological functions and values or have less certainty that ecological functions and values will be maintained over time.

7.A.3 The county shall regularly monitor shoreline conditions and habitat improvements to provide information which can be used to evaluate the cumulative impacts of shoreline and upland development.

7.A.4 The county should consider the recommendations contained in watershed management plans, salmon recovery plans, NPDES requirements, NRCS standards or other relevant science-based plans as guidelines for developing the monitoring program. Data from approved land use applications should also be considered.

7.A.5 The county should pursue funding sources for the monitoring program.

7.A.6 The county shall monitor results of the tree canopy regulatory requirements within urban unincorporated areas.

Objective NE 7.B Develop and implement an adaptive management strategy to adjust county programs as necessary.

NE Policies

7.B.1 If monitoring results indicate that the goal of no net loss has not been achieved, the county shall consider strengthening elements of the multi-faceted approach.

7.B.2 The county shall periodically evaluate and update natural environment protection programs to ensure consistency with best available science.

GOAL NE 8 Protect public health and safety by minimizing the potential for physical injury and property damage.

Objective 8.A Protect the health, safety, welfare, and the economy of the community by minimizing the risks associated with natural hazards.

- 8.A.1 The county shall consider natural hazards in all land use planning.
- 8.A.2 The county should adopt an integrated floodplain management approach that considers diverse interests and aims to reduce flood risks to people and property while also protecting habitat, water quality, agricultural viability, and open space. An integrated floodplain management approach should include joint flood hazard planning and interlocal agreements to ensure consistent floodplain management where the county shares common floodplains with cities, tribes and state or federal agencies.
- 8.A.3 The county shall develop and update drainage basin plans that document urban flooding problems and potential solutions.
- 8.A.4 The county shall adopt and implement a Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan to reduce the vulnerability to natural hazards.
- 8.A.5 The county shall develop programs that provide for notification of the presence of geologic hazards.
- 8.A.6 The county shall identify vulnerable communities at risk from environmental hazards and exposure to pollution and identify opportunities and funding for improving environmental health.

Objective NE ~~((8.A.))~~ 8.B Reduce the potential for physical injury and property damage from natural hazards.

#### NE Policies

- ~~((8.A.1))~~ 8.B.1 The county should develop and maintain a regional flood information and warning program.
- ~~((8.A.2))~~ 8.B.2 The county shall periodically analyze county-owned flood control structures for public benefit, consistency with adopted flood hazard management plans, and the potential for those structures to cause damage downstream, and modify, maintain or abandon the structures based on such analysis.
- ~~((8.A.3))~~ 8.B.3 The county shall reduce the number of existing flood damage prone structures through acquisition, relocation, incentives, and regulation.
- ~~((8.A.4))~~ 8.B.4 The county should develop a prioritized set of actions that, when implemented, will provide increased public safety and reduced national flood protection insurance rate for county residents.
- 8.B.5 The county shall seek the most current research, data, modeling, and mapping on hazards including but not limited to channel migration, landslides, coastal erosion, earthquake faults and liquefaction zones, lahar routes, mine hazard areas, flood

hazard areas, and areas potentially subject to tsunami in coordination with local city, county, state, federal, tribal agencies, and academic institutions. This information will be used for public education and to inform regulatory strategies.

Objective NE ((8.B)) 8.C Promote and enhance regional air quality by reducing air pollution emissions associated with land uses and transportation in accordance with national, state, regional, and local policies and standards.

#### NE Policies

~~((8.B.1))~~ 8.C.1 The county shall operate a burn permit program consistent with Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations and compatible with county goals and objectives, which will manage burn ban areas consistent with the adopted urban growth areas of the county.

~~((8.B.2))~~ 8.C.2 The county shall ~~((adopt))~~ maintain development regulations that minimize or eliminate nuisance odors through the use of best available control technologies, provided that odors occurring as a result of accepted agricultural or forest practices on natural resource lands shall be presumed reasonable and not a nuisance.

~~((8.B.3))~~ 8.C.3 The county shall require development activities to minimize dust, provided that dust occurring as a result of accepted agricultural or forest practices on natural resource lands shall be presumed reasonable and not a nuisance.

~~((8.B.4))~~ 8.C.4 The county shall provide solid and yard waste disposal opportunities at a reasonable cost to discourage the burning of yard debris outside of no burn zones and illegal burning of garbage in all zones.

~~((8.B.5))~~ 8.C.5 The county shall, where possible, require construction projects to provide for on-site wood waste recycling to preclude the need to burn debris outside of no burn zones.

~~((8.B.6))~~ 8.C.6 The county should offer incentives to help reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles to reduce air emissions.

~~((8.B.7))~~ 8.C.7 The county should coordinate with regional bodies such as the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, the Puget Sound Regional Council, and tribes to attain national, state, and regional air quality goals and to leverage federal and state programs and funding that promote clean air protection and enhancement.

Objective NE ~~((8.C))~~ 8.D Minimize ~~((the))~~ exposure ~~((of citizens))~~ to ~~((the dangers of))~~ excessive noise and light pollution.

## NE Policies

~~((8.C.1))~~8.D.1 The county shall administer rules and regulations established regarding acceptable noise levels based on state and federal standards.

~~((8.C.2))~~8.D.2 County regulations may require, where appropriate, buffering or other noise mitigation measures to be incorporated into development proposals.

~~((8.C.3))~~8.D.3 The county shall take appropriate steps to mitigate noise impacts at airports consistent with recommendations of the Federal Aviation Administration in the FAR Part 150 Noise Study.

8.D.4 The county shall require light shielding and visual buffering to improve land use compatibility where commercial, industrial, or mixed-use development with outdoor lighting is adjacent to residential uses or habitat for critical species.

Objective 8.E Protect water quality by seeking to minimize the introduction of pollutants into the environment.

NE Policies

8.E.1 The county shall make available educational materials describing best management practices for land maintenance, septic system care, natural yard care, control of invasive species, low impact development principles and techniques for stormwater management, ecological functions and values performed by trees and native vegetation, and healthier alternatives to toxic pesticides and herbicides.

8.E.2 The county shall employ water quality best management practices and integrated pest management approaches to the greatest extent feasible in the management of county owned land and right-of-way.

8.E.3 The county shall require that new development and redevelopment proposals include provisions addressing pollutants, including sediments, in stormwater runoff through use of best management practices, preferably low impact development wherever feasible, to help protect water quality in natural water bodies in accordance with the Snohomish County Drainage Manual.

8.E.4 The county shall provide access to educational materials directed to shoreline property owners and users of recreational watercraft to help protect water quality, prevent spread of invasive species, and preserve natural shoreline ecological processes.

- 8.E.5 The county shall support and promote programs addressing installation, inspection, monitoring, maintenance, repair and replacement of onsite sewage systems. When an onsite sewage system is failing and a conforming repair is infeasible, the county will require connection to an existing public sewer system whenever such connection is adequate and available within 200 feet of the structure served by the onsite sewage system. When neither conforming repair nor sewer connection is feasible, the county shall require use of innovative and state-of-the-art design techniques for repair or replacement of the onsite septic system. The county shall explore funding opportunities to assist property owners with costs associated with septic repairs or replacements, or sewer hook-ups, where a demonstrated public health hazard exists.
- 8.E.6 The county shall track revisions to WAC 246-272A proposed by Washington State Department of Health and incorporate provisions into the county's onsite sewage system program that advance public health benefits for Snohomish County residents, recreational and commercial shellfish harvesters, and Tribes.

## Urban Tree Canopy

Trees and tree canopy provide cultural, historic, and ecosystem services and are a significant part of life in the Pacific Northwest. Urban and community forests have many functions and values including providing aesthetic, cultural, and historical values, conserving energy, reducing air and water pollution and soil erosion, improving air quality, carbon sequestration, moderating temperature impacts from climate change, mitigating stormwater impacts, reducing noise and light pollution, supporting salmon populations, and many more ecological and social benefits. The Urban Tree Canopy subelement plays an important role within the Natural Environment Element, establishing policies that seek to preserve and enhance Snohomish County's climate and environment for all.

Planning for urban unincorporated tree canopy preservation, restoration, and management is consistent with GMA goal 10:

*Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.*

Protecting, restoring, and managing Snohomish County's urban forests also is an important part of implementing the 2024 Comprehensive Plan's Vision Statement. One of the Vision Statement's guiding principles reads:

*Natural Environment: The County values its beautiful landscapes and fiercely protects the natural environment for its ecosystem services, recreational opportunities, and habitat. There are many connected greenways, open spaces, and wildlife corridors throughout the county providing habitat, flood mitigation, and tree canopy. Regional and neighborhood parks, trails, and open spaces offer recreational opportunities that are accessible and inclusive to all.*

The Urban Tree Canopy subelement draws significant inspiration from chapter 76.15 RCW, the Washington State Urban Forest Management Act of 2021. This Act modernized the 2008 Evergreen Communities Act (ECA), in chapter 76.15 RCW and its related programs. The ECA established the need for tools including canopy assessment and regional tree canopy analysis, and targeted technical assistance to support cities and counties seeking to deliver impactful urban forestry programs. The Evergreen Communities Program found in the ECA includes standards to provide for the conservation and long-term maintenance of the urban tree canopy. The Urban Forest Management Act (2021) adds capacity to the ECA by:

- Utilizing information and analysis around environmental health disparities and salmon recovery plans;
- Increasing capacity for the delivery of an urban forestry program in order to strengthen and enhance its impact; and
- Expanding participation to include federally recognized tribes and community-based organizations.

The following goal, objectives, and policies address the challenge of how to balance the need to plan for growth and development, while maintaining livability and a holistic approach for sustainable, equitable, and resilient, and healthy tree canopy in urban areas. The Urban Tree Canopy subelement supports the Natural Environment and Climate Change Elements and will guide Snohomish County in creating an Urban Forest Management Program and taking steps to be recognized an Evergreen Community.

Goal NE 9 Provide healthy urban forests in urban unincorporated areas to support ecosystem services, public health, economic vitality, increased environmental stability and resiliency, and a better quality of life.

Objective NE 9.A Develop an urban forest management program for urban unincorporated areas that identifies, protects, and restores forests and plants that have significant environmental, habitat, cultural, and aesthetic value.

#### NE Policies

9.A.1 The county shall model the urban forest management program on Evergreen Communities Act requirements and take steps necessary for recognition for unincorporated urban areas as an Evergreen Community under the Evergreen Communities Act (Chapter 76.15 RCW).

9.A.2 The county shall prepare an urban forest management plan that meets requirements in chapter 76.15 RCW and establishes an area-wide minimum tree canopy goal for urban unincorporated areas of at least 38%.

9.A.3 The county should identify existing programs to preserve and restore native vegetation and tree canopy, especially where the programs protect habitats,

contribute to overall ecological function, and demonstrate capacity to sequester and store carbon.

9.A.4 The county's urban forest management program should prioritize areas where tree canopy and understory vegetation would not otherwise have protection under critical areas, shoreline, or drainage regulations and may include groves of trees and understory, significant individual trees or tree stands, street trees and community trees, and forested hillsides.

9.A.5 The county's urban forest management program shall take into consideration requirements under the Growth Management Act to accommodate population, housing, and employment growth within unincorporated Urban Growth Areas while also preserving the urban forest canopy.

9.A.6 The county shall periodically perform a tree canopy assessment and inventory to identify areas for protection and enhancement and report this information to the County Council. Subsequent assessments and inventories should evaluate the success and failures of past actions taken to protect or enhance tree canopy and refine methodologies to improve implementation of the inventory and assessment processes and the urban tree program overall. The assessment will use best available qualitative and quantitative information and can rely on LiDAR/Satellite imagery.

9.A.7 The county should seek funding to support the urban forest management program including but not limited to opportunities to fund improvements along forested corridors preserved before contemporary critical area standards were adopted in 2007, and to fund improvements in alignment with the goals of the Salmon Safe Puget Sound Pledge, the Orca Recovery Plan, the Puget Sound Partnership, and the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan.

Objective NE 9.B Apply regulatory and non-regulatory strategies to retain and restore urban forest areas.

9.B.1 Based on the results from a periodic assessment of urban tree canopy, the county shall, as needed, review codes and administrative rules to identify where protections for urban forests and tree canopy may need to be revised and identify where new development may need to follow appropriate tree management practices.

9.B.2 The county shall investigate the creation of incentives to protect urban forest areas that provide significant functions and values that are outside critical areas. When landmark trees, a stand or grove of trees, or additional canopy cover is retained beyond regulatory standards, consider incentives such as stormwater modeling credits, density/building height bonuses, adjusted building setbacks or parking requirements. Incentivize tree retention and planting as visual amenities, providers of environmental services, and drivers of economic development.

- 9.B.3 County departments shall develop management strategies for urban forests on properties within their custodial property inventories. Management strategies for county-owned urban forests may include levels of service standards for forested areas within urban parks, right of way planning, impact fees, and properties purchased, donated, and/or managed by the county for conservation or restoration.
- 9.B.4 The county shall develop community-wide education and stewardship programs to enhance the community's awareness of the value of trees and the urban forest. Encourage engagement in the care and maintenance of trees and related resources by including actions and resources to educate and involve the public.
- 9.B.5 The county shall examine options for establishing a tree canopy fee-in-lieu program, taking into consideration other county objectives including but not limited to, urban development needs and urban growth targets, habitat restoration and/or enhancement projects, level-of-service standards for county parks, right-of-way planting, and frontage improvements, and equitable access to urban forested open space.
- Objective NE 9.C Apply best management practices to maintain urban forest health, optimize ecological functions, and provide public health benefits.
- 9.C.1 Departments with urban forest on lands in their custodial inventory should share standardized maintenance practices to increase overall consistency in tree maintenance, resulting in better tree health and longevity.
- 9.C.2 The county shall employ best management practices, taking into consideration the potential impacts of said practices to environmental and human health, to control invasive species which are destructive to forest health and eradicate them where possible on publicly owned property.
- 9.C.3 The county's tree maintenance program must include integrated pest management strategies to protect soil, water, and air quality, and minimize use of pesticides and herbicides.
- 9.C.4 The urban forest management plan shall address standards and practices for resolving potential land use incompatibility issues including, but not limited to maintaining view corridors, preserving solar access for solar panels and gardens, minimizing property line issues where canopy and roots extend onto adjacent properties, preventing interference with public and private utilities, removal of invasive plants and hazardous trees, minimizing risk of potential damage from wind-throw, illegal dumping and garbage cleanup in forested areas, and public access.



- 9.C.5      The urban forest management plan shall address and assign maintenance responsibilities for urban forest areas and identify access for maintenance purposes.
- 9.C.6      The county shall provide educational materials aimed towards a greater understanding by the public of its individual and combined impacts on natural systems, the ecological and economic value of urban forests, and urban forest management and maintenance best management practices for private property.
- Objective NE 9.D      The county shall provide urban forest resources, including financial, education, and access, equitably across the urban forests.
- 9.D.1      The county shall allocate resources to support the county’s urban forest management program, including financial and programmatic, in a manner that recognizes geographic, racial, and social equity.
- 9.D.2      The county shall work to create or preserve urban forest assets across unincorporated urban areas to help provide access to urban forest benefits equitably for all residents of a community.
- 9.D.3      The county shall identify in the county’s capital improvement program actions and areas for acquisition of urban forest assets that would reduce unequal access to the benefits of urban forest.
- 9.D.4      The urban forest management plan should incorporate the conservation needs assessment from the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan to identify gaps in equitable access to open space, as it applies to urban forests.
- Objective NE 9.E      Consider management coordination of urban forests and trees along with planning for transportation and utilities in the right of way (ROW) and tree maintenance in utility corridors.
- 9.E.1      The county shall require that the location and type of trees planted in proximity to above ground and underground utilities be selected to avoid damage to the utility’s infrastructure and consider the long-term health and maintenance needs of the urban forest and trees. The county shall review and update administrative rules regarding vegetation planting, maintenance, and restoration standards in the right-of-way to reduce long-term maintenance burden of utilities and improve the health of trees planted or protected according to those rules.
- 9.E.2      The county shall evaluate opportunities in transportation corridors to provide tree and shrub planting in conjunction with land development and county projects. County departments shall review codes, administrative design rules, and maintenance standards to find opportunities to enhance vegetation along transportation corridors. Priority shall be given to public safety.

9.E.3 The county shall promote reliance on native trees and vegetation to help manage stormwater, wherever feasible.

Objective NE 9.F Coordinate urban forest management and tree canopy retention goals with other local and regional environmental programs and initiatives.

9.F.1 The county's urban forest management efforts should be coordinated with the urban forest preservation efforts of local cities, tribes, agencies, organizations, and adjacent counties.

9.F.2 The county should develop a management approach for urban forests and trees that supports salmon recovery goals and Snohomish County's commitment to Salmon Safe Puget Sound Pledge, the Orca Recovery Plan, the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan, and the Priority Habitats and Species data from the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda.

9.F.3 The county shall provide outreach programming to the public that is designed to raise the visibility of available opportunities for community partnerships with local organizations, schools, and agencies. The goal of this outreach programming is to increase awareness and understanding of the importance of protecting and caring for urban forests and to encourage participation in programs that support urban forest goals.

9.F.4 The county shall invite the public to participate in the development of the urban forest management program and preparation of the urban forest plan. The plan shall identify stewardship opportunities in support of long-term public participation and sustainable tree practices and policies.

9.F.5 The county shall coordinate with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources to identify and address in the urban forest management plan potential issues that could arise where the urban forest edge abuts working resource lands or the wildland interface edge. Where edge issues may arise, consideration must be given to GMA priorities related to critical area protection, natural resource management, and public safety.

~~((GOAL NE 9 Promote energy conservation and recycling to reduce detrimental effects on the natural environmental and human health and safety.~~

~~Objective NE 9.A Recycle and reuse water.~~

## NE Policies

~~9.A.1 The county shall develop plans and programs for the reuse, recycling, and treatment of water.~~

~~9.A.2 County facilities shall be designed, operated and maintained to ensure recycling of water occurs to the maximum extent possible.~~

~~9.A.3 The county should promote the use of low impact development designs to encourage the reuse of water.~~

~~9.A.4 The county should encourage the development of innovative water supplies such as rain-water catchment systems as a source of domestic drinking water.~~

~~Objective NE 9.B — Conserve nonrenewable energy resources while promoting the development and utilization of new and renewable energy resources.~~

~~9.B.1 The county should adopt plans and regulations that require site planning and building design to promote energy conservation and reduce demand.~~

~~9.B.2 The county shall encourage transportation alternatives such as, the expansion of transit service, carpools and vanpools to reduce consumption of fossil fuels.~~

~~9.B.3 The county shall adopt and enforce the Washington State Energy Code for new construction.~~

~~Objective NE 9.C provide safe, efficient and cost effective disposal of solid waste while encouraging waste prevention, reduction, and recycling.~~

## NE Policies

~~9.C.1 The county shall develop plans and programs for the management of solid waste generated within Snohomish County.~~

~~9.C.2 The county shall be responsible for the disposal of solid waste generated within Snohomish County.~~

~~9.C.3 County facilities shall be designed, operated and maintained to ensure recycling is available and occurs when technically and economically feasible.~~

~~9.C.4 County offices and facilities shall set an example in waste prevention, reduction and recycling.~~

~~9.C.5 The county shall encourage waste prevention, reduction, and recycling of solid waste when technically and economically feasible.~~

~~9.C.6 The county shall design, maintain or retrofit solid waste facilities to prevent contaminated storm water run off from the facility for the purpose of preventing water pollution.~~

~~9.C.7 The county shall site new solid waste handling facilities in a manner which will minimize impacts on the natural environment while providing essential solid waste disposal services.))~~

## **~~((Climate Change and Sustainability~~**

~~Greenhouse gases, global warming and projected impacts on the climate create new challenges to implementing the Growth Management Act. A number of climate change impacts have been recorded over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the trends are projected to continue. Research indicates that the burning of fossil fuels and the conversion of land from its natural state are the primary human causes of climate change. Planning for transportation, open space, and resource lands under GMA can influence local fossil fuel dependence and land conversion to reduce the county's greenhouse gas emissions. Likewise, GMA planning for infrastructure and future growth are appropriate means of preparing for and adapting to predicted climate change impacts. While scientific understanding of climate change continues to grow, the county recognizes the prudence of planning for projected impacts. The county will move forward cautiously and responsibly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure its citizens are prepared to respond and adapt to climate change impacts.~~

~~These policies are one element of the county's response to climate change. Other elements include a study of climate change impacts to the county and its infrastructure and a stakeholder involvement process to help the county chart a course of action. This response is in step with state actions on a climate response strategy. The state's Climate Advisory Team, which includes Snohomish County, is tasked with reducing emissions, identifying measures to adapt to climate change, developing clean energy jobs, and moving toward energy independence.))~~

~~**((GOAL NE 10 ——— Help sustain Snohomish County's economy, environment and communities by minimizing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting clean energy development.**~~

~~**Objective NE 10.A — Adopt practices for Snohomish County government services and operations that minimize greenhouse gas emissions.**~~

### **NE Policies**

~~10.A.1 Identify and implement technologies to improve the efficiency of Snohomish County buildings and service vehicles.~~

~~10.A.2 Identify and implement operational and purchasing policies and practices that reduce emissions, support energy conservation and efficient use of resources.~~

~~10.A.3 Pursue options and incentives to reduce the vehicle miles traveled by Snohomish County employees in both their commuting and job related activities.~~

~~10.A.4 Achieve green building certification for new county buildings and major renovation projects whenever appropriate and feasible.~~

~~10.A.5 Inventory the county's greenhouse gas emissions and develop and implement a plan to minimize emissions.~~

**~~Objective NE 10.B — Develop strategies for Snohomish County communities that support sustainability and minimize greenhouse gas emissions.~~**

**~~NE Policies~~**

~~10.B.1 Incorporate the most current scientific consensus on climate change into the county's planning processes.~~

~~10.B.2 Establish land use patterns that minimize transportation related greenhouse gas emissions and encourage the preservation of resource lands, open space and habitat.~~

~~10.B.3 Support market development for alternative fuels and clean energy sources.~~

~~10.B.4 Encourage climate friendly businesses and business practices and a clean energy economy.~~

~~10.B.5 Seek to reduce vehicle miles traveled by encouraging expanded availability and use of public transportation through planning, partnerships, investments and incentives.~~

~~10.B.6 Adopt development regulations that foster energy conservation, environmental enhancement, recycling and waste reduction.~~

~~10.B.7 Investigate long term strategies to address waste management within Snohomish County's borders to reduce emissions from the transport of waste, increase reuse and recycling and foster sustainable practices.~~

~~10.B.8 Develop education and incentive programs related to climate change and sustainability so that citizens, businesses and others can make informed decisions.~~

~~10.B.9 Support intergovernmental planning regarding climate change and sustainability and coordinate local efforts with regional, state and federal efforts.~~

~~10.B.10 — Incorporate principles of sustainability and "green building" design as set forth in "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design" (LEED) certification for development of the county Cathcart site. Ensure that this development will serve as a model for "green" building and sustainable neighborhood development in Snohomish County.~~

~~10.B.11 — Incorporate energy conserving and climate friendly construction and development techniques within all development activity at the county Cathcart site.~~

**~~GOAL NE 11 — Help sustain Snohomish County's economy, environment and communities by responding and adapting to the impacts of climate change.~~**

**~~Objective NE 11.A — Improve the county's preparedness to respond to climate change.~~**

**NE Policies**

~~11.A.1 Work with community stakeholders, establish partnerships and organize resources to coordinate a response to the projected impacts of climate change.~~

~~11.A.2 Periodically assess Snohomish County's vulnerability to climate change, based on the most current scientific consensus, and utilize the findings and community priorities to guide policy development and infrastructure investments.~~

~~11.A.3 Incorporate measures that account for, mitigate and monitor the expected impacts of climate change in planning for economic, environmental, and community health.~~

~~11.A.4 Implement strategies and monitor progress to protect the county's natural resources and systems from the projected impacts of climate change.~~

**Objective NE 11.B — Strengthen the county's ability to adapt to climate change impacts.**

**NE Policies**

~~11.B.1 Incorporate adaptive management for climate change, in response to the most current scientific consensus, into future comprehensive plans and development regulations.~~

~~11.B.2 Develop strategies to encourage a diversified and sustainable economy that is resilient to the impacts of climate change.~~

~~11.B.3 Develop incentives that encourage citizens to reduce the adverse impacts from climate change to their lives and communities.~~

~~11.B.4 Promote the efficient use, conservation and protection of water resources.))~~

