

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.

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 of the comprehensive 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 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 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 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.

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:
- (a) environmental sensitivity and ecological functions and values;
 - (b) limitations of ground and surface water quantities; and
 - (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:
- (a) maintaining the natural hydrologic cycle and minimizing alterations of natural drainage patterns;
 - (b) encouraging alternative impervious surface techniques;
 - (c) providing for the retention of natural vegetation;
 - (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

- (e) utilizing low impact development (LID) techniques and site planning.
- 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:
- (a) including best available science in plans and programs;
 - (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;
 - (c) coordinating the use of agricultural resource lands with the protection, restoration and/or enhancement of ecological functions and values;
 - (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
 - (e) including strategies for monitoring and adaptive management in plans and programs.
- 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 and citizens.

Objective NE 2.A Coordinate and support 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 and other agencies and tribes to protect, manage, and monitor 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.

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 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 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.

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:
 - (a) Maintain natural flood storage capacity;

- (b) Preserve natural drainage and conveyance systems;
 - (c) Avoid increases in flood elevations; and
 - (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 incorporate new 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 Flood regulations should allow for volume of on-site or in-floodplain excavation to offset volume or fill.
- 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.

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, landside 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.

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 opportu-

nities 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.

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 regulations for Class IV General forest practices and for conversion option harvest plans.

3.G.2 The county shall develop 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 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 The county shall adopt water pollution control requirements intended to ensure that receiving waters, groundwater, and storm-water in Snohomish County meet or exceed state water quality standards.

Objective NE 3.I Develop and implement an enforcement program to protect, and prevent and remediate damage to, the natural environment.

- NE Policies**
- 3.I.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.I.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.I.3 The county should impose punitive consequences on flagrant or repetitive violators.
 - 3.I.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.I.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, minimize impacts to wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas on land used for commercial agriculture 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).

- 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 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 ecological functions and values, seeking 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.

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 recreational opportunities.
- 5.A.4 The county should develop acquisition and conservation easements programs directed at lands that have unique ecological values 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:
 - (a) prioritizing funding of those projects that provide maximum benefit to the environment;
 - (b) working with other jurisdictions to maximize opportunities to restore across jurisdictional boundaries; and
 - (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 the recommendations contained in the watershed management plans and salmon recovery plans as the 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:

- (a) aquatic ecosystems and aquifers;
- (b) existing or degraded habitat areas;
- (c) native top soils;
- (d) water quality through use of low impact development techniques;
- (e) a healthy diversity of native plants and plant communities; and
- (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 to be water resource stewards through participation in decision-making, volunteer activities, and technical assistance programs.

GOAL NE 6 Educate citizens 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 with information concerning species and habitats and voluntary methods for protecting and restoring habitat areas.

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 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.

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 NE 8.A Reduce the potential for physical injury and property damage from natural hazards.

NE Policies 8.A.1 The county should develop and maintain a regional flood information and warning program.

8.A.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 The county shall reduce the number of existing flood damage prone structures through acquisition, relocation, incentives, and regulation.

8.A.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.

Objective NE 8.B 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 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 The county shall adopt 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 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 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 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 The county should offer incentives to help reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles to reduce air emissions.
- 8.B.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 Minimize the exposure of citizens to the dangers of excessive noise.

- NE Policies**
- 8.C.1 The county shall administer rules and regulations established regarding acceptable noise levels based on state and federal standards.
 - 8.C.2 County regulations may require, where appropriate, buffering or other noise mitigation measures to be incorporated into development proposals.
 - 8.C.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.

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 rainwater 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.

NE Policies 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 20th 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.

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| 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.