



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

January 27, 2017

To: Jessica Finn Coven, Director, Office of Sustainability and Environment

From: Seattle Planning Commission

Subject: Preparing for Climate Change

Dear Director Finn Coven,

We appreciated the opportunity to discuss the draft Climate Change Preparedness Strategy with Tracy Morgenstern at our November 10, 2016 meeting. Climate change is an inherently complex issue, and the Planning Commission supports this plan as a necessary and critical step in proactively addressing the myriad impacts of climate change on the environment, infrastructure, public health, and our communities. As such, we strongly support including race and social justice as a guiding principle in addressing climate change. This plan creates a blueprint for future planning processes and decision-making methodologies, and we are appreciative of the challenging work that has been accomplished thus far. Considering the national context, it is more critical than ever that cities take the lead on climate change. We hope OSE continues to advocate for bold actions that reinforce Seattle's commitment to building resilience and preparing for climate change impacts.

The following points include questions, observations, and suggestions voiced by Commissioners at the November 10, 2016 meeting and January 12, 2017 meeting.

Elevate the importance of collaboration

1. Outline ongoing or planned collaborations with other entities, including the names of other departments, coalitions, and jurisdictions. Encourage those not currently involved to join the effort.
2. Explain how this plan fits in with other existing plans and initiatives at the city and regional level, such as the 100 Resilient Cities Initiative, the Climate Action Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, King County climate plans, and Washington State climate plans.
3. We would like to see closer collaboration with other agencies and departments that are working on related policies and plans. OPCD is in the midst of extensive planning for growth in the urban villages. Seattle-King County Public Health is carrying out related work, such as around emergency management including heat waves, messaging, and drills.

Commissioners

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Policy Analyst

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The work Seattle City Light is doing on water supply and snowpack change should be linked to this climate planning.

4. Include current or planned efforts aimed at working with and supporting environmental justice groups and other community-led planning efforts. Prioritize continued collaboration with these groups as a top priority.
5. Website. There are multiple documents related to climate change for the City, it may be helpful for the website to be organized in a manner that offers easy access for residents to view and download information. Understandably, this is a city-wide issue, not just specific to OSE.

Plan elements & planning strategies

1. Equity. Bolster the commitment to this by integrating discussion on how this is providing direction for various actions throughout the plan. Consider a brief discussion on the equity implication for each section that demonstrates how the plan prioritizes needs of high impact communities.
2. Climate Impacts
 - a. Consider using an approach based on watersheds to address the impact of increased flooding stormwater and drainage, and water quality. Many of the spaces along the Green/Duwamish are inter-jurisdictional; using a watershed approach may better equip multiple jurisdictions to work together to adapt to these changes.
 - b. Include information about the climate impact of ocean acidification, especially as to how it impacts our shoreline ecosystems and marine industries.
 - c. Examine how changing temperature extremes will impact air pollution and air quality levels, especially in regards to vulnerable populations with respiratory illnesses, and areas with less green space and tree canopy. Partner with the Seattle Parks and Recreation to improve their green space planning efforts, and work with OPCD and the Office of Housing around green requirements that help mitigate urban heat island effects.
 - d. Are there “highly impacted” industrial communities, especially within M/ICs? Continued access to employment in highly impacted industrial areas should be just as important to supporting highly impacted neighborhoods without industrial uses, especially if these opportunities for employment support marginalized communities (this is not an assumption that marginalized communities are only employed in areas at risk).
3. Transportation. Recognizing that Seattle is part of a regional network, please be explicit about how the City currently is, or plans to, collaborate with Metro, Sound Transit, WSDOT, and other regional transportation agencies to adapt to climate change.
4. Land Use
 - a. Explore how climate preparedness should be incorporated into OPCD plans, such as MHA, urban village expansions, etc. Identify what areas are most vulnerable to which impacts, and how frameworks and policies are established that support vulnerable populations including low-income, communities of color, immigrant and refugee, renters, and small businesses.
 - b. We support exploring code or zoning changes that promote resiliency. Consider giving specific examples of adaptations and naming potential collaborators. For example, the county has a requirement of a 3ft freeboard in sea level rise zones.
 - c. Include how future growth planning and comprehensive plan updates can take climate impacts into consideration, and how the city can identify and support the communities that will be the most impacted, including collaborating with existing community-led planning efforts.
 - d. Outline opportunities to proactively plan for communities that will be impacted by sea level rise, including priority actions and alternative approaches to consider, including building

resiliency in place or relocation.

- e. Describe how ongoing planning process are considering solutions to addressing the threat of sea level rise and flooding in Seattle’s communities. Provide a framework that helps to evaluate current growth strategies and consider alternatives, especially for areas such as South Park and Westwood, and to ensure that planning processes are consistent with the strategies set forth in plan.
5. Public Health
 - a. Health impacts are one of the most significant ways that people are experiencing climate change. How is Seattle-King County Public Health involved?
 - b. Several sections have health-related aspects, and each should address public health directly. We need to ensure that planning and preparedness efforts are aligned so that people have healthy and resilient communities to live in.

Plan organization & accessibility

1. Include a set of general definitions at the beginning for those unfamiliar with the terminology used.
2. Consider graphic design standards that supports understanding of the subject matter for a diverse group of residents (i.e. multiple languages, infographics, accessibility for those with visual or hearing impairments).
3. Page-Specific Comments
 - a. Page 11: might be helpful to identify where this information is sourced from—perhaps even links.
 - b. Page 21: Are there additional “Land Use and the Building Environment” Energy Management and Cooling standards that should be amended?

We hope to maintain an open dialogue about the progress the City is making, and look forward to inviting you back for further discussion. We are excited to see how work with King County and other jurisdictions continues to shape future efforts and plans to come.

Please do not hesitate to contact our Interim Executive Director, Valerie Kinast, at 233-7911 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Grace Kim, Chair
Seattle Planning Commission