

Changes Suggested by Executive on 7-1-22

WHEREAS, as reported in the most-recent National Climate Assessment, climate change is expected to result in more frequent and intense extreme weather events, and

WHEREAS, people who are already vulnerable, including lower-income and homeless residents have lower capacity to prepare for and cope with extreme weather and climate-related events and are expected to experience greater impacts in coming years, and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the department of public health published the Blueprint for Addressing Climate Change and Health ~~that which~~ describes the core functions and strategies for public health to address climate change and health, and

WHEREAS, according to the department of public health, heat-related health risks in King County are exacerbated by existing inequities in housing, access to healthcare and health outcomes, and

WHEREAS, in 2021 King County completed a heat-mapping project that quantifies the harmful, inequitable impact that hotter summers are having on the region. The data show that surface-level temperatures in areas with paved landscapes, less tree canopy and more industrial activity are substantially higher during summer heat events compared to less-urbanized areas, and

WHEREAS, according to the department of public health, hotter temperatures increase the risk of illness and death from heatstroke and cardiovascular disease, and

WHEREAS, researchers at the University of Washington found an increase in emergency medical service calls, hospitalizations and mortality in King County during hotter temperatures, and

WHEREAS, record heat waves can be extremely dangerous in areas such as the Pacific Northwest with historically cooler climates because people are less likely to have access to air conditioning, and

WHEREAS, according to 2019 data from the United States Census Bureau's American Housing Survey, Seattle is the least air-conditioned metropolitan areas included in the survey. As of 2019, only forty-four and one-quarter percent of households in Seattle metropolitan area were cooled by central air or a room unit. Only thirty-four and seven-tenths percent of those households with incomes less than thirty thousand dollars have air conditioning, and

WHEREAS, according to the department of public health, the record-setting heat dome event in June 2021 caused over thirty ~~thirty-three~~ deaths from hyperthermia in King County, and

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, access to a cool environment during an extreme heat event can help residents avoid heat illness, and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports exposure to air pollutants in wildfire smoke can irritate the lungs, cause inflammation, alter immune function and increase susceptibility to respiratory infections, likely including COVID-19, and

WHEREAS, extreme cold can have a disproportionate impact on those who are experiencing homelessness or who are financially unstable and unable to pay utility bills, and can cause power outages, which can lead to the inability to safely heat homes, and

WHEREAS, the King County emergency management program fosters collaborative and cooperative planning at all levels to enable a uniform and rational approach to the coordination of multiagency and multijurisdictional actions for all regional mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, and

WHEREAS, the King County comprehensive emergency management plan contains elements that address mitigation activities, preparedness, responses to disasters and emergencies, and recovery operations, including mass care disaster sheltering and other related assistance, and

WHEREAS, on behalf of the executive, the King County office of emergency management has broad responsibility to perform coordination activities for county government agencies, cities and other appropriate agencies, and provide liaison with other governments and the private, nongovernmental sector, for emergencies and disasters, and

WHEREAS, the King County Office of Emergency Management OEM has initiated a planning process with the cities and other interested parties to develop a regional extreme weather and disaster sheltering plan, to include the use of cooling/warming/clean air centers through the Zone Liaisons have started conversations on developing a regional sheltering plan (to include use of cooling/warming/clean air center), and

WHEREAS, the King County office of emergency management coordinates with the Department of Local Services during extreme weather events, and

WHEREAS, the Department of Local Services has identified community partners and volunteers to operate and staff extreme weather heating and cooling centers, and

WHEREAS, in 2012, King County adopted its first Strategic Climate Action Plan ("SCAP"), becoming one of the first local jurisdictions in the nation to comprehensively plan to address the threats of climate change. The emphases in the SCAP have included: requiring county agencies to limit greenhouse gas emissions associated with agency operations; encouraging and supporting efforts to limit emissions by the regional community; and preparing to mitigate the impacts of climate change, particularly as they affect vulnerable populations. The county council adopted the 2020 SCAP in 2021 with Motion 15866, and

WHEREAS, as part of the SCAP, King County is beginning work on a strategic plan to mitigate the impacts of higher temperatures on communities in King County, with an emphasis on low-income neighborhoods, communities of color and other vulnerable communities in King County that experience a confluence of multiple inequities; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 version of the King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (“RHMP”), adopted by the county council with Motion 19160, and by nearly 50 of the cities and special purpose districts as well as the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, and which integrates with the SCAP, contains extreme weather as one of the 14 highest risk hazards confronting the region, and

WHEREAS, the RHMP details the risk for, vulnerabilities to, and consequences of extreme weather events and sets forth strategies, projects and programs through which vulnerability to and impacts from extreme cold, extreme heat, and wildfire smoke are reduced and abated, and

WHEREAS, significant coordination is required with amongst the King County Regional Homeless Authority, which has responsibility for unhoused people throughout the county, the cities for their residents, the Tribes for their residents, the county for unincorporated residents and the state for residents of long-term care facilities and family care homes;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The council requests the executive to:

A. Coordinate across King County agencies, cities, King County Regional Homeless Authority, the state, and other partners and work groups, including the department of public health, the office of emergency management, the facilities management, the climate action team and the King County Regional Homelessness Authority to develop a Comprehensive Regional

operational plan for extreme weather centers and disaster sheltering, with a special focus on the most-vulnerable residents. ~~Develop an operational plan for sheltering the most vulnerable residents during extreme cold, heat and wildfire smoke events.~~ For the purposes of this section A., "the most-vulnerable residents" shall include, but are not limited to, unhoused people, low-income people who live in housing without adequate protection from extreme weather, and senior citizens or those with disabilities without adequate protection from extreme weather. ~~The executive shall strive to begin offering expanded extreme weather sheltering opportunities identified in the operational plan by no later than June 2023.~~ In developing the operational plan, the executive shall:

1. Conduct community outreach in low-income communities ~~and unhoused communities~~ in unincorporated King County to gather information on ~~the communities' preference for the~~ locations and features that would result in the highest utilization of centers and disaster shelters during extreme cold, heat and wildfire smoke events and other disasters;

2. Encourage the cities, in similar locations within their jurisdictions, and the Regional Homelessness Authority, in unhoused communities, to gather information on locations and features that would result in the highest utilization of centers and disaster shelters for the cities, and centers, disaster shelters, and shelters for unhoused persons for the Regional Homelessness Authority, during extreme cold, heat and wildfire smoke events and other disasters, and Consolidate this information put with the County's Regional Homeless Authority's outreach efforts in unincorporated King County with unhoused communities as well as with city outreach results Outreach efforts should also seek to identify other community needs in responding to extreme weather events;

~~2.3. Based on information gathered from low income these communities, determine with appropriate city, state, federal, tribal and private sector businesses provide a listing and map of locations that King County owned or operated facilities in King County could that serve as cooling, warming or clean air centers, or disaster shelters or shelters for unhoused persons or storage space in the event of extreme cold, heat and wildfire smoke events and other disasters and provide a listing of locations;~~

~~4. Develop and update as the inventory changes a list of county facilities that could be rapidly repurposed to serve as shelters in the event of extreme cold, heat, and wildfire smoke with an emphasis on those facilities that can be available to residents of unincorporated areas or residents of cities that do not have access to similar facilities in their own cities;~~

~~3. Coordinate with city, state and federal agencies to identify any public or private facilities in King County that could serve as shelters in the event of extreme cold, heat and wildfire smoke event.~~

~~4.5. Develop a staffing model Identify the number of county staff needed to operate the facilities centers and disaster shelters identified in subsections 2 and 3 of this section A, the departments, agencies or community partners that will provide the staff, options for staffing using existing staff who voluntarily agree to temporary reassignments that includes and the cost estimatesd cost to provide staffing for a range of scenarios;~~

~~5. Identify the cost of any needed improvements for each of the county facilities identified in subsection 2 of this section A.~~

~~6. In coordination with the state department of social and health services, identify any long term care assistance facilities or family care homes in King County that do not have air conditioning;~~

~~7. Develop a plan to offer hotel vouchers during extreme heat events to offer temperature controlled accommodations to those living in unincorporated King County who are the most vulnerable to the effects of heat, including the elderly, families with infants and those with underlying medical conditions, and opportunities to stay cool; and~~

6. Consider with KCRHA and city partners the use of vouchers for accommodations or day use activities for most vulnerable residents;

7. Include information, if available, from the state department of social and health services on long-term care assistance facilities and family care homes in King County that do not have conditioning;

8.5. Maintain a website with updated real-time information during extreme weather events, which includes a listing of all available shelters, where to go to get help and public health tips for staying safe during extreme weather events, and how to volunteer or donate resources to organizations providing support during extreme weather events; and

B. File the operational plan by ~~June 30~~February 28, 2024, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff for the transportation, economy and environment committee, or its successor.