

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

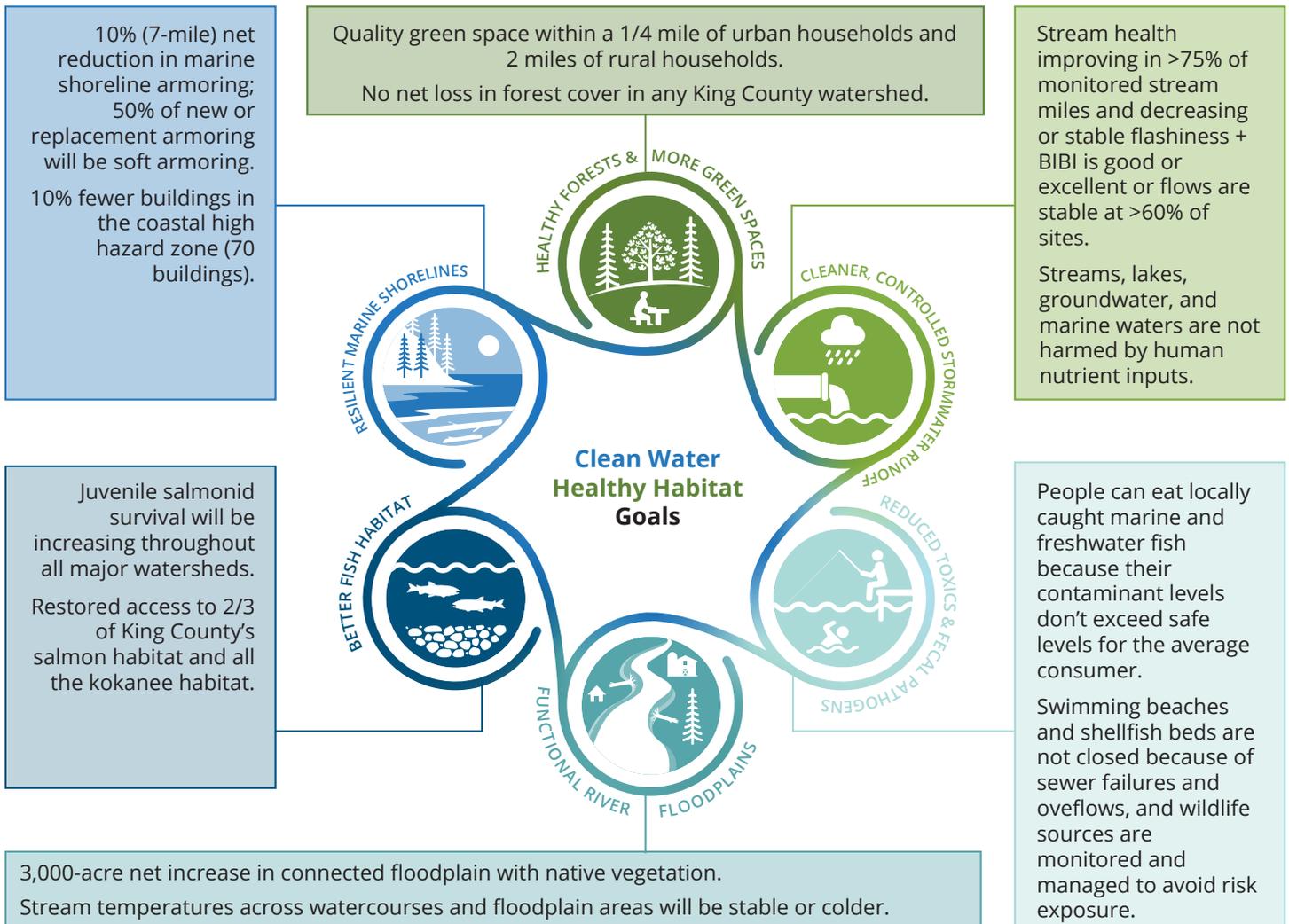
King County is committed to protecting and restoring clean water and healthy habitat in order to preserve and enhance the health and well-being of 2.25 million residents, fulfill tribal treaty rights, eliminate inequities, and recover threatened salmon and orca.

The purpose of the Clean Water Healthy Habitat Strategic Plan (strategic plan) is to align the County's work around shared goals and empower employees to deliver faster, better results in their work with residents, businesses, tribes, customers, partners, other governments, and nonprofit organizations.

In 2019, Executive Dow Constantine created the Clean Water Healthy Habitat Initiative with a vision to protect and restore the water and land that sustains all of us within a generation. The Executive challenged King County leaders and employees across the enterprise to:

- Develop measurable 30-year goals that represent environmental success and benefit all people, including, and especially, marginalized communities.
- Develop strategies that guide County work to achieve better, faster results; incorporate equity practices; and yield higher returns on public investments.

Goals The strategic plan centers on six 30-year goals that are connected to 12 measures to assess King County's progress.



In addition, each goal has 30-year outcomes described in three parts, like braided strands:

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- The best environmental outcomes believed to be possible in 30 years.
 - Benefits to humans from clean water and healthy habitat, when and where they need them.
 - Elimination of racial inequities and an increase in equitable environmental outcomes and benefits.

Healthy Forests and More Green Spaces:

- Forest cover and green spaces are protected, increasing, widespread, equitably distributed, healthy, and connected in ways that sustain habitat, stream functions, carbon storage, clean air, cool waters and air temperatures, and natural streamflow.
- Human health is supported, and cultural values and practices are ensured.
- Inequities in people's access to quality green space are eliminated by 2050.

Cleaner, Controlled Stormwater Runoff:

- Stormwater has less contaminants, pathogens, or nutrients; and water levels and stream flows are healthy for fish and aquatic life.
- Waters consistently provide swimming, fishing, and shellfishing opportunities and drinking water is clean.
- All lives, homes, and properties are protected from stormwater-related flooding.

Reduced Toxics and Fecal Pathogens:

- Toxic chemicals and fecal pathogens consistently decline and the health of salmon and resident orca is improving.
- King County is responsive to fecal pathogen contamination so that waters are safely managed and open for swimming and recreation for all people in King County.
- People can enjoy fish, crab, and other shellfish that are safer to eat, more plentiful, and sustainable.

Functional River Floodplains:

- Floodplains are reconnected and revegetated.
- Reductions in flood risk to people and structures, while supporting agriculture and open space.
- People have equitable access to flood programs and projects and King County provides targeted support to land and capital for farmers who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

Better Fish Habitat:

- Native wild fish populations are thriving and self-sustaining, with ample healthy habitat.
- People can enjoy locally caught fish.
- Tribes have abundant salmon to provide for their economic and cultural prosperity.

Resilient Marine Shorelines:

- Beach and marine shoreline habitat processes are maintained and fewer structures are vulnerable to sea level rise.
- People aren't in harm's way, functions provided by vital infrastructure are sustained, and residents' drinking water is clean.
- Treaty rights can be meaningfully exercised related to fish and shellfish.



Strategies

The strategic plan presents 13 strategies to realize the vision of the Clean Water Healthy Habitat Initiative. They address barriers preventing better outcomes. They are aligned and coordinated with the 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) and Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan. Strategies build on functional plans implementing the work and inform land and water management in communities across the County. Strategies focus on “upstream” changes to policies, practices, and systems that functional plans need for better and faster environmental outcomes. Strategies are framed by Clean Water Healthy Habitat principles directed by the Executive:

Equitable Investments and Community Engagement strategies create guidance for consistent data gathering to ensure community priorities inform the services provided and that investments go where they are most needed. Strategies will be consistent and coordinated with the ESJ Strategic Plan. The intent is to address systemic racial discrimination that burdens BIPOC communities with degraded environments, contributing to inequities in health, well-being, and economic prosperity.

- **Strategy 1.** Engage community partners to align delivery of County environmental services with community priorities and development of data that highlight current environmental inequities resulting from racial discrimination.
- **Strategy 2.** Establish an equitable Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)-wide community partnership vision, standards, and protocols.
- **Strategy 3.** Continue to promote more equitable hiring and contracting.

Integration strategies leverage funding and staff resources, orient toward shared outcomes while delivering program goals, identify synergies, promote a better run government, and communicate what we are doing and why.

- **Strategy 4.** Integrate capital planning and monitoring to maximize multi-benefits.
- **Strategy 5.** Integrate natural asset management.
- **Strategy 6.** Shift the workplace culture to incentivize integration.
- **Strategy 7.** Create integrated data tools.

Standardization and Systems Approach strategies promote work programs at watershed- and system-scales, across lines of business, to achieve shared outcomes. Standardized goals will help programs find ways to support multiple Clean Water Healthy Habitat outcomes, even if that work was previously beyond the scope.

- **Strategy 8.** Add multi-benefit criteria to King County grants and incentive programs.
- **Strategy 9.** Update the Green Building Sustainable Infrastructure Scorecard.

Innovation strategies focus on employees bringing forward new ideas to improve outcomes of planned investments and on developing new funding streams invested in the highest environmental returns. Success depends on problem solving, advancements in technology, data analytics and visualization, market mechanics, and novel partnerships.

- **Strategy 10.** Promote employee-generated innovation.
- **Strategy 11.** Pursue innovative funding mechanisms.

Outcome-driven decision-making strategies call for identifying the best outcomes that can be achieved and then designing ways to get there. Internal and external regulations and policies guide how the County invests public dollars, does long-term planning, manages land use, and implements projects.

This strategy directs us to challenge laws, regulations, and policies prohibiting the County from achieving the best environmental results.

- **Strategy 12.** Develop regulatory alternatives for improved environmental outcomes.
- **Strategy 13.** Develop and implement an interdepartmental work plan and policy framework between the Department of Natural Resources and Parks and the Department of Local Services.

Implementation

Every five years, the County will assess what barriers were removed to create better environmental outcomes for King County. In 2025, targets will be evaluated, and strategies will be adjusted or updated. The sum of the functional plans' success will be indicated by progress toward 30-year goals and measures, which may be adjusted at that time. Implementation of individual actions and the five-year update will be done in coordination and alignment with the 2025 SCAP.

Clean Water Healthy Habitat is a promise to deliver better, faster results that yield a higher return on public investments. Success depends on employees and King County's environmental partners embracing this integrated framework. King County is committed to achieving the goals with urgency. The County will provide environmental leadership supported by science, with priorities co-created by communities to eliminate inequities from systemic racism. Through Clean Water Healthy Habitat, the County will continue to deliver on the promise of making King County a welcoming community where every person can thrive.