



# KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

## Signature Report

### Motion 15555

**Proposed No.** 2019-0434.1

**Sponsors** Balducci, Kohl-Welles,  
Dembowski, McDermott and Gossett

1           A MOTION relating to communitywide greenhouse gas  
2           emissions; directing the executive to conduct further  
3           outreach and engagement with local governments and other  
4           stakeholders, and to develop a toolkit for local governments  
5           to use in planning, implementing and monitoring actions to  
6           reduce greenhouse gases.

7           WHEREAS, in October 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change  
8           released a special report concluding that humans must reduce global greenhouse gas  
9           emissions by forty-five percent by 2030 to limit global warming to one and one-half  
10          degrees Celsius, and

11          WHEREAS, warming beyond one and one-half degrees Celsius is projected to  
12          irreversibly impact food systems, water supplies, public health, economic growth and  
13          natural resources around the globe, and

14          WHEREAS, the past five years have been the hottest on record, and in 2017  
15          global temperature rise surpassed one degree Celsius above preindustrial levels, and

16          WHEREAS, over seven hundred localities around the world have declared a  
17          climate emergency to drive efforts to prevent the worst effects of climate change, and

18          WHEREAS, every action to limit warming matters and every government, every  
19          community and every individual can play a role, but collective multisector coordination

20 will be most effective in combatting climate change, and

21 WHEREAS, King County is already experiencing the impacts of climate change:  
22 more frequent wildfires, rising sea levels, declining mountain snowpack, worsening flood  
23 and drought risk and extreme heat, and

24 WHEREAS, unless adequately addressed, climate change will have devastating  
25 effects on regional economies, infrastructure, recreation, the natural environment, public  
26 health, safety and quality of life, and

27 WHEREAS, the effects of climate change will disproportionately impact frontline  
28 communities in King County that are predominantly low-income and communities of  
29 color who, due to historic systems of structural racism and oppression, have been limited  
30 in their capacity to mitigate and respond to climate impacts, and

31 WHEREAS, in 2016 King County adopted the Equity and Social Justice Strategic  
32 Plan, which directs the county to consider equity and the disproportionate environmental  
33 burdens experienced by frontline communities in county investments and policy, and

34 WHEREAS, such a consideration requires active community engagement and  
35 outreach with frontline communities throughout policy and program development, and

36 WHEREAS, King County has a long history of commitment to combatting  
37 climate change and is a national leader in local climate action, and

38 WHEREAS, in 2014 King County and its thirty-nine cities developed  
39 countywide, community-scale greenhouse gas emission reduction targets of eighty  
40 percent by 2050 against a 2007 baseline, with benchmark target reductions of twenty-five  
41 percent by 2020 and fifty percent by 2030, and

42 WHEREAS, these targets were formally adopted as countywide planning policies

43 by the King County Growth Management Planning Council in 2014 to guide the  
44 comprehensive planning of King County and its cities, and

45 WHEREAS, in 2015 King County convened the King County-Cities Climate  
46 Collaboration, which now includes membership by King County, sixteen cities and the  
47 Port of Seattle, representing eighty percent of the county's population, and adopted the  
48 Joint County-City Climate Commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across  
49 King County consistent with countywide planning policies, and

50 WHEREAS, in 2015 King County adopted the Strategic Climate Action Plan,  
51 which identified specific goals, strategies, measures, targets and over seventy priority  
52 actions related to transportation and land use, building efficiency, green building, waste  
53 management and forests and agriculture to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in  
54 government operations and at the community scale, and

55 WHEREAS, King County has made progress since the 2015 Strategic Climate  
56 Action Plan, including the Metro transit department transitioning to a zero-emission fleet,  
57 the county surpassing its energy-use goals in county-owned facilities and the county  
58 being on-track to source ninety-eight percent of its electricity supplies in Puget Sound  
59 Energy service territory from renewable energy in 2020 through Puget Sound Energy's  
60 green direct program, all of which have resulted in significant reductions in county  
61 government operational emissions, and

62 WHEREAS, King County has worked with its partners in the King County-Cities  
63 Climate Collaboration to implement programs to achieve community-scale goals, such as  
64 county support in the development of green building tools, enrollment of additional  
65 member cities and businesses in the green direct program and the containment of ninety-

66 eight percent of new development within urban growth areas, and

67 WHEREAS, King County reports on countywide greenhouse gas emissions every  
68 two years, providing an estimate of communitywide emissions released within the county  
69 geographic boundary and resulting from community activities, and

70 WHEREAS, local government operations account for a small portion of  
71 communitywide greenhouse gas emissions, for example, King County government  
72 operations account for approximately one and seven-tenths percent of the county's  
73 communitywide emissions, and

74 WHEREAS, communitywide greenhouse gas emissions have decreased just one  
75 and four-tenths percent between 2007 and 2017, and are not on track to achieve the  
76 eighty percent reduction goal by 2050, and

77 WHEREAS, globally, cities are responsible for seventy percent of greenhouse gas  
78 emissions, and

79 WHEREAS, King County must work together with local governments in  
80 cooperation with a broader range of stakeholders, including the private sector and  
81 community members, to achieve significant communitywide greenhouse gas emissions  
82 reductions, and

83 WHEREAS, King County is positioned as a regional partner to support local  
84 governments and other stakeholders in acting to achieve communitywide goals, and

85 WHEREAS, available climate science and observable climate impacts have  
86 demonstrated the immense, urgent threat that climate change poses to public health and  
87 safety, which requires immediate and cross-jurisdictional action to reduce  
88 communitywide greenhouse gas emissions;

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

90 A. The executive, building upon current efforts, should greatly expand efforts to  
91 accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in order to meet established  
92 communitywide climate goals. As part of these expanded efforts, the executive should:

93 1. Partner with local governments to provide resources and build capacity to  
94 implement local and cross-jurisdictional climate initiatives, especially those outlined in  
95 the Joint County-City Commitments;

96 2. Expand partnerships with nongovernmental stakeholders and the broader  
97 community to drive actions to reduce emissions communitywide;

98 3. Develop a consistent and uniform system to track and report greenhouse gas  
99 emissions progress made by local governments across King County; and

100 4. Identify new and existing funding sources necessary to support that work.

101 B.1. The executive should engage a consultant to develop a robust climate action  
102 plan toolkit. The toolkit should include recommended actions and best practices to  
103 support the development and implementation of comprehensive local climate action plans  
104 by local jurisdictions and other partners to reduce communitywide emissions.

105 2. The climate action toolkit should enable the user to assess the user's  
106 jurisdiction's or agency's individualized needs, provide a comprehensive list of  
107 recommended actions to help reduce communitywide emissions and identify the expected  
108 co-benefits of those actions. The toolkit should include the following:

109 a. recommended approaches, resources and tools that local governments and  
110 other large organizations can use to calculate a baseline of communitywide greenhouse  
111 gas emissions within their jurisdiction;

112           b. recommended actions for advancing Joint County-City Climate  
113 Commitments and reducing emissions in each of the following action categories. The  
114 recommended actions should be focused on reducing communitywide greenhouse gas  
115 emissions, but also include actions intended to support reductions in emissions from local  
116 government operations and water and energy utilities operations:

- 117           (1) transportation and land use;
- 118           (2) green building and energy efficiency;
- 119           (3) consumption and waste management, including food;
- 120           (4) forests and agriculture, including healthy city tree canopies and the  
121 promotion of carbon dioxide sequestration in soils; and
- 122           (5) water and energy utilities operations.

123           3. To support development of actions, the toolkit should include:

124           a. recommended approaches for assessing local greenhouse gas emissions  
125 sources, development patterns, and areas of local influence to identify and prioritize  
126 actions that will have the most impact in reducing emissions with in the city and at the  
127 community scale;

128           b. a comprehensive list of recommended actions, weighted based on their  
129 relative potential for emissions reductions and including information regarding their  
130 expected co-benefits such as public health, mobility, climate justice and equity, jobs and  
131 economic growth and the natural environment in jurisdictions with varying population  
132 sizes, land use patterns and emissions sources;

133           c. policy actions, grant funding, utility incentives, business and community  
134 partnerships and financing strategies that can support implementation of actions;

135 d. best practices for setting goals and targets, monitoring progress and publicly  
136 reporting actual greenhouse gas emissions reductions;

137 e. best or emerging practices for public engagement, outreach and education to  
138 involve the broader community, and especially frontline communities, in reducing  
139 communitywide greenhouse gas emissions;

140 f. recommendations to assist the user in overseeing and coordinating climate  
141 actions in the various substantive areas to maximize the overall impact; and

142 g. recommendations for achieving climate justice and equity for frontline and  
143 disadvantaged populations.

144 4. When developing the climate action toolkit, the executive, with support from  
145 a consultant, should:

146 a. collaborate with local jurisdictions and tribes, including King County-Cities  
147 Climate Collaboration partners, to develop strategies that can be implemented locally;

148 b. review other local government climate action plans and climate action  
149 planning toolkits that have been developed for other local governments;

150 c. engage with and incorporate input from the community, especially frontline  
151 communities, via workshops and other engagement with stakeholder groups, such as the  
152 King County Climate Equity Frontline Community Task Force, 350 groups, People for  
153 Climate Action and Climate Solutions;

154 d. engage with and incorporate input from other nongovernmental stakeholders  
155 such as local businesses, unions, and utilities; and

156 e. engage with King County council central staff and interested  
157 councilmembers.

158           5. The consultant's final work product should take the form of a climate action  
159 plan toolkit and a plan to distribute and promote its use by local governments,  
160 nongovernmental stakeholders, advocates and the community as a resource in decision-  
161 making and the implementation of local climate action plans. The distribution and  
162 promotion plan should include a convening of local governments to introduce the toolkit  
163 and explore areas for collaboration in its implementation.

164           6. No later than July 31, 2020, the executive should transmit to the King County  
165 council a motion approving the climate action plan toolkit, a summary of  
166 recommendations, a report detailing the outreach and engagement process, feedback  
167 received and the plan to distribute and promote the toolkit's use. The motion shall be  
168 filed in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council,  
169 who will retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the  
170 council chief of staff and the lead staff to the mobility and environment committee or its  
171 successor.

172           7. The executive, in collaboration with local governments and other  
173 stakeholders, should conduct a preliminary review of the toolkit's adoption by local  
174 jurisdictions within two years of the time the toolkit is first issued. Further review and  
175 updates of the toolkit and its effectiveness should be conducted periodically thereafter.

176           8. The executive, in collaboration with local governments, should compile and



177 publish a report every two years of available greenhouse gas emission reductions data  
178 from local governments across King County.  
179

Motion 15555 was introduced on 10/16/2019 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 12/4/2019, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Lambert, Mr. Dunn, Mr. McDermott, Mr. Dembowski, Mr. Upthegrove, Ms. Kohl-Welles and Ms. Balducci



KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Rod Dembowski, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

**Attachments:** None