

Project Overview

Thurston Regional Planning Council

April 2017

THURSTON CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN

The Challenge & Opportunity

Storms. Wildfires. Droughts. Floods ... We face such natural hazards today, and climate change is projected to make them worse tomorrow. Human activities — such as burning fossil fuels to produce electricity — are changing the earth’s climate by increasing atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases.

This process is known as the “greenhouse effect.” It increases air and water temperatures, shifts precipitation patterns, raises sea levels, and poses many risks for our human and natural systems — everything from our urban waterfronts and rural farmlands, to our salmon runs and shellfish beds.

The challenge: Climate change is already impacting our quality of life and will continue to for generations to come.

The opportunity: We are preparing today so that we are more resilient tomorrow. It’s the responsible thing to do.

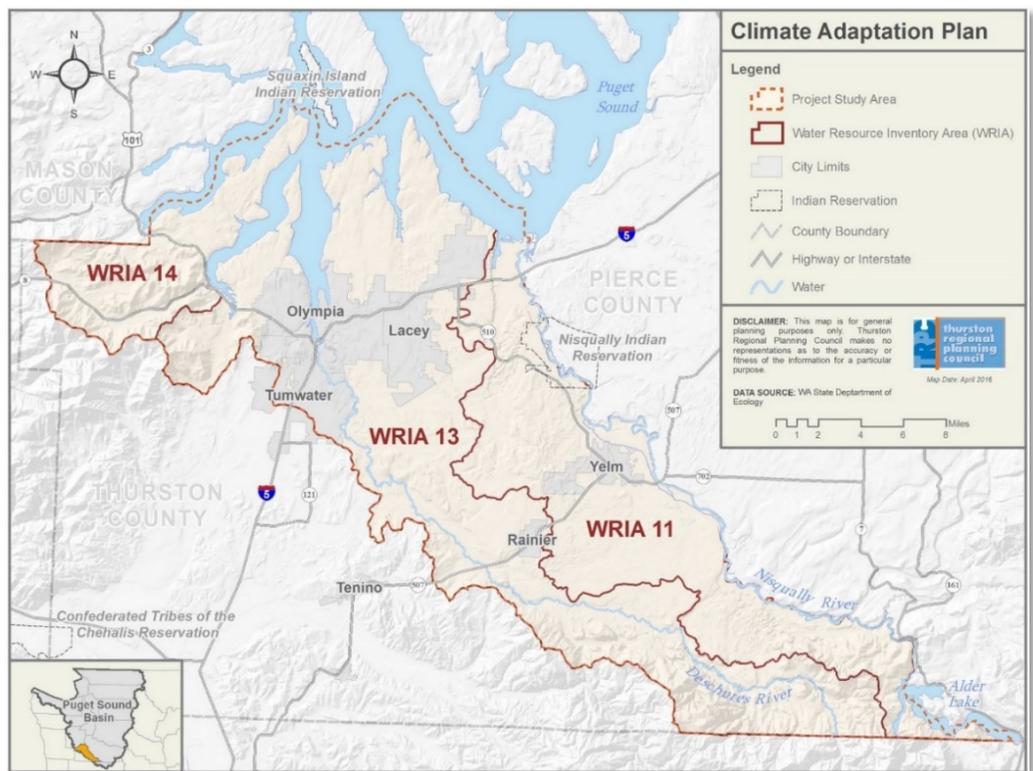
Project Funding & Purpose

The Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) is using a National Estuary Program (NEP) grant to develop a watershed-based climate adaptation plan with actions the Thurston County region could take to prepare for and cope with climate change impacts in the decades ahead. The Washington Department of Commerce is administering the U.S. EPA funding over the project period, which concludes in early 2018. TRPC is uniquely qualified for this important work, as the metropolitan planning organization’s mission is to assemble stakeholders, analyze data, build consent for regional plans, and support local action.

Project Area

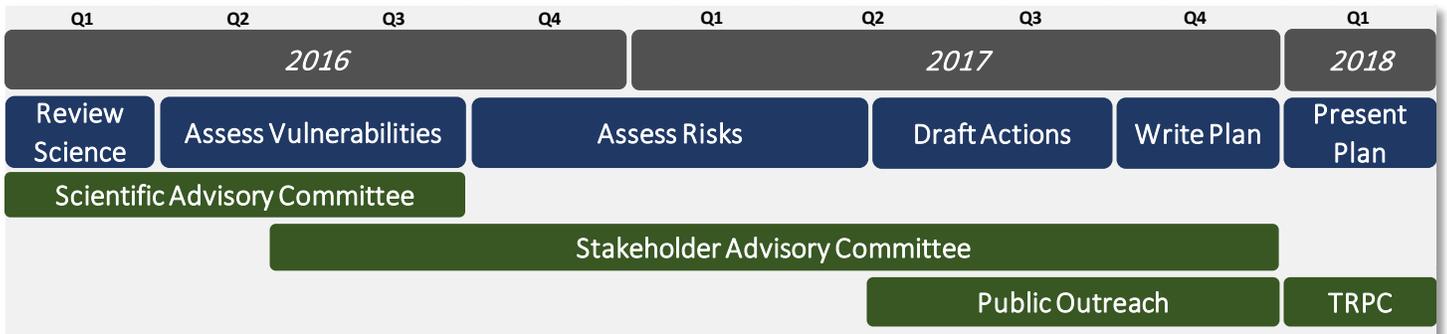
The planning area includes parts of three watersheds that overlay northern and eastern Thurston County and drain into Puget Sound [See map]; these watersheds — defined by the state Department of Ecology as Watershed Resource Inventory Areas (WRIAs) — include Nisqually (WRIA 11), Deschutes (WRIA 13), and Kennedy/Goldsborough (WRIA 14).

Southwestern Thurston County drains into Grays Harbor via the Chehalis River, so this area is not included in the NEP grant and Puget Sound spatial analysis of climate change impacts. That said, many of the actions for the project area will likely be applicable to the rest of Thurston County and the broader Puget Sound region.



Project Process

The project entails: researching and summarizing past and projected climate change impacts within the region; assessing climate change vulnerabilities and risks for built and natural assets (e.g., roads, estuaries, crops); developing adaptation strategies and actions; conducting benefit-cost analyses; and, drafting a climate adaptation plan for TRPC policymaker adoption. Like TRPC's [Sustainable Thurston](#) plan, the [Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan](#) will include a menu of options for the region's diverse communities, as well as identify priorities, leads and partners.



Project Roles

The project team — composed of local government staff — has assessed climate change vulnerabilities, risks and impacts. In coming months, the team will evaluate actions for inclusion in a draft plan for TRPC policymaker consideration (in early 2018). In the meantime, the project team will continue working with two advisory committees:

- A **Scientific Advisory Committee** — composed of scientists from local tribes and universities — reviews project materials, as needed, to ensure technical accuracy.
- A **Stakeholder Advisory Committee** — whose members were selected based on their technical and policy expertise — will help the project team evaluate and prioritize adaptation actions, as well as recommend a draft plan for TRPC policymaker adoption. This committee meets monthly at TRPC, and members of the public are encouraged to attend.

Project Communications

TRPC will facilitate a [climate adaptation community forum](#) to spread the word about the project and elicit action ideas:

- **When:** Monday, April 17th, from 5:30-8PM
- **Where:** South Puget Sound Community College's Lacey campus — Building 1, 4220 6th Ave SE, Lacey WA 98503

Project meeting dates and materials — including a [survey to recommend adaptation actions](#) — are posted online:

- **Website:** www.trpc.org/climate

Project inquiries may be directed to:

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