

Project Overview

Thurston Regional Planning Council

Fall 2017

THURSTON CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN

The Challenge & Opportunity

Storms, floods, droughts, wildfires ...

We face such natural hazards today, and climate change will worsen them 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, known as the “greenhouse effect,” increases air and water temperatures, shifts precipitation patterns, raises sea levels, and poses many risks for our human and natural systems — everything from urban waterfronts and rural farmlands, to salmon runs and shellfish beds.

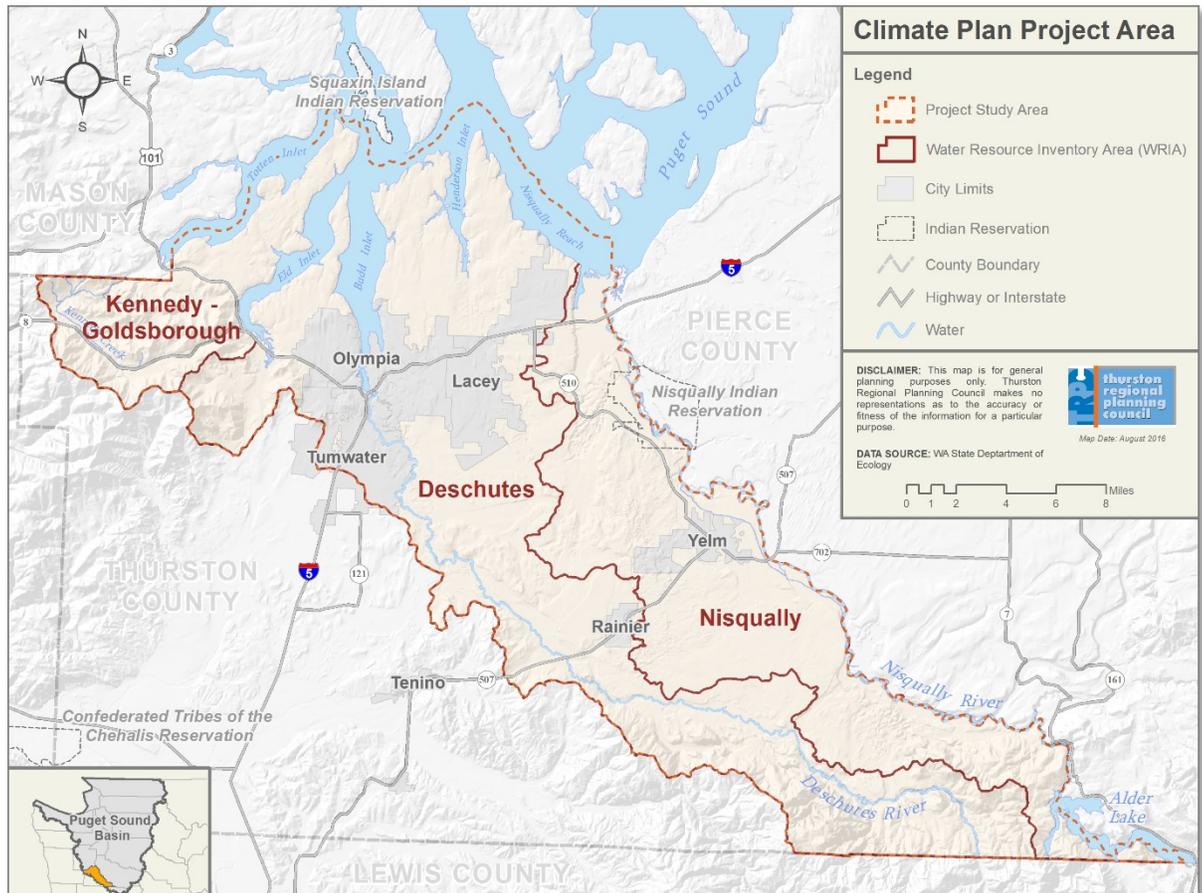
- **The challenge:** Climate change is impacting our quality of life and will continue to for generations to come.
- **The opportunity:** We can prepare and adjust today so we’re more resilient tomorrow. It’s the responsible thing to do.

Project Funding & Purpose

The Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) is using a National Estuary Program (NEP) grant to develop the *Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan*, a watershed-based plan with actions the Thurston County region (Thurston Region) could take to prepare for and adjust to adverse climate impacts. 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 project area includes parts of three watersheds that overlay northern and eastern Thurston County and drain into Puget Sound: Nisqually, Deschutes, and Kennedy/Goldsborough [See map].

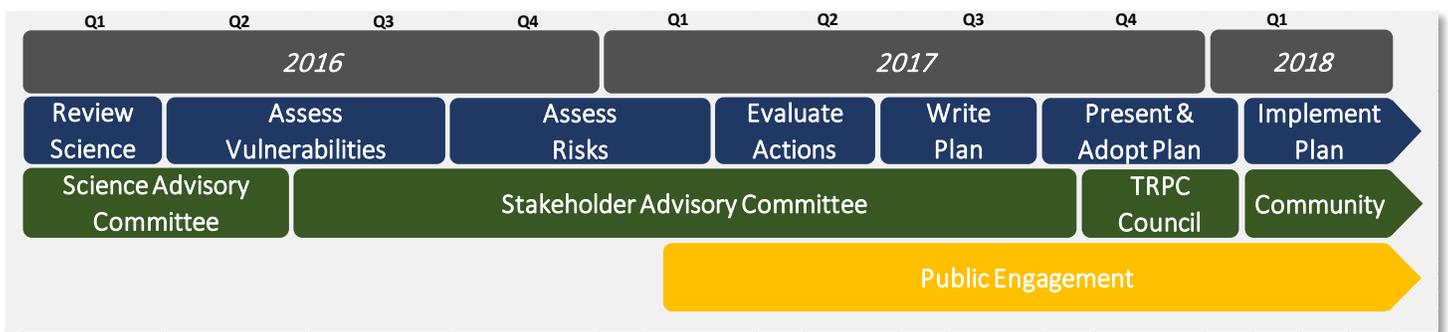


The Chehalis River Basin covers southwestern Thurston County and drains into the Pacific Ocean, so this area is outside of the NEP grant’s boundary. That said, many of the *Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan’s* actions may be applied effectively across Thurston County’s entire 774-square-mile area. Indeed, TRPC hopes that other communities throughout the Puget Sound region, state, and nation will replicate this project’s science-based assessments and comprehensive actions.

Project Process

Completed work on the project includes: researching and summarizing past and projected climate change impacts within the region; assessing climate change vulnerabilities and risks for humans and built and natural assets (e.g., roads, buildings, estuaries, plants); developing adaptation actions that incorporate community ideas; conducting economic analyses of representative actions; and, drafting an adaptation plan for TRPC policymaker consideration.

Like TRPC’s [Sustainable Thurston](#) plan, the [Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan](#) includes a menu of options for the region’s diverse communities, as well as identifies priorities, leads, and partners. It will be up to tribes, cities, businesses, neighborhoods, and other stakeholders what actions to take, when, and where.



Project Roles

The project team — composed of local government staff — worked with a Science Advisory Committee to assess climate change vulnerabilities, risks, and impacts [see below]. A Stakeholder Advisory Committee used this scientific foundation to evaluate and prioritize actions for inclusion in the plan.

- The 5-member **Science Advisory Committee** — composed of scientists from local tribes and universities — reviewed project materials, as needed, to ensure technical accuracy.
- The 22-member **Stakeholder Advisory Committee** — whose members were selected based on their policy expertise — helped the project team evaluate and prioritize adaptation actions.

Next Steps

Tell us what you think: The project team has posted online a draft of the *Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan*. The team is seeking public feedback this fall, and the team will seek TRPC policymaker adoption of the plan this winter.

- Please visit www.trpc.org/climate to read the plan and provide feedback via a brief survey.

Project Communications

Questions may be directed to:

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