

PUBLIC RELEASE MEMORANDUM

January 31, 2025

To: Skagit County, Washington
From: Kimley-Horn & Associates

Skagit County Vulnerability Assessment Frequently Asked Questions as Part of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update

What is the Skagit County Vulnerability Assessment?

The Skagit County Vulnerability Assessment was conducted as part of the County's Comprehensive Plan periodic update. This assessment identifies and evaluates potential impacts from climate-related hazards on County-owned assets and other resources critical to the community's resilience. The analysis follows the requirements of Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA), specifically [RCW 36.70A.070\(9\)](#), and incorporates the recommended steps provided by the Washington Department of Commerce. For information about the required analysis and steps [visit the Department of Commerce Climate Planning Website](#).

Who completed this analysis?

Kimley-Horn, a consultant for Skagit County, completed the climate vulnerability assessment for the new Climate Element as part of Skagit County's 2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.

Why was the Vulnerability Assessment conducted?

The assessment ensures that Skagit County is proactively addressing risks posed by climate-related hazards, such as flooding, wildfire, and sea-level rise. This helps protect public assets, prioritize investments, and plan for a more resilient community. In addition, this is a requirement passed by State law and is part of a larger effort to manage growth within a climate change framework.

What does the Vulnerability Assessment cover?

The analysis focuses on:

- County-owned assets, such as facilities, infrastructure, and public services.
- Vital community resources to bolster resilience against prevalent climate hazards in Skagit County.

Are all jurisdictions in Skagit County completing similar assessments?

Yes, all cities within Skagit County are completing their own vulnerability assessments/climate-related analysis as part of their respective comprehensive plan updates. All cities and counties

are required to adopt new climate element with resiliency sub-elements. Residents who live within city boundaries are encouraged to visit their city's website for more information:

- [City of Mount Vernon](#)
- [City of Burlington](#)
- [City of Sedro-Woolley](#)
- [City of Anacortes](#)

Will there be an opportunity for public input on the Vulnerability Assessment?

While Skagit County is not accepting public comments specifically on the Vulnerability Assessment at this time, there will be opportunities to provide input at future Planning Commission meetings. For details about upcoming meetings and how to participate, please [visit the Skagit County Planning Commission website](#).

How does the Vulnerability Assessment align with state laws and guidelines?

The assessment adheres to the [Growth Management Act \(GMA\) RCW 36.70A.070\(9\)](#), which mandates counties to identify and plan for potential climate-related risks. Skagit County has followed [guidance from the Washington Department of Commerce](#) to ensure a thorough and compliant analysis.

What data was used for this analysis?

Kimley-Horn listed sources that were used in Appendix B: Sources and References and comprises mainly of – but are not limited to – public agency mapping tools and reports in addition to the standard [CMRW tool](#). The data used by staff is based on those required and recommended from the Department of Commerce's [Intermediate Guidance](#), which will be revised in late 2025 and every five years thereafter. Staff strives to remain balanced in using data to support the climate vulnerability assessment while being consistent with State laws.

How will the results of the Vulnerability Assessment be used?

The findings from the Vulnerability Assessment guide policy updates, prioritize infrastructure investments, and inform future planning initiatives to improve the County's resilience to climate-related hazards. The policies will be included in a new Climate and Resiliency Element in the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan. A draft of the Comprehensive Plan will be released February-March 2025. A first draft of climate-related policies was presented to the Planning Commission in October 2024 when the vulnerability assessment was partially complete and under review by the County. There was a 30-day public comment period for climate-related policies and Skagit County received over 100 public comments relating to climate and resiliency. Visit the [Skagit County Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update Website](#) to see climate-related public comments received.

What will be done with the analysis?

Next, the County will take any one or combination of pathways, which include:

1. Selecting or adapting existing goals or policies (Pathway 1);
2. Developing new goals or policies (Pathway 2); and/or
3. Updating a hazard mitigation plan and adopt it, by reference, in the comprehensive plan (Pathway 3).

The data will be used eventually to support actions in pursuit of any of the chosen pathways.

Where can I find more information about the Skagit County's Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update?

For additional details about the Skagit County's Comprehensive Plan update, please visit the project website at: <https://www.skagitcounty.net/2025CPA>. You can find links to previous materials completed for the project, public comments submitted to date, and other community engagements events completed to date.

If you have questions about the assessment or need further assistance, please contact Skagit County Planning and Development Services at (360) 416-1320 or email us at planning@co.skagit.wa.us.