

CITY OF EDGEWOOD

DRAFT POLICY AUDIT

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Prepared by

MEASURE
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Overview

The City of Edgewood has taken meaningful steps toward climate resilience through its planning documents, regional partnerships, and environmental goals. The purpose of this policy audit is to understand the City's current policy strengths related to climate resilience. Notable areas of progress include environmental stewardship policies, open space planning, and alignment with Vision 2050 objectives. At the same time, there are opportunities to expand climate-related strategies in areas such as emergency management, critical areas, and green infrastructure. Strengthening the connection between planning goals and municipal code requirements could help Edgewood more fully integrate climate considerations into zoning, development, and public health policy.

Documents included in this policy audit & analysis

CITY OF EDGEWOOD PLANS & POLICIES

- Edgewood Comprehensive Plan (2024)
- Edgewood Municipal Code as of June 1, 2025
- Edgewood PROST Plan (2022)
- Capital Improvement Plan (2024-2029)

OUTSIDE PLANS & POLICIES

- Pierce County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020-2025)
- Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2050 (2020)
- General Sewer Plan (2024)
- Mt. View-Edgewood Water Company Water System Plan (2011)

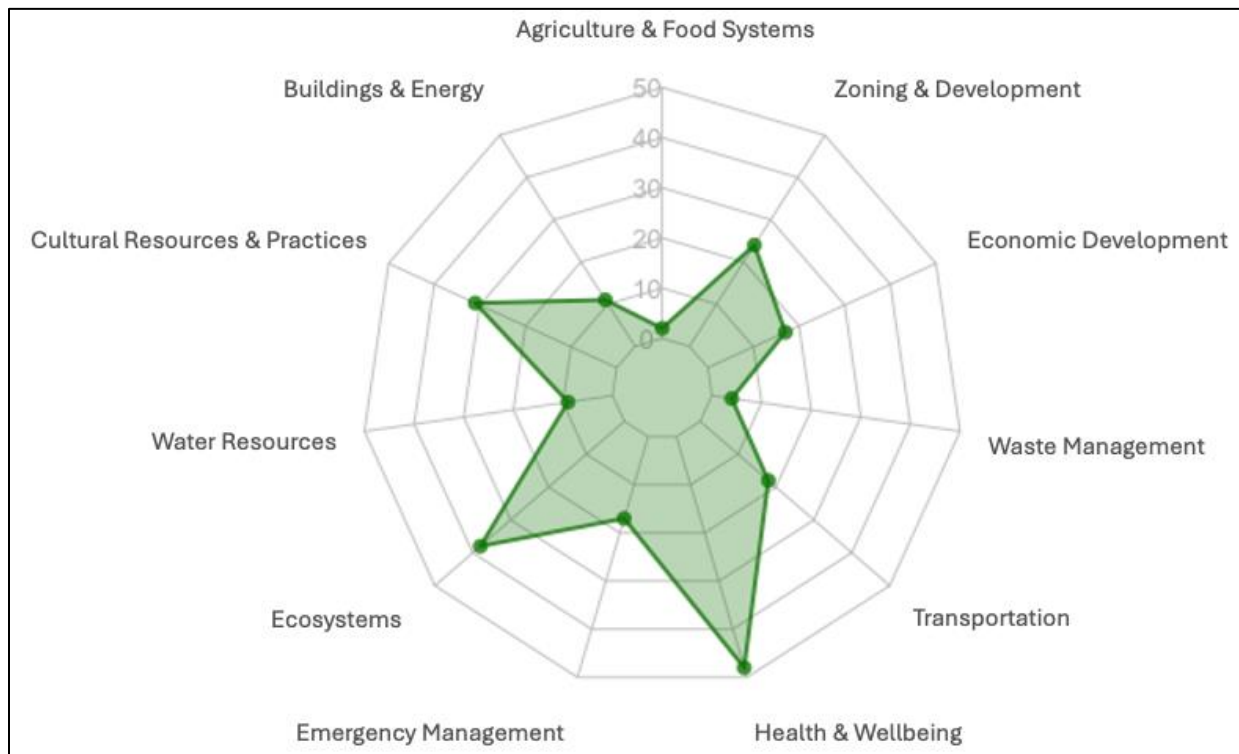


Figure 1. The chart above depicts the number of climate resilience related policies by sector in Edgewood's planning documents, including the Comprehensive Plan, Land Use and Zoning Ordinances, PROST Plan, Pierce County Hazard Mitigation Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, and General Sewer Plan. Excluded from this visual are Vision 2050 goals in order to focus on the policies in the City. Policies that relate to two sectors have been counted in both relevant sectors. These results show that greater focus on Buildings & Energy, Waste Management, Water Resources, and Agriculture & Food Systems may be advantageous.

Edgewood's Key Policy Strengths and Opportunities

The City of Edgewood has established a solid foundation for climate resilience through its planning documents, regional partnerships, and environmental priorities. Across the Comprehensive Plan and PROST Plan, the City articulates a clear vision for preserving ecological integrity, supporting community health, and fostering sustainable growth. These values are reflected in policies promoting compact development, protection of critical areas and riparian zones, water quality stewardship, inter-jurisdictional hazard mitigation, and transportation choices that reduce reliance on personal vehicles.

KEY STRENGTHS:

- Strong environmental stewardship policy language, particularly regarding riparian protection, water quality management, and ecosystem health.
- Open space planning through the PROST Plan supports physical and mental wellbeing while enhancing habitat connectivity and stormwater infiltration.
- Regionally, the City is aligned with Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2050 goals for reducing emissions, supporting green infrastructure, and creating more resilient, compact communities.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Agriculture & Food Systems, Buildings & Energy, and Economic Development lack explicit climate-related strategies. For example, the City may develop specific goals supporting green job creation, renewable energy deployment, or local food security.
- Emergency management does not yet fully incorporate climate projections or adaptive planning for future risks such as extreme heat or wildfire smoke. Public health planning would benefit from a more explicit focus on climate vulnerabilities, especially for frontline communities.
- The City promotes sustainability in zoning and development. However, many policies are suggestive rather than mandatory. This presents an opportunity to strengthen climate adaptation by requiring, rather than encouraging, climate-smart zoning, building codes, and green infrastructure.
- The City's Waste Management policies may be strengthened, with opportunities to formalize recycling, composting, and material reuse programs.
- The City may include policies on water reuse and long-term drought adaptation.

Aligning Planning documents with Edgewood Municipal Code:

- Include the best available climate science to guide the Surface Water Management and Site Development, Sewer System General Provisions, and Critical Areas Chapters (Titles 11, 13, & 14). Include climate considerations in infrastructure design standards and funding to accommodate more intense storms, flooding, and heat.
- Incorporate proactive, climate-friendly, and resilient design strategies in the Health and Wellness, Streets, Sidewalks and Public Areas, Buildings and Construction, and Development Standards Chapters (Titles 8, 12, 15, & 18). Include climate resilience strategies in waste management, landscaping, parking requirements, and materials standards.

The City is well-positioned to lead with proactive, enforceable policies that translate vision into action. The City of Edgewood can align its regulatory framework with its climate planning ambitions by closing the gap between policy goals and Municipal Code, ensuring that the built environment, ecosystems, and communities are prepared to thrive in a changing climate.

Edgewood's Primary Climate Considerations

Edgewood, like many communities globally, is experiencing the effects of a changing climate—trends that are expected to intensify in the coming years. Anticipated impacts include rising temperatures and more frequent extreme heat events; shifting precipitation patterns marked by heavier storms and prolonged droughts; and an increased risk of wildfires within the city and across the region.

These evolving conditions pose risks to public health, critical infrastructure, and natural systems. To ensure long-term community resilience, it is essential that climate projections inform current and future policy, planning, and investment decisions. The chart below summarizes how major climate drivers intersect with core areas of municipal planning:

Climate Driver	Policy Implications
Increasing temperatures and extreme heat events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure emergency management planning includes extreme heat response and considers periods of prolonged heat and smoke; emergency management preparedness should also include the possibility of two or more events happening at the same time. • Identify urban heat islands and include policies to mitigate high temperatures while prioritizing cooling resources for underserved and at-risk populations. • Evaluate transportation systems for vulnerabilities associated with high temperatures.
Increase high fire danger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build awareness and provide resources for people during smoke events. • Update land use policies and development regulations to include fire risk mitigation. • Prioritize populations most at-risk from wildfire smoke.
Shifting precipitation patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support an assessment to better understand how climate change will impact aquifer levels. • Implement policies to protect groundwater resources. • Evaluate capital facilities plans and water resource plans to include climate considerations. Identify opportunities to invest in flood mitigation for publicly owned infrastructure and for human safety. • Educate and support homeowners and people living in floodplains or near closed depressions.
Existing Disparities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify existing socioeconomic disparities during long-term planning projects and take actions to address them. • Understand that climate change will make existing disparities worse and take action to address these disparities. • Conduct a climate vulnerability assessment to better understand which individuals and groups are most at-risk from climate change. Prioritize actions and resources accordingly. • Work with local tribes to ensure land access to first foods and native fish protections.

Policy Analysis by Sector

Agriculture & Food Systems

STRENGTHS

Although Edgewood is not a major agricultural hub, its land use policies contribute indirectly to food system resilience. The Comprehensive Plan and Vision 2050 emphasize the protection of rural character and open spaces, which can safeguard peri-urban agricultural capacity. A focus on preservation of green corridors and undeveloped land provides a foundation for future community gardens or small-scale food production.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

The City currently lacks a comprehensive strategy for strengthening food systems in the face of climate change. There is only one explicit policy related to access to healthy food in the Comprehensive plan. Including support for local food producers could strengthen this sector. By considering food resilience in planning, such as incentives for community gardens, local procurement policies, or urban agriculture zones, Edgewood could better address climate-related disruptions to food supply chains.

Buildings & Energy

STRENGTHS

The City of Edgewood supports energy-efficient and resilient development, renewable energy development, and natural means of heating and cooling through trees and building design. Development standards encourage environmental design principles, and Vision 2050 reinforces a regional commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the built environment. The City's emphasis on compact, walkable development also contributes to reducing energy demand from transportation and infrastructure.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

The City does not have explicit incentives for energy retrofits and renewable energy installations. There is no formal framework to support electrification or zero-emission buildings. Strengthening development regulations to include energy benchmarking, on-site renewables, and energy efficiency performance standards would align Edgewood more closely with regional climate targets.

Cultural Resources & Practices

STRENGTHS

Edgewood's Comprehensive Plan demonstrates respect for cultural heritage, including recognition of the Puyallup Tribe and the preservation of historic sites. The PROST Plan reinforces this by incorporating cultural and historic features into the vision for park and trail development. These policies help safeguard the community's identity and sense of place amid growth and environmental change.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

There is limited engagement and collaborative stewardship with local Tribes in climate or environmental planning. Formalizing consultation processes into natural resource and land management decisions could enhance resilience while supporting reconciliation and cultural integrity. Identifying and investing in additional cultural resources beyond parks and natural areas can deepen residents' connection to Edgewood, potentially creating awareness of and resilience to climate change.

Economic Development

STRENGTHS

Edgewood's economic development framework emphasizes local business vitality, encouraging diverse industries, walkable commercial centers, and strategic infill—aligning well with climate resilience goals. The Town Center chapter of the Comprehensive Plan supports a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented economy that reduces reliance on fossil fuel-based transportation and encourages local resilience. Equitable outcomes are considered for persons of color, and attention is paid to avoid potential impacts of gentrification on existing businesses.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

Explicit links between climate resilience and economic planning could be established. Edgewood can improve integration by promoting green workforce development, sustainable industries, and climate-adaptive business support services. Emphasizing resilience in economic development may include supporting energy-independent businesses, local supply chains, and workforce training in clean technologies.

Ecosystems

STRENGTHS

Edgewood has strong policies protecting riparian corridors, wetlands, and critical habitats through its Comprehensive Plan, zoning overlays, and development codes. The PROST Plan also calls for improved habitat connectivity and ecological restoration in parks and open spaces, which further supports biodiversity and ecosystem health.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

Protecting critical ecosystems features prominently in Edgewood's planning documents. However, restoration initiatives are not as robust. Proactive measures like reforestation, invasive species management, and green infrastructure installation could further climate resilience by improving stormwater management and mitigating urban heat islands. Strategic investment in ecological restoration can enhance both adaptive capacity and community well-being.

Emergency Management

STRENGTHS

The Pierce County Hazard Mitigation Plan includes Edgewood in its regional risk assessments and identifies natural hazards such as earthquakes, flooding, and severe storms. Local policies

support hazard mapping and interjurisdictional coordination, laying the groundwork for more resilient emergency response systems.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

Edgewood's emergency planning does not yet fully reflect emerging climate risks such as extreme heat, wildfire smoke, potential flooding, or chronic drought. Updating emergency preparedness protocols to include these hazards, and identifying vulnerable populations, will be crucial. The City should ensure alignment between emergency plans and climate adaptation strategies to foster long-term community resilience. Climate hazards can compound with other climate and non-climate hazards; they can also last for longer durations. It is important for emergency management planning to consider compounding risks and the potential for emergencies that last more than a couple hours or days.

Health & Wellbeing

STRENGTHS

Edgewood's planning documents promote community health through access to open space, pedestrian infrastructure, and clean air and water. The PROST Plan prioritizes equity in park access, emphasizing the mental and physical health benefits of nature for all residents. Policies limiting noise, light, and pollution also contribute to health-focused environmental quality.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

The City does not currently assess or address climate-related health impacts, including exposure to heatwaves or air pollution. Future resilience planning should incorporate public health risk assessments and outreach, particularly for seniors, children, and low-income residents. Several locations within Edgewood are exposed to above-average pollution (in the 90th percentile compared to the rest of the U.S.) from diesel particulate matter and proximity to facilities that are required to have risk plans due to the potential for chemical accidents (noted through US EPA-designated Risk Management Plan facilities using the Environmental Justice Screening Tool). People in areas with high pollutant levels will likely be more affected by high heat, smoke, and other climate-related hazards.

Transportation

STRENGTHS

Edgewood promotes multimodal transportation through compact, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly development and connectivity goals in the Comprehensive Plan. Vision 2050 amplifies these priorities with regional goals for compact development, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and expanding public transit.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

Edgewood could further climate resilience by integrating electric vehicle infrastructure, strengthening transit partnerships, and enhancing the durability of transportation infrastructure to withstand extreme weather. Setting local emission targets and incentives for non-auto travel would further align Edgewood with regional transportation climate goals.

Waste Management

STRENGTHS

Waste management goals are present in the Comprehensive Plan, particularly around establishing infrastructure for recyclables. Regional policies in Vision 2050 support waste reduction and circular economy approaches, providing a policy context for expansion.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

Edgewood has not yet implemented specific programs for composting, organic waste diversion, or waste-related emissions reduction. Developing these services or partnering with appropriate agencies, alongside educational campaigns and business waste diversion incentives, could significantly improve this sector's contribution to resilience and sustainability.

Water Resources

STRENGTHS

Edgewood's Water System Plan and Comprehensive Plan include policies for groundwater protection and water quality monitoring. Mt. View-Edgewood Water Company demonstrates strong operational practices, including metering, leakage tracking, and conservation-based demand projections. The City's emphasis on riparian protection and stormwater infiltration further supports ecological water management.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

Despite these strengths, Mt. View-Edgewood Water Company does not formally assess future climate risks to water supply, such as seasonal variability or long-term drought. Incorporating adaptive strategies such as water reuse, decentralized stormwater systems, and demand reduction programs will be increasingly important as climate variability intensifies. Population growth projections should be updated for accuracy in current and future water system plans. Additionally, we recommend more research on how climate change is expected to impact aquifer recharge.

Zoning & Development

STRENGTHS

Edgewood employs zoning strategies that promote compact growth, protect critical areas, and incorporate low-impact development techniques. Overlay zones and design guidelines help align development with environmental protection goals. These approaches support hazard avoidance and minimize impervious surface coverage.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

Many zoning policies are encouraged rather than required, and resilience considerations (e.g., wildfire buffers, heat-resilient landscaping, flood mitigation) are not consistently embedded in land use regulations. Codifying resilience strategies within the zoning code, such as requiring native green infrastructure, would create enforceable standards for future growth.

Climate-Resilient Municipal Code Updates

This preliminary review identifies potential opportunities to enhance Edgewood's Municipal Code in support of climate resilience and greenhouse gas mitigation. The findings should be validated through staff review and informed by a Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

Edgewood has incorporated a range of environmental considerations throughout its Municipal Code, including provisions for development standards, critical area protections, stormwater and sewer management, and public health. However, climate-specific considerations have not yet been integrated into the planning documents adopted by the Code or within the Code itself. Key climate drivers—such as rising temperatures and extremes, prolonged periods of drought and flooding, and increasing storm intensity—should be systematically incorporated into all planning and permitting processes. Several sections of the Municipal Code present clear opportunities to integrate best available climate science and support both climate adaptation and greenhouse gas mitigation:

- **Title 8: Health and Wellness** – While Pierce County's Health Code does not currently address climate hazards or emissions goals, Edgewood may adopt supplementary standards to reflect local priorities—particularly for waste and water systems. The hazardous vegetation removal chapter could also be updated to guide landowners in proactive climate-resilient vegetation management to reduce carbon emissions from vegetation removal.
- **Title 11: Sewer System General Provisions** – The Sewer System General Provisions chapter and General Sewer Plan should be revised to include flood frequency and intensity analysis and potential impacts on infrastructure.
- **Title 12: Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places** – Development standards for pathways and sidewalks that incorporate design to increase stormwater infiltration while still using low-maintenance surfacing.
- **Title 13: Surface Water Management and Site Development** – Stormwater regulations could require that engineering designs incorporate climate projections, including updated precipitation and runoff models. Funding mechanisms for surface water management should also reflect future flooding scenarios.
- **Title 14: Critical Areas** – Critical Area maps and setback requirements for wetlands, landslide zones, floodplains, and aquifer recharge areas could be updated to reflect the best available science as approved by the associated state departments.
- **Title 15: Buildings and Construction** – Expand provisions to support energy retrofits and climate-smart building practices, particularly for new development.
- **Title 16: Subdivisions** – New subdivisions, which often emphasize low-density residential development and car dependency, may be inconsistent with long-term climate goals. Opportunities exist to reconsider subdivision standards through a climate resilience lens.
- **Title 18: Development Standards** – Landscaping requirements should be updated to require native, drought-tolerant, and low water use plant species. Additionally, limiting new parking development could further support alternative transportation and reduce emissions.

Next Steps

CONDUCT A CLIMATE VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

Edgewood's next step is to conduct a climate vulnerability assessment to identify key areas for targeted climate adaptation and resilience planning. This policy audit evaluates the City's current adaptive capacity as reflected in local planning documents, including preparedness for emergencies, regulatory protections for natural areas and water resources, and existing design standards aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in future development.

USE THIS POLICY AUDIT AND THE VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT TO INFORM THE CLIMATE ELEMENT

This audit highlights policy gaps that can directly inform updates to the Comprehensive Plan and other relevant planning efforts. Updates to the Comprehensive Plan should consider that discrepancies may exist between adopted policies and their practical implementation. This audit can serve as a foundation for community engagement and dialogue to help close any gaps between written policy and action, and develop new, community-driven policies.

ALIGN EDGEWOOD'S MUNICIPAL CODE WITH THE CITY'S PLANNING OBJECTIVES

Edgewood can undertake a comprehensive code audit to identify and implement necessary amendments. This process should involve community engagement and interdepartmental coordination. By proactively updating the Municipal Code to reflect Edgewood's Comprehensive planning goals, Edgewood can enhance its resilience to climate change and promote sustainable development practices.

Funding Acknowledgment

The City of Edgewood's climate planning process is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act (CCA). The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at www.climate.wa.gov.

