

## Climate Adaptation Plan 2012



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## 1. Policy Framework for Climate Change Adaptation

While the scope, severity, and pace of future climate change impacts are difficult to predict, it is clear that potential changes could have important impacts on the federal government's sites, buildings, and operations. Adaptation planning will allow the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) to minimize negative impacts of climate change that are already occurring in our region and take advantage of opportunities.

NCPC's mission is to protect and enhance the extraordinary historical, cultural, and natural resources of the National Capital Region by crafting long-range plans, analyzing emergent planning issues, reviewing site development and building proposals, and monitoring federal capital investment. NCPC's strategic goals are as follows.

**Goal 1:** Crafting plans and policies that employ the highest standards of urban design and planning to define the federal government's interest in the National Capital Region's long-term development.

**Goal 2:** Review proposals subject to Commission approval or advice to determine whether they are consistent with the federal interest.

**Goal 3:** Inform the public of its activities, encourage citizens to become involved in the planning process, and participate in broader professional discussions at local, national, and international levels.

**Goal 4:** Build consensus and facilitate cooperation among citizens, public interest groups, nongovernmental organizations, and governmental agencies to shepherd plans and policies toward fruition.

**Goal 5:** Embrace the best practices for the continual development of its human resources, work processes, and technology to respond to the National Capital Region's changing planning needs.

In addition to meeting the agency's strategic goals, NCPC commits to climate change adaptation planning using the best available science and information. The Agency shall consider potential climate change impacts when crafting long-range plans, analyzing emergent planning issues, reviewing site development and building proposals, and monitoring federal capital investment.

NCPC will update its agency-wide Climate Adaptation Plan per Executive Order 13514. The plan will incorporate the findings and directives of this policy statement. The plan will identify how climate change may impact the Agency's ability to achieve its mission and will identify and prioritize actions to reflect current and future climate changes.

NCPC will apply the guiding principles and planning framework for climate change adaptation found in the October 5, 2010 *Progress Report of the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force: Recommended Actions in Support of a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy*.

NCPC's senior sustainability officer is responsible for ensuring implementation of all aspects of this policy.

## 2. Agency Vulnerability

The U.S. Climate Change Science Program (CCSP) examined the potential effects of climate change in the National Capital Region in 2009. *Coastal Sensitivity to Sea-Level Rise: A Focus on the Mid-Atlantic Region* documents climate change effects—particularly for sea-level rise—as a major occurrence to be considered in Washington, DC. Vulnerability to threats associated with rising sea levels is compounded by high population densities along coastal areas and rivers leading to major estuaries, such as the Chesapeake Bay. Areas with the potential for significant effects include low-lying areas in Washington, DC and locations along water bodies, including the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. Even water rise of a few feet would exacerbate the effects of storms, tides, or floods and increase the potential damage. There are many federally-owned properties in these locations, including parkland, military installations, museums and agency headquarters. Sea-level rise and variability in weather events is likely to exacerbate the frequency and intensity of river, urban drainage and storm surge flooding.

Risks and opportunities to NCPC’s mission, programs, and operations from climate change include the following.

Climate Change Impact	Relevance to NCPC’s work/strategic goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More frequent flooding</li> </ul>	Each of these impacts could have an effect on the federal development projects that NCPC reviews and on NCPC’s long range planning initiatives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased levels of pollutants in runoff</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil erosion</li> </ul>	While the applicant agency is responsible for any particular project, NCPC has the authority to review the project and ensure that it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s goals and objectives. These include addressing the impacts of climate change.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased stormwater runoff</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average temperature rise</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects on tree viability and vegetation (in urban areas)</li> </ul>	It is also important for NCPC to address climate change impacts in its long range planning projects and initiatives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortage of water supply by 2050 in the National Capital Region</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme weather events</li> </ul>	An extreme weather event could also impact NCPC’s operations because it might make it difficult for employees to commute to work. It could also make it difficult for the public to attend our events because public transportation may be impacted.

## 3. Process of agency adaptation planning and evaluation

NCPC staff will update the agency Climate Adaptation Plan every year with input from the entire agency. This process will coincide with the development of the upcoming fiscal year’s work plan. Because the agency is relatively small (37 people), NCPC has the flexibility to solicit agency-wide input as issues (such as climate change impacts that could affect the agency mission) arise and need to be addressed quickly.

#### 4. Programmatic Activities

Over the past few years, NCPC has integrated climate change adaptation into its programs, policies, and operations.

- In early 2010 NCPC formed a working group to address the significant flooding in the Federal Triangle that resulted from a series of storms in 2006. NCPC coordinated input from all impacted parties on the alternatives and worked with consultants to develop recommendations for improvement. In 2012 the agency released the *Federal Triangle Stormwater Drainage Study*, along with a companion report summarizing findings and recommendations
- In 2011, NCPC continued to play a critical role in coordinating federal and District stakeholders to develop levee improvements for the Potomac Park Levee across 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW that would meet federal standards and be appropriate to the culturally and historically important grounds of the National Mall. Construction of the levee is underway.
- In 2012, NCPC continued to update the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*, completing and releasing for public review the draft Federal Workplace, Federal Environment and Transportation Elements. Climate adaptation was specifically addressed in the form of new narrative and policies.
- NCPC also released the public draft of the *SW Ecodistrict Plan* which addresses how a precinct of mostly federal buildings and related infrastructure can function together to reduce energy and water consumption; move toward zero-net energy as measured in carbon; manage stormwater; and reduce the federal government's operating costs. It demonstrates how to maximize efficient use of valuable urban land; increase development capacity and mix of uses; improve access, mobility, and walkability; and establish a more attractive and engaging public realm.

#### 5. Actions to better understand climate change risks and opportunities for FY2013

As organizations develop more information regarding climate change and the National Capital Region, NCPC will incorporate the relevant findings into the Comprehensive Plan, the agency's plan review process, and its long range planning activities.

NCPC will also continue to engage with local and regional organizations and agencies (such as the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the District of Columbia Government, the Urban Land Institute, academic organizations, and federal agencies) to stay informed and exchange information.

- Building upon the findings of the Federal Triangle Stormwater Drainage Study, NCPC contributed to the development of the regional Climate Adaptation Guide being developed by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. This initiative was started in 2011 and is ongoing.
- NCPC is also serving in the advisory committee to update FEMA's Commercial Building Floodproofing Manual, which is scheduled for completion at the end of 2012.

**6. Action to address climate change risks and opportunities for FY 13**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Scale (National, Regional, or Local)</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Other Agencies Collaborating With (if applicable)</b>
NCPC will complete the update of the <i>Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital Region: Federal Elements</i> to include new policies on climate change adaptation.	Local/regional	Fall 2013	Department of Defense, GSA, CEQ, NPS, EPA, DOT, DC Government, MWCOG
NCPC will consider the impacts of climate change when reviewing federal projects.	Local/regional	Ongoing 2013	All federal agencies who submit projects to NCPC
NCPC will include climate change adaptation as part of its ongoing discussion with other regional organizations.	Local/regional	Ongoing 2013	DC Government, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
NCPC will also manage the federal sectors' role in DC's Climate Adaptation Plan.	Local	Ongoing 2013	DC Government, GSA, DOD
Assist in the development of regional climate adaptation and resilience plans to assist the National Capital Region and individual localities with vulnerability assessments, adaptation planning, and emergency preparedness.	Local/regional	Ongoing 2013	Various
Support the analysis of impacts from climate change on and risks to the region's transportation infrastructure, buildings, and populations in low-lying areas, and in particular federal lands and facilities adjacent to the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers.	Local/regional	Ongoing 2013	Various
Perform the SW Ecodistrict Stormwater Infrastructure Study	Local	End of 2013	17 Federal and local agencies