Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District CLINATE ACTION PLAN Approved: March 13, 2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Approval

The plan was reviewed on 6/6/23, 1/10/24, and was adopted unanimously on March 13, 2024 at the Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District's board of directors meeting.

Approved

Board President

Date 3/13/24



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The district has long provided stewardship of natural areas, conducted energy and fuel efficiency evaluations, and run a recycling program. Input from the Vision Action Plan led to an Environmental Stewardship chapter in the 2023 Comprehensive Plan. Objective Three states, "be a leader in climate change response by prioritizing sustainability & resiliency in design, operations, and maintenance." The section also had a recommendation to write and implement a climate action plan.

A climate action plan differs from a sustainability plan in that it has a focus on actions that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, such as carbon dioxide, which can be harmful to the environment. Staff, consultants, advisory committees, and board members identified activities and programs that will help reduce the district's climate impacts to a sustainable level, ranging from the replacement of gas vehicles with electric vehicles to heating/air conditioning systems, and lighting system adjustments.

In addition to background information about the impacts of climate change on the district, the plan has two primary activity sections.

- 1. Actions in the mitigation section will help THPRD reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted, thereby helping to slow or stop the effects of climate change. Key actions include:
 - Reducing building energy usage
 - Using less water
 - Updating the district's purchasing policy
- 2. Actions in the adaptation section will help people and parks to thrive and be more comfortable in the face of extreme weather, such as hotter, drier summers.
 - Developing and implementing guidelines to create climate-adapted parks and facilities
 - Supporting the community by participating in the Natural Hazard Mitigation Program
 - Stewarding parks and natural areas to be resilient and minimizing wildfire risks

The district will follow the Oregon Global Warming Commission's¹ climate action goals to reduce GHG levels to 45 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, 70% below by 2040, and 95% by 2050. This plan is intended to be carried out between 2024 and 2029, and will be updated every five years. Battling the effects of climate change is a long game, but a vital one for our community, parks, and natural areas. Through staff and partner efforts, I'm hopeful that we can build healthy, resilient parks and facilities that serve our community well into the future.

Sincerely,

Doug Menke General Manager

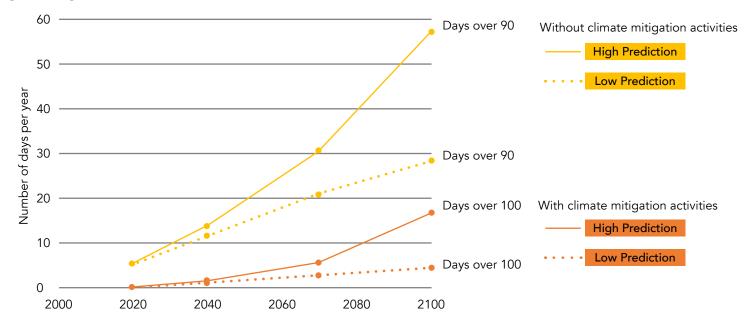
2. CLIMATE CHANGE BACKGROUND

In recent years, changes to the climate have become more pronounced. What once seemed like a slow-moving shift with warmer temperatures has rapidly become a noticeable challenge to established climate patterns. According to NASA, this warming trend is a result of human activities that started with the industrial revolution in the 1800s. The burning of fuels like coal and oil release carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, methane, chlorofluorocarbons and other gases collectively known as greenhouse gases (GHG). These GHGs trap heat in the atmosphere, raising the temperature on the surface of the planet, causing changes in historic weather patterns. If current trends continue, temperatures and climatic challenges will increase.

Northwest Oregon has long been known as a place with cool, wet winters and drier, mild summers with temperatures rarely reaching into the 90-degree range. Rains historically came as mild, consistent showers throughout the fall, winter, and spring.

In recent years, extreme heat events with sustained temperatures close to 100 degrees have become common² and scientific models predict an increasing number of days with temperatures over 90 degrees (Figure 1). Rainfall patterns³ are also changing. Models predict less precipitation in the summer and an increase in the winter. The number and intensity of rain events during the winter are expected to rise, leading to stormwater management challenges as well as erosion of stream banks due to high flows. Dramatic storm events may also lead to less overall recharging of groundwater since water runs off instead of soaking in, causing less water availability in the summer months.

Figure 1: Range of projected extreme temperatures in NW Oregon with and without greenhouse gas mitigation activities.



Each set of lines represents computer models showing the high and low range of the predicted number of days of extreme temperatures. Source: Climate Toolbox: https://climatetoolbox.org/tool/climate-mapper

2. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's US Climate Extremes Index:

https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/monitoring/cei/graph/nw/06-08/1

3. Dalton, M., and E. Fleishman, editors. 2021. Fifth Oregon Climate Assessment. Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon. https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/occri/oregon-climate-assessments/

The immediate impacts to these conditions in the park district could include:



Lower water levels in streams and lakes.



Changes to programming, staff operations, amount of water needed to maintain sports fields.

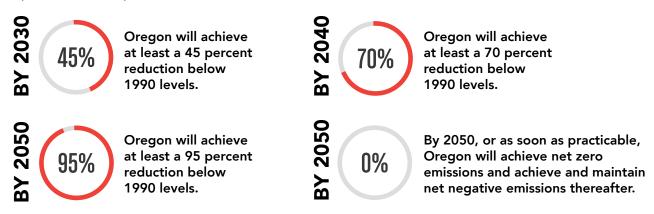


Flooded fields/amenities in the rainy season.



Increased risk of wildfire.

Reducing emissions of GHGs to a sustainable level is the key to a healthy future for people and nature. THPRD aspires to do its part and serve the community by meeting the State of Oregon's goals⁴:



4. Oregon Global Warming Commission https://www.keeporegoncool.org/meeting-our-goals

3. THPRD ACTIONS: VALUES-BASED APPROACH

THPRD is the steward of treasured parks, natural areas, and facilities ranging from the 222-acre Tualatin Hills Nature Park to the Cedar Hills Recreation Center. The community relies on staff to be caretakers of these shared resources, and the district has a long history of being good stewards of the environment.

TIMELINE



Acquired Commonwealth Lake (1971) and surrounding properties (through 2022)



Opened Tualatin Hills Nature Park



Created sustainability program





Formed Natural Resources department



Developed recycling program





Completed first GHG Inventory



Started Strategic Energy Management Program





Installed solar panels at Cooper Mountain Nature House



Created Natural Resources Functional Plan



Adopted Vision Action Plan

In 2018, THPRD engaged in extensive outreach with community members who value our services, parks, recreation areas, natural spaces, and more. This two-year community visioning process led to the creation of a Vision Action Plan. Participants made many comments about their desire for environmental stewardship:



These comments drove elements of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan and shaped park district goals including:

- **Environmental Stewardship.** Caring for natural areas and trails, as well as operating sustainably allows staff to serve the community well now and in the future.
- Accessible and Safe. Maintenance of facilities and equipment and the ability of all THPRD residents to access amenities safely.
- **Financial Sustainability.** Managing revenues and expenditures in a sustainable fashion allows THPRD to continue offering high-quality programs and services.

To carry out this vision, staff worked with Good Company, a sustainability consulting firm, to do a greenhouse gas inventory for the 2022 fiscal year. An inventory quantifies the amount of GHGs in metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MT CO2e) that THPRD releases as a result of its purchasing, operations, and activities. The inventory results help staff know how to most effectively focus limited time and funds.

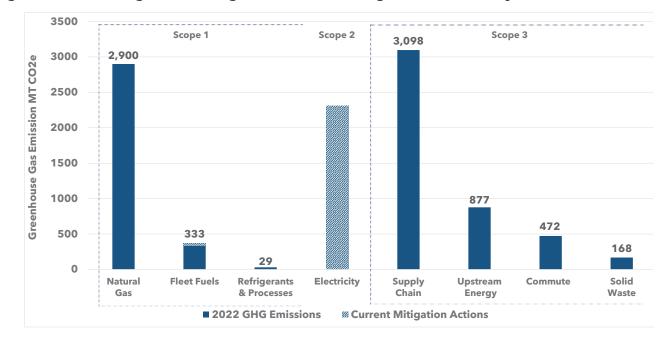


Figure 2: THPRD's greenhouse gas emissions during the 2022 fiscal year.

Scope 1 items represents emissions that THPRD can directly influence. Scope 2 items can be indirectly influenced by THPRD. Scope 3 represents items that are not directly owned or controlled by THPRD.

Figure 2 shows that THPRD's largest sources of direct emissions are overwhelmingly from combustion of natural gas to heat water and air at THPRD facilities followed by fuel for vehicles or motorized equipment, mainly gasoline. Indirect emissions from purchased electricity have been effectively reduced to zero through THPRD's investment in renewable electricity from Portland General Electric. These sources of "owned" emissions are a common boundary for setting climate pollution reduction goals. Purchasing, also summarized as supply chain (Figure 3), is a significant emissions area, but a more complex one to reduce due to factors in the manufacturing process that are out of staff's control.

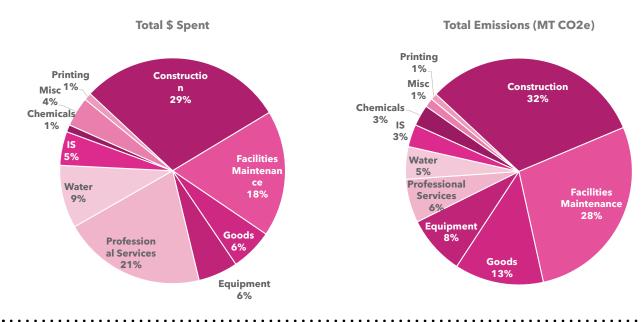


Figure 3: THPRD supply chain expenditures and their relative GHG emissions impacts.

4. GOALS/MEASURING SUCCESS

To successfully implement a climate action plan (CAP) and reduce THPRD's GHG footprint, staff will need to be strategic. While there are many small actions that would result in positive outcomes, a few very specific actions will result in significant GHG reduction benefits, co-benefits, and offer the greatest climate benefits at the lowest cost. For example, participation in Portland General Electric's solar and wind power program cut more than 25% of THPRD's total emissions with only a modest increase in cost, which demonstrated our value of Environmental Stewardship and met Vision Action Plan goals.

Some actions like updating the district's sustainable purchasing practice will result in purchases that may support the local economy and diverse vendors, while also reducing the district's carbon emissions. However, due to the way that emissions are tracked and reported, the district's measured emissions may not go down immediately, even if it is the "right" thing to do.

In other cases, success will be demonstrated through staff actions such as programming of thermostats, maintenance of equipment for efficient operation, and implementing waste reduction activities in parks and facilities. Based on the GHG inventory, lessening the use of natural gas and fleet fuels will result in the biggest reductions in emissions.

To measure quantitative success and find areas for improvement, a greenhouse gas inventory should be performed periodically. Two years is the shortest interval in which change can realistically measured. Four years is the maximum time between inventories- beyond that and it will be unclear what changes had an impact. To account for THPRD project completions, as well as to respond to changes in technology and the environment, the CAP should be updated every five years.

Climate change doesn't operate solely within jurisdictional boundaries, so THPRD will need to work with the community, non-profits, and other governmental groups to succeed. Staff are already engaged in projects like Tree for All, Natural Hazard Mitigation, and Regional Heat Mapping that will yield communitywide benefits over time. These projects along with other staff action items will make a difference in our community but cannot be easily measured. In these cases, staff can collect evidence to show what they've achieved. Things like reports, demonstrations, photographs and stories help to show positive impacts and to allow THPRD to paint a picture of how we serve the community.



5. GETTING TO WORK

THPRD's CAP has two approaches with focus areas in each section.

- 1. The section about **mitigation** is designed to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases THPRD emits, thereby helping to slow or stop the effects of climate change.
- 2. Activities in the **adaptation** section will help people and parks to adjust or be more comfortable in the face of extreme weather, such as hotter, drier summers.

Focus areas in each section are organized as follows:

Action type	Focus area
Objective	A measurable or demonstrable outcome by the end of the five-year plan focus (2024-2029).
Rationale	Background about the environmental footprint and reason it is important to work on the topic.
Strategies	A recommended set of approaches to achieve the objective.
Key Staff	A list noting which departments and lead staff should collaborate on annual work plans.

Climate technologies and approaches are highly fluid. To allow flexibility as opportunities or incentives arrive, new projects based on strategies will be proposed each year, as part of THPRD's annual budget process.



6. MITIGATION

Mitigation activities lower the amount of greenhouse gases that enter the atmosphere, thereby helping to slow or stop the effects of climate change. Taking steps to reduce GHGs is critical; without a change in course, temperatures will continue to increase, causing unprecedented and disastrous changes. Reaching net zero will require THPRD to reduce its emissions drastically. Further, incorporating sustainable activities such as reducing energy usage will likely save money. Natural gas costs could more than double over the next 20 years⁵. Electricity rates have historically gone up by about 4% per year, though 2023 prices are estimated to increase by 10%⁶, so switching to electric when feasible will likely save money and lower emissions.

While some climate investments will require financial commitments and cost more than doing things the "old way," others like upgrading to LED lighting or installing solar panels will meet the district's values of financial and environmental sustainability by both saving money and reducing our carbon footprint.

Greenhouse gas reductions (which include multiple gases, including carbon) are the focus of mitigation activities and success is measured in metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MT CO2e).



 Northwest Natural Gas 2022 Integrated Resource Plan https://www.nwnatural.com/-/media/nwnatural/pdfs/2022_irp_chapters_1_10_ replacementandaddendum.pdf?rev=57a725127bfe44e4b58aebd45fffe5eb&hash=7DF3A1EC3528C7F102362EFAE77EE30A
 Correspondence with Portland General Electric staff, 6/23/23

MITIGATE 1: ENERGY USE IN BUILDINGS

Objective	Reduce building energy use by at least 10%
Rationale	Building energy use makes up nearly 90% of direct emissions (2,900 MT CO2e) and over a third of total emissions. These emissions are solely attributable to natural gas because of THPRD's participation in Portland General Electric's clean energy program.
Strategies	 a. Connect finance, operations, and program staff to review energy bills for conservation. b. Replace natural gas appliances with electricity where feasible; when no practical alternative exists, purchase the most energy efficient alternative. c. Consider electric heat pumps over natural gas furnaces where functional and feasible. d. Update fluorescent, metal halide, and other older lighting systems with LED to save money and lessen impact to the electrical grid. e. Investigate solar panel arrays for facilities to stabilize or reduce energy costs and lessen impact to the electrical grid. f. Invest in digital controls for HVAC systems. g. Continue purchasing 100% renewable electricity. h. Purchase renewable natural gas or carbon offsets when available.
Key Staff	 Park Services Support Services Manager Trades Supervisor Development Supervisor Recreation/Sports & Inclusion Building Maintenance Supervisor Center Supervisors

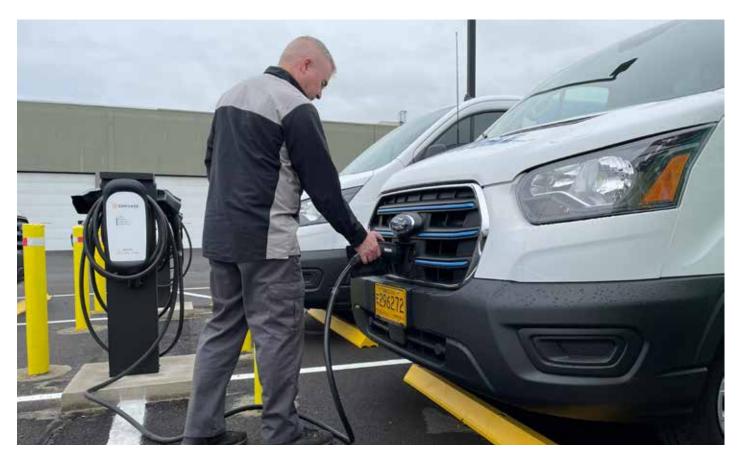
- Center Supervisors
- Finance
 - Finance Director
 - Accounting & Budget Manager





MITIGATE 2: TRANSPORTATION & FLEET OPERATIONS

Objective	Reduce fleet GHG footprint by at least 10%.
Rationale	Fleet fuels constitute the second, much smaller portion of direct emissions. Tail-pipe emissions constitute 333 MT CO2e, primarily from fossil gasoline usage (91%). Fossil diesel usage makes up 8% of emissions, and those emissions are kept low, in part, by the use of R99 (renewable) diesel.
Strategies	 a. Evaluate cost to benefit ratios for e-vehicles. b. Replace high-use gas vehicles (>5,000 miles per year) with hybrid or electric vehicles that have market-ready replacements. c. As vehicles are due for replacement, select "right size" vehicles for the job and fuel economy. d. Continue to use 100% renewable fleet fuels where available (such as R99 diesel). e. Increase the proportion of electric equipment such as mowers, power tools, and blowers as functional models become available. Continue to try new equipment. f. Reduce employee commute miles by offering flexible schedules and remote work opportunities.
Key Staff	 Park Services Support Services Manager



MITIGATE 3: WATER USAGE IN PARKS & FACILITIES

Objective	Reduce overall water usage by 10%.
Rationale	THPRD used nearly 76,500,000 gallons of potable water in 2022. Water was used for facilities, pools, and irrigation are also a large source of emissions at 144 MT CO2e.
Strategies	 Empower maintenance, program, and finance staff to review utility bills for leaks or use reduction possibilities. Convert irrigation controller systems to current standards. Maintenance and program staff will work together to evaluate irrigation needs of fields and parks. Maintain and monitor irrigation systems. Adjust plumbing fixtures to minimize water usage, while providing for patron needs. Train staff to monitor fixtures and fix leaks.
Key Staff	 Park Services Support Services Manager Maintenance Operations Manager Trades Supervisor Recreation/Sports & Inclusion Building Maintenance Supervisor

- Center Supervisors
- Finance
 Accounting & Budget Manager



MITIGATE 4: PURCHASING

Objective	Update purchasing policy to incorporate strategies to reduce GHG emissions by 10%.
Rationale	Supply chain emissions are the largest single source of emissions for THPRD constituting 3,098 MT CO2e, exceeding emissions from natural gas (2,900 MT CO2e). The largest contributions to supply chain emissions come from facility maintenance and construction. Together, these two categories of spending make up nearly 60% of the supply chain emissions (1,846 MT CO2e). Categories such as general maintenance, any facilities upgrades (such as ADA improvements or pool improvements), or park improvements fall under this category.
Strategies	 a. Purchase based on life cycle and operation cost, not just capital cost. b. Focus on highest impact purchases (construction, maintenance, operations). c. Support future GHG inventories by aligning purchasing information with GHG categories. d. Develop a method to evaluate costs, benefits and values that could lead to spending extra for sustainable items. e. Track and report on sustainable purchases.
Key Staff	 Park Services Sustainability Manager Maintenance Operations Manager Support Services Manager Planning & Development Manager Finance

Finance Director



MITIGATE 5: WASTE REDUCTION

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Objective	Reduce trash disposal costs by 5%.
Rationale	Changing purchasing practices to buy in bulk, reduce packaging, and reviewing recycling practices can limit waste in facilities. Evaluating trash services offered in parks and trails could also help reduce waste.
Strategies	 a. Connect finance, operations, and program staff to review trash bills for reduction. b. Determine maintenance staff trash sources (construction debris, green waste, patron trash) for possible recycling or avoidance. c. Consider trash services offered to patrons that may reduce waste. d. Evaluate current garbage service for frequency of service, size of container, and types of garbage/recycling present at facilities and larger parks. e. Develop purchasing protocols that lead to waste reduction.
Key Staff	 Park Services Sustainability Manager Maintenance Operations Manager Recreation/Sports & Inclusion Building Maintenance Supervisor Center Supervisors

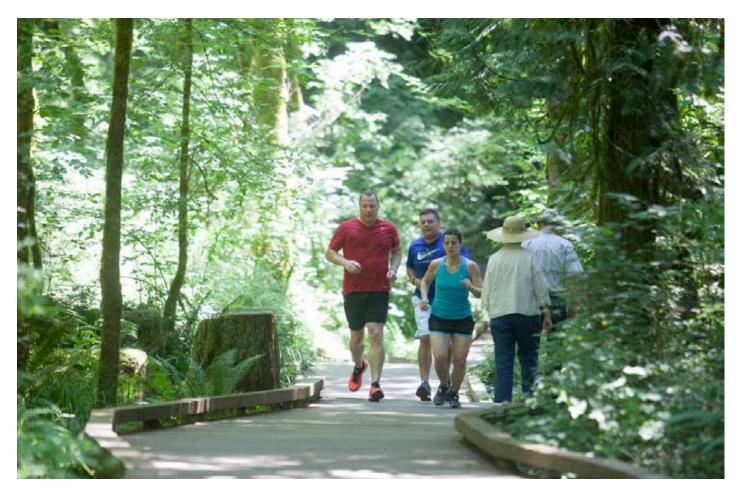
- Finance
- Fiscal Operations Manager



MITIGATE 6: GREEN SPACE PRESERVATION

Objective	 Maintain or increase vegetation and tree canopy in parks. Maintain 80% native cover in high-function natural areas. 60% in moderate-function sites, and 40% in low-function areas.
Rationale	Ensure that THPRD natural areas and parks retain as much tree and vegetation cover as possible, since these areas help sequester carbon while they clean and cool the air and water.
Strategies	 a. Conduct baseline tree/greenspace inventory and develop protocols for future surveys that enable showing change over time. b. Develop a districtwide tree health program. c. Review and implement tree protection best practices during construction and maintenance activities. d. Review park spaces for areas to revegetate turf, bark dust, and/or remove pavement.
Key Staff	 Park Services Sustainability Manager Nature & Trails Supervisor Maintenance Operations Manager Maintenance Supervisors

Planning & Development Manager



7. ADAPTATION

Adaptation activities help people and parks to adjust or be more comfortable in the face of extreme weather, such as hotter, drier summers. These activities are focused on planning and incremental changes that make a difference to park users and environments. Most of the actions below can be demonstrated, seen, and experienced. Although equally important to mitigation activities, measuring GHG impacts from adaptation activities is more challenging, and is therefore not a focus at this time.

ADAPT 1: EDUCATION

Objective	Educate and inform stakeholders at multiple levels.
Rationale	Providing patrons and staff with information about climate change and THPRD's efforts leads to support and cooperation. It also shows that staff are responding to community interests.
Strategies	 a. Add updates to internal and external THPRD communications. b. Share outcomes as part of the strategic plan annual report. c. Promote related partner efforts. d. Use partner strengths to complement THPRD efforts. e. Integrate age-appropriate climate information into programs and educational signs.
Key Staff	 Park Services Sustainability Manager Recreation Nature Center Supervisor

- Communications
 - Communications Director



ADAPT 2: NEW PARK & FACILITY PLANNING

Objective	Develop and implement guidelines to locate, design, and service new parks, trails and facilities.
Rationale	Ensure that THPRD natural areas and parks retain as much tree and vegetation cover as possible, since these areas help sequester carbon while they clean and cool the air and water.
Strategies	 a. Follow LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or Sustainable Sites Initiative guidelines when developing new facilities. Certification is optional. b. Use Comprehensive Plan "GRASP" analysis to offer facilities, parks and amenities in the most effective locations, through "purple pipes" or cistems. c. Explore the use of recycled water for irrigation. d. Incorporate shade structures or trees to extend the usability of outdoor sites. e. Connect gaps in trail system so trails can serve as part of the transportation network.
Key Staff	 Park Services Planning & Development Manager Sustainability Manager Maintenance Operations Manager Support Services Manager Recreation/Sports & Inclusion Recreation Director Sports & Inclusion

Sports & Inclusion Director



ADAPT 3: MANAGING FOR RESILIENT PARKS

Objective	Remodel or adjust existing parks to adapt to a changing climate.
Rationale	Well-managed, designed, and sited parks will best serve community needs. Staff will be able to manage climate-adapted parks with less resources more effectively than traditional parks.
Strategies	 a. Conduct baseline tree/greenspace inventory and develop protocols for future surveys that enable showing change over time. b. Develop a districtwide tree health program. c. Review and implement tree protection best practices during construction and maintenance activities. d. Review park spaces for areas to revegetate turf, bark dust, and/or remove pavement.
Key Staff	 Park Services Sustainability Manager Nature & Trails Supervisor Maintenance Operations Manager Maintenance Supervisors

- Maintenance Supervisors
 Planning & Development Manager
- Support Services Manager



ADAPT 4: FOSTERING COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

Objective	Work with partners to build a resilient community.
Rationale	Climate change is a health, environmental, and economic challenge. Working to address all three components will create a stronger community.
Strategies	 a. Participate in Natural Hazard Mitigation Program. b. Offer facilities for partner needs such as cooling and warming shelters during extreme events. c. Continue to implement air quality and temperature best practices for staff and program participants. d. Integrate outcomes from 2023 heat mapping project into programs and services.
Key Staff	 Park Services Sustainability Manager Maintenance Operations Manager Recreation/Sports & Inclusion Center Supervisors Building Maintenance Supervisor

- Communications
 - Safety Services Manager
 - Equity & Engagement Manager



ADAPT 5: NATURAL AREA STEWARDSHIP & STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Objective	Provide dynamic stewardship of natural areas to create resilient and adaptable habitats.
Rationale	Natural areas provide wildlife habitat and ecosystem services (ex: clean air, water filtration) as well as health, recreation, and education. Stewarding these areas for wildlife and people ensures that these opportunities will continue to exist.
Strategies	 a. Ensure that the diversity of habitat types, plants, and animals is protected, conserved, and restored. Add climate adapted plants to maintain habitat diversity and structure. b. Acquire, protect, conserve, and manage functional habitat connectivity for wildlife. c. Control invasive non-native plant and animal species and reestablish native species. d. Create a healthy urban forest canopy that contributes to improvements in stormwater management and air quality. e. Maintain the long-term ecological integrity of streams, wetlands, rivers, and floodplains, including their biological, physical, and social values.
Key Staff	 Park Services Nature & Trails Supervisor Maintenance Supervisors



ADAPT 6: WILDFIRE REDUCTION

Objective	Develop and implement plans that minimize wildfire risk while promoting healthy habitat.
Rationale	Reducing wildfire risk provides the benefits noted above, and protects people and adjacent property.
Strategies	 a. Create and maintain native plant communities that are resilient to disturbance. b. Manage fuel loads and right-of-ways in parks to minimize fire risks, where practical. c. Work with partners to educate the public about fire risk and creating defensible space. d. Maintain parks and natural areas in a manner that meet aesthetic and fire reduction targets.
Key Staff	 Park Services Nature & Trails Supervisor Communications

Safety Services Manager



8. HOW THE WORK HAPPENS

Sustainability is part of what THPRD does. It is a core value, but not an agency output. Staff will integrate climate program and sustainable outcomes into the budget process and into the work that they do. Recognizing that 20 to 30 actions over the five-year period of this plan are the most critical actions to lowering our carbon footprint, staff will need to focus.

Climate-based projects will be planned in conjunction with the annual budget cycle. The district's Sustainability Manager will serve as the plan coordinator. As capital or operational plans are created each year, the 12 objective areas should be integrated. Some actions will require capital funds, such as upgrading an HVAC system, while others, such as carrying out wildfire reduction activities or saving water, may be done as part of routine operations. It is important to recognize that sustainable activities are an important part of how THPRD staff provide service, not a specialty area, hence they should be fully woven into the provision of park and recreation services.



9. NEXT STEPS

Work on implementing the climate plan is already underway, but there's plenty more to do. The plan is a derivative of other THPRD plans, in particular the strategic plan. Because sections like Environmental Stewardship, Safe and Welcoming, and Financial Sustainability all have sustainability components, climate plan outcomes will be reported as part of the strategic plan's annual report to the board of directors.

In year four of the five-year plan window, a summative evaluation will be conducted along with an updated greenhouse gas inventory. This will provide data to determine which actions were most effective and new directions to pursue in the following five years. The state of the environment and technology is rapidly changing; by 2029, there may be opportunities that did not exist or were unaffordable at the start in 2024. There may also be new challenges. Regardless, by collecting data, evaluating projects, and making periodic adjustments, staff can make important contributions to the community and the environment.

