

**CHAPTER 37**

**SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE, EQUITY, AND RESILIENCE**

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**CHAPTER 37****SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE, EQUITY, AND RESILIENCE****Article 1. General Provisions.****Section 37-1-1. Title.**

This chapter shall be known as the “sustainability, climate, equity, and resilience code.”

(2023, ord 23-56, sec 3.)

**Section 37-1-2. Declaration of policy.**

It is declared to be the policy of the County to address sustainability, climate change, equity, and resilience in the County through immediate, direct, and coordinated trauma-informed action. To this end, the office of sustainability, climate, equity, and resilience is created to coordinate and manage policies and programs to address sustainability, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and adapt to the impacts of climate change and other natural and human caused hazards. Through regular stakeholder engagement these policies and programs shall promote the County’s sustainability and resilience in a manner that is immediate, direct, coordinated, and equitable in their impact on various communities in the County.

(2023, ord 23-56, sec 3; am 2024, ord 24-8, sec 2.)

**Section 37-1-3. Definitions.**

As used in this chapter, unless it is apparent from the context that a different meaning is intended:

“Adaptation” means the process of observing changes in social, environmental, and economic systems and adjusting operations with a trauma informed approach to meet present and anticipated future needs.

“Climate change impacts” means the effect on social, economic, and environmental systems that are caused by human-driven climate change including, but not limited to, increases in natural disaster severity, unstable and extreme weather patterns, and loss of native ecosystems.

“Environmental justice” means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

“Equity” means the consideration of cumulative impacts on lower- and middle-income individuals and historically marginalized groups during all aspects of decision making, including and not limited to assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

“Mitigation” means actions and strategies aimed at reducing the risk of harm and damage to human communities, natural ecosystems, infrastructure, and the economy due to the impacts of climate change. These actions and strategies shall include but not be limited to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

“Office” means the office of sustainability, climate, equity, and resilience.

“Resilience” means the ability to withstand social, environmental, and economic shocks and stressors with minimal human, environmental, and economic costs, risks, and damages.

“Sustainability” means a balanced approach of managing present day environmental, social, and economic needs and maintaining a healthy lifecycle through a trauma informed framework to fulfill the needs of current populations that does not compromise the needs of future generations, and ensures harmony between economic growth, environmental systems, and social well-being.

“Trauma” means an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

“Trauma informed” means an approach to service provision that infuses knowledge about trauma into agency programs, policies, and procedures to promote the safety and well-being of clients, visitors, staff and volunteers by actively resisting the re-traumatization of participants, individually and as a whole.

(2023, ord 23-56, sec 3; am 2024, ord 24-8, secs 3 and 4.)

**Section 37-1-4. Authority to adopt rules and regulations.**

The sustainability administrator is authorized to adopt rules and regulations as the office deems necessary for the administration of the conduct of the office’s business.

Rules shall be adopted pursuant to chapter 91, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes.

(2023, ord 23-56, sec 3.)

**Article 2. Office of Sustainability, Climate, Equity, and Resilience.**

**Section 37-2-1. Duties of the office of sustainability, climate, equity, and resilience.**

(a) Policy and program development. The office shall:

- (1) Establish policies and programs to promote sustainability, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and build the County’s resilience to the impacts of climate change and other natural and human caused hazards. These policies and programs shall be developed after consideration of resources such as the County’s general plan, County community development plans, County multi-hazard mitigation plan and County climate action plan, State law, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement.

- (2) Improve environmental justice and equity by promoting specific policies and actions to ensure that sustainability, change mitigation and adaptation, and resilience efforts also benefit lower and middle income, Native Hawaiian, and historically marginalized communities. These policies and actions should include utilization of place-based, Native Hawaiian guiding principles, tools, and frameworks to guide, inform, coordinate, and evaluate proposed actions and activities.
  - (3) Regularly engage with stakeholders to assess and assure that policies and actions are implemented in a manner that is immediate, direct, and coordinated, and employs strategies that are equitable in their impact on various communities in the County.
  - (4) Ensure policies, practices, and actions are trauma-informed to promote resilience, health, and wellness.
- (b) Shared metrics.
- The office shall develop metrics, benchmarks, and data visualization tools to track and communicate progress towards sustainability, climate mitigation and adaptation, equity, and resilience goals.
- (c) Coordination, collaboration, and education. The office shall:
- (1) Coordinate communication among County departments and with community partners to develop and promote a shared vision and collaborative approach to implementing solutions that are based upon a clear understanding of the issues and challenges related to sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptation, equity, and resilience within a trauma-informed framework and approach.
  - (2) Coordinate and provide technical support to County departments to create policies and programs designed to implement and measure sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptation, equity, trauma informed, and resilience strategies.
  - (3) Collaborate with County departments and community stakeholders on sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptation, equity, trauma informed, and resilience strategies to maximize collective impact through mutually reinforcing activities.
  - (4) Provide education, outreach, and support, both internally and externally, that promotes climate sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives in a manner utilizing trauma informed principles and best practices that promotes equity and resilience and the capability to adapt effectively in the face of adversity.
- (d) Legislation and budget. The office shall:
- (1) Evaluate potential impacts of climate change on County human resources, facilities, and infrastructure and provide operating and capital improvement budget recommendations for consideration in addition to the recommendations of the planning department.

- (2) Provide policy analysis and propose legislation to the Council to implement this section.
  - (3) Provide the Council with an annual sustainability report.
  - (e) Grants and funding. The office shall:
    - (1) Investigate and provide technical support for grant applications and grant management to support funding to implement this section.
    - (2) Prepare programs and contracts with the Federal government to carry out the purposes of this article and transmit to the Council for approval.
  - (f) The office shall perform other related duties necessary to fulfill the mandate of the office.
- (2023, ord 23-56, sec 3; am 2024, ord 24-8, sec 5.)