

**GREEN RIVER SYSTEM-WIDE IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK (SWIF)  
ADVISORY COUNCIL  
Meeting #1 Summary Notes**



# Executive Summary

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## Advisory Council (AC) Action Items

- **Green River SWIF Charter and Vision/Goals**
  - The AC discussed and approved the Charter and Vision/Goals proposed by the project team with revisions from the SWIF Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
- **Level of Protection Flow Range Guidelines**
  - King County staff briefed the AC on level of protection flow range guidelines. The goal is for the AC to recommend levels of protection by June 2014.

## AC Business

The project team will finish the Current Conditions Report and announce a joint meeting between the TAC and AC to share report results. The AC will meet after that point to go over significant policy questions. The AC will likely meet next in May of 2014.

## Presentations and updates

The AC heard and discussed presentations on the following topic areas:

- Green River SWIF Overview
- Levels of Protection

## Public Comment

No public comment was provided.

# Detailed Meeting Summary

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## ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Organization/Entity	Member	Attendance
KC Flood Control District	Chair Reagan Dunn	Present
KC Flood Control District	Supervisor Julia Patterson	Absent
King County	Fred Jarrett	Present
Corps of Engineers	Col. Bruce Estok	Represented by Olton Swanson
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe	Isabel Tinoco	Represented by Holly Coccoli
Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance	Jesus Sanchez	Present
City of Tukwila	Mayor Jim Haggerton	Present
City of Kent	Mayor Suzette Cooke	Present
City of Auburn	City Manager Wayne Osborne	Present as well as Mayor Pete Lewis
City of Renton	Mayor Denis Law	Represented by Gregg Zimmerman
National Marine Fisheries Service	Mike Grady	Present
Puget Sound Partnership	Marc Daily	Absent
WRIA 9	Co-Chair Marlla Mhoon	Present
Boeing	Lori Pitzer or Susan Champlain	Lori Pitzer – Present
Business leader	Sam Anderson	Absent

## OTHER ATTENDEES

Jennifer Knauer, King County Water and Land Resources Division

Lorin Reinelt, King County Water and Land Resources Division

Steve Bleifuhs, King County Water and Land Resources Division

Mike Mactutis, City of Kent Environmental Engineering

Mike Bertsch, Boeing

Ken Brettmann, Corps of Engineers

Ron Straka, City of Renton Surface Water Utilities

David Servis, Tetra Tech

Penny Mabie, EnviroIssues  
Sara Colling, EnviroIssues

## **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Reagan Dunn welcomed the Advisory Council (AC) and introduced Colonel Estok from the Army Corps of Engineers by phone. Col. Estok thanked King County for their leadership and inclusion of all interests on the council. Col. Estok noted that a likely new development in eligibility criteria in incorporating vegetation may add some flexibility to levee design and planning. Both Chair Dunn and Col. Estok emphasized this project as an opportunity to lay the foundation for the region's future as well as serve as a model for other regions in the country.

Chair Dunn then led a round of introductions from each member. Penny Mabie, facilitator, reviewed the meeting agenda: The meeting will begin with an update of the Green River System Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) overview followed by council business, including a discussion of the revised Charter and the draft Vision/Goals document. The AC will be asked to approve both of these documents. The AC will receive an overview of the levels of protection and process on determining levels of protection goals. The meeting will end with an opportunity for public comment and review of any follow up actions.

## **GREEN RIVER SWIF OVERVIEW**

Jennifer Knauer, King County Water and Land Resources Division, provided an overview of the SWIF including its purpose and history. She reviewed the proposed geographic scope of the project which includes the entire left and right bank (not just the levees) focusing primarily from the Howard Hanson Dam to approximately river mile 5.5 (which overlaps some with the Duwamish River). The Middle Green is included in the SWIF's focus in that effects of different flow rates are being evaluated; the Lower Green is the proposed focal geography. She reiterated the high stakes of the project with the Green River contributing 1/8 of Washington State's Gross Domestic Product as well as supporting salmon and other wildlife and habitat important to the region. Because safety, economic and habitat interests are significantly tied to this project, King County strove to involve all interests where possible. Therefore, representatives from a variety of interests form the Technical Advisory Committee as well as the Advisory Council. The goal is to submit a package to the US Army Corps of Engineers by February 2015. Jennifer noted that one of the issues discussed with the TAC was the proposed geographic scope of the study. The TAC agreed with the proposed boundaries.

### *Comments*

- Chair Dunn said the District does support vegetation on our levees, because we know there are a lot of benefits. Vegetation is a major issue of contention elsewhere in the country.
- Mike Grady, National Marine Fisheries Service, asked if there are comprehensive studies on this work including information about structural integrity.
  - Jennifer noted the project team will complete a literature review of all known studies.
  - Lorin Reinelt, King County Water and Land Resources Division, added that in California the Corps is looking at the vegetation issue intensively and will release a six volume report in the coming weeks.
  - Marlla Mhoon, WRIA 9, noted there are some issues that other regions have that this region won't. For example, seepage is an issue with vegetation elsewhere in the country such as the Midwest, but it isn't a high priority issue here.
- Mayor Suzette Cooke, City of Kent, noted another challenge under vegetation is public recreation access and asked if the SWIF will include discussion of woody debris.
  - Jennifer responded that the SWIF does not anticipate including woody debris in this process, but this could be the start for further evaluation upstream.
  - Mayor Cooke suggested a "sidebar conversation" of future issues to address.
- Lori Pitzer, Boeing, asked what the criteria were that informed the recommended SWIF boundary.
  - Jennifer responded that the boundary was determined through an internal technical conversation that the project team brought to the TAC. It is logical to use the Howard Hanson Dam as the upstream boundary, and the team decided to continue further downstream than the Green River to river mile 5.5.
  - Lorin noted that the vast majority of the facility is the Lower Green.
- Chair Dunn asked the AC if they accepted the proposed geographic boundaries of the SWIF. The AC agreed by consensus with the geographic scope.

## **COUNCIL BUSINESS**

Penny reviewed the SWIF Advisory Charter and Work Plan proposed by King County staff and revised by the TAC. She pointed out key areas for the council to take note of. She indicated that the charter proposes the AC will operate by seeking consensus. Consensus is reached when everyone on the council agrees they can accept moving forward with the recommendation and will support the recommendation as the SWIF process advances. Four meetings are planned for

the council. The dates are yet to be determined and will be based on when information is ready.

### *Comments*

- Mayor Cooke asked what is meant by confidential, as mentioned in the charter, if TAC and AC meetings are public.
  - Penny agreed that the AC and TAC meetings are public with summaries made available. She said the charter is referring to potential one-on-one conversations that might occur between the facilitator and members outside of meetings. Members can ask for and expect confidentiality during those instances.
- Jesus Sanchez, Governor’s Office of Regulatory Assistance, asked if four meetings will be enough for the AC to get a handle on everything.
  - Jennifer responded that holding four meetings is an estimate that can be revised, but the AC will be working on a higher level so will not need to meet as often as the TAC.
  - Chair Dunn noted that it is important to stay as close to the timeline as possible.
- Mayor Jim Haggerton, City of Tukwila, asked about the protocol for a tie in voting.
  - Penny clarified that the consensus model does not involve voting. Decisions will be based on group consensus, with a quorum requirement of at least seven members present. In the absence of consensus, a minority opinion may be forwarded along with the recommendation.
- Mhoon asked if AC members can have alternates.
  - Penny responded yes, however, if both the member and alternate are present at the same meeting, only one representative from the seat will be at the table.
- Sanchez suggested that on page three of the charter, the AC change the phrasing from “habitat enhancement” to “habitat restoration.”
  - Penny sought consensus from the group to make that change.

The council came to consensus that with one phrasing change, this will be the final charter.

## **GREEN RIVER SWIF VISION/GOALS**

Jennifer reviewed the Visions/Goals/Objectives document. This document is a draft and will remain a working document throughout the process as more is learned about the project. She reported that the TAC discussed the document at length and came to general consensus with a couple of minor issues not being agreed to. Jennifer noted the minority views that are not captured in the Vision/Goals including:

- Some TAC members suggested switching the placement of the goals listed first and second so that “flood protection” would appear first.
- The TAC had consensus that “community resiliency” should be a goal, but they had not come to an agreement on where the second bullet (regarding recreation and open space) under community resiliency should be placed.

### *Comments*

- Holly Coccoli, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, in response to the “community resiliency” discussion with the TAC, noted the intent was to ensure recreation does not compete with habitat requirements.
- Coccoli also proposed adding “treaty fishing” under the first goal within “recreation and public access,” so that it reads, “recreation, treaty fishing and public access.”
  - Mayor Cooke asked if the goal should include trout along with salmon protection.
  - Coccoli noted that trout, steelhead and salmon are all considered salmon.
  - Mayor Cooke suggested a grammatical change within the same sentence; changing “enhances open space” to “enhance open space” to align the grammar with the rest of the sentence.
- Mayor Cooke noted that the property tax to the Flood Control District is focused on flood protection and suggested keeping that as the number one goal, because that is what the public expects the SWIF to focus on.
  - Mhoon asked what percentage of the Flood Control District’s budget allocation is allotted to habitat restoration.
    - Chair Dunn responded, 10%
  - Fred Jarrett, King County Executive Office, suggested keeping the goal order as is. Placing flood protection above habitat protection would negate the idea that the SWIF is integrated.
  - Chair Dunn affirmed that he agrees to keep the order as is, but noted to communicate the minority position as well.
- Grady inquired if the temperature standards mentioned in the third bullet of the “ecological resiliency” goal are adequate?
  - Coccoli responded yes.

The AC came to final consensus to approve the Vision/Goals document.

## **LEVEL OF PROTECTION**

Lorin reviewed the Level of Protection recommendations that the SWIF will develop. King County’s goal is to develop a proposed flow rate by June 2014 that can be applied to the right

bank and left bank of the Green River. The County proposes using cubic feet per second (cfs) rather than a timeframe measurement, such as 100 year flood, for the recommended level of protection because cfs is a more precise measurement. Lorin reviewed the need for a provisional range of flows to be used to guide the technical team when modeling different flow scenarios. Lorin also noted that the TAC recommended a provisional flow range of 12,000 cfs to 26,800 cfs.

### *Comments*

- Sanchez asked about the liability of using a timeframe vs. a specific cfs. He asked if the number was too precise of a standard to meet.
  - Jennifer responded that new projects would use that number as a minimum threshold.
  - Lorin explained that the cfs number has uncertainty factored in. For instance, free board, the required space between the top of the water and the top of the levee, accounts for uncertainty.
- Mhoon noted that setting levels of protection is one strategy to achieve flood protection goals; reducing the rate of flow is another strategy.
  - Jennifer agreed and noted there are many ways to get to that goal, including the flow rate.
- Chair Dunn said that he prefers using the timeframe reference as well as cfs. Flood communication should always use both and be clear on what the timeframe means. The public understands the timeframe reference which matters both for their support and for the warning system.
  - Lorin noted that Chair Dunn's point is well taken, though you can see on the table on page three that there is a lot of variation on what the timeframe really means. Therefore using just the timeframe can be confusing without knowing the cfs.
  - Mayor Haggerton added that Tukwila goes by cfs, but they have always had to use the Auburn gauge which isn't good enough. He suggested the need for more flood gauges, because right now the distances between the gauges are significant. He also agrees with keeping it simple. For emergency management, the simpler the better. He wouldn't want people to be confused by the message that the "right bank" vs. the "left bank" is susceptible.
  - Jarrett added that he appreciates that the project team included both the cfs and timeframe, and he thinks it is important to include probability when communicating to the public.
- Mhoon asked about other levees on the river and what level of protection they are designed for.

- Jennifer responded that the project team will report on that shortly.
- Mayor Cooke asked how this recommended level of protection will be used.
  - Lorin responded that this recommendation will be used as a goal for designing future capital projects.
  - Penny clarified that the provisional level of protection range being discussed was not intended to set the level of protection; rather it is to inform technical work.
- Mayor Cooke indicated that she heard from the Corps and others that there has never been a system designed or built to a 500 year level of protection.
  - Lorin clarified that California uses 200 year protection, many use 500 year, a couple use 1,000. Holland uses 10,000 year protection.
  - Jennifer stated that the project team will provide information to the AC on specific examples.
- Grady asked if there is a 50-year duration on capital projects. He indicated he was asking because of changes with climate change.
  - Lorin responded that the assumption is that the SWIF will be setting duration for the next 50-100 years. A levee, if maintained, should last that long.
  - Chair Dunn agreed with Grady that the SWIF should be specific on their timeline. At some point the AC will need an economic cost comparison of different options.
  - Jennifer noted that in spring 2014 the team should have cost information.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was received.

## **NEXT STEPS AND ACTION ITEMS**

The next AC meeting will likely take place in April, 2014, based on when information is ready. The SWIF documents will be updated to include the AC's suggested changes and will be available on SharePoint. The project team will also make available their compilation of communities who have planned and built their levees to more than the 500 year flood level. The project team will finish the current conditions report and propose a joint meeting between the TAC and AC to hear the report results. The AC will meet after that point to go over significant policy questions.