

King County Flood Management Plan

Partner Planning Committee – Meeting #1 Meeting Notes

October 26, 2022 | 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

List of committee members/alternates present:

- Alex Lincoln (King County)
- Angela Donaldson (Fall City resident)
- Diane Pasta (Des Moines resident)
- Erin Ericson (Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District)
- Jackie Underberg (Bellevue resident)
- Jamie Hearn (Duwamish River Community Coalition)
- Jared Schneider (King County Office of Emergency Management)
- Jason Wilkinson (King County)
- Judi Radloff (King County)
- Kate Ryan (People to Preserve the Tualco Valley)
- Ken Zweig (King County)
- Laura Hendrix (King County)
- Lauren Silver (Snoqualmie Valley Preservation Alliance)
- Laurie Lyford (Washington Sensible Shorelines Association)
- Lexanne Bumm (Des Moines resident)
- Lisa Nelson (Washington Department of Ecology)
- Lorin Reinelt (King County)
- Martha Neuman (Seattle Public Utilities)
- Matt Baerwalde (Snoqualmie Indian Tribe)
- Patrick Haluptzok (Lake Sammamish resident)
- Robert Seana (Snoqualmie Valley resident and farmer)
- Sherry Edquid (City of Tukwila)
- Shawn Gilbertson (City of Kent)
- Steve Bleifuhs (King County)
- Stewart Reinbold (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
- Thomas Wilkenson (Upper Preston resident)
- Tom Dean (Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust)
- Spencer Easton (Consultant team – ESA)
- Dan Beckley (Consultant team – ESA)

Interested parties present:

Eric Beach (King County), Frederick Chavre (Maple Valley resident), Helen Gitahl (Green River farming interest), Kjrystine Lund (interested citizen), Lucy Gitahl (Green River farming interest)

Flood Plan Purpose, Process, Scope, and Schedule

Steve Bleifuhs presented on flood risk in King County and the roles of King County and the Flood Control District in identifying flood hazards and mitigating flood risks. Jason Wilkinson presented on the reasons for pursuing a new flood plan, including changing conditions and the importance of considering equity,

and detailed the scope of the plan, which will identify flood hazards, describe impacts, and outline strategies and actions to mitigate flooding.

Jason Wilkinson described the purpose of the Partner Planning Committee is to share information and ideas, provide input on goals, objectives, and guiding principles, and to develop a shared vision for flood hazard management across jurisdictions and interest areas.

Multiple questions were asked by Partner Planning Committee members about the role of the Flood Control District, what they fund, and what government entities adopt or implement the Flood Plan. Jason Wilkinson explained that King County submits the Flood Plan to the County Council for consideration and the Flood Control District determines how they want to consider the plan through their own process. Steve Bleifuhs explained that the Flood Control District funds staff in the King County River and Floodplain Management Section and that the Flood Control District is funded through a county tax, having significant legal obligations in how they spend that money, but no regulatory authority to manage the floodplain or legal obligation to implement the Flood Plan.

Spencer Easton summarized initial input from one-on-one interviews with committee members, which included a desire for the Flood plan to address equity, climate change, agriculture, a balanced approach to multi-benefits, as well numerous more specific issues. A need for further discussion on the role between King County, the King County Flood District, and the cities of King County was identified.

Breakout Room Discussion of Important Issues

The Partner Planning Committee was divided into four breakout rooms with Spencer Easton, Jason Wilkinson, Steve Bleifuhs, and Dan Beckley as hosts.

Issues frequently identified as important to attendees included:

- Agriculture (drainage issues, economic losses, regulations, soil impacts, viability)
- Climate change (adaptation, increased flood frequency, sea level rise, climate projections)
- Equity (communication, education, environmental justice)
- Development in the floodplains (property acquisition, managed retreat, regulations, resources)
- Interagency coordination (implementation roles, FEMA programs)
- Related disasters and impacts (burn scars, erosion, forest fires, logging, landslides)
- Stormwater management (drainage infrastructure, upper watershed runoff, urban flooding)

Areas of concern and locations where attendees have observed impacts included:

- Coastal areas
- Cedar River
- City of Kent
- Lake Sammamish
- Raging River
- Rural streams

- Urban areas
- Upper watershed areas

Introduction to Goals, Objectives, and Guiding Principles

The draft goals were presented to the Partner Planning Committee. Multiple people expressed a desire to see agriculture represented in the goals, as well a show of consideration for other land uses and geographic areas. There was discussion about whether goals should emphasize reducing flood risk or reducing flooding, which led to identifying a need to further clarify and define flood risk, among other terms.

Public Comment

The only public comment inquired about the potential for engaging with the Army Corps of Engineers on reducing flooding in Lake Sammamish, similar to the way that Lake Washington's water levels are lowered in winter to reduce flooding.

Next Steps

The next meeting will focus on goals, objectives, and guiding principles. A recording of this meeting will be made available online.