

King County Flood Hazard Management Plan Update
Partner Planning Committee – Meeting #3 Meeting Notes
February 21, 2022 | 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

List of attendees:

- Adrienne Hampton (Duwamish River Community Coalition)
- Alicia Kellogg (King County)
- Angela Donaldson (Fall City resident)
- Diane Pasta (Des Moines resident)
- Erin Ericson (Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District)
- Jackie Underberg (Bellevue resident)
- Jared Schneider (King County)
- Jason Wilkinson (King County)
- Jay Smith (King County)
- Jon Sloan (Port of Seattle)
- Judi Radloff (King County)
- Kazia Mermel (Sound Cities Association)
- Laura Hendrix (King County)
- Lauren Silver (Snoqualmie Valley Preservation Alliance)
- Laurie Lyford (Washington Sensible Shorelines Association)
- Lexanne Bumm (Des Moines resident)
- Lorin Reinelt (King County)
- Ken Zweig (King County)
- Martha Neuman (Seattle Public Utilities)
- Mary Strazer (King County)
- Matt Knox (King County)
- Mike Mactutis (City of Kent)
- Miranda Fix (Seattle resident)
- Monica Walker (King County)
- Nancy Sandford (King County)
- Sherry Edquid (City of Tukwila)
- Steve Bleifuhs (King County)
- Stewart Reinbold (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
- Teresa Lewis (King County)
- Tom Dean (Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust)
- Spencer Easton (Consultant team – ESA)
- Dan Beckley (Consultant team – ESA)

Interested parties present:

Laura Casey (Carnation farmer), Laura Wolfe (Port of Seattle), Lucy Gitahl (Green River farming interest), Molly Lawrence (Van Ness Feldman), Regina Fletcher (Snoqualmie Valley Preservation Alliance)

Introductions

Spencer Easton provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting. Spencer reviewed the purpose and planning process for the Partner Planning Committee

Public Comment

An opportunity to provide public comment was provided at the beginning of the meeting. No public comments were made.

Flood Plan Goals, Objectives, and Guiding Principles Follow-up

Spencer Easton provided an overview of the development of the goals, objectives, and guiding principles, which the Partner Planning Committee provided input on in December. The Committee would review and discuss revisions based on prior input in this meeting.

Goals were updated to:

- Acknowledge existing development and infrastructure
- Distinguish urban vs. rural needs
- Consider long-term costs rather than cost effectiveness

Objectives were updated to:

- Consider future changes beyond climate, including land use changes
- Address engagement with affected communities
- Address the watershed context for flooding
- Clarify the role of acquisition in flood risk reduction
- Clarify the application of multi-benefit activities

Guiding principles were updated to:

- Reflect urban contexts
- Give direction to the plan
- Remove language that was suggestive of bias in favor of nature-based solutions or against structural solutions

Comments about prioritizing actions and potential solutions were not addressed because these will be incorporated in other elements of the flood plan. Additional comments were provided about clarifying the intent or better defining terms in the goals, objectives, and guiding principles, but none of the comments were in opposition to the concepts presented.

Introduction to River Flooding Hazards and Risks

Spencer Easton reviewed ongoing engagement efforts to identify flood issues, described basin-specific flood risk discussions that would occur in this meeting, and noted that the remaining river basins in King County would be discussed at the next Partner Planning Committee meeting. Spencer introduced Jay Smith, Nancy Sandford, and Monica Walker, who are members of the King County River and Floodplain Management Section's basin teams for the Snoqualmie River Basin, Cedar River Basin, and Green-Duwamish River Basin, respectively.

Jay Smith described flooding and flood hazard management in the Snoqualmie River Basin:

- Flooding characteristics: overbank floods, deep and fast flows, levee failures, high variability in flood pattern
- Impacts: roads overtopped, channel migration, flooding of urban areas and agricultural landscapes
- Initiatives: incorporating climate projections into capital projects, land acquisitions on Tolt River, flood gages, floodplain reconnection, reduce channel migration, road and infrastructure resilience

Nancy Sandford described flooding and flood hazard management in the Cedar River Basin:

- Flooding characteristics: overtopping banks, deep flows through neighborhoods, large wood deflects flows into banks, avulsion, sediment aggradation limits levee capacity
- Impacts: extensive residential property impacts, roads overtop including SR-169, landslides, erosion, vulnerable broadband infrastructure
- Initiatives: buyouts of vulnerable neighborhoods, levee maintenance, dredging at mouth of river, levee setbacks and floodplain reconnection, bank stabilization and repairing revetments along roadways

Monica Walker described flooding and flood hazard management in the Green-Duwamish River Basin:

- Flooding characteristics: overbank flows, flooding in areas without levees, channel migration risks
- Impacts: erosion, levee and revetment instability, urban flooding
- Initiatives: system-wide levee improvement framework, urban stormwater management, floodplain and habitat restoration

Breakout Rooms: Basin-Focused Discussions

Spencer Easton introduced an exercise where participants could provide input in a basin-specific breakout room on experiences with flood problems and solutions.

Discussion of the Snoqualmie River Basin included:

Flood issues

- Lower valley flooding being caused by upper watershed impacts
- Erosion on farmland and regulatory barriers to armoring shorelines
- Recurring and prolonged impacts to productive farmland
- Landslides near Spring Glen, Mud Creek, Tokul Creek, Snoqualmie Falls Hill, Raging River, and San Souci

Potential solutions

- Upper watershed storage, including retrofitting existing development and stormwater/floodwater retention to stagger high volume flows
- Changing King County Code to enable private flood control and drainage measures
- Changing management of Ames Lake weir to address flooding
- Assess flood management potential in FERC relicensing of Tolt Dam

- Streamlining solutions to drainage needs, such as prioritizing drainage response without necessarily needing to meet the variety of environmental requirements or incorporate multi-benefits

Discussion of the Cedar River Basin included:

Flood issues

- Sediment aggradation in lower river worsens flooding, requires ongoing maintenance
- Jones Road reach is constrained, lacks capacity
- Tributary flooding has localized impacts

Potential solutions

- Multi-benefit analysis of project identification and prioritization
- Levee setbacks and additional floodwater storage
- Continue coordination with City of Seattle on floodplain restoration efforts downstream of Landsburg Dam

Discussion of the Green-Duwamish River Basin included:

Flood issues

- Sea level rise and tidal influence impacts flooding upriver to Kent
- USGS change in the rating curve at their Auburn stream gage on the Green-Duwamish River will affect how Howard Hanson Dam is operated and may result in high volume releases from the dam that could raise the Green-Duwamish River stage an additional one foot in Kent
- Storm surge issues in Duwamish River area

Potential solutions

- Stricter regulation and monitoring of potential contaminants and pollution sources, especially in urban areas that flood
- Study compound impacts of sea level rise, storm surges, and riverine flooding to understand viability of different flood risk reduction solutions
- Adaptive management approach to monitoring outcomes of current and upcoming projects
- Seek additional funding sources for flood hazard management in South Park

Next Steps

Spencer Easton noted that the next Partner Planning Committee meeting would be on March 21st, at 10:30 a.m. The next meeting will provide an opportunity for participants to identify flood hazards and risks on the South Fork Skykomish River, Sammamish River, and White River, as well as to continue conversations initiated at this meeting about flooding in the Snoqualmie basin, on the Cedar River, and on the Green River.