



King County Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee Final Opinion Summary from June 8, 2007 Meeting

“Temperature Read” on the Project List and Proposed Ten Cent Tax Levy

At the June 8 meeting of the Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee, each member was asked to provide the full group with a “temperature read” of where they stood on two key issues:

1. Was the “Sequenced List of Projects” (green sheet distributed at the meeting) the right list of capital improvement projects for the District to pursue during this first phase of project construction?
2. Is ten cents per \$1,000 of assessed home value the most appropriate levy rate? This would amount to \$37.00 per year for the owner of a \$370,000 home.

Fourteen out of fifteen committee members were present at this meeting, and indicated their opinions on these two questions. These round-robin temperature reads are being used as part of the committee process to record committee opinions on the capitol projects list, the tax levy amount, and whether or not a “tiered” levy system should be used to fund flood control projects.

“Final votes” from committee members on these issues will not be taken until the July 20 advisory committee meeting.

1) DO YOU SUPPORT THE SEQUENCED KING COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL ZONE DISTRICT CIP LIST?

King County staff presented a sequenced list of projects that had been reviewed by the Basin Technical Committees. This list included a number of projects that had been previously identified through the development of the *Flood Hazard Management Plan*, as well as some projects that had been nominated by cities after the plan was adopted by the King County Council. The “sequenced list” indicated the projects that should be built or implemented during this first phase of the CIP program.

Eight committee members affirmed that they were comfortable with the sequenced list of projects.

These committee members noted that the list was a good start, and further noted that it would change over time. For example, new funding opportunities might emerge that would enable a project to be built sooner than anticipated. These members also noted

that the committee will be reviewing this list every year, and will have the opportunity to make changes the group determines are appropriate and necessary. One supporter of the list said that he was comfortable with it because the Basin Technical Committees had helped to assemble, and had reviewed the list, prior to it being presented to the advisory committee. Another supporter reminded the committee that *the list is dynamic*, and another committee member urged the group to *not try to be too perfect* for this first year of the program.

Five members were somewhat uncertain about the list, or simply wanted more information before indicating a “pro” or “con” opinion.

A couple of these members wondered how various projects had been incorporated into the green list without first being presented and reviewed during the planning stage of the *Flood Hazard Management Plan*. Perhaps most notable among these new projects was the Alaskan Way seawall for the City of Seattle. One member said she was growing more comfortable with the list, but *had to have the rationale for the seawall*. Another member said that she was *dismayed by some of the additions to the list*, and wondered how the projects identified (e.g. storm drains) could be classified as regional projects. Another comment was that more information was needed to understand *how projects had migrated from being subregional to regional*. This member felt that the Advisory Committee should thoroughly substantiate the recently-added projects *to ensure that they are not strictly isolated local issues looking for regional funding*.

One member was opposed to the list.

This member was disturbed, in general, by the committee process and the level of review that the committee is being asked to engage in. He did not believe that the criteria for project selection had been adequately explained by King County, and felt that the advisory committee should have had more time to review and discuss the selection criteria. He had a similar opinion about the lack of advisory committee input and discussion on what might constitute a “regional” vs. a “subregional” project. He felt that, when measured against an objective set of criteria, the projects on the sequenced list should be those for which there is an immediate health or safety risk, and did not feel that property buyouts qualified as “regional” under this criteria.

2) IS TEN CENTS PER ASSESSED VALUE THE MOST APPROPRIATE TAX LEVY RATE?

Eight members affirmed that they believe ten cents per assessed value is the most appropriate tax levy rate.

The members who supported this tax rate noted that it was important to set the amount high enough to get the projects built. They worried that a lower rate would not result in enough completed projects to prove to the public that the Flood Control Zone District was a wise investment for the region. A representative comment: *It is far worse to set the tax rate too low. We have to be sure we have enough money to get the job done*. One of those supporting the ten cent rate felt it was important to cap the amount at ten cents, and not add on additional money for sub-regional projects: *In fairness, we cannot dismiss the concerns of those jurisdictions that do not have projects on the sequenced list. We should not*

add onto the ten cents at this time, and we do need more definition around what constitutes regional vs. subregional projects. In contrast, another member wondered what additional projects might be built if the levy were raised to eleven or twelve cents.

Four members were uncertain that ten cents was the most appropriate amount, and wanted more information before they weighed in with a definitive “pro” or “con” opinion.

Primarily, these members felt they had not received adequate analysis justifying the ten cent rate. They wondered if the ten cents was a “done deal” and where it had come from. They asked for more detail: *What projects do we get at a five-six cent rate? What if it is eight cents? What would a penny or two on top of the ten cents buy us in terms of subregional projects?* These members wanted more information, a sense of the “price sensitivities” associated with the project list, and a higher level of tax rate analysis before they made a final decision on which levy rate to support.

Two members were opposed to a ten cent levy rate.

One of these members did not believe there had been adequate analysis or justification for the ten cent levy rate. He did not believe that the criteria for justifying either the list of projects or the tax rate had been clearly identified. He was concerned about the lack of context regarding the flood control levy and other proposed County taxing initiatives: *I have very serious concerns about the impact of this tax along with all of the other tax levies that we are asking our citizens to pay for this year.* He did not believe that there had been adequate discussion or analysis about the overall capital improvement program and the tax funding that would be necessary to support that program. Moreover, he believed that the two-tiered rate proposal should be thoroughly evaluated and discussed by the advisory committee.

The other member was not willing to indicate a pro or con opinion on the levy rate until the committee has had a discussion on the possibility of implementing a two-tiered rate for District funding. He did not see any direct benefits for his city out of the list of projects, and believed that a two-tiered structure would be more equitable for those cities that are not located on a major river.

Individual Member Responses

1) RICHARD BONEWITZ, KING COUNTY UNINCORPORATED AREA COUNCILS

I am a “go” with both the project list and the ten cent rate. I do think it would be helpful to have a bit more information about the projects that migrated onto the green sheet. It would give me more confidence if we had that information. We do need to remember that the County is putting out something like seven levy proposals later this year.

(Uncertain on Project List, Yes on Ten Cents)

2) SALLY CLARK, CITY OF SEATTLE

I am generally comfortable with the project list, but I would like to see more analysis. I would also like to see more analysis and discussion around the tax rate. Ten cents might be the right number, or it might not be. What happens with eight cents, for example? I'd like to see a price sensitivity completed that shows what we can achieve at differing levy rates.

(Uncertain on Project List, Uncertain on Ten Cents)

3) DAN CLAWSON, CITY OF RENTON

I am comfortable with the green sheet, and I am comfortable with the ten cent levy rate. People will be very upset if we don't get these projects built. We also have to make sure that the money we are directing toward flood control doesn't get siphoned off to other programs.

(Yes on Project List, Yes on Ten Cents)

4) SUZETTE COOK, CITY OF KENT

I am getting comfortable with the list of projects, but I have to have some rationale for the seawall. We need to have more discussion on that project. I am supportive of the ten cent rate. We need to collect enough money to get the job done.

(Uncertain on Project List, Yes on Ten Cents)

5) GRANT DEGGINGER, CITY OF BELLEVUE

I am not comfortable with the ten cents. We have not had adequate discussion about either the projects or the tax levy rate. The priorities are not clear, and the criteria distinguishing the difference between subregional and regional have not been well defined. I have very serious concerns about the cumulative impact of this tax – along with other regional priorities such as Medic I, parks, and the conservation district – on my constituents. This project is being conducted backwards. The advisory committee should have more time to review the project selection criteria, discuss the differences between regional and subregional projects, and then determine what the level of the tax levy should be. I do not see anything for Bellevue on the list of projects. It is difficult to do things for the region when our city does not benefit.

(No on Project List, No on Ten Cents)

6) MIKE FLOWERS, CITY OF CARNATION

I do not see any major red flags on the project list, and I am comfortable with the ten cents. It's important that we try not to be too perfect for this first year CIP. This is a

ten-year-plus type of a plan. It will change over time. Let's not lose sight of the immediate decisions that have to be made. *(Yes on Project List, Yes on Ten Cents)*

7) RON HANSON, CITY OF SHORELINE

I agree with Sally Clark. How did we get to the ten cent rate? I'm a little disappointed because I thought the advisory committee was supposed to set the rate. But it seems that the ten cents was predetermined. I would like to see more analysis of that. I also like the idea of a two-tiered rate system. I do think it would be far worse to set the rate too low and not get projects built. I am reasonably comfortable with the project list, but I would like more information on how the subregional projects migrated to that list. *(Uncertain on Project List, Uncertain on Ten Cents)*

8) KENNETH HEARING, CITY OF NORTH BEND

I am comfortable with the ten cent rate, but I do not think we should go any higher than ten cents. I have confidence in the project list, and I would also welcome a more vigorous look at the projects that were recently added. We need to remember that we will be reviewing and adding to the project list every year. The list is flexible and will be reviewed and changed by us on a regular basis. *(Yes on Project List, Yes on Ten Cents)*

9) LAURE IDDINGS, CITY OF MAPLE VALLEY

I think we need more of a discussion/analysis on the levy rate. We have not seen an evaluation, for example, of what could be possible at a five-six cent rate. What projects would drop off the list if we went for a lower levy rate? I am somewhat comfortable with the list of projects, but I am dismayed that projects have been added to the green sheet that were not identified previously throughout the planning process. Also, I want to make certain there is not duplication between this list and the projects that have been identified through the WRIA process. *(Uncertain on Project List, Uncertain on Ten Cents)*

10) MATT LARSON, CITY OF SNOQUALMIE

I am comfortable with the ten cent rate and I am comfortable with the project list. However, I do not believe we should push for more than that in order to fund the subregional projects. In fairness, we cannot dismiss the concerns of those cities that do not feel they are benefiting from this program. We do need more clarity and definition between regional and subregional. I would like to make a plea for the Kimball Creek project, as it is very important. *(Yes on Project List, Yes on Ten Cents)*

11) PETE LEWIS, CITY OF AUBURN

I am comfortable with the project list. Let's remember that this is a dynamic list that will change over time. I also support the ten cent levy rate. Five cents is not enough. I've always disliked trying to make the distinction between regional and subregional; I would not have any problem adding a cent or two above the ten cents for the subregional projects. *(Yes on Project List, Yes on Ten Cents)*

12) JOAN MCBRIDE, CITY OF KIRKLAND

I am comfortable with the project list, recognizing that it will change over time. I would like to see more analysis regarding the ten cent rate. If we go lower, what does that buy us? What does it mean to add a penny or two? When I put my regional hat on, I have to be supportive of the overall program moving forward. I'm not worried about voter fatigue. Our state has one of the nuttiest tax systems around, and this is the only way we can get these types of programs funded. It's our job to make sure that we recommend the best product possible for our region. *(Yes on Project List, Uncertain on Ten Cents)*

13) STEVE MULLET, CITY OF TUKWILA

I am comfortable with the list of projects. This is a good place to start. I also support the ten cent levy rate. We have collected at the five cent rate before, and it just doesn't work. We have to build these projects, or the entire County will be seriously impacted by flooding. The economic impacts of what happens in the lowlands will also impact the highlands. We are all interconnected. *(Yes on Project List, Yes on Ten Cents)*

14) MICHAEL PARK, CITY OF FEDERAL WAY

At this point Federal Way is strictly a contributor to the program, we are not deriving any direct benefit. I am comfortable and confident in the project list, primarily because the Basin Technical Committees have already reviewed them. The proposed levy rate assumes a flat amount applied equally throughout the County. I cannot support the ten cent rate, because I do not support an evenly-applied levy. We need to discuss and consider a two-tiered rate, with different levies applied to cities that will not get direct benefit out of these projects. *(Yes on Project List, No on Ten Cents)*

15) RON SIMS, KING COUNTY

Executive Sims was not present at the June 8 meeting.