

**--FINAL SUMMARY--**

**July 18, 2007**

**King County Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee  
Opinion Summary from June 22, 2007 Meeting**

**“Temperature Read” on a uniform or tiered tax levy. Restated opinions on the project list and proposed ten cent levy amount.**

At its June 22 meeting, the Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee discussed the pros and cons of a possible “tiered” rate structure to fund the District, meaning that property owners in jurisdictions most impacted by flooding would pay more for flood control and protection than property owners in those jurisdictions that are located away from flood prone areas. After their discussion, each committee member provided the full group with a “temperature read” of where they stood on this issue.

In addition to their opinions on a tiered rate structure, committee members restated their opinions on the list of Capital Improvement Projects that had been discussed previously, as well as their opinions on the proposed levy rate of ten cents per assessed value. Members had conducted their first temperature read on these two issues at their June 8 committee meeting.

These three questions were posed to members on June 22:

1. Do you support a uniform tax levy throughout the County, or a tiered rate structure?
2. Is the proposed list of capital improvement projects the right list of projects for the District to pursue during this first phase of project construction?
3. 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.

All fifteen committee members were present at this meeting, and indicated their opinions on these three questions. These early temperature reads are being used as part of the committee process to record opinions on the capitol projects list, the tax levy amount, and how that levy should be applied throughout the County. “Final votes” from committee members on these issues will be taken at the July 20 advisory committee meeting.

## 1) DO YOU SUPPORT A TIERED RATE STRUCTURE, OR A UNIFORM RATE STRUCTURE?

### **Eleven members supported a uniform levy rate throughout the County**

These members emphasized that flooding is a regional problem with region-wide public safety and economic impacts. Given these hazards and impacts, they believe it is only fair that everyone in the County pay the same amount. These members were also concerned about the complexities of attempting to implement a two-tiered or “special zone” taxing structure, since it can be difficult to define. One member noted that they had abandoned the flood control district currently serving her jurisdiction, and are now counting solely on the financing support from the County-wide District. She and others were concerned that any delays or complications related to the formation of a tiered system would jeopardize or further delay the implementation of the District.

For others who supported the uniform levy rate, it is a matter of good governance. *People are counting on us to get these projects built, and as leaders we need to make certain that these flood protection projects get put into place.* One member reminded the group that commercial establishments (such as those located in South Center) were already paying a higher level of tax given the size and assessed value of their property holdings; so, in effect, there is already a “tiered” payment system.

Supporting a uniform levy rate were Richard Bonewits, Dan Clawson, Suzette Cooke, Mike Flowers, Ron Hanson, Kenneth Hearing, Matt Larson, Joan McBride, Steve Mullet, Ron Sims, and Roger Thordarson (sitting in for Auburn Mayor Pete Lewis).

### **Four members supported a tiered levy rate.**

These members were concerned that there had not been enough time to adequately discuss and analyze all possible funding options. In addition to simply dividing the levy into two tiers, for example, the idea of a uniform rate, plus a “service charge” or “special assessment” for flood-prone areas are two other possibilities that should be fully explored. Some felt that they were being asked to make major decisions on the basis of too little information. Others asserted that *flooding is flooding*, and that those jurisdictions that do not suffer from flooding impacts should not have to pay as high of a tax rate. *Although we support the idea of regionalism, there is a matter of equity here.* Another concern was that the region would be subsidizing commercial business owners if the tax levy was uniform.

Supporting a tiered levy rate were Sally Clark, Grant Degginger, Laure Iddings, and Michael Park.

## **2) DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROPOSED LIST OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS?**

### **Twelve committee members affirmed that they were comfortable with the list of projects.**

These committee members noted that the identified list was *a good place to start*, and expressed confidence in the list because it had been well vetted by the Basin Technical Committees. As discussed on June 8, these members noted that the list was *dynamic*, and would change over time. One member said the prioritized list was good, because the criteria used to define the list – especially public safety – were important for the entire region.

Members supporting the CIP list included Richard Bonewits, Sally Clark, Dan Clawson, Suzette Cooke, Mike Flowers, Ron Hanson, Kenneth Hearing, Matt Larson, Joan McBride, Steve Mullet, Ron Sims, and Roger Thordarson (filling in for Auburn Mayor Pete Lewis).

### **Three members disagreed with, or were uncertain about, the proposed list of projects.**

These members were concerned that the differences between regional and subregional projects had not been well-defined, and they wanted that definition to be clarified before they could support the list. They did not have the same level of confidence in the Basin Technical Committees that the supporting members expressed. They did not feel that the criteria for project selection had been well-defined, nor that the advisory committee had had adequate time to review the criteria, the list of projects, and the rationale supporting those projects.

Members disagreeing with the list, or looking for more information/clarity included Grant Degginger, Laure Iddings, and Michael Park.

## **3) IS TEN CENTS PER ASSESSED VALUE THE MOST APPROPRIATE TAX LEVY RATE?**

### **Ten members said they agreed with the ten cent levy rate.**

In general, this group reiterated what they had said on June 8; that the ten cent amount was enough to get the job done, and that it was important to set the rate high enough to ensure that there would be success in getting the necessary projects built. One member said that the rate was *what people could afford*. A couple of members in this group said they were comfortable with the ten cents, but also noted it was the *least amount* of tax they would be comfortable supporting.

Two members said they would like to explore the option of a higher amount, with one saying *I could sell more in the flood plain*, and the other saying *I would like to go higher than ten cents if possible*.

Another member said *10 cents is when you start to see benefits of multiple projects getting completed in a particular area or stretch of a river – this results in getting the problems fixed rather than temporary fixes and/or pushing the problem down stream.*

Supporting the ten cent rate were Richard Bonewits, Dan Clawson, Suzette Cooke, Mike Flowers, Kenneth Hearing, Matt Larson, Joan McBride, Steve Mullet, Ron Sims, and Roger Thordarson.

### **Five members were uncertain that ten cents was the most appropriate amount.**

Those who could not fully endorse the ten cent rate felt that there had not been enough information or analysis completed to justify that level of funding. One member said he was *concerned about the lack of clarity with which we are addressing these issues.* Another member said she could more easily support a five or eight cent levy rate. Another member wondered how the ten cents had been suggested in the first place, and said he needed more information before he would be able to endorse that rate.

Members opposed to or uncertain about the levy rate included Sally Clark, Grant Degginger, Ron Hanson, Laure Iddings, and Michael Park.

## **Individual Member Responses**

### **1) RICHARD BONEWITS, KING COUNTY UNINCORPORATED AREA COUNCILS**

I agree with King County regarding the single uniform rate, the list and the ten cent levy. The cost is increasing, so start with a one tier system. We need to have a discussion with more data.

### **2) SALLY CLARK, CITY OF SEATTLE**

I can appreciate five or eight cents. Seattle doesn't have huge flooding problems. I prescribe to the concept of regionalism and agree that we need to tackle this problem as a region. But, it will be hard to sell to Seattle constituents. I support the two tiered or tax assessment option. I am happy with the project list, with the understanding that I am not endorsing the list.

### **3) DAN CLAWSON, CITY OF RENTON**

I am fine with the single uniform rate and the project list. It would be quicker and cheaper to do these projects with the single uniform rate. Ten cents is about what people can afford. I would like to go higher than ten cents if possible.

### **4) SUZETTE COOKE, CITY OF KENT**

I like the single uniform rate and I am fine with the list for now. A ten cent rate is appropriate at the beginning. I don't see King County Council reducing the rate. It is important to keep in mind that areas currently considered flood plains used to have working levees. When people moved to the area, the rivers were controlled.

**5) GRANT DEGGINGER, CITY OF BELLEVUE**

I recognize that there is a regional component to this project, but there should be some proportionality. I am concerned about the rate and lack of clarity with which we are addressing these issues. I am not comfortable with the subregional or regional categories. With some work we could help reprioritize and understand crucial pieces of the system. There should be further analysis regarding the rate structures.

**6) MIKE FLOWERS, CITY OF CARNATION**

Flooding is a regional problem, so I vote for a single uniform rate option. I am comfortable with the project list. I am okay with ten cents. Ten cents is when you start to see benefits of multiple projects getting completed in a particular area or stretch of a river – this results in getting the problems fixed rather than temporary fixes and/or pushing the problem down stream. Less than ten cents doesn't fix the problem – ten cents is when you start to see the problem being fixed.

**7) RON HANSON, CITY OF SHORELINE**

The Basic Technical Committee did an adequate job to select the list and I understand that the list is dynamic. I don't have any problems with the list or with the single uniform levy. I would like to see the impacts of a uniform tax assessment. I am not sure why ten cents was chosen. I don't want the rate too high, but I also want to provide enough money to get the job done.

**8) KENNETH HEARING, CITY OF NORTH BEND**

I am fine with ten cents, but no lower. I am okay with the project list. The rate should be uniform throughout the county. Regarding special benefits to commercial properties, they will pay a bigger share of the cost.

**9) LAURIE IDDINGS, CITY OF MAPLE VALLEY**

I need the multi-tiered approach with either the tax assessment or service charge so that the rates are proportional. I would like more information. The list is wonderful and appropriate but it is not getting into the subregional and regional categories. Unless there is a major catastrophe, we don't need buyout now. I am not sure about the ten cents.

**10) MATT LARSON, CITY OF SNOQUALMIE**

I like the uniform single option. I am all right with option #3 regarding the regional/subregional definition. I am comfortable with ten cents but I could sell more in the flood plain.

**11) JOAN MCBRIDE, CITY OF KIRKLAND**

I am happy with the uniform single rate. It is an issue of good governance. Ten cents is the least amount I would be comfortable with. I am okay with option 1 and 3 regarding the definition for regional/subregional categories. We can take our time discussing this issue. The project list is a tool to identify a levy amount. I have problems with three or

four of the projects, but overall the list is good. It is our job as policy makers to sell this issue to the public.

**12) MICHAEL PARK, CITY OF FEDERAL WAY**

I am willing to participate but I am not happy with the process. This is a very sensitive and large issue. I appreciate the presentation regarding the options and prefer the two tiered system and tax plus assessment or service charge. How much are we able to get with that system? I don't fully understand and have confidence in the list, so I will talk to my staff to find out more. I would like to see what funding is available, then I can decide if I am comfortable with nine or ten cents.

**13) STEVE MULLET, CITY OF TUKWILA**

I have not changed my opinion, the levy rate should be uniform. There are not a lot of advantages to other options. The project list is a start. The projects will change. Ten cents is good, five cents is not enough.

**14) ROGER THORDARSON, CITY OF AUBURN**

I think the single uniform rate should be applied to the region; it is economically important to the region. Areas may not be directly affected, but they will be affected indirectly. The list is a good start. Ten cents is realistic.

**15) RON SIMS, KING COUNTY**

I vote for the uniform single rate. I like the list of projects. I didn't like the nickel option and I would rather do ten cents than eight cents. I like option #3 for the regional/subregional definition.