

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) King County Flood Control Zone District

1. Why did the County Council form the King County Flood Control Zone District?

As described in Chapter 7 of the 2006 Flood Plan, King County's current funding does not provide sufficient funding to address the region's critical flood protection facility maintenance, repair and reconstruction needs. Most of the nearly 500 facilities flood protection facilities in the County were constructed in the early 1960s are degrading and are no longer consistent with current federal standards. This poses significant risks to public safety and regionally important economic centers and transportation corridors. Proactively addressing these deficiencies will reduce the overall risks from flooding. Current funding limitations significantly jeopardize the ability for King County to provide basic flood protection facility management and risk reduction services, including the implementation of high priority flood risk reduction projects.

The King County Executive recognized this problem and proposed the formation of a countywide flood control zone district to address critical regional flood protection needs.

2. Where did 10 cents come from?

The 10 cent funding level was determined in the preparation of the 2006 Flood Hazard Management Plan to be the level of funding necessary to provide regional, comprehensive flood hazard management services to ensure protection of public safety. The 10 cent level was introduced over a year ago as the recommended rate to generate the necessary funding to implement the adopted plan. The \$30 million in 2006 flood damage repair projects and the \$55 million in new city submittals had not been identified when the 10 cent levy rate was first proposed.

3. How are the capital project costs developed?

King County accounts for the following costs activities when costing a project: pre-design study, project management, design and permitting, construction, monitoring reporting, maintenance, and, for projects that include an acquisition component, acquisition overhead, purchase price, and other acquisition-related costs. Staff estimate the number and amount of staff time as well as other resources necessary to complete each project. Cost estimates for each of these categories are based on the specific project, engineering design standards and King County's experience implementing acquisitions and capital projects, The County has completed 191 capital projects and acquisitions between 1993 and 2005 (see Appendix D of the Flood Plan). A summary of cost assumptions used in the financial plan is available upon request.

4. What is the status of capital projects on the list?

Each of the projects on the Capital Improvement Program list was categorized into one of the following capital project phases: risk assessment/planning, project concept and identification, feasibility (including landowner willingness and appraisals for acquisitions), design, permitting, final design, construction (or acquisition for buyout projects), and monitoring and maintenance. This information is included on the sequenced project list included in the July 20th meeting packet.

During 2008 there are several levee repair and rehabilitation projects that will be constructed, but the number of projects in the construction phase will increase significantly in 2009-2012 as feasibility, design, and permitting phases are completed. Many of the levee repair projects to be implemented in 2008 were identified as a result of the 2006 flooding, and the repairs must be completed within approximately 18-24 months of the flood event in order to receive federal flood damage repair funds. Finally,

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many floodplain buyout projects are scheduled for 2008 and 2009 to enable levee setbacks and removals in subsequent years, and to reduce the inflationary impacts of real estate appreciation.

5. How is the levy rate approved?

The KCFCZD levy rate is approved by the Board of Supervisors of the King County Flood Control District (which is comprised of the members of the King County Council). Approval occurs at the time of the adoption of the County budget).

6. Is the levy set annually?

Yes. The levy rate is approved annually by the District Board of Supervisors. Once the initial levy is set, it can go down in future years, but increases are capped by I-747 (1% plus new construction.) The 2006 Flood hazard management plan anticipated a 10-year planning horizon primarily to address a capital backlog. After the capital needs have been addressed, it is anticipated that the levy would be reduced to a level to cover primarily maintenance and operations needs.

7. How are Federal, State, and other local funding sources factored into the District's financial plan?

Partnerships and other external funding will continue to be vigorously pursued to supplement District funding and enable cost-effective and collaborative implementation of the District's work program. The proposed financial plan includes revenue projections for federal, state and local grants, based on the WLRD River and Floodplain Management Unit's average annual grant revenues from previous years.

It is important to note, however, that grants and disaster assistance funds are not a consistent, long-term dedicated funding source. In addition, federal and state programs that offer grants and public assistance funds typically do not fund routine maintenance and repair activities.

8. How much overlap is there between capital projects on the FCZD list and those identified in the Puget Sound Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan?

Major river floodplains are a focal area of both Chinook recovery and flood hazard management. Because both of these regional efforts focus to a large extent on the same area of the landscape, there is a natural overlap in some of the proposed project areas. In order to reduce flood risk, many of the high priority actions in the 2006 Flood Plan seek to improve natural floodplain function by removing or setting back levees to increase flood storage, conveyance capacity, and sediment deposition. Many of the salmon conservation actions also seek to restore natural floodplain function in order to increase habitat productivity for Chinook and other salmon species. Of all projects included on the District's project list, 58 projects (41% of all projects) totaling \$143 million are considered to be identical to or supportive of salmon plan priorities. At the 10 cent funding level, 42 of the 91 funded projects (46%) totaling \$108 million are identical to or supportive of salmon plan priorities.

In addition, the majority of proposed projects will need to go through a biological assessment process with Federal agencies (US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service), and will likely include habitat mitigation, vegetation maintenance, and restoration components as part of any federal permit.