

Draft Regional and Sub-Regional Flood Hazard Reduction Projects FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

Background

Ordinance 15673 (January 2007) adopts the 2006 King County Flood Hazard Management Plan (FHMP) to serve as the functional plan for King County's floodplain management efforts. The geographic scope of the FHMP is the entire County, but the focus of hazard reduction capital projects in the Plan is on regionally significant flood hazards along the County's six major rivers, their significant tributaries, and smaller tributaries where King County has historically maintained flood protection facilities. In adopting the FHMP, the Ordinance stated the County's intent to provide adequate funding to implement the projects contained in the Plan, and to 'address subregional flood risks and infrastructure needs on tributaries'. While the ordinance does include eligibility and ranking criteria for subregional actions (whether capital or programmatic); it does not include a definition for the subregional category. In order to make informed work program and budget decisions, the KCFCZD will need answers to two fundamental questions:

1. What clear, transparent, and objective thresholds can be used to differentiate between regional, 'subregional', and local flood hazard reduction actions?
2. What eligibility and ranking criteria should be used for any new categories?

Defining Regional, Subregional, and Local

The rivers and streams targeted for capital and programmatic flood hazard reduction efforts in the Flood Plan range significantly in size. Specific flood hazards are identified in the following systems:

- King County's six major river systems, which are the South Fork Skykomish, Snoqualmie, Sammamish, Cedar, Green and White Rivers (approximately \$300 million in capital projects).
- Significant tributaries of the major river systems, including the Tolt, Raging, Miller and Greenwater Rivers (approximately \$30 million in capital projects).
- Other tributaries and smaller streams, including, but not limited to those with existing flood protection facilities such as Tokul Creek, Kimball Creek, Coal Creek (Snoqualmie), Issaquah Creek, Fifteen Mile Creek, and Holder Creek (approximately \$3 million in capital projects).

When a common measure of basin size, such as mean annual flow in cubic feet per second (or cfs) is compared, one can see at least an order of magnitude difference between:

- The major rivers and their tributaries such as the Snoqualmie (2600 cfs), Green (1300 cfs), Cedar (660 cfs), Tolt (570 cfs), or Issaquah (130 cfs) and
- The Puget Sound lowland stream systems which are generally less than 30 cfs, such as Kimball, Boise, Fifteenmile, Juanita, and Kelsey Creeks.

Based on the fundamental differences in basin size and flooding potential in these systems, the following definitions are proposed:

- **REGIONAL:** Rivers and streams with a mean annual flow of at least 100 cfs. Systems over 100 cfs include the Snoqualmie, Skykomish, Cedar, Sammamish,

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Green, Miller, Greenwater, Raging, Tolt, and White Rivers and Issaquah and Tokul Creeks.

- **SUBREGIONAL:** Actions intended to address flood hazards on systems with a mean annual flow smaller than 100 cfs but with affects more than one jurisdiction, impacts major public infrastructure.
- **LOCAL:** All local drainage issues on smaller systems would continue to be addressed through local stormwater utilities rather than the KCFCZD.

Selection and Prioritization of Subregional Projects

While the ordinance did not define the subregional category, it did provide clear criteria for the identification of projects as well as factors that should be used to evaluate proposals:

- The jurisdiction proposing the subregional project must have regulations consistent with the FHMP.
- The jurisdiction proposing the subregional project must carry out flood risk policies and other objectives of the FHMP.
- Subregional flood risks and infrastructure needs would recognize past investments in flood risk reduction for any future funding.

Subregional project evaluation criteria should also include factors used to evaluate regional projects, such as severity, consequence, and urgency.

Recognizing there are likely more subregional needs than annual funding, it is recommend that:

- The District administers an annual project selection process
- Project proposals be submitted to a technical ranking committee (either within or across the existing Basin Technical Committees)
- The ranking committee would review, discuss, and prioritize proposals and forward to the Advisory Committee
- The Advisory Committee would recommend projects for subregional funding.

It is anticipated that subregional projects would be implemented by the sponsoring jurisdiction rather than by the FCZD.

In order for either regional or subregional projects to be considered for FCZD funding, a project, program or plan must have an official project sponsor. An official project sponsor is any governmental entity capable of undertaking a project, including having proper jurisdiction for the property on which the project, program or plan is proposed to be undertaken, the ability to obtain permits, and financial capability to construct and maintain the project, program or plan once completed.

In order to support the County Council's stated intent of providing adequate funding to implement actions identified in the Flood Plan, it is recommended that subregional projects and programs be funded in addition to the proposed FCZD budget, rather than by reducing funds available for regional projects and programs.