

Thurston County Flood Planning Committee Meeting Notes



Wednesday, June 21, 2017 – 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Thurston Regional Planning Council – 2424 Heritage Court SW, Olympia, WA

Conference Room A

Present: Pat Allen, Scott Boetcher, Cal Bray, Paul Brewster, Tris Carlson, Howard Glastetter, Andrew Kinney, Mark Maurer, Meghan Porter, Tim Rubert, Trevin Taylor, Alan Vanell, and George Walter

Absent: Robert Scott, Allison Osterberg

1. Introductions

Paul Brewster, Senior Planner, Thurston Regional Planning Council, facilitated the meeting. The committee members introduced themselves.

2. Thurston County Flood Hazards Mitigation Plan Goals and Objectives Review

The committee agreed to the following changes, proposed by members, to the revised goals and objectives (mark up shown):

- 2f. Maintain **up to date** ~~current~~ maps of floodways, floodplains, channel migration zones, and areas subject to high groundwater flooding
- 3a. Identify, document, and learn from lessons learned from previous ~~disasters~~ **events and exercises**
- Goal 5 **Educate and inform residents and businesses to act** ~~prevent to minimize their flood risks~~

Planner Paul Brewster explained that while this is the last opportunity for the committee members to collectively discuss the goals and objectives, it is possible that additional revisions could be made up to the adoption of the final plan. No additional revisions were requested.

Committee member Howard Glastetter suggested that the committee draft a letter for the County to send to Tacoma Power to suggest that the utility keep the Reservoir no higher than 10' below capacity in the Fall / Winter. (They are now keeping Riffe Lake Reservoir (Mossyrock Dam) 30' below capacity year-round due to earth quake concerns. The committee suggested deferring this consideration as part of future committee discussions for the flood mitigation strategy.

3. Flood Risk Assessment

Planner Brewster presented an overview of the purpose and contents of a risk assessment. The risk assessment serves as the factual basis for the county's flood mitigation strategy. The presentation highlighted the requirements of the Community Rating System (CRS) Planning Steps 4 and 5. Draft tables of GIS flood hazard exposure analysis were presented. The analysis considers a structure vulnerable to flooding if 50 percent or more of a parcel is within one of the

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county's flood hazard areas (100-year floodplain, high groundwater hazard area, or flood of record).

Two questions were posed to the committee:

Question #1: What data or information, that is readily available, should be included to inform our understanding of flood hazards and problems?

The committee members shared the following:

- Alan Vanell and Scott Boetcher mentioned a study performed by West Consultants for the Chehalis Basin that is evaluating the efficacy of data from a variety of private gauges and sensors. Some of this data may be useful to the plan's risk assessment. Scott will email Paul more information about this.
- Howard Glastetter mentioned a need to summarize data on Alder Lake Reservoir levels
- Tris Carlson inquired about availability of an inventory of farms. This information could be used to ascertain potential contamination issues regarding the risk of floodwaters contacting fertilizers and other farm chemicals.
- George Walter stated that the risk assessment needs to include information about lake flooding. Shoreline flooding of Lake Saint Claire is a case in point.

Question#2: What essential data is missing that should somehow be collected for future planning efforts (a future work program/task)?

- Mark Maurer suggested that the use of big data collected from an array of private gauges and sensors could be useful for predicting high groundwater flooding.
- Cal Bray discussed the need for a permanent, calibrated, real-time gauge for monitoring the Black River. Location could be near the bridge on Highway 12 or another suitable location upstream.
- Scott discussed the challenge of communicating the areal extent of flooding. Flood gauge heights and narrative descriptions of flood levels aren't as impactful as maps are in clearly marking where floodwaters are likely to occur. Tim added that floodwater or stream velocity is also difficult to communicate.
- Scott also mentioned the local areas analysis work being performed in the Chehalis Basin to assess high water monuments, conditions, and assets within a planning area.

4. Mitigation Strategy Introduction

Planner Brewster presented CRS flood plan requirements for evaluating existing plans and programs for their ability to support mitigation strategies and the need to modify them if challenges or barriers exist. The mitigation strategy is the plan's call to action and should consist of specific measurable actions that will help the county achieve its flood plan goals and objectives.

The county will need to evaluate its existing actions and report on what progress has been made. Based on the information in the risk assessment, the county may need to consider new

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mitigation initiatives. Rather than simply identifying a solution, the county will need to consider a range of actions to solve a problem and conduct a benefit cost review to determine which action is the most effective and appropriate solution. The actions need to identify who will be responsible for implementing the action, the timeline, cost estimates, and potential funding sources.

A crosswalk of the county's current flood mitigation strategy and related actions from the all hazards mitigation plan was shared with the committee. The flood plan presently includes 32 actions. The all hazards plan has 19 flood actions, of which 14 are related to the flood plan.

A process was proposed for Thurston County staff to perform an initial evaluation of the existing strategy, propose new actions, and prioritize them (up to 2 meetings before July 19). Staff will evaluate the all hazards plan actions and reference FEMA's Mitigation Ideas handbook to support the development of an updated mitigation strategy. The flood planning committee will review the proposed strategy and advise the county, offer suggestions, and provide feedback on the priority. Planner Brewster encouraged the committee members to share thoughts and ideas via email. The Flood Planning Committee will review the county's proposed mitigation strategy update on July 19.

5. Public Comments

No additional participants attended the meeting. No public comments were received.

6. Adjourn

The next meeting is on July 19 from 2-4 p.m. at TRPC. The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.