

# Thurston County Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan Public Comments, September 5-17, 2017



Thurston County sought comments of the [Draft Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) from September 5 – 17. Ten community members submitted comments. All comments will be published in *Appendix C Public Outreach Information* in the final plan. The comments are shown in the order they were received.

**5 September**

**Leslie Connelly**

**4716 Thompson Lane SE**

**Comment on the Risk Assessment:** Thank you for including the chart on Lake St. Clair elevation levels and information on the expired irrigation. What is the flood stage? Can you show that on the chart as well? As a homeowner on the lake, it would be good to know more about the study commissioned by the county to look at controls for lake levels. I haven't heard about this study at all.

**Comment on the Mitigation Strategy:** Flood hazard mapping should be a high priority as a way to inform the review of the development regulations and insurance requirements. Mapping should be parcel specific. For example, when we purchase our home on Lake St. Clair in 2008, it was deemed a flood hazard even though it is steep bank. We had to hire a surveyor to document that we did not need flood insurance. It was expensive. The county should help with this type of survey and mapping work to clearly identify which properties and structures are at risk.

**Other Comment:** I am glad to see the flood plan incorporates the impacts climate change. There are many great resources out there to further inform the impacts. See The Climate Impacts Group at the UW. Flooding is only going to get worse. We need to get ahead of the impacts, rather than react to every emergency.

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**6 September**

**Charles Reed**

**3033 85th Avenue SW**

**Comment on the Risk Assessment:** There is not much in Chapter 2 regarding the Salmon Creek Basin which has had a great deal of flooding over the years. What is written is on page 75 of Chapter 2. More should be done in this area following the recommendations from the Salmon Creek Basin plan. I served on this planning committee for several months a few years back and not much has come from the plan

recommendations to the County. Rhondo pond just of 83 Ave in my neighborhood is pretty high at this time of year. Expect flooding this year if there are heavy rains.

**Comment on the Mitigation Strategy:** Very important to maintain old ditches in this area to re leave the groundwater build up. County has allowed drainage ditches to erode and not be maintained by some property owners. This is a large part of the groundwater problems. Your item ID Number 3 address this issue in part. Old ditches and culverts have been blocked that used to release groundwater build up to Salmon Creek and the Black River.

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**7 September**

**Ryan Stout**

**4816 Thompson Lane SE**

**Other Comment:** My family has lived on Lake St Clair for over 50 years. The home flooded for the first-time last year. We need help however small.

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**7 September**

**Darline Duncan**

**11535 Nisqually Park  
Loop SE**

**Other Comment:** My main concern is when you complete this Flood Plan that you include in whatever materials or booklet you come up with, a plan, PREFERABLY A MAP, showing a safe route out of the flood area (or expected flood area) for those of us living in possible flood areas. I live in the Nisqually Delta, off Pacific Hwy & 6th Ave. There are many others who live in this area, lots of us are senior citizens, some with disabilities, who will need help evacuating the area. I have several directions I could go to get out of the Delta should the Nisqually flood again. However, each if the directions have possible hazardous spots. To go north or west up Mounts Road to Ft. Lewis means crossing several bridges, including one over the Nisqually River. To go up Steilacoom Road to the Lacey area means crossing a creek (possibly flooded). To go west toward the freeway and Martin Way means crossing a creek twice (again possibly flooded). We either need extra time to leave our homes BEFORE the flood gets dangerous or at the very least the direction to go that would present the least hazardous flight to higher ground. Thank you.

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**8 September**

**James Jackson**

**5421 Rehklau Road SE**

**Other Comment:** Please post what is planned to address the flooding problems on the lake. Don't mix it with other areas and other data that makes it difficult to see what you are doing to fix the problem. To tell me what is planned to fix the flood problem will be added after the plan is accepted is not acceptable. We want to know what and when the action will be. Please keep your statements simple for the home owners, we may not be engineers.

It is clear from the graphs you have supplied that we are hearing for urgent flooding and now is the time for immediate action. Please say it like it is, if you don't plan to do anything within the next two years say so. Let the home owner on the lake know what they can expect.

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**8 September**

**Bruce Smith**

**No address provided**

**Other Comment:** You need a Flood Hazards Prevention Plan. Don't let people build in flood prone areas.

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**9 September**

**Anonymous**

**No address provided**

**Other Comment:** Doesnt cover water features not in flood plain, but were questioned in 1996 as landslide hazards created by rain run off, 1956 USGS springs, and county neglect to identification. SEThurston fire plan has more info than county EM, or county anyone and WA DNR had no clue until I asked. Ive Asked questions to state and Federal partners, nothing. I hate what this county has done to acknowledge public risk assessment and EM ignores informed questions. You dont need to work for the public!

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**12 September**

**John Suessman**

**6620 Carpenter Road SE**

**Other Comment:** What a great document you have produced! Wow!

Just a little note.

In February 1996 when we had Federal Disaster 1100 Flood. Tacoma Power did an emergency release from the two dams, Alder and La Grande. The flooding wiped out the Mounts Road overpass to the Nisqually River in the Nisqually basin on Old Pacific Highway. It took about a year to replace this bridge. Also, highway 507 in McKenna was flooded and this left only one way out of Thurston County to the North. There truly are only three ways to go north out of Thurston County (Hwy 507, Mounts Road, and Interstate 5). Unless you go through Shelton to Bremerton.

On page 2-51 seems like the narrative of the 1996 Disaster misses the fact that the Transportation corridors out of Thurston County were blocked and damaged.

I enjoyed reading the plan. Thank you for your hard work and amazing talent.

Sincerely,

John Suessman  
North Thurston Public Schools  
Transportation Director

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**17 September**

**Lake Stintzi**

**7514 Cattail Lane SW**

**Comment on the Risk Assessment:** 2.3.5 Lake Flooding, 2.2.5.2 (page 2-38) is a very accurate depiction of Black Lake. In recent years, the Stormwater Utility has done an excellent job of clearing debris and beaver dams from the Black Lake Ditch. The most recent October to March period on the Black Lake saw the most stable lake levels in sometime. I am hopeful the Stormwater Utility will continue to receive the resources necessary for this work.

Of a longer-term concern is the future range of the Oregon Spotted Frog. The species is found in the Black River and some areas of Tumwater's UGA. Should the range increase to include the Black Lake Ditch, will the Stormwater Utility be allowed to continue their maintenance of the Ditch?

For the developing HCP, I am hopeful consideration can be given to allow continued maintenance of critical storm water facilities (such as the Black Lake Ditch) even if endangered species are present.

**Comment on the Mitigation Strategy:** I am very much in favor of "Preventive" activities for mitigation. In Table 3.1 "Summary of Mitigation Initiatives", I would like to see "13 Debris and Sediment Inspection" receive a "high" priority instead of "medium". Although this initiative is identified as "new", the county departments have been performing these tasks. I would like to see a more formalized inspection and maintenance prioritization.

**Other Comment:** I am on the board of the Black Lake Special District. Our scope is water quality and vegetation control. At our meetings, flood concerns have been frequently raised by a number of district members. We are prompt to pass them on to county staff.

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19 September (comment received after public comment period closed)

**E.J. Zita, Vice-chair of Salmon Creek Basin Neighborhood Association**

**PO Box 1441, Olympia, WA 98507**

**Other Comment:**

The Salmon Creek Basin Neighborhood Association (SCBNA) submits these comments on the Thurston County Flood Hazards Mitigation Plan 2017. The SCBNA is in the Tumwater Urban Growth area of Thurston County, between I-5 and Case Road (west to east), and between 76<sup>th</sup> Ave – 93<sup>rd</sup> Ave (north to south). Our neighborhood is designated a High Groundwater Hazard Area; homes and schools in this Area experience occasional severe flooding, with blocked roads and floating septic tanks.

Method:

1. We responded to Goals and Objectives (Ch.3.1) with Questions and Comments focused on our neighborhood.
2. We proposed specific actions in select Mitigation Categories (Ch.3.2)
3. We rated Ch.3.2.2 **Factors** for each proposed action: Cost (high, med, low), Timeline (short, long, ongoing), and Benefit (high, med, low).
4. We noted **Initiatives** (Ch.3.3.1) that may address each area of concern.

We discovered after completing this process that related Objectives are cited in each Initiative.

- Could these connections between Objectives and Initiatives be made more visible, e.g. with live links between them?

While our comments tend to be specific to the SCBNA, we want to express strong appreciation for all the work in this Flood Plan, from meetings and outreach to analysis and modeling. The structure of the document is clear and useful, overall. We valued the explicit connections to other important TRPC work, such as the Climate Adaptation Plan. Thank you for considering our feedback.

Ch.3 Mitigation Strategies - 3.1 Goals and Objectives

**1. Reduce the county’s vulnerabilities to flooding, to protect people and essential facilities, and to reduce property losses.**

g. Enforce ordinances and development regulations ... to prevent the creation of new flood hazards or shifting of existing flood hazards

*Comment on (1.g) - Preserving Tumwater’s 200 acres of urban forest along Kimmie St. can help protect our Salmon Creek Basin Neighborhood from worse flooding. This is a designated high groundwater hazard area. However, development pressures threaten loss of ecosystem services, such as flood mitigation, which are provided by the forest. Protection of these valuable natural assets can reduce our neighborhood’s vulnerability to flooding.*

*Question - How can this project facilitate the recommended protections?*

## 2. Commit resources to cost-effective flood management and hazard mitigation activities.

c. Create a comprehensive flood mitigation strategy, and pursue funding to manage and implement priority projects.

*Comment on (2.c) - **Preserve natural assets which provide ecosystem services such as flood mitigation.***

d. Evaluate practical opportunities to leverage new public and private projects to afford protective measures to surrounding properties with pre-existing flood risks.

*Question on (2.d) - **What can be done to help neighbors whose septic tanks float in severe floods?***

e. Participate in federal, state, and local all-hazards workshops, programs, and exercises.

*Question - **How can our neighborhood get training on how to help ourselves and each other in emergencies?** This may be part of 2 (d), 5 (c, d, e) and 6 (c).*

5. Educate and inform residents and businesses to act to minimize their flood risks.

c. Provide flood education materials...

d. Assess needs and provide educational resources to accommodate flood disaster preparedness for special needs individuals or populations within the county.

e. Inform residents [how] to ... become self-reliant for 72 hours ... during a disaster.

6. Bring the community together to make Thurston County resilient to flood hazards.

c. Train and plan for sheltering, evacuation needs, and coordination of volunteer assistance with ... emergency management partner agencies ...

### 3.2.1 Mitigation Categories

**We need help in the Salmon Creek Basin Neighborhood for these Objectives.**

We rate Ch.3.2.2 **Factors** for each proposed action: Cost (high, med, low), Timeline (short, long, ongoing), and Benefit (high, med, low).

We note **Initiatives** (Ch.3.3.1) that may address each area of concern.

#### 1. Preventive activities

- Planning and zoning – ***Preservation of forests that mitigate flooding near Kimmie St.***
  - Cost – low. Timeline – ongoing. Benefit – med
  - Initiative 7 – Risk map Land Use and Development Reg. review and revisions (p.3-20 )
  
- Drainage system maintenance – ***The NE section of the Salmon Creek Drainage Basin does not effectively drain to Salmon Creek, partly because roads act as dikes. 93<sup>rd</sup> Ave blocks the flow of surface water to the south, Case Road blocks water from flowing west, and I-5 blocks water from flowing east. Can drainage systems relieve flood pressure on this area?***
  - Cost – high. Timeline – long. Benefit – med.
  - Initiative 3 – Stream culvert replacement (p.3-16)
  
- Building codes – ***Some wet lands along Kimmie St. have been elevated with fill, increasing flooding in adjacent areas. Building codes should not permit damaging activities.***
  - Cost – low. Timeline – ongoing. Benefit – med.

- Initiative 7 – Risk map Land Use and Development Reg. review and revisions (p.3-20 )

## 2. Property Protection activities

- Sewer backup protection – ***How can neighbors get access these resources? Septic system problems due to flooding are relatively common in the Salmon Creek Basin.***
  - Cost – med. Timeline –short. Benefit – high.
  - Initiative 12 – Vulnerable Structures and Repetitive Loss Mitigation Program (p.3-25 )
- Insurance – ***Could someone be available for a discussion of insurance options, after our neighborhood emergency training session?***
  - Cost – low. Timeline – short. Benefit – med.
  - Initiative 19 – Flood Hazard Education and Hazard Reduction Public Outreach (p.3-32)
  - Initiative 20 – Flood website development – thank you for providing this resource!

## 3. Natural Resource Protection

- Wetlands protection – ***What areas between Kimmie St. and I-5 are (seasonal) wetlands? Needs assessment.***
  - Cost – med. Timeline – long. Benefit – med.
  - Initiatives 5, 6, 7 – Modeling; Risk Map Land Use and Development Reg. review and revisions (p.3-18-20 )
- Natural area preservation - ***Natural assets providing ecosystem services such as flood mitigation should be preserved. Fortunately, much of the land meeting this description along Kimmie St. is already public property (Port of Olympia). We recommend conserving these areas as parks. Many of these areas are already used as de facto parks.***
  - Cost – low. Timeline – short. Benefit – med.
  - Initiative 7 – Risk map Land Use and Development Reg. review and revisions (p.3-20 )
- Natural area restoration – ***Many flood-prone acres along Kimmie St. are compacted by historical logyard use, and covered with a thick sheet of plastic. This exacerbates standing water problems in the Salmon Creek High Groundwater Hazard Area. Port of Olympia should restore these natural areas for flood mitigation.***
  - Cost – high. Timeline – long. Benefit – high.
  - Initiative 7 – Risk map Land Use and Development Reg. review and revisions (p.3-20 )

- Natural functions protection – ***Retain natural systems such as forests, which provide ecosystem services such as flood mitigation.***
  - Cost – low. Timeline – ongoing. Benefit – med.
  - Initiative 7 – Risk map Land Use and Development Reg. review and revisions (p.3-20 )
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#### 4. Emergency Services measures

- Health and safety maintenance - ***Many residential streets in the Salmon Creek Basin Neighborhood become impassable during severe floods. Some neighbors use boats to get to their homes. How can emergency services reach these neighbors?***
  - Cost – low. Timeline – short. Benefit – high
  - Initiative 2 – Flood detours and response planning (p.3-15)
- Post-disaster mitigation actions - ***Most homes in this area get water from wells; some wells serve many homes. How should wells be checked after a flood? What to do if they are contaminated?***
  - Cost – low. Timeline – short. Benefit – high.
  - Initiative \_

#### 5. Public information

- Outreach projects – ***Our neighborhood requests disaster training, as a community.***
  - Cost – low. Timeline – short. Benefit – medium

Initiative 19 – Flood Hazard Education and Hazard Reduction Public Outreach (p.3-32)