## King County Flood Hazard Management Plan Update

## Partner Planning Committee – Meeting #9 Meeting Notes October 17, 2023 | 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

List of attendees:

* Angela Donaldson (Fall City resident)
* Diane Pasta (Des Moines resident)
* Eric Beach (King County)
* Erin Ericson (Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District)
* Jason Wilkinson (King County)
* Judi Radloff (King County)
* Laura Hendrix (King County)
* Laura Wolfe (Port of Seattle)
* Lauren Silver (Snoqualmie Valley Preservation Alliance)
* Laurie Lyford (Washington Sensible Shorelines Association)
* Lisa Nelson (Department of Ecology)
* Martha Neuman (Seattle Public Utilities)
* Matt Baerwalde (Snoqualmie Tribe)
* Mike Mactutis (City of Kent)
* Nicole Johnson (King County)
* Patrick Haluptzok (Sammamish resident)
* Sherry Edquid (City of Tukwila)
* Steve Bleifuhs (King County)
* Stewart Reinbold (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
* Spencer Easton (Consultant team – ESA)
* Dan Beckley (Consultant team – ESA)

Interested parties present:

* Emily Arteche (City of Snoqualmie), Laura Casey (Carnation farmer), Regina Fletcher (Snoqualmie Valley Preservation Alliance), Molly Lawrence (Van Ness Feldman)

**Introductions**

Spencer Easton provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting. Spencer noted the objectives of the meeting included reviewing flood risk reduction activities from past King County plans, summarizing activities that were submitted for the 2024 Flood Plan, discussing gaps and opportunities for expanding upon the activities submitted, and discuss next steps in the Flood Plan process.

**Public Comment**

An opportunity to provide formal public comment was provided at the beginning of the meeting. No public comments were made.

**Presentation and Discussion: Flood Plan Activities**

Spencer provided an overview of flood risk reduction activities recommended in the 2020 King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, including whether these activities were complete, ongoing, or not yet started. Participants were prompted to discuss if these activities were relevant to the 2024 Flood Plan, should be included in the 2024 Flood Plan, or if they should be modified.

* Numerous members expressed their support for including flood-related activities from the 2020 King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan in the 2024 Flood Plan.
* Martha Neuman asked for clarification on the activity that recommends “Rehabilitation or removal of high hazard dams,” expressing concern that this may apply to the dams that support storage of Seattle’s drinking water supply.
  + Nicole Johnson stated that the technical definition of a high hazard dam is one whose failure would result in any loss of human life, which applies to many of the dams in the region.
  + Erin Ericson suggested this strategy could be expanded upon to include outreach about dam risks and support for better dam monitoring technologies.
  + Martha expressed general support for dam improvements, but that the activity would need to be reworded, so as not to construe the potential for removal or major changes to critical infrastructure.
  + Lauren Silver suggested possible improvements around dam failure warnings and studying evacuation routes and protocol.

Spencer provided an overview of flood risk reduction activities recommended in the 2013 King County Flood Plan, including the progress on completing activities in each major river basin. Participants were prompted to discuss if these activities were relevant to the 2024 Flood Plan, should be included in the 2024 Flood Plan, or if they should be modified.

* There was general support for the types of activities in the 2013 Flood Plan, but nobody expressed support for pulling activities from the 2013 Flood Plan for direct inclusion in the 2024 Flood Plan.
* Lauren Silver expressed concerns about approaches to land acquisition, which could impact agricultural production, and suggested this be approached differently in the 2024 Flood Plan through other property protection methods.

Spencer detailed the process for evaluating activities submitted for possible inclusion in the Flood Plan and summarized information about the activities submitted, including their basin, activity types, benefits, and types of flooding addressed.

* Over 100 activities were submitted by King County and nearly 200 were submitted by other cities, governments, and organizations operating in King County or were otherwise pulled from publicly available information.
* 101 activities (or 33%) were natural resource protection projects, such as floodplain restoration, habitat improvements, and levee setbacks.
* 89 activities (or 29%) were structural projects, such as levees, revetments, floodwalls, or drainage improvements.
* 56 activities (or 18%) were preventive activities, such as land use regulations, flood hazard mapping, planning, and stormwater management.
* 37 activities (or 12%) were property protection, such as acquisition or elevation of homes.
* 14 activities (or 5%) were public information activities, such as technical assistance, education, and outreach.
* 9 activities (or 3%) were emergency services, such as flood warnings and emergency response.

For more detailed information on the activities submitted, review the presentation or video recording of the October 17th, 2023 Partner Planning Committee meeting [here](https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dnrp/nature-recreation/environment-ecology-conservation/flood-services/flood-management-plan/partner-planning-committee).

The Partner Planning Committee discussed potential gaps in the activities submitted or additions that could be made.

* Erin Ericson suggested improvements to existing flood warning systems and dam failure warning systems.
* Lauren Silver suggested emergency planning technical assistance for communities and private landowners, including working with private landowners to document risks on properties that could improve emergency response.
* Laura Casey noted that many earlier discussions emphasized the importance of public information activities, which were not widely represented in the activities submitted.
  + Jason Wilkinson acknowledged the substantial input about the need for public outreach and education about flood risk, indicating that King County is considering ways to improve public information activities and will work to identify additional activities that will address the input that has been heard.
* Sherry Edquid suggested that the Comprehensive Risk Mitigation Strategy could include technical assistance provided by King County to communities conducting substantial damage assessments after flood disasters.
* Martha Neuman inquired about adaptive management of the Flood Plan and how implementation of the Comprehensive Risk Mitigation Strategy could change over the life of the Flood Plan.
  + Jason stated that the Flood Plan would be updated every five years, in addition to annual evaluations and progress reporting. These update and monitoring activities will allow for reconsideration of priorities and adapting to potential changes that could necessitate changes to how the Flood Plan is implemented. These activities would involve coordination with partners and would not be an action performed independently by King County.
* Molly Lawrence and Laura Wolfe suggested including an activity that would involve a planning effort on best practices and resilience in addressing sea level rise, with coordination between King County, the Port of Seattle, and other governments.
* Sherry suggested distinguishing property protection activities that apply to residential properties from those that apply to commercial properties.

Spencer detailed the proposed process for prioritizing activities submitted for inclusion in the Flood Plan’s Comprehensive Risk Mitigation Strategy. Based on the evaluation criteria and consideration of other Flood Plan themes, such as equity and climate change resilience, a short list of activities would be selected for distinction as high priority activities. This would be different from alternatives that would rank all or some activities in multiple tiers.

* Laura Hendrix suggested prioritizing activities that reduce risk to repetitive loss properties.
* There was discussion of prioritizing a range of activities that would be appropriate for different environments, such as rural and urban areas, as well as a variety of activities that are appropriate for different types of flood impacts.

**Flood Plan Process**

Jason provided information on next steps in developing the Flood Plan and opportunities for review. An initial draft of the Flood Plan has been developed. Internal review and revision processes will be occurring through the end of 2023. A draft Flood Plan is expected to be available in January or February 2024, with a 45-day comment period.

No other Partner Planning Committees are scheduled. A proposed Partner Planning Committee meeting would occur in February 2024, which would allow for Committee members to discuss the draft Flood Plan and provide feedback.