



Community Technical Group Meeting 7 Summary

3/16/16

OVERVIEW

On Feb. 24, 2016, Pierce County Storm Water Management hosted the seventh Community Technical Group (CTG) meeting for the System Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) planning process.

Topics for the Feb. 24 meeting included:

- Overview of relevant River Capital Improvements and how they relate to the SWIF Plan

All presentations can be found at:

<https://www.co.pierce.wa.us/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/4415>

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting facilitator Penny Mabie welcomed everyone and led a round of introductions. She conducted an overview of the agenda, meeting handouts and ground rules.

COMMUNITY TECHNICAL GROUP BUSINESS

Penny noted that Tony Fantello, Project Sponsor, had followed up with Chrissy Cooley, CTG member from the Agricultural Round Table about her request for an additional tour. Tony shared with her that there is not room in the schedule for another tour. He confirmed with her that she is still interested in being part of the CTG, but she does not feel that her organization is directly affected by these issues. She will continue to attend as she is able.

Penny also reminded the group of the request for the number of people who had opted-in to PCAAlert. Jill Bushnell, Pierce County Emergency Management, was unable to attend the meeting, but asked that Penny currently, 20,023 people have opted-in to PCAAlert.

Finally, Penny said that the draft King County Interim System Wide Improvement Framework for the Green River had been released and that she would share it with the group via email.

RIVER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS DISCUSSION

Rob Wenman, Pierce County Project Manager, introduced the River Capital Improvements topic and how it relates to the SWIF Plan. The SWIF Plan focuses on operations and maintenance to address levee deficiencies identified by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), whereas the River Capital Improvements address other types of projects to improve the system.

Levee General Investigation

Randy Brake, Pierce County Capital Improvement Program, provided an overview of the USACE General Investigation Study (GI Study), a flood risk management study to maximize national economic benefits and reduce life safety risk on the Puyallup. The draft GI Study will be released in March or April, and will include a 45-day public comment period and public meeting. The County is anticipating completing the GI Study in September 2017. See slides 4-14 of the [Presentation](#) for details.

CTG members and Pierce County staff shared the following questions or comments and Randy provided answers where appropriate:

- A CTG member asked how the draft GI Study would be released.

- Randy indicated that a few hard copies would be available at Pierce County, USACE and local libraries. In addition, a PDF of the GI Study would be available on the Pierce County and USACE websites.
- Rob asked how environmental review was conducted.
 - Randy said that an environmental review was conducted as part of the Feasibility Report, which will also be available for comment during the comment period.
- Tony highlighted that the County chose to conduct a General Investigation to be considered for federal appropriation of funds to address needs in the levee system.
 - Randy added that a partnership with the federal government would be required to undertake projects of the scale and magnitude identified by the County.

Countyline Setback Project

Jeanne Stypula, King County River and Floodplain Management, gave an overview of the Countyline and Pacific Right Bank Levee Setback Projects. Both of these projects are located at the King/Pierce County line and will affect Pierce County's Potelco Levee. The projects will remove existing levees and revetments to increase channel capacity and build setback levees. Once complete, King County will take responsibility for maintenance and operations.

Construction is set to begin on the Countyline Project in May 2016 and be completed by December 2017. King County has begun geotechnical work for the Right Bank Project and is continuing to work with land owners to acquire properties. King County is anticipating completing the Right Bank Project in 2018 or 2019. See slides 15-30 of the [Presentation](#) for details.

CTG members and Pierce County staff shared the following questions or comments and Jeanne provided answers where appropriate:

- A CTG member asked whether King County expects to excavate at Pacific Park as part of the Right Bank Project.
 - Jeanne indicated that the County is still in the early planning stages for the Right Bank Project, but excavation at Pacific Park will likely be necessary because it is a former dump site.
- A CTG member asked why the budget for the Right Bank Project (\$25 – \$30 million) is so much higher than the Countyline Project (\$18 million) budget.
 - Jeanne said that the Right Bank Project is a complex design effort involving more property acquisition.
- Tony asked if there is any concern about sediment infill in the area where the levees are removed.
 - Jeanne said that the river has been filling with sediment for years and King County has a good idea of the infill rate. King County will survey the river again this summer to check the sediment build-up. The Countyline Project is designed to account for sediment deposition, and by increasing channel capacity, the project will slow the rate of infill.
- A CTG member asked if King County estimates that the setback levee will buy them 30 years and how long it would be before the levee reaches capacity if no setback were built.
 - Jeanne said that they are predicting 50 to 75 years assuming the same rate of infill, but climate change or other conditions may impact this prediction. Without any changes, the current levee would no longer be sufficient in a handful of years.
- Rob noted that the Potelco Levee is currently part of the PL 84-99 program. Pierce County will continue to maintain their portion of the levee until the setback levee is constructed.

- A CTG member asked whether the Countyline Setback Project would be a certified levee under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
 - Jeanne said that the Countyline Setback Levee will not be a certified levee under FEMA, but it will be part of FEMA's Levee Analysis and Mapping Procedures.

Setback Feasibility Program

Tom Nelson, Pierce County SWM, provided an overview of the Setback Feasibility Study, which seeks to improve salmon habitat through prioritized levee setback projects. In 2008, a Setback Feasibility Study identified 32 potential levee setback sites and prioritized them with the help of a technical committee.

Tom showed a Levee Setback Feasibility Study Project video available at <https://youtu.be/-IzU0BU1V4E>. The video details the potential levee setback sites from the 2008 Study, so some of the sites are out-of-date. In 2014, Pierce County updated the study to include additional criteria. The ranking priority for some of the sites changed between 2008 and 2014. When funding becomes available, the County would like to do another update to the Study to include all of the land in the floodplain from valley wall to valley wall. See slides 31-46 of the [Presentation](#) for details.

CTG members shared the following questions or comments and Pierce County provided answers where appropriate:

- A CTG member asked whether cost was a component of the rankings.
 - Tom explained that cost was a factor in the 2008 rankings, but when they did the update in 2014, they modified the cost ranking. If all property in the floodplain can be acquired, building an actual levee (and the associated cost) may no longer be necessary. Therefore, cost is not a straight forward component in the rankings.
- A CTG member noted that nine out of the 32 identified sites were compromised by development and asked for clarification about why those sites were compromised.
 - Tom explained that the sites were compromised by development on the backside of the levee. Once developed, it became cost prohibitive to acquire that land and a setback levee was no longer feasible.
 - The CTG member followed up to ask if the County is doing enough to prevent development in these area, or whether more coordination with the cities is needed.
 - Tom said that there are some prohibitions in the County code which seek to limit development. Tom will share these with the CTG member.
 - Rob noted that the team will need to consider the proposed levee setback sites with levees enrolled in the PL 84-99 program to assist with operation and maintenance planning efforts. At some point, it may make sense to forego levee maintenance work if it will soon be transitioned to a setback levee.

Flood Hazard Management Plan Levee Improvements

Rob shared several handouts to provide an overview of the Flood Hazard Management Plan (FHMP) Levee Improvements. These handouts included, a list of FHMP Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) and how they align with levees in the PL 84-99 program, a corresponding map detailing the location of those levees, and a packet describing levee setback projects.

CTG members and Pierce County staff shared the following questions or comments and Pierce County provided answers where appropriate:

- A CTG member asked what was included in the estimated cost for the Nisqually Park levee.
 - Rob noted that the ultimate solution has not yet been determined and the current estimate only includes property acquisition.

- Tony added that a small segment of levee may be required to protect the road, but this will not have a major effect on the cost.
- Randy noted that the County and the City of Orting are currently seeking funding for a Preliminary Feasibility Design Report and Cost Estimate for the Bridge Street/Carbon River setback levee.
 - Rob asked whether there has been any property acquisition and when they anticipate beginning construction.
 - Randy explained that property acquisition would come later, but that most of the land in that area is undeveloped. He also noted that construction is at least five years out.
- A CTG member asked whether there has been an assessment of the cost of all properties behind the proposed setback levee up to the valley wall, so that the cost could be compared to the cost of building the levee structure itself. The CTG member also noted that acquiring property all the way to the valley wall would be better for salmon habitats.
 - Randy said that the County did not do that comparison. For the Alward setback levee specifically, acquisition to the valley wall may not be possible because of a road that allows access to the nearby development.
 - Ziad Farrah, Pierce County Capital Improvement Program, added that this is a slow process and the current focus is to acquire as much property as possible up to the proposed setback levee. Further property acquisition could be considered once those initial properties have been acquired. Ziad noted the proposed comparison is a new idea and sounds like a good idea.
- A CTG member asked what portion of the estimated cost for the Alward setback levee is for levee construction.
 - Randy said that the levee structure would cost upwards of \$15 million. He added that the estimate includes other features, such as an engineered log jam to train the flow against the opposite bank.
 - The CTG member noted that the other features would also not be necessary if land was acquired up to the valley wall.
- A CTG member noted that the estimated costs would lead someone to assume that funding had been secured for these projects through the CIP and suggested that the County add clarifying text to the document.
 - Rob said that the projects listed in bold are included in the CIP, but only a fraction of the estimated cost has been funded. Money is appropriated on a yearly basis.

Rob indicated that the team would like to work with the Flood Control District and the CIP team to establish protocols for how these projects get prioritized and share that with the CTG in March or April.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Rob thanked the group for sharing their comments on the strategy and supporting documents. He noted that the team would be working to respond to those comments and this agenda item will be discussed at a later meeting when those responses are available.

NEXT STEPS

Penny reminded the group that the next meetings will take place on Wednesday, March 16 and March 23. At the March 16 meeting, the group will learn about protocols for prioritizing projects, including discussions about maintenance, betterments and improvements.

Rob said that the team is working to pull together the draft Action Plan, which will be shared at a future meeting. The Action Plan will be framed around deficiencies identified by USACE, as well as near-term, mid-term and long-term projects.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

ATTENDANCE

Community Technical Group Members

Chrissy Cooley	Agricultural Round Table
Steve Carstens	City of Puyallup
Doug Beagle	City of Sumner
Martin Fox	Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
David Molenaar	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Hugh Taylor	Pierce County Council's Office
Russ Ladley	Puyallup Tribe of Indians
Kimball Oshiek	US Army Corps of Engineers
Doug Wiedemeier	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Pierce County

Tony Fantello	Project Sponsor
Rob Wenman	Project Manager
Todd Essman	Project Technical Lead
Erick Thompson	Environmental Biologist
Tom Nelson	Environmental Permitting & Planning
Randy Brake	Capital Improvement Program
Ziad Farrah	Capital Improvement Program

King County

Jeanne Stypula	River and Floodplain Management
Stephanie Shelton	River and Floodplain Management

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Chris Conklin

EnviroIssues

Penny Mabie	Facilitator
Chelsea Ongaro	Notetaker

Hackney Interests

Clint Hackney	Tribal Liaison
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