

10. SEA LEVEL RISE

Provide additional context in the Plan about Olympia's priority for preparing for sea level rise.

Summary of Comments

A couple of commenters at the public hearing mentioned the importance of addressing sea level rise and associated downtown flooding in the Comprehensive Plan.

Council Direction of August 12, 2014

Council suggested providing more context in the narrative portions of the draft Comprehensive Plan regarding predicted sea level rise impacts and their timing, as well as additional background about the City's overall approach to sea level rise.

Staff Analysis

Sea level rise will be a key challenge facing Olympia over the next twenty years. Council requested additional emphasis be added to the Plan regarding the predicted pace and magnitude of this threat and the City's overall approach to responding to sea level rise impacts.

Text of Public Hearing Draft

Sea level rise is mentioned in the Public Hearing Draft in the following locations:

- Introduction (pg. 11)
- Natural Environment (pg. 38, 54, 60)
- Utilities (pg. 240, 253, 254-255)

The proposed goal and policies are stated as follows:

GU11: The City uses best available information to implement a sea level rise management plan that will protect Olympia's downtown.

PU11.1: Evaluate different scenarios for sea level rise, including varying magnitudes and time horizons, and develop a progression of adaptation and response actions for each scenario.

PU11.2: Develop plans, cost estimates and financing options for addressing sea level rise that include regulatory, engineering and environmentally sensitive solutions.

PU11.3: Maintain public control of downtown shorelines that may eventually be needed to help manage flood water.

PU11.4: Incorporate sea level rise planning into the design of public and private infrastructure where needed.

PU11.5: Use the best available science and the experiences of other communities in formulating plans for sea level rise.

PU11.6: Partner with government entities and other key stakeholders, such as, the State of Washington, LOTT Clean Water Alliance, Port of Olympia, Squaxin Island Tribe, downtown property owners, businesses and residents, environmental groups, and other interested parties.

PU11.7: Engage the community in a discussion of various sea level rise scenarios, how the City will respond to lessen the impact, and what the costs would be.

PU11.8: Require development to incorporate measures, such as higher finished floor elevations, that will reduce risks and avoid future costs associated with rising sea levels; and to encourage acknowledgment of such risks by state and federal agencies.

Staff Proposed Clarification

Add the following as a subsection to the Introduction chapter:

Sea Level Rise

Over the next twenty years, sea level rise will continue to be a key challenge facing Olympia, and therefore a key priority. Olympia has a long history of preparing for sea level rise. The City has consistently made it a priority to track the continuing evolution of science in this arena, and apply those findings to the Olympia local condition.

The City will use adaptive management to nimbly respond to new data and changing local conditions. City work outlines response scenarios tailored to varying heights and speeds of sea rise. Current science indicates that sea level may rise between 11 and 39 inches by 2100. The City's Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) will help implement identified infrastructure needs and additional assistance will be sought from State and Federal sources. As a waterfront city, sea level rise response will be a key priority for Olympia over the next two decades and beyond.

(for exact proposed location, see the bill format attachment of the Introduction chapter).

Alternative(s)

None proposed.