



City Council

Update on Sea Level Rise

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Title

Update on Sea Level Rise

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive an update on sea level rise issues and provide City staff with general guidance on next steps.

Report

Issue:

Sea level rise and its potential to increase downtown Olympia flooding is a concern. In recent years, staff has provided City Council with an annual update on the science of sea level rise and our planning and engineering responses.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Eric Christensen, Public Works Water Resources

Background and Analysis:

Downtown Olympia has a long history of flooding. It is built on low-lying fill and continues to be at risk of flooding.

The City first addressed the risks of sea level rise in 1991. Since 2007, staff has completed annual work plans that improve our information. In recent years, minor City construction projects have reduced flooding downtown. While it remains difficult to predict the level or timing of sea rise, our understanding of Olympia-specific implications increases.

The Olympia Comprehensive Plan goals and policies provide specific guidance on our response to sea rise (See attachment 1).

During the study session, staff will provide an update on global and local sea level rise trends. We will explain the implications to downtown. Staff will share a proposal to increase our community discussions about sea rise and to develop a response plan. The plan would address the long-term needs to protect downtown.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Various community groups and other agencies are engaged in climate change and sea level rise issues.

Options:

N/A

Financial Impact:

The City allocates \$150,000 bi-annually through the Storm and Surface Water Utility for downtown flooding and sea level rise planning work efforts. Current funding is modest and primarily addresses improved response to existing flooding problems. A funding source for increased investment in infrastructure to protect downtown will need to be identified in the near future.

Attachment:

Attachment 1