



Planning Commission

Update on Sea Level Rise Planning

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Title

Update on Sea Level Rise Planning

Recommended Action

Information only. No action required.

Report

Issue:

Receive briefing on sea level rise planning work initiated by the City of Olympia, the Port of Olympia and LOTT Clean Water Alliance.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter:

Andy Haub

Background and Analysis:

Downtown Olympia and its peninsula are vulnerable to flooding. Sea level rise will increase the likelihood of flooding and could threaten large portions of downtown. Implications to various public and private entities are extensive. Without action, maintaining downtown services will be challenging.

The City of Olympia has been engaged in climate change and sea level rise planning since the early 1990s. Considerable topographic, water elevation, and land use information has been generated and evaluated. The City of Olympia's Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Strategy provide support for the development of a formal Sea Level Response Plan. Based on a research review, we are currently recommending that we plan for 24 inches of sea rise by the year 2050 and 55 inches by 2100. While these projections may change, researchers indicate with 99 percent confidence that sea rise should not exceed 72 inches by 2100.

The City of Olympia, the Port and LOTT share common concerns regarding sea level rise, yet also have unique individual vulnerabilities. The planning process will take into account each party's unique vulnerabilities. The consulting firm, AECOM Technical Services, has been hired to help lead the planning effort.

Reaching agreement on the scope of the sea level rise planning process and implementing a robust public involvement plan is key to the success of the project.

At a minimum, the tasks to be completed by AECOM for this project include: public involvement, capital facility planning, environmental assessment, land use planning and identification of regulatory and financing needs. Staff will brief the Olympia City Council on the proposed scope of work and public outreach strategy on May 23, 2017.

The planning process will culminate with elected official consideration of the plan and its implementation in late 2018.

City Public Works staff will provide the Planning Commission with an overview of sea rise science, its implications to our downtown, and the approach to the planning process.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Various community groups and other agencies are engaged in climate change and sea level rise issues. The City of Olympia Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Strategy support the development of a sea level response plan. Citizens in attendance at a February 8, 2017 community meeting on sea rise voiced support for starting the planning process.

Options:

Information only.

Financial Impact:

None at this time. However, potential long-term private and public impacts are appreciable.

Attachments:

None