



Land Use & Environment Committee

Update on Sea Level Rise Planning in Olympia

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Title

Update on Sea Level Rise Planning in Olympia

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive the information. Briefing only; No action requested.

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(s):

Eric Christensen, Engineering and Planning Supervisor

Background and Analysis:

Downtown Olympia and the Port peninsula are vulnerable to flooding. Sea level rise increases the likelihood of flooding and could threaten large portions of downtown. Implications to various public and private entities are extensive. Without action, maintaining downtown public and private 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 Rise Response Plan to protect downtown.

The City of Olympia, the Port of Olympia, and the LOTT Clean Water Alliance (the partners) share common concerns regarding sea level rise, yet also have unique individual vulnerabilities. The

partners have entered into an Interlocal Agreement to jointly fund and participate in a formal sea level rise planning process for downtown Olympia and the Port peninsula. The partners hired the consulting firm AECOM Technical Services, to help lead the planning effort.

The tasks to be completed by AECOM and the partners for this project include:

- Evaluating the best available science
- Developing a sea level rise planning framework
- Conducting a vulnerability and risk assessment of downtown assets
- Developing three or four sea level rise adaptation strategies
- Completing a Sea Level Response Plan

Three major community meetings to gather feedback on draft project material are planned in 2017 and 2018. Additional community and stakeholder involvement opportunities are also planned. A community meeting on the project scope of work was held on June 27, 2017.

The partners developed a draft planning framework, including a project goal, principles and assumptions. Work has begun on the vulnerability and risk assessments. The partners, along with AECOM, will present the planning framework and vulnerability and risk assessment at a community meeting in late 2017.

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

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 developing a sea level response plan. During a February 8, 2017, sea level rise community informational meeting and the June 27, 2017, sea level rise project scope community meeting, citizens voiced their support for the sea level response planning process. Protection of Olympia's downtown from sea level rise will benefit the regional community. Coordination with regional climate change mitigation planning is occurring. By taking a comprehensive and proactive approach to planning for sea level rise and climate change, the City and the regional community will be prepared to address changes rather than responding to the effects of climate change after they occur.

Options:

Information only.

Financial Impact:

None at this time. However, costs associated with potential adaptation strategies are appreciable.

Attachments:

Planning Summary
Flow Chart