



## Utility Advisory Committee

### Sea Level Rise Response Planning Update

**Agenda Date:** 6/3/2021  
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**Title**

Sea Level Rise Response Planning Update

**Recommended Action**

**Committee Recommendation:**

Briefing only

**Report**

**Issue:**

Brief the Utility Advisory Committee on sea level rise response planning efforts.

**Staff Contact:**

Eric Christensen, Water Resources Director, Public Works Department, 360.570.3741

**Presenter:**

Eric Christensen

**Background and Analysis:**

Downtown Olympia has always been vulnerable to flooding. The confluence of high water levels in Capitol Lake and high tides in Budd Inlet can cause water to overtop the shoreline and spill into downtown streets and low-lying areas. Even with minimal amounts of sea level rise, the risk to our downtown's built environment and its many community services increases quickly and substantially. Downtown flooding is anticipated to become more frequent and severe in the future.

The City's awareness of and work related to climate change and sea level rise dates back to the early 1990s. Olympia was one of the first cities in the nation to begin planning for climate change. A number of studies have been completed since the early 1990s:

- *City of Olympia's Response to the Challenge of Global Climate Change* (1991)
- *City of Olympia Preliminary Assessment of Sea Level Rise in Olympia, WA* (1993)
- *City of Olympia's Response to the Challenge of Climate Change* (2007)
- *City of Olympia's Engineered Response to Sea Level Rise* (2011)
- *Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan* (2019)

In early 2017, the City, the Port and LOTT entered into an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) to jointly fund and participate in a formal sea level rise planning process for downtown Olympia, the Budd Inlet

Treatment Plant and the Port peninsula. The *Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan* (Plan) resulted from the collaboration.

In February 2020, the Partners entered into a second ILA that established a Joint Administrative Committee comprised of elected officials tasked with developing a governance structure to implement the Plan. The Joint Administrative Committee drafted a new ILA and by-laws that were executed in April 2021 establishing the Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Collaborative (Collaborative).

The first meeting of the new Collaborative is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 24<sup>th</sup> at which time officers will be elected and a draft two-year work plan will be refined.

Staff will provide to the UAC a discussion of ongoing sea level adaptation work and the Collaborative's draft two-year work plan.

**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. Citizens voiced their support for the sea level response planning process during four well-attended public meetings conducted during the 18-month planning process. Comments received at each public meeting are included in meeting summary reports that are available on the City's website. Coordination with the City's regional climate change mitigation planning is also occurring.

**Options:**

None at this time, briefing only.

**Financial Impact:**

Chapter 8 (Cost of Adaptation) of the Plan includes high level costs for the physical strategies by focus area. Estimated total costs range from \$190M to \$350M. Costs will be spread out over decades and shared by the Project Partners and the community.

In the near term, Storm and Surface Water capital budgets include \$125,000 for continued planning and technical work associated with Plan implementation. Additional capital facility funding is provided annually for downtown flood reduction work.

**Attachments:**

Interlocal Agreement establishing the Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Collaborative  
Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Collaborative Bylaws

See hyperlinks listed online:

*Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan* (2019)

Chapter 8: Cost Adaptation (2019 Plan)

*City of Olympia's Response to the Challenge of Global Climate Change* (1991)

*City of Olympia Preliminary Assessment of Sea Level Rise in Olympia, WA* (1993)

*City of Olympia's Response to the Challenge of Climate Change* (2007)

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