



News Release

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Flood Control District projects would increase flood protection in the White River Basin

The King County Flood Control District Executive Committee met in the City of Pacific today to review project plans that would provide protection against flooding that recently caused approximately \$15 million in damage to the city in 2009.

“The Flood Control District was created to provide a proactive, regional approach to flood control and we invest resources throughout King County to protect public safety, the regional economy, and critical infrastructure,” stated Flood Control District Board Chair Reagan Dunn. “It’s important for us to see areas of the county first-hand that are impacted by flooding and in turn aided by the vital work of the Flood Control District.”

Executive Committee members focused on two large-scale proposed levee setback projects that would provide increased flood protection – the Countyline (left bank) Levee Setback and the Pacific (right bank) Levee Setback. The projects would allow flood flows to enter wetland areas away from existing development, significantly reducing flood risks in Pacific neighborhoods.

“Extensive flooding in Pacific in January of 2009 had devastating effects – displacing 15 families, damaging more than 60 homes, closing seven businesses, and causing approximately \$5 million in residential damages and \$10 million in commercial damages,” said Flood Control District Supervisor Pete von Reichbauer, whose King County Council District 7 includes the City of Pacific. “These projects are integral to the solution, ensuring residents and businesses don’t have similar experiences in the future.”

In addition to discussing White River Basin projects, the Executive Committee:

- Approved an Interlocal Agreement related to the Reddington Levee Project, a major levee reconstruction project on the Green River in Auburn. The project will enhance

flood protection for hundreds of residents and nearly \$700 million of residential and commercial properties, while improving fish and wildlife habitat.

- Discussed a System-wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) that will aid in the development of a framework to address key flood risk reduction issues on the Green River.
- Reviewed specific policy issues related to updating the Flood Hazard Management Plan, including outreach to vulnerable and underserved populations, levee vegetation, and urban and small stream flooding.

“We are looking forward to working with a broad range of stakeholders to seek diverse and timely input on the development of a shared flood risk reduction vision for the Green River Valley,” stated Flood Control District Board Vice-Chair Julia Patterson. “Successfully implementing the SWIF will help focus investments in levee improvements, ultimately reducing risks to public safety and property damage from major flooding.”

Flood Control District Executive Committee member Larry Gossett highlighted the importance of robust outreach to low-income and limited English populations. “I want to ensure that we have not only effectively communicated comprehensive and clear information to our most vulnerable citizens, but that we also have specific strategies and detailed plans for evacuation if needed.”

“Including urban and small stream flooding in the dialogue is critical as small stream floods can pose a risk to life safety, just as flooding on major rivers can,” said Flood Control District Executive Committee member Kathy Lambert. “These issues deserve our attention as protecting all people from flood waters is important.”

The Flood Control District, established in 2007, is implementing a \$360 million ten-year investment plan. Since its creation, the District has completed 68 levee repair and rehabilitation projects, with another 15 major rehabilitations underway. The District also provides funding for flood risk reduction activities in each of King County’s 40 jurisdictions through the Opportunity Fund, completes home elevations for at-risk structures, acquires at-risk properties, activates the Flood Warning Center and Flood Patrols during flood events, and provides approximately 5,200 citizens and first responders with automated real-time information about flood conditions on King County’s major rivers through its Flood Alert System.

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The King County Flood Control District is a special purpose government created to provide funding and policy oversight for flood protection projects and programs in King County. The Flood Control District’s Board is composed of the members of the King County Council. The Water and Land Resources Division of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks develops and implements the approved flood protection projects and programs. Information is available at www.kingcountyfloodcontrol.org.