



Community Technical Group Meeting 1 Summary

11/19/15

OVERVIEW

On Oct. 21, 2015, Pierce County Storm Water Management hosted the first Community Technical Group (CTG) meeting for the System Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) planning process.

Topics for the Oct. 21 meeting included:

- Convening the Community Technical Group
- Reviewing draft operating guidelines/rules for conducting business
- Building understanding for the System Wide Improvement Framework Planning process and goals

All presentations can be found at:

<https://www.co.pierce.wa.us/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/4014>

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting facilitator Penny Mabie welcomed everyone and led a round of introductions. Penny asked each CTG member to share their name, affiliation and goals for the SWIF process. The CTG shared the following goals and expectations, indicating that the CTG should:

- Feel free to address concerns and ask questions
- Bring many voices to the table
- Help the process
- Improve the Puyallup River Vegetation Management Agreement
- Balance flood protection and habitat needs
- Understand how levees are maintained and what the local implications are
- Understand the County's maintenance obligations
- Learn and understand the intersection with emergency management
- Understand how the flood control system addresses multiple benefits
- Be an advisor on the SWIF process
- Work collaboratively to put the SWIF Plan in place

Penny reviewed the meeting agenda and draft ground rules.

Tony Fantello, Pierce County Project Sponsor, introduced the SWIF process and the County's relationship with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). He indicated that the County is working on three major projects related to surface water management: the SWIF Plan, the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), and the Sediment Management Risk Reduction Tool (SMRRT). He thanked the CTG for participating in the process.

INTRODUCTION TO PIERCE COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL

Todd Essman, Pierce County Project Technical Lead, provided an introduction to surface water maintenance and operations. He gave an overview of the key objectives and responsibilities for maintenance and operations, as well as a history of flood control in Pierce County. Todd closed his presentation with the problems, challenges and solutions facing Pierce County today. See slides 4-26 of the [Presentation](#) for details.

CTG members shared the following questions or comments and Pierce County staff provided answers where appropriate:

- A CTG member asked if the SWIF process applies only to levees that are eligible for the PL 84-99 program.
 - Todd indicated that the SWIF process focuses solely on the PL 84-99 levees, which are shown as red on the map (see slide 10). All of these levees are owned by Pierce County, but are eligible for cost sharing and rehabilitation under the program.
- A CTG member asked how much the County has spent on property acquisition compared to levee maintenance.
 - Todd explained that between 2000 and 2015, the County acquired 284 acres of floodplain property, costing \$4.7 million. This resulted in a 63% reduction in rehabilitation and replacement costs compared to prior years.

SWIF 101

Rob Wenman, Pierce County Project Manager, gave a broad overview of the PL 84-99 program and the SWIF Plan. Rob's presentation included the history, benefits and requirements for the PL 84-99 program, as well as the goals, objectives and work plan for the SWIF Plan. In addition, Rob shared the results of the County's last USACE inspection. Of the 28 levees enrolled in the PL 84-99 program, 13 received an unacceptable rating; six levees were not rated because they were deemed uninspectable due to vegetation conditions. See slides 27-64 of the [Presentation](#) for details.

CTG members shared the following questions or comments and Pierce County staff provided answers where appropriate:

- Rob shared that since 1991, PL 84-99 funding in Pierce County has totaled more than \$17 million in levee repairs. A CTG member asked if that figure included flood fighting costs.
 - Rob said that the \$17 million figure only includes repair costs.
- A CTG member asked how the funding for the PL 84-99 program works.
 - Tony noted that USACE is not a granting program. USACE comes out to do the work themselves; they cannot provide reimbursement later. If funding is tied up and a critical repair is needed, the County may need to take care of the repair themselves. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) can offer assistance in some instances, but FEMA does not usually pay for levee repairs.
- A CTG member requested information about the detailed criteria USACE uses to inspect the levees.
 - Todd indicated that the County would share this information with the CTG members via email.
- A CTG member asked if the SWIF Plan will include acquisitions.
 - Rob indicated that acquisitions could be part of the SWIF Plan, but the main focus will be meeting maintenance deficiencies.
- A CTG member asked about the timeline for completing the SWIF Plan.
 - Rob said that the County plans to complete the SWIF by January 2016, but they asked for an extension to 2017. Tony indicated he had heard that it is unlikely that the County will be granted a full year extension.
- A CTG member asked if the objectives of the stakeholders will be folded into the objectives for the SWIF Plan.
 - Rob noted that the County is hoping to hear the positions and interests of the CTG members to inform the SWIF Plan.
- A CTG member asked how the County will be effected by any new policies that are put in place by USACE.

- Rob shared that the County intends for the SWIF to be adopted under the interim policy that is currently in effect. If the SWIF Plan is accepted by USACE while the interim policy is still in effect, Pierce County will be grandfathered into this interim policy.

CTG WORKPLAN AND PURPOSE

Rob reviewed the SWIF Plan Key Sections and how the CTG workplan aligns with those sections.

CTG members shared the following questions or comments and Pierce County staff provided answers where appropriate:

- A CTG member asked if the solutions in the SWIF Plan will be constrained by funding sources, or if the plan should simply include a prioritized list of projects and associated costs, and funding will be identified later.
 - Rob indicated that the Plan must include sources for funding, but these can be subject to change.

OPERATING GUIDELINES

Penny reviewed the draft CTG Operating Guidelines. The CTG members suggested the following edits:

- Include the url where meeting materials will be posted.
- Include a note that a contact list will be shared with the CTG members so they can communicate with each other if needed. This list will not be shared with the public.

Penny indicated that these edits would be made and the updated Operating Guidelines would be presented to the CTG at the next meeting for approval. She also noted that a public comment period will be included on future agendas as required by the Operating Guidelines.

NEXT STEPS

Rob noted that the County is planning a levee system tour for the CTG members. EnviroIssues will share a Doodle poll to find a date for the tour that works for the majority of CTG members.

Penny indicated that she noted several acronyms and technical terms used throughout the discussions. Definitions will be included in the glossary of future agendas. CTG members should feel free to ask for clarification as needed.

Finally, per a request from a CTG member, Penny agreed to share the Puyallup River Vegetation Management Agreement with the group before the next meeting.

ATTENDANCE

Community Technical Group Members

Chrissy Cooley	Agricultural Round Table
Russ Blount	City of Fife
J.C. Hungerford	City of Orting (Parametrix)
Steve Carstens	City of Puyallup
David Molenaar	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Ryan Mello	Pierce Conservation District
Hugh Taylor	Pierce County Council’s Office
Jill Bushnell	Pierce County Emergency Management
Kimberly Freeman	Pierce County Parks and Recreation
Russ Ladley	Puyallup Tribe of Indians

Charles Ifft US Army Corps of Engineers
Jeffrey Stewart Washington Department of Ecology
Doug Wiedemeier Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Pierce County

Rob Wenman Project Manager
Todd Essman Project Technical Lead
Tony Fantello Project Sponsor
Erick Thompson Surface Water Management
Sarah Motsenbocker Surface Water Management

EnviroIssues

Penny Mabie Facilitator
Chelsea Ongaro Notetaker

Hackney Interests

Clint Hackney Tribal Liaison