



Community Technical Group Meeting 10 Summary

8/11/16

OVERVIEW

On July 27, 2016, Pierce County Storm Water Management (SWM) hosted the tenth Community Technical Group (CTG) meeting for the System Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) planning process.

Topics for the July 27 meeting included:

- Understand how CTG feedback was used to develop the draft SWIF Plan
- Clarify the process and timeline for Pierce County to deliver a final SWIF Plan
- Discuss the draft SWIF Plan chapters and any initial thoughts from the CTG
- Understand future opportunities for further input from CTG members and the public

The presentation can be found at: www.co.pierce.wa.us/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/4873

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting facilitator Daniel Brody welcomed everyone and led a round of introductions. He reviewed the meeting agenda and ground rules.

INCORPORATING FEEDBACK INTO THE DRAFT SWIF PLAN

Rob Wenman, Pierce County Project Manager, updated the group on the status of the draft SWIF Plan. He reminded the group that the Plan is intended to address deficiencies and ongoing maintenance needs, as well as how to improve the levee system over time.

Rob noted that risk, interim risk reduction measures (IRRM), and vegetation management were major topics of interest for the CTG. He asked the CTG to provide feedback and comments on the draft SWIF Plan by Aug. 27, 2016 and offered to meet with folks individually to discuss questions or concerns.

Tony Fantello, Pierce County Project Sponsor, noted that the team has been working hard and put a tremendous amount of effort into the draft SWIF Plan.

DRAFT SWIF PLAN

Rob provided an overview of each chapter of the Plan, including the purpose and key points of each chapter, as well as key comments from the CTG. See slides 5-17 of the [Presentation](#) for details.

Each chapter is outlined below, followed by comments and questions from CTG members. Pierce County provided answers where appropriate.

Chapter 1: Interagency and Stakeholder Collaboration Plan

This chapter outlines the plan and schedule for collaboration with stakeholders, Tribes, and interested parties. Rob highlighted the formation of the CTG and Tribal outreach through the Tribal Liaison, as well as public outreach through the project webpage and public events.

- A CTG member asked what the County envisions consultation with Tribes will look like moving forward, specifically whether each individual maintenance project would involve notification and interdisciplinary review.

- Rob said that the team hopes to meet with Tribal Councils to give a presentation about the SWIF. In regards to specific maintenance projects, Rob noted that notification and consultation would vary depending on whether the project requires permits.
- Tony noted that the County has met with the Muckleshoot and Puyallup Tribes outside of regular CTG meetings. Clint Hackney, Tribal Liaison, has also been working to connect the team with Tribal Councils.
- A CTG member asked whether Tribes would receive notification when there is a levee repair project, noting that Tribes may wish to weigh in on impacts to habitat and riparian functions.
 - Tony indicated that the County is open to engaging with Tribes at any time.
 - Rob noted that the County has also attempted to engage the Nisqually Tribe in the SWIF process. The team has shared all information with Nisqually administrative staff and will continue to update the Nisqually Tribe moving forward.

Chapter 2: Levee System Overview

This chapter identifies the levees covered by the SWIF Plan, including culverts and discharge pipes. The chapter also includes the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) 2010 and 2013 inspection comments. Todd Essman, Project Technical Lead, noted that the SWIF Plan is a living document that the team will continue to update as needed. Specifically, this chapter will be updated at least every two years following USACE and County inspections to identify deficiencies and damage.

Chapter 3: SWIF Associated Agreements

This chapter documents agreements between Pierce County and other agencies or organizations related to implementation of levee maintenance. Rob noted that there are many agreements, but he highlighted the Settlement Agreement and the Vegetation Management Program with the Puyallup Tribe, as well as the County's agreements with Pierce County Parks related to levee trails. In some cases, other agencies are responsible for certain areas of maintenance. For example, the County is currently working on an agreement with the City of Orting related to outfall maintenance.

- Charles Ifft, USACE, asked whether USACE would coordinate with the County or the City of Orting if an outfall were damaged.
 - J.C. Hungerford, City of Orting, noted that the City of Orting could repair any damaged outfalls.
 - Tony indicated that the agreement will include a protocol for addressing damage to outfalls and the levee structure.

Chapter 4: Regional Considerations, Approaches & Tools

This chapter documents regional considerations, approaches, and tools to implement the SWIF Plan, including documentation of the current condition of the levees and surrounding environment. Rob noted that this chapter characterizes the levee system, focusing on the importance of habitat, risk associated with floods, and vegetation.

Rob highlighted that the team incorporated some of the CTG's comments about vegetation. Specifically, the Plan indicates that the County will seek to retain vegetation on the upland side of the levee on County-owned property. He encouraged those who were interested to pursue working with private property owners to retain vegetation through the Conservation District or some other mechanism.

- A CTG member noted that the Shoreline Management Act might be a useful tool for working with property owners to maintain vegetation on the upland side of the levees.
 - Rob said that he was not aware of any specific restrictions in the Shoreline Management Act, but that he would follow up with the group.
 - Tony also noted that many of the areas behind the County’s levees are within the floodplain, which makes them sensitive, and perhaps critical areas. Those areas may also be wetlands, which restricts what can and cannot be removed on private properties.
- A CTG member expressed interest in how the SWIF Plan will create uniformity in vegetation management throughout the system. The CTG member also noted that the County has done a good job acknowledging that a long-term riparian buffer is an important component of the levee system.
 - Rob noted that the team attempted to provide assurances regarding vegetation management, and that some of the details would be fleshed out once the County develops their standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Chapter 5: Risk Assessment Report

This chapter describes interim maintenance standards to mitigate for “Unacceptable” inspection items, including documentation of the history of levee damage and a risk assessment for each levee. Todd described the levee scoring system for prioritizing levee maintenance and future capital projects. He noted that the scoring system incorporates USACE’s levee safety action classification (LSAC) number as a multiplier. He explained the five categories used to determine a relative flood risk ranking and walked through scoring for the Nisqually Park levee as an example.

- A CTG member asked how the population for the perceived threat to public safety category was calculated.
 - Todd indicated that the team used population data from within the floodplain inundation area. The County looked at both nighttime and daytime population, and whichever number was higher was used.
- A CTG member requested that Todd include the equation for calculating the relative flood risk ranking as a footnote to the table in section 5.5.4.
 - Todd said that he would add the equation as a footnote.

Rob requested that the CTG members, particularly those from technical backgrounds, pay special attention to this chapter and provide comments.

Chapter 6: Interim Risk Reduction Measures (IRRM) Plan

This chapter outlines an Interim Risk Reduction Measures (IRRM) Plan and a risk communication plan to offset risk until levee improvements are implemented or deficiencies are corrected. Sarah Motsenbocker, Pierce County Civil Engineer, highlighted the team’s work with the Department of Emergency Management on non-structural measures, such as evacuation plans. Rob noted that the action plan includes development of SOPs related to coordination with the Department of Emergency Management. Tony clarified that IRRMs will be used until a levee goes from an “Unacceptable” to an “Acceptable” ranking.

- A CTG member asked whether the levee scoring from the risk assessment chapter is linked to IRRMs.
 - Rob said the team has not evaluated how a levee’s priority ranking will fold into long-term capital improvement projects, but that is included as an action item in the action plan.

Chapter 7: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Notification

This chapter outlines the process for notifying the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of levees that have been deemed “Unacceptable” and the protocol for addressing those deficiencies in the SWIF Plan. The County does not have any FEMA accredited levees included in the SWIF.

Chapter 8: System Wide Action Plan

This chapter describes proposed levee improvements and is the basis for implementing the SWIF Plan over time. Rob highlighted that the County is using a “worst first” approach and have identified near-term, mid-term, and long-term programmatic and monitoring actions. He also noted a key component of this chapter is funding for each of these actions.

Rob encouraged CTG members to review this chapter closely and provide comment.

Chapter 9: Plan Implementation Schedule

This chapter identifies the schedule and milestones for implementing the Plan, including a template for sharing this information with USACE. The team has established milestones of when reports will be provided to USACE, typically following USACE and County inspections. Rob noted that the team will likely refine this chapter after receiving comments on the draft from USACE. Tony added that SWM will need to work with the Pierce County Council and the Flood Control Zone District to identify funding for SWIF actions.

- A CTG member asked what constitutes a milestone.
 - Rob indicated that some milestones will directly address deficiencies, while others refer to developing action plan items (e.g., SOPs).
 - Todd reiterated that the SWIF Plan is intended to be a living document and can be updated over time. He noted that there will be updates following the release of the USACE General Investigation (GI) Study.
- A CTG member asked if the SWIF Plan would be going through the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process.
 - Rob explained that USACE will review the SWIF Plan and it does not require SEPA review. Individual maintenance projects will involve a permitting process, which may include SEPA and public notification.

Chapter 10: Progress Reporting

This chapter identifies the plan for reporting progress to USACE. Rob indicated that the team would also be refining this chapter after receiving comments from USACE.

NEXT STEPS

Rob reminded the group to provide feedback and comments on the draft SWIF Plan by Aug. 27, 2016 and reiterated his offer to meet with folks individually to discuss questions or concerns. The team will compile the comments, develop responses, and share those with USACE and the CTG. The team is working towards developing a final draft for approval by January 2017.

Tony explained that the County will be bringing the SWIF Plan in front of Pierce County Council with the hope of receiving comprehensive funding for the maintenance program. He also thanked the CTG for their time and work on the SWIF. Tony said that SWM would let the CTG know when they present to Council, so that CTG members could attend.

Rob also noted that the County will continue to maintain the SWIF project website (www.co.pierce.wa.us/swif) and that there will continue to be opportunities to help the County improve the maintenance program over time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

ATTENDANCE

Community Technical Group Members

Russ Blount	City of Fife
J.C. Hungerford	City of Orting (Parametrix)
Martin Fox	Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
David Molenaar	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Jessica Stone	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

Tony Fantello	Project Sponsor
Rob Wenman	Project Manager
Todd Essman	Technical Lead
Sarah Motsenbocker	Civil Engineer
Annette Pearson	Environmental Permitting Manager

EnviroIssues

Daniel Brody	Facilitator
Chelsea Ongaro	Notetaker