

“Straw-man”

Potential mission, short-term and long-term goals, objectives, and measurement criteria for the Skagit River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan

Background

A Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan must contain certain minimum elements to comply with State law (RCW 86.26 and WAC 175-145). One of these elements, “Short-term and long-term goals and objectives for the planning area” is required under WAC 175-145-040(1)(f). While there are required goals and objectives, it has been identified by the Advisory Committee that agreeing to a mission and having measurement criteria are elements they would additionally like to discuss and consider.

The following “straw-man” (examples of mission, short term and long-term goals objectives, and measurement criteria) were initially selected by staff for consideration by the Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee and further refined by the Advisory Committee at their September 2008 meeting. These mission/goal/objective/measurement criteria statement examples are not intended to be exhaustive and are, in general, gleaned from existing comprehensive flood control management plans, the Skagit GI, interviews with participants, and statements from the Technical Committee and Advisory Committee meetings.

Ecology’s “Comprehensive Planning for Flood Hazard Management Guidebook” notes that “goals” are generally the broadest expression of a jurisdiction’s desires. “Objectives” are more specific targets or benchmarks to be achieved in the ongoing implementation of the stated goals. In addition to the use of short-term and long-term goal statements some plans blend or further split goals/objectives into associated terms, such as: mission statements, project purpose statements, guiding principles, performance standards, prioritization criteria, strategies, and evaluation criteria, etc. For purpose of this “straw-man” paper no distinction is made between “short-term” and “long term” objectives, and other similar expressions.

Potential Mission Statement

The FCZD Advisory Committee agrees to the following mission statement for flood hazard [risk reduction](#) management:

Option #1

The intention of flood hazard [risk reduction](#) management in Skagit County is to clearly state the vision, hopes, and expectations for all aspects of flood risk reduction, provide for a coordination of all of the multiple flood and flood related efforts that are ongoing in the County, meet the requirements of agencies who support and fund flood management and projects [by ensuring that all laws and government regulations are complied with](#), and include consideration of and steps to improve conditions for life safety, property protection, environmental, endangered species, farmland preservation, economic viability, and public issues and concerns.

Option #2

Identify and implement viable solutions to flood [risk reduction](#) damage prevention and public safety by considering the needs of:

- Cities, towns, and urban growth areas
- Environmental issues, habitat enhancement

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- Preservation of farmland
- Transportation corridors of local, state, national, and international significance
- Protection of public infrastructure
- Rural property owners within the Skagit River floodplain that do not currently have flood protection which would include but not be limited to non-structural methods of risk reduction
- Ensure that damages to upstream and downstream property owners are minimized which would include but not be limited to some form of compensation (i.e. crop insurance, flowage easements, etc.)

Option #3 Combine 1 & 2 into one by altering the first sentence of Option #2 to read, “This can be accomplished by identifying and implementing viable solutions to flood risk reduction damage prevention and public safety by considering the needs of:

Long Term Goals and Objectives of Flood Hazard Management for the Skagit River

For the purposes of this plan, “goals” are defined as the benefits that the plan is trying to achieve. The success of the plan, once implemented, should be measured by the degree to which its goals have been met (i.e., by the actual benefit that occurs on the ground. “Objectives” are defined as short-term aims which, when combined, form a strategy or course of action to meet a goal.

| Goals | Objectives | Measurement Criteria |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Establish and adopt a systematic, coordinated, comprehensive approach to flood hazard <u>risk reduction</u> management for the Skagit River. | 1.1 Establish and maintain a planning process that encourages and supports coordinated, county-wide flood hazard <u>risk reduction</u> management that includes both structural and non-structural approaches | 1.1.1 Continue use of the Flood Control Zone District (FCZD) for county-wide flood management coordination. 1.1.2 FCZD Advisory Committee will meet monthly (or as needed) to conduct FCZD business. 1.1.3 FCZD Advisory Committee will report annually in a public session to the Board of Supervisors on accomplishments and proposed work plan for the upcoming year. <u>1.1.4 Part of the planning process is a public commitment to the on-going support of the continuation of the collection of data including operation of the USGS river flow gages including but not limited to The Dalles gage west of Concrete.</u> |
| | 1.2 Continually improve flood warning, emergency response, and evacuation capabilities | 1.2.1 Identify agencies with responsibilities for flood emergency actions. 1.2.2 Identify existing plans containing flood emergency response strategies, including responding to floods that exceed a 400 50-year event. 1.2.3 Coordinate emergency flood protection amongst |

| Goals | Objectives | Measurement Criteria |
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| | 1.3 Support the completion of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer’s Skagit River Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study (Skagit GI ¹). | existing plans and agencies. 1.3.1 Provide review and comment on the Skagit GI from the perspective of the FCZD. 1.3.2 Provide a forum for public review and comment of the Skagit GI. 1.3.3 Provide local funding match as necessary to complete the Skagit GI. |
| | 1.4 Support the FEMA flood insurance program by encouraging communities and individuals to remain in or join the program. | 1.4.1 Monitor insurance participation percentages as part of implementation of the CFHMP |
| | 1.5 Support continued county-wide participation in the federal Community Rating System (CRS) of the National Flood Insurance Program if it is determined to be effective in reducing flood damages/risks <u>and is not actually promoting development within the Skagit River floodplain</u> . *(need more information on CRS) | 1.5.1 Encourage owners of all properties in the floodplain to obtain flood insurance, including properties behind levees providing 100-year flood protection. 1.5.2 Work with the federal CRS program to lower flood insurance rates and premiums. 1.5.3 Conduct surveys of or provide feedback mechanisms for the general public and agencies on occasions to determine awareness of the CRS program 1.5.4 Through GIS technology, monitor changes in floodplain development to determine increases and/or decreases ² |
| | 1.6 Support local efforts to improve flood protection/ <u>risk reduction efforts</u> consistent with the Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan. | 1.6.1 Provide opportunity for <u>Require</u> local entities and jurisdictions to share information on their flood risk reduction activities <u>with all adversely impacted upstream and downstream property owners before adoption and/or implementation of said activities</u> . 1.6.2 Assist local entities and jurisdictions to find funding for flood risk reduction activities. 1.6.3 Assist local entities and jurisdictions adversely impacted by flood risk reduction activities of others ³ . |

¹ I'm not so sure that the residents of Skagit County are going to support the completion of the GI study. This is something that I feel needs further discussion before the FCZD AC with the possible recommendation that we wait on the results of an advisory vote from the people of Skagit County. The discussion before the FCZD AC should include the ramifications of the County not going forward with the GI Study which in my personal opinion might very well be more adverse then proceeding with the GI Study.

² Increases and/or decreases of what? The amount of development or the impacts of said development?

| Goals | Objectives | Measurement Criteria |
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| | <p>1.7 Improve public understanding of flood hazard management through multi-media public outreach and education efforts using the Public Involvement Plan as a tool for guiding efforts⁴.</p> | <p>1.7.1 Complete and approve a public involvement plan that lines out specific tasks and actions related to public outreach⁵.</p> <p>1.7.2 Using the public involvement plan, implement the actions specified in a timely manner.</p> <p><u>1.7.3 Ensure that the public involvement plan provides a public understanding of the various uses and limitations associated with flood risk reduction by the use of a variety of educational efforts</u></p> <p>1.7.34 Update and change the public involvement plan as necessary to adjust actions to meet the needs of the CFHMP and implementation of the CFHMP.</p> |
| | <p>1.8 Establish a stable funding mechanism to support county-wide flood hazard management. Secure community-wide support for local, state, and federal funding to implement flood <u>risk</u> reduction measures.</p> | <p>1.8.1 Develop recommendation for long-term funding for county-wide flood hazard <u>risk reduction</u> management.</p> <p>1.8.2 Develop budget for continued county-wide flood hazard management planning efforts and implementation of flood reduction measures.</p> <p>1.8.3 Coordinate county-wide efforts to obtain Local, State and Federal funding for flood protection measures.</p> |
| | <p>1.9 Integrate flood hazard <u>risk reduction</u> management with other land use plans and regulations to minimize flood risk and to reduce need for in-stream flood control works.</p> | <p>1.9.1 Identify existing plans and regulations that restrict development along shorelines and within the <u>Skagit/Samish River</u> floodplains.</p> <p>1.9.2 Integrate flood hazard <u>risk reduction</u> management strategies into the plans and regulations that restrict development along shorelines and within the floodplain.</p> |
| | <p>1.10 Identify at-risk properties, with special attention to those experiencing repetitive losses, and look for ways to acquire, and remove or relocate them out of harms way.</p> | <p>1.10.1 Support efforts by local groups to buyout at-risk properties, especially those in the floodway such as Hamilton.</p> <p>1.10.2 Support grants to fund buy-out programs as matching funds are available.</p> <p>1.10.3 Support Farmland Legacy Program that acquires development rights in floodplain/floodway.</p> |

³ [Further explanation of just how this would be accomplished is warranted. Would it include public opposition to a proposed project that would divert floodwaters onto surrounding property \(i.e. a ring dike around Burlington\)?](#)

⁴ [What public involvement plan? Does one currently exist? If yes shouldn't this be something the committee reviews? If no, who is going to develop said plan and when?](#)

⁵ [See footnote #4.](#)

| Goals | Objectives | Measurement Criteria |
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| | <p>1.11 Establish and utilize criteria for selection and prioritization of flood hazard <u>risk reduction</u> management measures and projects. Examples of criteria include: severity of problem; effectiveness; benefit; cost; public acceptance; environmental impact; life safety impacts <u>not only to those benefitting from said measures but those adversely impacted as well</u>; protection of critical infrastructure; and achievement of multiple objectives.</p> <p><u>1.11 ALTERNATIVE: Strategies for flood risk reduction shall balance engineering, economic, environmental, and social factors in relationship to stated comprehensive planning goals and objectives.</u></p> <p>1.12 When financially feasible, flood measures and projects should be designed to offer protection from a 500-year event <u>for urban areas only</u>.</p> <p>1.13 Provide coordination component with local <u>dike district</u> flood <u>risk reduction efforts and</u> projects and where possible support such efforts</p> <p>1.14 Focus CFHMP on risk reduction efforts <u>rather than on flood protection</u>.</p> | <p><u>1.10.4 Support grants and/or government programs that would help homeowners who have been identified as a “at risk repetitive loss property” to elevate their residences 3 feet above the 100 yr flood levels.</u></p> <p>1.11.1 Develop rating protocol that can be used to evaluate and prioritize flood reduction measures throughout the county⁶.</p> <p>1.11.2 Aim to be consistent with USACE criteria for the Skagit GI <u>however if it is in the best interest of the people of Skagit County, the County is not bound solely to the Skagit GI.</u></p> <p>1.11.3 Benefit/cost ratio, when used as a tool to evaluate or compare flood protection <u>risk reduction</u> measures, should reflect the financial impact of the measure on the entire river system <u>including but not limited to those adversely impacted by said measures.</u></p> <p>1.12.1 Prioritize measures offering 500-year protection.</p> <p>1.12.2 Look for ways to increase funding to implement 500-year protection measures <u>for urban areas</u>.</p> <p>1.13.1 Incorporate local flood <u>risk reduction</u> efforts into CFHMP.</p> <p>1.14.1 List specific risk reduction efforts in CFHMP and prioritize them <u>higher than flood protection</u>.</p> |
| <p>2. Incorporate environmental and natural resource considerations into flood hazard solutions.</p> | <p>2.1 When developing flood hazard solutions, incorporate environmental and natural resource considerations into the planning process.</p> | <p>2.1.1 Non-structural (out-of-stream) measures for flood hazard reduction are to be considered as viable options in reducing flood risk.</p> <p>2.1.2 Structural (in-stream) flood control measures should preserve or enhance existing flow characteristics, and water quality for fisheries, water supply, recreation,</p> |

⁶ Until this protocol has been adopted how can we rate the current 38 Corps potential projects?

| Goals | Objectives | Measurement Criteria |
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| | | <p>and other river uses.</p> <p>2.1.3 Reduce the need for emergency measures that degrade habitat and prepare a mitigation strategy for those occasions when emergency measures are unavoidable.</p> |
| | <p>2.2 When developing environmental or natural resource projects, incorporate flood hazard solutions into the planning process.</p> | <p>2.2.1 Funding agencies, such as the Puget Sound Partnership fund environmental projects/salmon projects that incorporate flood improvement components</p> |
| | <p>2.3 Look for opportunities to restore lost habitat and improve diversity of habitat for all wildlife species.</p> | <p>2.3.1 Encourage structural (in-stream) flood reduction measures to include a restoration component consistent with ESA recovery plans.</p> <p><u>2.3.2 Flood risk reduction measures should not result in net loss of or damage to fish and wildlife resources, but wherever possible develop or improve diversity of habitat of those resources, particularly with respect to the Chinook, Steelhead, and Coho runs.</u></p> <p><u>2.3.3 New flood risk reduction measures shall not obstruct fish passage.</u></p> |
| <p>3. Develop recommendations that garner broad public support</p> | <p>3.1 Work toward a balance in projects that provides multiple benefits (i.e. parks, open space, trails, economic vitality) that will be useful in creating broad public support.</p> | <p>3.1.1 Reduce negative public comments on SEPA decisions. <u>Flood risk reduction measures should preserve to the fullest extent possible opportunities for other uses.</u></p> <p>3.1.2 <u>Manage the floodplains within the Skagit Basin for multiple uses---including flood and erosion hazard reduction, fish and wildlife habitat, open space recreation, water supply, and hydropower.</u></p> |
| | <p>3.2 Create broad public awareness for projects that allows for smoother approval of such projects</p> | <p>3.2.1 Reduce negative public comments on SEPA decisions. <u>Ensure that all flood risk reduction measures meet the three “E’s” (engineering, economic, environmental) and are socially acceptable.</u></p> |
| | <p>3.3 Address project funding needs such that public support can be obtained.</p> | <p><u>3.3.1 This will include but not be limited to property taxes, sales taxes and government and/or private</u></p> |

| Goals | Objectives | Measurement Criteria |
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| | <p><u>3.3 Alternative: A stable, adequate, and publicly acceptable long-term source of financing should be established and maintained for flood risk reduction.</u></p> | <p><u>corporation/group grants.</u></p> |
| <p><u>4. Minimize Expenditure of Public Funds in order to achieve the reduction of the long-term costs of flood control and floodplain management.</u></p> | <p><u>4.1 Review past cost associated with flood reduction measures and where possible cut the future cost to the taxpayer.</u></p> <p><u>4.2 Prevent new development in hazardous areas or ensure that it is built in such a way that risk is minimized and does not impact surrounding landowners either upstream or downstream.</u></p> | <p><u>4.1.1 The past decade of cost associated with flood reduction measures (i.e. the GI study) shall be reviewed by the FCZD advisory committee in order to determine how county efforts could be better spent in order to reduce the cost to taxpayers.</u></p> <p><u>4.1.2 Ensure that all land use laws and regulations are complied with including but not limited to SEPA, SMA, NFIP local ordinances, grading permits, and if federal funding is involved compliance with but not limited to NEPA, Clean Water Act, EO 11988.</u></p> <p><u>4.1.3 Ensure that the benefits of maintaining existing flood risk reduction/flood control facilities outweigh their costs; if not, consider some other type of solution at the site.</u></p> <p><u>4.1.4 Ensure that the solution chosen to lower the risk to existing development is the most cost-effective available, protects or enhances riparian habitat, and is consistent with applicable land-use plans and regulations.</u></p> |
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