



News Release

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Large turnout hear from experts on flooding issues in the Green River Valley

More than 120 residents learn that new FEMA flood maps are at least 5 years away

How new federal flood maps could impact Green River Valley homes and businesses was a primary focus of more than 120 residents who met with the members of the King County Flood Control District Executive Committee and representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Wednesday.

FEMA officials provided information on work to update official Green River Valley flood maps at the September 11 public meeting at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent. The update is of concern to residents and property owners because the maps help define special-risk areas that may affect insurance rates or building regulations.

"These types of meetings are vitally important to inform the public about potential flooding issues that may arise," said Supervisor Reagan Dunn, Chair of the King County Flood Control District. "It is great to see such a large turnout and be able to share the details of the flood mapping process and how we are still in the very early stages of this process."

"I'm glad that we were able to convene a transparent and productive meeting between FEMA and members of the Green River Valley community, and I'd like to thank everyone that took the time to attend," said Supervisor Julia Patterson, Vice Chair of the King County Flood Control District. "Community members asked important questions that got to the bottom of why flood maps matter and how they affect the thousands of residents and businesses in the Green River Valley. I'm happy that FEMA provided direct answers to these questions, and I look forward to continue working with FEMA and the Green River Valley community moving forward."

"I was very encouraged by the turnout at this meeting. It's obvious that the citizens in the Valley are interested in knowing about flood mapping plans from

FEMA so they can be prepared; knowing building requirements, flood preparation and potential insurance rates," said Supervisor Kathy Lambert. "I'm also encouraged that FEMA is working to prepare more accurate flood maps as these maps influence many factors within the Valley communities."

"I want to thank FEMA and King County for coming to last night's meeting and sharing important information about FEMA's Flood Maps," said Supervisor Larry Gossett, member of the Executive Committee. "This is a complex, time consuming, and often confusing process. It is critically important that the residents of the Green River Valley realize how early we are in the process of creating those Flood Maps."

A number of years ago, FEMA issued draft flood area maps that indicated there were more areas of the valley within the floodplain. These draft maps left some in the valley under the impression that the adoption of the final maps by FEMA was imminent. An important element of this meeting was that FEMA made clear that adopting of flood maps is not in fact imminent and the likely scenario for adoption would be spring or summer of 2018 at the earliest.

Other highlights of the meeting included a presentation by King County Water and Land Resources Division on projects either already constructed or planned in the valley that will reduce or eliminate potential flooding and serve to reduce the amount of areas that will be contained within the FEMA flood maps.

"We heard from FEMA that their ability to provide insurance maps for our region is complicated by a variety of technical, financial, and political constraints at the national level," said Mark Isaacson, Water and Land Resources Division Director. "While they work through these challenges over the next several years, the Flood Control District will continue to rebuild our aging levee system to exceed federal engineering safety requirements. Through the System-Wide Improvement Framework the Flood Control District and King County are working with a wide range of partners in the Green River valley to develop a shared vision for sustainable flood risk reduction and capital investments that will protect people, property, our environment, and our region's economy."

Editors: Cutline for attached photos are:

Photo #1 "More than 120 residents of the Green River Valley came to the Maleng Regional Justice Center Sept. 11 for a special meeting on the King County Flood Control District on FEMA flood maps

Photo #2 Flood Control District Supervisors (l-r) Reagan Dunn, Julia Patterson and Kathy Lambert listen to a panel presentation at the special meeting of the King County Flood Control District

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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.