



News Release

Date: February 26, 2013

Contact: Kris Faucett, (206) 652-9506

Briscoe Desimone levee design selected

Plan for protecting public safety and property moving forward

The King County Flood Control District Board of Supervisors took action today to improve public safety and property protection in the Green River Valley by selecting a levee design with setback levees retained by walls, and providing funding for the Briscoe Desimone levee project located between S. 180th Street and S. 200th Street in the Green River basin.

“We are pleased to be providing certainty to Green River Valley residents, property owners, and businesses regarding this important project,” stated Flood Control District Chair Julia Patterson, whose council district includes the Green River Valley. “This design provides additional public safety and property protection in a cost-effective, environmentally beneficial way. It paves the way for accreditation by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which will mean lower insurance costs to residents and businesses.”

The Flood Control District thoroughly reviewed and evaluated two alternative design strategies for improving the Briscoe Desimone levee, one with setback levees retained by walls, and one with larger levee setbacks. The assessment included engaging an independent, third-party expert review by Dr. Robert Gilbert, a professor of civil, architectural and environmental engineering at the University of Texas at Austin, to evaluate the relative risks and benefits of the two design strategies.

“Independent, external review is recommended for all public works projects where performance is critical to public safety, health, and welfare, and where reliability of performance under emergency conditions is critical,” said Flood Control District Executive Committee Chair Reagan Dunn. “Dr. Gilbert’s examination greatly helped us to better understand the assumptions behind each strategy, allowing the Board to come to unanimous consensus about the levee design.”

In choosing the floodwall design, the Flood Control District Board made modifications to the initial proposal based on Dr. Gilbert's recommendations, including requiring that the walls be similar in height, construction, and performance to provide a more homogenous system. Active monitoring and periodic inspections were also required by the Flood Control District to provide warning of erosion and quantitative, scientific data about how the river is working for future projects.

The Briscoe Desimone levee is one segment of the larger flood risk reduction system protecting the region's valuable economic center located in the Green River Valley. This system includes the federally owned and operated Howard Hanson Dam, which controls river flow upstream.

A comprehensive vision and system-wide plan for managing flood risk in the Green River Valley that includes the dam, the levees, and land use planning was approved by the District Board to ensure a complete solution that protects people, the economy, and the environment, while also guaranteeing the best use of public resources.

"The Flood Control District's decision was based first and foremost on public safety and the protection of property," said Supervisor Pete von Reichbauer. "This plan provides us the ability to move forward on this project now, while continuing to focus on a long-term, system-wide approach."

The Flood Control District also stressed the importance of public education regarding the residual risks of flooding in the Green River Valley by reminding individuals of the importance of preparing for flooding, including purchasing flood insurance and knowing how to evacuate if needed.

"I was pleased to support approval of a repair and replacement project for the critical Briscoe Desimone levee in the Kent Valley at today's Flood Control District meeting," stated Supervisor Rod Dembowski. "The project we approved was supported by the cities that are most affected by this segment of the Green River, is a wise use of limited taxpayer funds, protects thousands of jobs in our region, and can be completed in the near future."

The levee design will be built using Flood Control District and state funds. A final design plan for the levee improvement is necessary for the obligation of a \$7 million grant awarded by the State Legislature before a July 1, 2013 deadline.

Information about the King County Flood Control District can be found at www.kingcountyfloodcontrol.org.

#

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.