



Memorandum

DATE: July 14, 2011

TO: Shoreline Planning Commission

FROM: Brian Landau, Surface Water Manager
Steven Cohn, Senior Planner

RE: Surface Water Master (SWM) Plan Discussion

The SWM Plan is being updated and will be brought to the City Council for discussion over the next few months with possible adoption in the Fall. Staff is providing background to the Commission to provide the Commissioners with additional context for the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update.

Background

The City's original SWM Plan was developed in 2004 and adopted in 2005. It included the development of a Capital Improvement Program (CIP), a fee or rate study, and Maintenance and Operations (M&O) plan to support the City's Surface Water Utility. The Plan focused on short and long-term needs for the Utility's storm water programs. The initial and critical needs were to address public safety, reduce damage caused by flooding, and meet legal mandates prescribed by Federal and State laws such as the Clean Water Act, plus provide habitat restoration.

Major regulatory drivers that helped guide the initial SWMP were the Federal Endangered Species Act, the Federal Clean Water Act – which includes the Federal National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II rule and the Washington State Department of Ecology's Basic and Comprehensive Stormwater Program.

Since 2005, a number of changes have affected the Surface Water Utility's programs. Some of these include:

- Completion of several capital improvements that have substantially reduced the number of flooding issues, and consequently the number of flooding complaints.

- Institution of educational programs focused on water quality such as the environmental mini-grant programs, recycling and natural yard care, and the Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship Program (NEST).
- Having real-time experience in NPDES permit compliance, helping us to more clearly understand the costs associated with the program.
- Construction of additional surface water management infrastructure that requires a higher level of maintenance (e.g., Aurora Avenue).
- Greater regional and local emphasis on sustainability, water quality, and habitat restoration.

Discussion

The 2011 SWMP Update will provide the Surface Water Utility with the guidance on program priorities and levels of service for the next five years. These include capital programs for drainage and water quality, operations and maintenance, regulatory compliance, water quality monitoring, and education/outreach programs. The plan will assess the level of funding needed to implement the recommended programs as well as the Surface Water Utility rates to support this funding. Once a draft of the plan is completed in August, staff will review the level of service options and their associated costs with Council.

The work to update the plan began in October 2010. An introduction to the update was presented to the public at an open house in February 2011. The City received information on priorities of those who attended. The areas of prioritization included flooding/drainage, water quality, aquatic habitat, sustainability, maintenance, aging infrastructure, and public outreach. The City also solicited input from the community through public comment forms and the City's website. The public comments will be incorporated into the Surface Water Master Plan.

The City Council provided valuable input on a number of policy issues on May 2, 2011. Future meetings include discussion of program change recommendations and associated rate impacts (August 8, 2011) and a discussion on the policy issue of surface water management activities on private property (September 12, 2011). A public hearing on the Surface Water Master Plan is scheduled with Council for September 26, 2011. The City Council is scheduled to adopt the Surface Water Master Plan in Fall 2011.

Next Steps

The July 21 meeting is intended to be a briefing to provide background to the Commissioners about the Plan. If you have questions prior to your meeting, please contact Brian Landau blandau@shorelinewa.gov or call him at 206-801-2451.