



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
**Department of Public Works**  
**123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800**  
**www.ci.kirkland.wa.us**

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Dave Ramsay, City Manager

**From:** Jenny Gaus, Senior Surface Water Utility Engineer  
Rob Jammerman, Development Engineering Manager  
Daryl Grigsby, Public Works Director

**Date:** March 22, 2007

**Subject:** Letter of support for formation of a King County Flood Control Zone District

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Council authorize the Mayor to sign the attached letter.

### POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

An ordinance to create a single countywide flood control zone district will come before the King County Council on April 9<sup>th</sup>. The attached letter expresses Kirkland City Council support for district formation and further expresses support for a levy rate that would be high enough to maximize salmon recovery benefits of flood management projects.

### BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

The King County Council adopted the *2006 Flood Hazard Management Plan* (see <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/flood/fhmp/index.htm>) in January of 2007. This plan proposes projects and strategies to minimize flood damage that is potentially devastating to our regional economic prosperity. One of the main recommendations in this plan is formation of a single countywide flood control district. This district would replace several existing smaller flood management districts, and would provide the ability to institute a levy on all properties in King County to pay for flood control. Major river flooding is a regional problem that demands a regional solution.

If the ordinance for district formation is passed by the King County Council, an advisory committee consisting of mayors from 15 cities within King County would be formed to develop levy recommendations (see Attachment A for details). The proposed levy would be considered by the King County Council during their regular budget process in November of 2007. The district and levy would commence in January of 2008. The flood management plan recommends a levy rate of between \$0.05 and \$0.10 per \$1000 in assessed value, although the lowest recommended rate will likely increase somewhat due to damage sustained during the November 2006 flood. This would result in a levy of somewhere between \$30 and \$60 per year for the average single-family home in Kirkland, and would raise between \$179 million and \$335 million for flood plan implementation.

Flood control and salmon recovery are closely linked as both involve modifications to major river systems. The planning and design and construction methods used for flood control projects have changed significantly in recent years so that most projects must have at least some habitat benefit for salmon and other fish. In the currently existing Green River Flood Control District, for example, projects on the Lower Green River have both protected property and increased spawning areas for salmon (see picture on Page 8 of Attachment A). With additional funds from a higher levy rate, it would be possible to maximize fish habitat aspects of individual flood control projects.

Kirkland participates in the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council (Joan McBride is the Council representative, Jim Lauinger is the alternate), and on June 21, 2006 the City Council adopted the *Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammaish Watershed (WRIA 8) Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan* (the WRIA 8 Plan), which contains a list of habitat improvement projects that are needed in order to recover Chinook salmon and thus achieve de-listing of the species under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Many of these projects are in locations where flood control projects are also needed and proposed.

The estimated cost of projects in the WRIA 8 plan is approximately \$53 million. Approximately 55% percent of the cost of these projects would be covered by projects in the *2006 King County Flood Hazard Management Plan* IF the higher proposed levy rate of \$0.10 per \$1000 in assessed value is adopted. If the lower proposed levy rate is adopted, flood control projects will only provide about 7% of the cost of fish habitat improvement projects listed in the WRIA 8 plan. Thus it is to Kirkland's benefit to support the higher levy rate. Other sources of funding for WRIA 8 such as grants from Federal and State government are unstable and subject to change. The adoption of a countywide flood control zone and a higher levy rate would provide a stable and predictable source of funds for salmon recovery.

Attachment A      Materials provided by King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks concerning the proposed King County Flood Zone Management District.

Attachment B      Draft letter to King County Council Chair Larry Gossett expressing support for formation of a King County Flood Control Zone District

## Countywide Flood Control Zone District Overview

### Flooding is a Regional Hazard

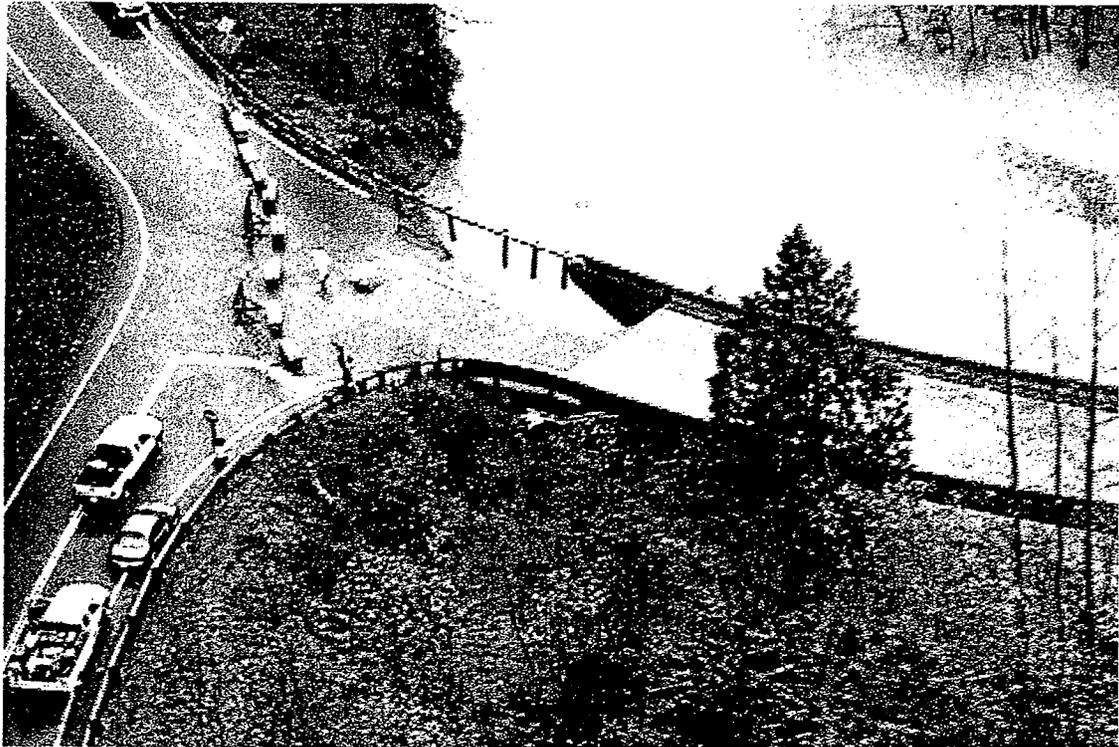
1. 8 federal disaster declarations in King County since 1990.
2. Major river flooding: Cedar, Green, South Fork Skykomish, Snoqualmie, Sammamish, and White Rivers
3. At least \$7 billion of assessed value in King County's floodplains
4. Examples of flood risks:
  - Lower Green River Valley (550 floodplain properties @ \$1 billion total AV)
  - \$4 billion total AV for properties protected by levees and other flood control facilities along the Lower Green River
  - SR 169 (51,000 vehicles/day) and other transportation corridors
  - Tolt Pipeline (30% of Seattle's drinking water)
  - Snoqualmie Valley (1,880 floodplain properties @ \$450M total AV)
  - Major employers: Boeing, Paccar, Southcenter Mall and other commercial/industrial areas
5. Warmer winters, due to climate change, are predicted to exacerbate flooding in the future
6. November 2006 was the wettest November on record
7. Scrutiny of levees, revetments, and flood protection facilities nationwide, post Hurricane Katrina



**Renton/Boeing Airport Flooding, 1996**



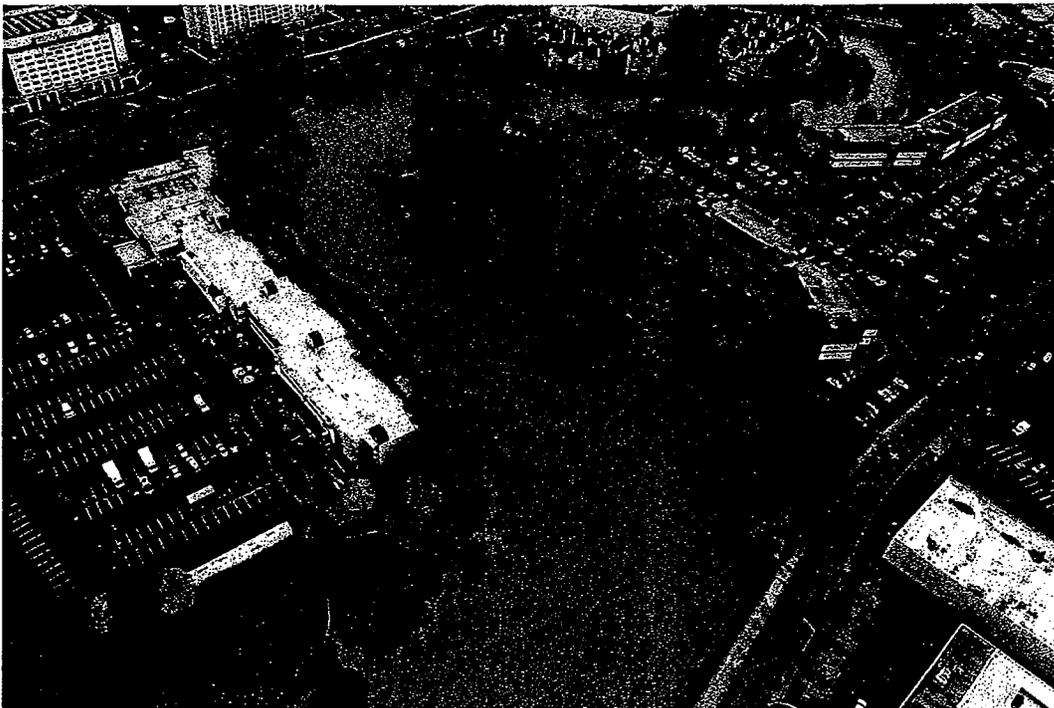
Snoqualmie River Valley - November 2006



Raging River – Preston Road, November 2006

## **Regional and Statewide Economic Impacts**

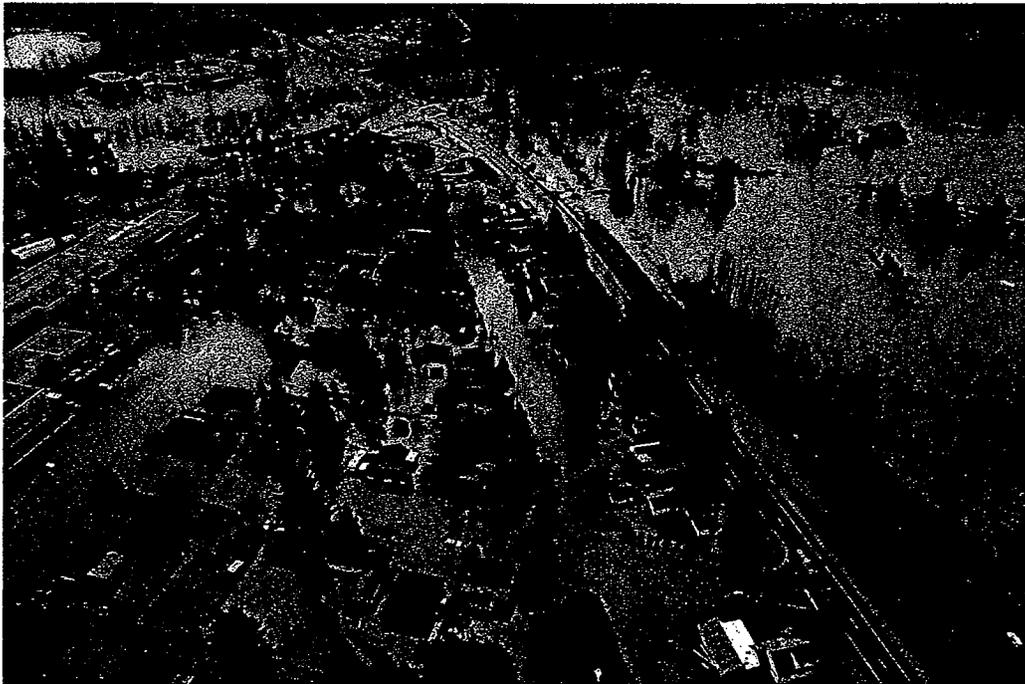
1. Major river flooding in King County impacts local, regional, and statewide economies
2. King County contributes 50% to the Washington State economy, as defined by total value added (GSP)
  - Total value added in Washington State (2003) was \$240 billion
  - King County contributed \$120.7 billion to Washington State's GSP in 2003
3. King County contributes 49% of tourist spending within Washington State
  - Tourist spending in Washington State (2003) was \$10.8 billion, of which King County contributes \$5.3 billion
4. King County's flood risk reduction actions protect significant economic resources
  - Up to \$118M per day, or 21%, of King County's daily total economic output from employees who commute into or out of a 100 year floodplain
  - These estimates do not reflect impacts to utilities, transportation corridors, or property damage
  - Flood factors such as flooding severity, location, and duration, affect the degree to which economic resources are impacted



**Lower Green River, City of Tukwila, - November 2006**

## **Insufficient Funds Limit King County's Ability to Reduce Flood Risks**

1. 1993 King County Flood Plan identified over \$300M in critical flood risk reduction projects
  - 1993 Plan lacked a funding recommendation
  - Very limited plan implementation
2. Current flood risk reduction funding ~ \$3.5M per year
3. King County's flood control facilities are degraded and floodplain capacity is insufficient; conditions are anticipated to worsen due to climate change
4. State statutory authority for counties to:
  - Provide comprehensive regional flood planning and protection
  - Form countywide flood control zone districts to fund improvements
  - 2006 Flood Plan recommends formation of a countywide flood control zone district



**Flooding in City of Snoqualmie – November 2006**

## 2006 King County Flood Hazard Management Plan

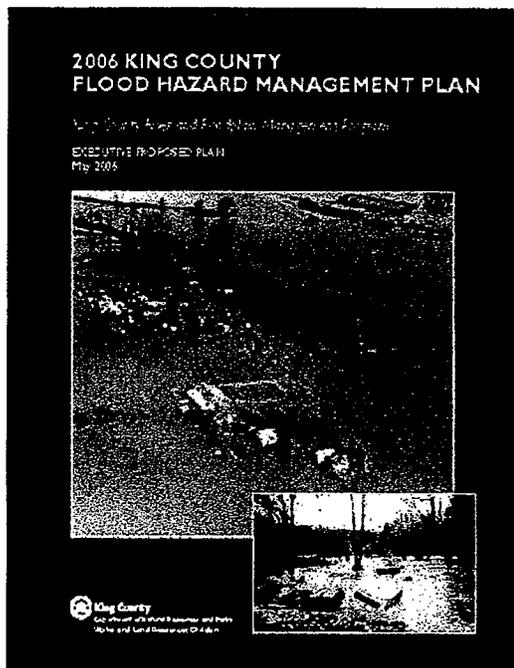
1. Identifies \$179M to \$335M of priority flood risk reduction projects and programs

2. Direct outcomes:

- Reduction in flooding along major rivers
- Reduction in flooding along sub-regional tributaries
- Protection of life and improved public safety
- Strengthened flood protection infrastructure
- Increased floodplain capacity
- Protection of property and transportation corridors
- Protection of regional economic interests

3. 2006 Plan recommends creation of a countywide flood control zone district, pursuant to State law

- Proposed levy range is 5-10 cents per \$1,000 AV
- Reflects a plan implementation range of \$179M to \$335M



## **Flood Control Zone District Formation Process**

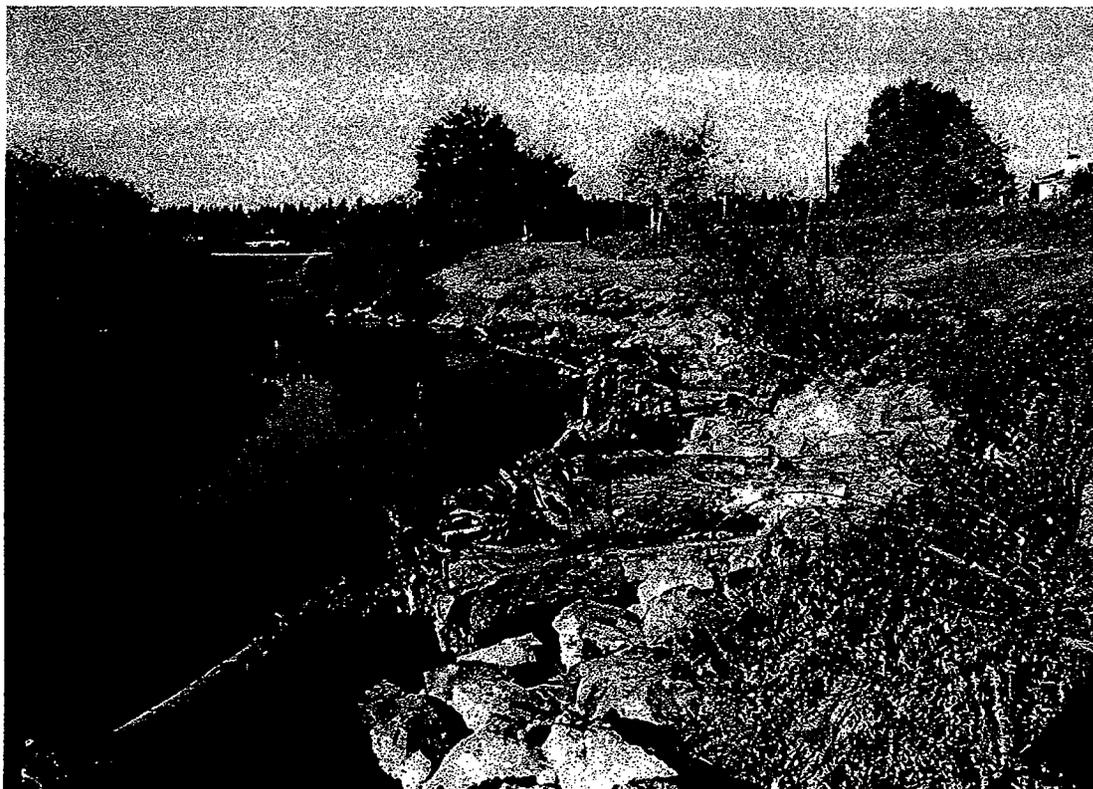
- Ordinance to form Countywide Flood Control Zone District is currently before the King County Council.
- Action on formation Ordinance anticipated in April, 2007.
- State law allows for a 15-member countywide advisory committee appointed by the Board of Supervisors of the District. (County councilmembers sit as the Board of Supervisors of the Flood Control Zone District.)
- Current advisory committee proposal provides for 11 permanent seats and four rotating seats. Each seat would have one vote.
- Under the current proposal, permanent seats would be held by the mayors of the following cities: Tukwila, Auburn, Kent, Renton, Snoqualmie, North Bend, Carnation, Seattle, and Bellevue, as well as the King County Executive and a County Councilmember. The four rotating seats would be held by a mayor or city councilmember nominated by the Suburban Cities Association from among the remaining cities.
- If the Flood Control Zone District is formed, advisory committee will provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on a proposed levy rate and capital project priorities – recommendations anticipated by August 31, 2007.
- Approval of levy rate and CIP projects by the District Board of Supervisors is expected at the time of the County's budget adoption in November, 2007.
- Implementation of regional flood protection through flood control zone district begins January, 1, 2008.

## King County's Approach Flood Hazard Management Provides Multiple Benefits

- Flood risk reduction
- Environmental benefits
- Reduced maintenance costs

### Salmon Recovery Benefits Gained From New Flood Projects

WRIA	HIGH PRIORITY SALMON RECOVERY PROJECTS THAT ARE ACCOMPLISHED WITH FLOOD PROTECTION PROJECTS (\$179M / \$335M FLOOD PLAN IMPLEMENTATION RANGE)
7	7% / 50% (\$2M / \$25M project cost estimate)
8	7% / 55% (\$14M / \$53M project cost estimate)
9	4% / 23% (\$3M / \$80M project cost estimate)



**Bio-engineered levee setback - Lower Green River**

## Conclusion

1. 2006 Flood Plan implementation results in significant flood protection benefits to the region's and state's economy
2. Major regional flood risk reduction outcomes: stronger flood protection infrastructure; protection of property; protected transportation corridors; protection of economic prosperity
3. Protection of life and improved public safety
4. Additional environmental and public benefits including: salmon recovery, water quality, recreation and aesthetics
5. Shared costs for plan implementation
6. Strong regional support for the 2006 Flood Plan and creation of a countywide flood control zone district

***"[This] investment would amount to as much as \$335 million in repairs over the next 10 years, funded by a property tax increase of as much as \$30 a year on a \$300,000 home. It would seem to be the cheapest insurance a homeowner could buy."***

**-- Seattle Post Intelligencer Editorial Board, July 10, 2006**

***"We live in a region with the potential of natural disasters that can be exacerbated by inadequate infrastructure. It makes sense to invest in safeguards now instead of paying for widespread destruction later. New Orleans taught us that."***

**-- Seattle Times Editorial Board, July 10, 2006**

April 4, 2007

**DRAFT**

Councilmember Larry Gossett, Chair  
The King County Council  
King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue Room 1200  
Seattle, WA 98104-3272

RE: Support for King County Flood Control Zone District Formation

Dear Mr. Gossett:

On behalf of the Kirkland City Council I am writing express strong support for formation of the King County Flood Control Zone District. Although Kirkland does not have major river flooding problems, we understand the impact that such regional flooding can have on our economic prosperity. Major river flooding is a regional problem that needs a regional solution.

Salmon recovery is also a top priority for Kirkland. We are eager to participate in the funding of flood hazard management projects that will also achieve salmon recovery goals. To that end, we support the adoption of funding at the high end of the range identified in the *2006 King County Flood Hazard Management Plan* (10 ¢ per \$1,000 AV), in order to complete the greatest number of high priority flood protection projects with salmon recovery benefits.

Thank you for your leadership on flood hazard management. We look forward to passage of the King County Flood Control Zone District ordinance, and to implementation of a levy rate that will provide both economic prosperity and maximum salmon recovery benefits through careful flood hazard management. Please contact Daryl Grigsby, Public Works Director, at (425) 587-3802 or [dgrigsby@ci.kirkland.wa.us](mailto:dgrigsby@ci.kirkland.wa.us) with questions or for further information.

Sincerely,  
City of Kirkland

James Lauinger, Mayor

Cc: Clerk of the King County Council  
Jenny Gaus, Senior Surface Water Utility Engineer  
Grover Cleveland, Business Development Manager, King County Department of Natural Resources  
and Parks