



King County

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MEETING NOTES

CEDAR RIVER COUNCIL

March 28th, 2017 – 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Riverbend Mobile Home Park Club House
17410 SE Renton/Maple Valley Rd. #25, Renton, WA 98058

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm.

1st Public Comment Period

There was no public comment.

Riverbend Levee Setback and Floodplain Restoration Project Update – Jon Hansen, King County DNRP

Jon Hansen, Riverbend project manager for KC DNRP, reviewed a detailed follow-up presentation to prior presentations to the CRC on King County's Riverbend project. He said the project's goals are to: address flood reduction, erosion, improve salmon habitat, accommodate public river use, and balance these objectives with costs/funding. He explained several elements of the project, such as existing levees, and whether to remove them and add setbacks; and excavations, which would have benefits to flood storage and wildlife habitats. Another element being explored is raising the bottom of Cavanaugh Pond, to prevent the pond from being eventually absorbed by the Cedar River or filling in with vegetation.

He said there are six project design "alternatives" being explored by DNRP. Alternative 1 is most aggressive in altering the landscape; Alternative 6 is least aggressive, addressing only the Riverbend mobile home park area and thus not appealing to the County due to lack of habitat benefits. He explained the County's evaluation process for the alternatives; modeling, studies, and analysis are used to help compare benefits, costs, risks, and how an alternative fits with long-term objectives. Metrics quantify expected effectiveness of each alternative in reaching project goals, followed by a "gate" process where County management scrutinize these options to determine effectiveness. He said the County looks at adjacent areas, not just the project site, when considering project effects, and that despite making an informed decision through evaluation, natural processes remain an uncertain factor in County assessments. Tom Beavers, Riverbend project sponsor for DNRP, added that a representative from King County Parks will attend a future CRC meeting to discuss Parks' role in the project.

As noted in prior meetings, the County's preferred option is Alternative 4. Mr. Hansen said this would have ample benefits for flood reduction, habitat, restoration of natural processes, and maintaining protective elements. This option would include raising the bottom of the pond, as well as several Engineered Log Jams (ELJs) throughout the project site. He noted that for public recreation access to the river, there are many opportunities for this closer to the mobile home park area. He also said the County believes it possible to create conditions in the pond that lead to salmon spawning levels on par with the Cedar River mainstem.

The presentation was followed by audience questions. One addressed the impetus behind raising the pond bottom; Mr. Hansen said the pond would be flooded by the main river if the levee is removed. He explained the levee does not "belong" in a floodplain, and removing it could take 3-5 years, but in the meantime the project can still relieve flood pressure and impacts to local residents. Jeff Neuner asked about total project costs. Mr. Beavers gave a breakdown of costs and funding: the property cost \$6.8 million, relocation of mobile home park residents was \$6 million, park demolition was \$1.5 million, and projected total cost of Alternative 4 is \$9-12 million. He said 70% of costs, including the relocation, were paid with grants. Additional sources include KC Flood District and Stormwater Management (SWM) funds. Another question addressed keeping trees from falling into the river in the project site; Mr. Hansen said possible problem trees can be identified and moved in advance, but there needs to be more discussion on a management program for when trees do fall into the river.



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Nathan Brown said the CRC's letter to the County on their project concerns has been received by DNRP, and the agency's response will be ready soon. Mr. Hansen said the next step of the process is final design approval by the end of 2018, with a 2019 construction window. Mr. Brown added that Mr. Neuner and Mr. Hansen are coordinating to arrange an in-depth meeting soon with local residents about the project.

CRC Representative's Update on WRIA 8 – Charles Ruthford

Charles Ruthford, WRIA 8 representative for the CRC, reported on the prior week's meeting of the WRIA 8 committee. The meeting covered several topics: changing "tier" designations on area streams to prioritize salmon recovery projects, setting habitat goals, and discussing recovery strategies. He explained the "tier" system uses three tier designations, with Tier 1 being a frequent chinook salmon spawning stream and Tiers 2 and 3 each decreasingly utilized for salmon spawning. The Cedar River is considered Tier 2.

Habitat restoration goals discussed for the Cedar include increasing total connected floodplain acreage from Landsburg Dam to the Ballard Locks to 1100 acres by 2025. Other goals are to see areas of riparian forest cover in wadable stream areas increase by 10% by 2025; and double the natural shoreline south of I-90 on Lake Washington by 2025. There are 25 suggested salmon recovery strategies, the top several of which included: protecting and restoring floodplain connectivity, protecting functional riparian vegetation, restoring cold water sources and reducing thermal barriers to migration, and improving juvenile salmon survival rates at the Ballard Locks. Max Prinsen asked if the new "tier" designations affect permitting; Mr. Beavers said they will not, that the designations largely determine where salmon recovery projects are focused. Mr. Brown reminded all present that it is now the time of year to contact legislators to request funding for river projects.

CRC Discussion Items

- **CRC 2017 Work Plan & Schedule:** Mr. Brown said the annual CRC goals, prioritized at last month's meeting, will be emailed to CRC members later this month.
- **CRC Membership Recruitment:** Mr. Brown said he will discuss this with Mr. Prinsen, and bring the results of their discussion to the full CRC.

Updates & Announcements

- **Cedar River Corridor Advisory Board:** Tom Allyn and Ron Straka reported this group completed its work several months ago; Mr. Brown said he would remove it as a standing CRC agenda item.
- **Cedar River Trash Pick-Up Events:** Steve Farquhar, a Cedar River area resident, spoke on ideas to address trash in/near the river. He is coordinating several volunteer pick-up events this summer, the first scheduled for May 20th, and a more firm plan set in April. He noted the events will likely be on foot, as the river is still closed to boaters. There was discussion among CRC members about conducting community outreach for the events through their various social and professional networks; this is also needed for supplies such as gloves and trash bags, and negotiating for river access points on private land. Mr. Brown added that the County has agreed to help with advertising.
- **Other:** Mr. Brown said he is coordinating with Mr. Ruthford on the possibility of a CRC bike ride down the Cedar River Trail, likely on a Saturday in September or October. He also advised the April CRC meeting will be held at Maplewood Greens Golf Course in Renton, and will include the CRC's annual "fish report," which several state and local regulators have been invited to present at.

2nd Public Comment Period

Mr. Beavers asked for audience feedback on how much they had learned about the Riverbend project from the different meeting formats utilized at this and prior meetings. He noted tonight's "traditional" format, of a PowerPoint presentation followed by discussion, had a higher percentage of people who felt informed about the project (more than 80% tonight versus 47% with January's "fishbowl" format). Mr. Brown said a modified version of the "fishbowl" format will be used at April's meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

Next Meeting

April 25th, 2017, 7:00 – 9:00 pm, Maplewood Greens Golf Course, Renton