

**Snohomish County
CY 2021 Annual Report
Attachment for Question 28
Stormwater Planning – Coordination with Long Range Plan Updates**

Question #28: “List the relevant land use planning efforts that have taken place in your jurisdiction (land use plans that are used to accommodate growth, stormwater management, or transportation).”

Planning Efforts Conducted in Calendar Year 2021

1. Initial Planning for 2024 Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan Update

Since last reported in March 2021, planning efforts have focused on preliminary work related to the next major update of the Growth Management Act (GMA) Comprehensive Plan due for adoption by June 30, 2024. Planning efforts conducted in 2021 associated with this 2024 update included: (a) working with the cities to allocate growth forecasts into incorporated cities and into unincorporated portions of the Urban Growth Areas based on GMA policy to distribute growth into urban areas, and on the regional growth strategy from Puget Sound Regional Council’s *Vision 2050* to allocate growth shares into metro, core, large and small cities; working with the cities to update countywide planning policies consistent with updated regional policies in *Vision 2050*; (c) selecting a consultant to conduct the analysis required by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and conducting a public scoping process for the plan alternatives and the corresponding environmental review; and (d) initial work with elected officials to establish a framework for the land use alternatives.

The SEPA analysis will compare the relative potential impacts of at least three land use alternatives, including an analysis of stormwater impacts. The scope of the stormwater analysis will depend on the complexity and scale of the land use alternatives, and the relative change compared to the existing comprehensive plan. For example, will the alternatives focus on infill and increasing densities within already urbanized areas, or will the alternatives include expansion of urban-style development into rural areas? Each of these scenarios could be expected to have different levels of new impervious surfaces and as such, varying degrees of stormwater impacts on the MS4 and receiving waters.

The SEPA analysis will include proposed mitigation measures to offset potential impacts. These measures will likely include policy, programs and capital projects. Any proposed policy amendments would be included in the General Policy Plan. Proposed programs and capital projects related to stormwater would be included in the Capital Facilities Plan (programs and projects associated with transportation or parks would be included in the Transportation Element and the Parks and Recreation Element respectively). Once identified in these planning documents, those programs and projects expected to move forward within the next six years are included in the capital improvements plans (CIPs) which lay

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out costs and project timing. The CIPs are updated each year along with the County budget process.

2. Initial Planning for Light Rail Communities Subarea

A subarea plan is being prepared for an area of unincorporated Snohomish County between the cities of Everett, Mukilteo, Lynnwood and Mill Creek. The subarea plan will focus on land use, transportation, housing, parks and recreation, public service and utility needs, and economic development. Separately, the project will consider changes to zoning and development regulations including, but not limited to development density, permitted uses, building height, and design standards.

Stormwater-related potential issues and impacts associated with subarea plan alternatives will be evaluated in conjunction with the GMA Comprehensive Plan update SEPA analysis described in #1 above.

Planning Efforts Conducted prior to 2021: List of County Land Use Planning Efforts that Evaluate Stormwater Impacts and Influence Stormwater Management Priorities during the 2013 – 2019 Permit Term

1. 2015 Update to the Comprehensive Plan – includes the general policy plan, capital facilities plan, parks and recreation element and transportation element; and associated SEPA documents.

The 2015 County Comprehensive Plan Update evaluated stormwater issues in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This update did not include expansion of Urban Growth Areas and the adopted alternative directed most of the growth into cities, and thus a significant increase in impervious surfaces or vegetation removal relative to the previous plan update in 2005 was not expected. Because these key components of stormwater impacts remained stable 2005 to 2015, analysis of stormwater impacts in the EIS consisted of a subjective discussion of stormwater issues. The adopted alternative was not expected to have impacts that would exceed the offset from implementation of project-level development regulations and the stormwater investment LOS.

The EIS also contains an analysis of potential water quality impacts on surface water and groundwater caused by the land use alternatives. There are several regulatory and non-regulatory measures in place to prevent water quality degradation described in the EIS (Section 3.1.3, pg.3-25 to 3-45).

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The County's 2015 update of its comprehensive plan was preceded by and guided by updates to the Multicounty Planning Policies at the regional level, and the Countywide Planning Policies, at the county level.

The 2005 Update to the Comprehensive Plan was relatively more significant than the 2015 Update in terms of the population and employment growth forecasts and the corresponding land use changes. The SWUGA was expanded along its eastern boundary converting rural areas to urban. However, this eastward expansion was not allowed to extend very far into the Little Bear Creek basin due to watershed sensitivity and costs associated with urban-level infrastructure needs. The SEPA process included hydrologic modeling of three land use alternatives. Earlier drainage studies from 2002 and the hydrologic modeling completed for the 2005 Update EIS identified potential drainage and flooding issues associated with each of the land use alternatives as well as projected projects and costs to mitigate these impacts. These comparative costs informed the elected officials charged with selection of the preferred alternative and final adoption of the long-range land use plan. The projects associated with the adopted alternative are then included in the annual CIPs

Other Planning Efforts

The plans listed in this section are not part of the comprehensive plan, but in some cases do rely on information from the comprehensive plan when assessing future conditions, such as future impervious surface and native vegetation cover. These documents can also be used by the County to inform future comprehensive planning efforts.

1. 2019 SWUGA Boundary Planning Study (BPS) – this was a voluntary high-level study of existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints that can inform future planning choices about the BPS Area and surroundings, which includes the Maltby/Clearview areas east of the SWUGA, including most of the Little Bear Creek Basin. The BPS Area was chosen for study because it is adjacent to a fast-growing area where the County has seen and expects to see continued interest in expanding the UGA. Given the interest and pressures on this part of the county, the County wanted to develop data and information under existing conditions and hypothetical growth scenarios, all of which consider the presence and importance of Little Bear Creek and other streams. It was not a plan proposal to change land uses, policies, or Urban Growth Area (UGA) boundaries. Rather, the study provides data and information that can be drawn from when considering alternatives for accommodating future growth and when reviewing proposals for UGA adjustments. The BPS compiles information on existing conditions, and the costs of providing infrastructure and services outside of the

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existing UGA under hypothetical scenarios with increased urbanization in the area. The study has built a tool to consider the potential vulnerability of the area to residential and commercial development, as well as its potential suitability for such development.

2. 2017 Little Bear Creek Basin Plan

The Little Bear Creek Basin Plan (LBC Basin Plan) fulfills a requirement from the 2013 Phase I Permit. This is not a land use plan, but future land use conditions from the comprehensive land use plan were used to predict future stormwater conditions. This plan contains an analysis of existing and future conditions in the basin and identifies strategies to meet water quality standards for fecal coliform, temperature, dissolved copper, and dissolved zinc. which if exceeded, can be harmful to fish. Fecal coliform standards are also established to protect human health. Existing and future conditions and strategies were also evaluated for aquatic biologic health, as measured by B-IBI (benthic index of biotic integrity). Evaluating the future land use and build out of the basin, the predicted future conditions (as determined by computer modeling) were compared to water quality standards and state targets.

Planning documents ancillary to the Little Bear Creek Basin Plan include:

- a. Instream Projects 2018
- b. Water Quality Ditch Retrofit Program (Jan 2019)
- c. Stormwater Treatment CIPs, January 2019

3. 2002 Drainage Needs Report

- a. The goal of the Drainage Needs Report (DNR) project was to gain a better understanding of the drainage systems, streams, and wetlands in the unincorporated UGAs and to plan for future infrastructure needs in ways that will reduce road and property flooding, protect and enhance aquatic habitat, and reduce stormwater pollution. The DNR project was focused on identifying projects that primarily reduce flooding by constructing a combination of conveyance and detention facilities that accommodate higher volumes of stormwater without overloading downstream drainage systems.
- b. By inventorying and mapping complete drainage systems, locating present and future drainage problems, and identifying possible corrections, the County has the tools to take a comprehensive approach to managing urban drainage areas and solving the top priorities within them. Recommendations from the DNR can be used to prioritize projects for the ACP (Annual Construction Program) and 6-year Capital Improvement

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Program (CIP). The DNR report identified 1,036 existing and future surface water problems and a list of 378 priority projects with conceptual designs.

- c. The DNR was the source for capital projects included under the LOS standard in the County's 2005 comprehensive land use plan. These projects were added to the annual updates of the 6-year CIP incrementally as funding was available. Most of these projects have now been completed.