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Public Input to Shape Snohomish County Stormwater Utility Services

Ratepayers are invited to weigh in on priorities.

EVERETT, Wash., February 6, 2018 – To provide services that ratepayers most value, Snohomish County’s stormwater utility, Surface Water Management (SWM), is gathering input from ratepayers and developing a new business plan. An invitation for the survey was mailed to all 95,000 ratepayers in January 2018. In addition to the survey, the county is gathering input through an advisory panel, interviews with stakeholder groups, and hosting four public open houses the week of February 5, 2018 (this week).

Preliminary survey results show SWM services are highly valued:

- More than 4,000 residential and business ratepayers have responded to the survey in the first two weeks it has been available.
- 84 percent of respondents said maintaining stormwater drainage systems is very or extremely important.
- 83 percent said fixing water pollution problems is very or extremely important.
- 77 percent said building projects that reduce flooding is very or extremely important.
- 71 percent said building projects to restore rivers, lakes, and streams for fish and other wildlife is very or extremely important.
- More than half said SWM should do more, while a third said SWM should do about the same amount of work.
- Less than 1 percent said maintaining stormwater drainage systems is not important, and 1 percent said the county’s work on correcting water pollution is not important.

“Public safety and health, along with environmental sustainability, are essential to the quality of life we enjoy in Snohomish County,” said Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive. “We want our rivers, lakes, and streams to be healthy for humans, fish, and the other creatures who rely on clean water. We also want to keep our roads clear and our basements dry. SWM’s new business plan will ensure that we meet these goals while operating in the most cost effective way possible.”

“Our goal is to provide services the public wants at the lowest cost possible,” said Surface Water Utility Director Will Hall. “We are glad to hear from so many ratepayers and look forward to learning more at the open houses this week.”

An advisory panel began meeting in September 2017 to review SWM services and input from stakeholders. The 16-member group represents a broad range of interests including ratepayers, small business owners, residential property owners, farmers, tribes, non-governmental groups, and local utilities.

Snohomish County’s stormwater utility, SWM, provides services that keep people, property and roads safe, while protecting the health of local rivers, lakes, streams, and Puget Sound. Services include maintaining drainage systems, reducing road and property flooding, monitoring and solving water quality problems, and coordinating regional salmon recovery. These services are funded by a utility charge paid within property taxes by property owners in unincorporated Snohomish County.

The survey is available at www.survey.SurfaceWater.info and the deadline has been extended to February 21, 2018.

Snohomish County Stormwater Utility Business Plan Open Houses

The public is invited to any of the open houses to learn more about SWM’s services, share flooding and drainage concerns, weigh in on how utility charges are spent, and discover financial incentives to protect clean water.

| Southwest County | South County | North County | East County |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Tue., Feb. 6: 6-8 p.m. | Wed., Feb. 7: 6-8 p.m. | Thu., Feb. 8: 6-8 p.m. | Sat., Feb. 10: 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. |
| Unity in Lynnwood Church | Brightwater Center | Arlington Boys & Girls Club | Snohomish Senior Center |
| 16727 Alderwood Mall Pkwy | 22505 State Route 9 SE | 18513 59th AVE NE | 506 4th St |
| Lynnwood, WA 98037 | Woodinville, WA 98072 | Arlington, WA 98223 | Snohomish, WA 98290 |

About Snohomish County Public Works

The Snohomish County Public Works Department constructs and maintains county roads; controls and manages surface water quantity, quality, and fish habitats; and oversees the recycling and disposal of solid waste. The department’s main office is located at 3000 Rockefeller Ave., Everett, WA 98201. For more information about Snohomish County Public Works, visit www.snohomishcountywa.gov/PublicWorks.

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