

Legislation Text

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A MOTION stating the Flood Control District executive committee's intent to proceed to thirty percent design for the Willowmoor Floodplain Restoration Project with a project that balances flood control, habitat restoration, fish passage, recreational access and on-going maintenance, including beaver mitigation and a dynamic weir.

WHEREAS, the Willowmoor Floodplain Restoration project proposes to reconfigure the Sammamish River Transition Zone ("Zone") and adjacent undeveloped King County property; and

WHEREAS, the Zone was constructed as part of the overall Sammamish River Improvement Project in the 1960s by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ("Corps") in cooperation with King County primarily to control flooding in the Sammamish river valley; and

WHEREAS, King County is responsible for maintaining the improvement project through an operation and maintenance agreement with the Corps; and

WHEREAS, the Zone as currently constructed has required increasingly intensive maintenance, including regular mowing, trimming, removal of vegetation, removal of accumulated sediments in the channel, and associated mitigation efforts; and

WHEREAS, in recent years property owners around Lake Sammamish have expressed concerns about high lake levels impacting their properties resulting from increased vegetation density within the Zone; and

WHEREAS, state agency and tribal government representatives have expressed concern that these maintenance actions adversely affect water quality and habitat and are in conflict with federal, state and local efforts to protect and enhance riverine habitat for recovery of salmon species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act; and

WHEREAS, the Willowmoor Floodplain Restoration Project seeks to reduce the frequency and duration of high lake levels in the Zone while maintaining downstream Sammamish River flood control performance and enhancing habitat; and

WHEREAS, since mid-2013, the Flood Control Zone District's ("District") service provider, King County, through the water and land resources division, has been collecting data, conducting technical analyses and developing a suite of conceptual design alternatives; and

WHEREAS, the District has funded a variety of means to engage various stakeholders and the public during the conceptual alternative development process; and

WHEREAS, nine stakeholder advisory committee meetings took place to identify, develop, vet, revise and refine design objectives and conceptual design alternatives; and

WHEREAS, in parallel with the process for developing options for reducing lake levels with reconfiguration within the Zone, eight cold-water supplementation concepts were identified, developed, analyzed and compared as a tool for reducing fish morbidity; and

WHEREAS, the Bellevue city council submitted a letter dated, March 18, 2016, supporting the split channel alternative; and

WHEREAS, the city of Redmond submitted a letter dated, June 3, 2016, supporting the split channel alternative with pumped groundwater for cooling; and

WHEREAS, the executive committee of the District conducted a public meeting on June 6, 2016, in Bellevue to hear comments from the community about the alternatives identified in the planning process; and

WHEREAS, the public testimony provided valuable input regarding design considerations for the alternative to be advanced for the Willowmoor Floodplain Restoration Project; and

WHEREAS, the Snoqualmie Tribe provided testimony at the public meeting supporting the split channel alternative; and

WHEREAS, the District budgeted \$4 million for the Willowmoor Floodplain Restoration Project; now, therefore

BE IT MOVED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE KING COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL ZONE DISTRICT:

SECTION 1: The King County Flood Control Zone District will proceed to thirty percent design for the Willowmoor Floodplain Restoration Project, which will include, but is not limited to, the following design elements, technical studies and plans:

1. Develop the split channel alternative in such a way that balances the objectives of flood control, habitat restoration, fish passage, and sustainability;
2. Include variable depth pools as an enhancement to the split channel alternative;
3. Work with the city of Redmond on coordination with city flood control efforts, groundwater issues related to cold water supplementation, and Bear Creek impacts on Sammamish River flows;
4. Conduct a feasibility analysis of a dynamic weir that includes costs and benefits;
5. Conduct a technical analysis of the split channel alternative for fish mortality and sustainability;
6. Include a beaver mitigation plan;
7. Include a maintenance plan for when the project is complete;
8. Pursue grant sources to further evaluate cold water supplementation;
9. Identify funding partners to assume on-going maintenance costs of cold water supplementation;
10. Work with the parks and recreation division of the King County department of natural resources and parks to pursue recreational boater access; and
11. Continue existing maintenance during design and permitting phases.

SECTION 2: The District will work with King County, through the water and land resources division, to explore project delivery options to expedite project delivery and to free up staff resources within the water and land resources to implement the District's six-year capital improvement program.

