

**THURSTON COUNTY  
STORM AND SURFACE WATER ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

**November 18, 2021  
Meeting Summary**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Representing</b>	<b>Present (P) Not Present (NP) Excused (E)</b>
Casey Kramer	District 2	P
Phyllis Farrell	District 1	P
Paula Holroyde	District 3	P
Jaclynn Simmons (Chair)	District 2	P
Britt Nederhood	District 3	P
Carla Sabotta	At Large	E
Nancy Winters (Vice Chair)	At Large	P
David Hartley	District 1	P

Staff:

Larry Schaffner      Andrew Boughan      Tim Wilson

Guests:

None

Introductions/Process/Correspondence (Jaclynn Simmons, Chair)

Introductions were made.

Public Comment

None

Amendments to the Agenda

Phyllis mentioned the federal infrastructure bill and wants to know if that money might come down to the County for stormwater management. Phyllis moved to approve the agenda amendment to include this topic at the general discussion section. Casey seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting Summary

Nancy mentioned that the meeting minutes should include the three topics she mentioned for agenda topic submission: monitoring, trees, and outreach. Phyllis moved to approve the amended meeting minutes for the September 16, 2021 meeting with Nancy's additions. Britt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Proposed Low Impact Development (LID) Code Revisions (Andrew Boughan)

Nancy asked for the "30,000-foot" review about these changes and if they reduce or increase impervious area.

Andrew explained this as a balancing act. There are regulations that are not applicable because of how they are worded with outdated references or terminology. As such, these are not having the intended outcomes. On the other side, there are regulations that are overbearing and include the need to take more into consideration than what is necessary for a specific lot. The goal of the amendment is to create more balance.

Larry added that the other reason for this revision is around clarifying language to improve the understanding of the code's intent for administration by the Building Development Center staff.

Andrew presented on the Low Impact Development Code Amendment (docket A-7)

- 2020-2021 Development code docket
- These regulations were adopted in 2016 and there have been a few implementation issues identified since then.
- On April 23, 2020 the BoCC asked for the review to address the following four aspects:
  - o Allow hard surface credits to be applied for lots 2.5 acre or less
    - There are several different hard surface credit options outlined in chapter 20.07090.2 (credits). These depend on the situation. For example, if there are native vegetation/trees, then they can receive a hard surface credit specific to that area. If there is a minimum vegetation/trees of 65% retained on the site, it may increase the hard surface credit by 100% based on the site's circumstance.
  - o Lots needing long access driveways
  - o Ken lake special overlay district
  - o 10% impervious surface limits on large rural lots

The idea is to standardize the content and simplify its administration. The proposal includes changing or adding code terminology to be consistent with the County's *Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual* (DDECM). Andrew mentioned that he was "gifted" this project with specific criteria to address. These proposed changes were recommended by Public Works, Community Planning (including the Stormwater Coordinator), and Development Services staff.

## Title 20 Chapter 20.03

The proposal includes amending definitions and adding new ones. The definitions refer to those contained in the Drainage Manual directly so that if changes happen to the DDECM's definition, they won't need updating in both places.

New Definitions proposed to be added to the code include:

- Effective Impervious Surface
- Full Dispersion
- Hard Surface
- Impervious surface
- Ineffective Impervious Surfaces

## Title 20 Chapter 20.07 Changes

- *Hard and Impervious Surface Limits* would add *ineffective impervious surfaces* as areas to not be included under the total for hard surfaces
- Add references to the DDECM
- Standardize wording
- Reformat sections to reflect new content hierarchy

Title 20 Chapter 20.30 and 20.30A

- Language reduced and the language “individual lots” is used.

Title 20 Chapter 23.04 and Title 23 Chapter 23.04

- Hard Surface Coverage

Divisions that have reviewed these proposed changes:

- Public Works
- Development Services
- Community Planning, including planning staff and the Stormwater Program Coordinator

Larry add that the Drainage Manual language is tied to the Ecology Stormwater Management Manual. One of the key areas that came up with some of the LID BMPs was the need to clarify “Hard Surfaces.” For example, when the design includes porous pavement, it is a “hard surface” but since the runoff is infiltrated into the ground, it doesn’t factor into designing of other stormwater features. The same applies with runoff coming off of other types of impervious surfaces. These are covered in detail in the Drainage Manual but wasn’t covered clearly in the existing code language.

Larry mentioned that there are two parts to the LID: 1) the drainage manual aspect; and 2) the land use code. The drainage manual addresses the site-specific stormwater management design elements. The land use code covers such aspects as impervious surface and vegetative coverage. In regards to the drainage manual, for example, a long driveway may factor into the thresholds that correspond to the drainage manual requirements (e.g., that driveway constitutes *effective impervious* surface).

Casey mentioned that he doesn’t see a difference between hard surfaces and impervious surfaces. It might be worth while to look at WSDOT’s requirements.

Larry explained that WSDOT doesn’t have to adopt land use codes because they do not regulate land use. The LID codes are a land use overlay and the stormwater manual is more for guiding stormwater system design and source control related to operations and maintenance. The Ecology Phase II Permit, in addition to having adopted the drainage manual as an equivalent to Ecology’s manual, also requires permittees to look at their land use code. For example, are there aspects of the land use code that could minimize impervious surface coverage? There is crossover with the drainage manual (e.g., how the land use code may influence stormwater system design).

Larry gave an example of a situation where planning staff developed an aspect of the LID that had allowed for greater flexibility at the subdivision the development scale. However, this

created a scenario where developers could take advantage of this on the initial lots but then the remaining lots were undevelopable. In practice the permitting staff identified this as administratively problematic and as a result, they want to adjust the code to administer this on a lot-by-lot basis. Applying LID guidelines via the drainage manual is a site-by-site design.

Larry suggested that someone who knows the drainage manual be present during the public hearing or help put together the materials for the public hearing.

Phyllis also added that it would be helpful to know why the four situations are an issue and explain those in the beginning of the presentation.

In response to a question, Larry confirmed that the proposed drainage manual revisions will go through the public review and comment too.

Ken Lake is located within the Urban Growth Area, which is why it is separated.

#### Draft Stormwater Management Program Plan (SWMPP) (Larry Schaffner)

Larry is asking for feedback on the SWMPP draft document.

David had some questions and suggestions that he created in track changes.

- Does this program plan cover all the storm and surface water activities or is it responding to the regulatory stormwater Permit requirements from Ecology? David thought it would be helpful to state that upfront.
  - o Larry mentioned that the County's approach is to capture the elements in the municipal stormwater permit and a little bit more.
- The stormwater utility does a lot more than what is mentioned in the document.
  - o Larry added that the document does mention the stormwater capital facilities retrofit program which isn't currently a Permit requirement.
  - o Larry also mentioned that this reiterates the need for a stormwater management comprehensive plan that has been talked about as a separate document.

Per Larry the Municipal Stormwater permit regulates discharges from the County's stormwater sewer system. There are other aspects that the Permit doesn't govern, which there are interest from SSWAB and the County, such as non-point discharges running off surfaces directly into receiving waters. In other words, that runoff doesn't get intercepted by the County's storm sewer system. These types of aspects could be captured in the proposed stormwater management comprehensive plan.

Nancy added that part of the confusion might be that the monitoring section of the document, there are mentions of other monitoring. So, maybe add that the ambient monitoring isn't part of the permit requirement.

- Per Larry, there is a requirement for stormwater planning which can be informed from local monitoring data. It's not a direct called out requirement, but more of an option. The County meets its Permit monitoring obligation by contributing the required amount of funding the Permit's regional monitoring program.

David's next comment is about the annual report submittals to Ecology and if these are available.

- The county does post the most current submittal to the website. Larry will add a hyperlink to the most recent annual report posted on the County's website as well as mention that previous submittals are posted on Ecology's PAIRS database.

Phyllis brought up the challenge of navigate the county's website; having the link in this document would help find things quicker.

David's next comment is around content; just above section 2.4. Why is the fee credit program only available for schools and non-residential properties?

- Per Larry, while the fee credit program was covered previously, given the turnover in SSWAB membership it might be helpful to reintroduce this topic at a future SSWAB meeting to talk more about this history. These rate credits were put into place by the Commissioners. The County has learned that schools and commercial rate payers aren't taking advantage of the rate credits because it often isn't worth their time since the rate isn't that high. There are a couple commercial companies taking advantage of the credits. This will likely be one of the elements explored in the stormwater comprehensive plan.
- Phyllis added that it might be that the stormwater management program plan needs to support the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan. For example, making sure pipes are large enough to handle storms.
- Larry mentioned the importance of being aware that one doesn't unintentionally compromise the ability to carry out the stormwater utility's services by the utility fee rate credits offered.
- Phyllis asked about wording to address how the stormwater management program plan supports the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (TCMP) and Climate Resiliency.
  - o Larry mentioned that the planning section of the program plan would be the appropriate place for that.
- Tim added that there are other incentives withing the stormwater maintenance and operation, such as providing dumpsters for neighborhoods to clean out their stormwater ponds. Years ago, the BoCC took action to offer rate reductions for rate payers within a lake management or special use district. There would be value for the County to put the summary together of these incentive programs and our thoughts on how they are doing and ask SSWAB for input. This would entail a 20 – 30-minute conversation at a future SSWAB meeting.
- David asked what is the County is doing to encourage stormwater retrofits? Since Thurston County lots are bigger, there are more opportunities for people to disconnect from the County's stormwater sewer system. Could there be education and outreach on this topic?

David's next question on the document is above section 3.2. What makes the Stormwater Coordination Team (SCT) inter-disciplinary? Why is this sentence in the future rather than present tense? The section states "The County will utilize its inter-disciplinary Stormwater Coordination Team (SCT), led by a core subgroup to assist in the stormwater planning program's development and deployment."

- Per Larry there is a Permit requirement for the County to do a stormwater management action plan. There is a core team that has been assembled for this to perform some preliminary work. The greater SCT will be engaged in this planning exercise as the work proceeds. It is inter-disciplinary because there are staff from many different groups such as, Planning, Operations and Maintenance, Monitoring, Water Resources Technical Services, and Education and Outreach. Additional subject matter experts are also involved (or will be). The sentence is in future tense because it is still in the early process of being implemented.

Reach out to Larry if you have any feedback or comments on the SWMPP draft document by noon Nov 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Casey mentioned that the inter-disciplinary discussion shows how departments are all working together for stormwater. How does this SWMPP fold into the bigger and broader utility? Having the organization chart would help the rate payers understand more detail.

#### 2022 SSWAB Calendar (Jaclynn Simmons)

There are some reoccurring topics that fall on specific meeting months that are already reflected on the meeting agenda calendar template. SSWAB can add on topics to fill in the remaining time available for each meeting.

- The stormwater capital facilities project (SW CFP) proposal topic normal happens in the January meeting but there aren't any new projects being proposed during this time, so that topic won't need to be on January's agenda for 2022.
- Jaclynn is interested in Education and Outreach. Are there other programs such as SPLASH?
  - o Yes, Larry mentioned that Tim talked about giving communication staff an opportunity to share with SSWAB their various program approaches. Tim also added that there was interest around how we communicate out on Capital Facility Projects. Those two topics could be combined and be presented at the January 2022 meeting. It might just be an overview.
  - o Phyllis mentioned that the Capital Land Trust and the Nisqually River Education program works with kids on water quality testing. Would they have any coordination with the outreach program through the County? If not, maybe there could be an integration. Per Larry, the County does help fund some programs for children around water quality. It might be a good idea to have a presentation on the County's K-12 program support and coordination topic separately.

- Nancy asked when would SSWAB's annual BoCC Briefing would happen in 2022? Per Larry, COVID changed the traditional timing of this by a few months. Last year's happened in July. We could try to go back to the old cycle of a Spring briefing or do it later in the year. It is nice to have the annual report submittal briefing to the BoCC coupled with the annual SSWAB BoCC. The annual report submittal goes to Ecology at the end of March. The BoCC is pretty accommodating to briefing dates as long as we target a month.
  - o Jaclynn suggested doing the briefing prep in March and May, then give the briefing in July.
- Casey asked when the Utility Business Plan development will start to take place? Per Tim, by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2022 is when the request for proposals (RFP) is scheduled to be out. Staff tasked with this are needing to pick up the slack for the staff shortage, so they are doing their best to try to meet this goal. Casey mentioned it would be good to show progress on that at the BoCC briefing this year. After the project has been awarded, Tim will share with Larry when to send out to solicit SSWAB's input.
- Nancy mentioned an agenda topic about trees and when people can cut down trees. She would like to see a presentation about trees and how they affect stormwater and climate mitigation. Could this be on the January or March meeting?
- Nancy also mentioned a topic about monitoring, but she plans to talk to Jane first before putting it on the agenda – maybe for a month later in the year.
- Phyllis would like to hear about funding from the federal infrastructure bill for stormwater and if that money will come down to the County. Could this be on the January meeting? Per Larry, we should wait until more news trickles down, because it is a fresh development. This topic could be proposed for July.
- Jaclynn would like to have the topic of rate fees and credit programs in January if possible. This would show us a snapshot of what we have existing for the County. Larry might be able to get some of this information to SSWAB ahead of time and there could be a conversation on this topic at the meeting.
- Larry suggested the agenda subcommittee meet to fill in the calendar.

#### SSWAB General Discussion (SSWAB Members)

##### Action Items

- Email comments to Larry about the SWMPP draft document by November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 at noon.
- Tim will reach out to CPED and Public Works Education and Outreach staff to get a presentation put together for the January 2022 meeting.
- Larry will reach out to Ann Marie Pearce to talk about the programs involving school-aged children-related outreach and education.
- Larry will connect with the planning staff to see who might be able to do a presentation on trees and how they affect stormwater as well as climate mitigation. The goal would be to have this presentation at the January or March meeting.

**The next meeting will be January 20, 2022.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:39 pm