

MINUTES

Walla Walla Regional Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Update Project Management Team Meeting
September 23, 2015 - Walla Walla Public Health and Legislative Building, 314 West Main, Room 203, Walla Walla

NOTE: All documents connected with the agenda for this meeting, as well as all documents related to this project, were previously placed on the county's website for easy public access, AND made available to project team members in advance.

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by team member County Commissioner Jim Johnson. Roll call was held as follows.

Project Team members present:

Representing City of Walla Walla	Elizabeth Chamberlain, Dev. Services Dept. Director
Representing Walla Walla County	Jim Johnson, Commissioner
Project Team Leader	Bill Stalzer
Representing City of Waitsburg	Randy Hinchliffe

Team members absent/excused: None.

Representing City of Prescott	Chuck Kimzey, City Council Member
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A quorum was established.

Others present/in the audience:

Tom Glover, Director, Walla Walla County Community Development Dept.
Lauren Prentice, Principal Planner, Walla Walla County Community Development Dept.
Jaime Short, Department of Ecology
Jeremy Sikes, Department of Ecology
Three members of the general public

There were no conflicts of interest.

There was no public comment.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: To approve the agenda for the September 23 meeting, by Bill Stalzer; seconded by Chuck Kimzey. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes, from the June 17 meeting, by Bill Stalzer; seconded by Chuck Kimzey. Motion passed unanimously.

Preliminary Draft Shoreline Master Program Update: Yellowhawk Creek buffer

Dan Nickel from The Watershed Company presented an overview of the issues relating to the proposed Yellowhawk Creek buffer. As the PMT discussed at the last meeting, the Department of Ecology and Department of Fish and Wildlife communicated to the County that the 50-foot buffer proposed in the June 30 draft does not offer sufficient protection; they would like to see the buffer increased to 75-feet or 100-feet. Mr. Nickel explained that the 50-foot buffer in the draft was based on the critical areas buffer and research for the entire length of Yellowhawk Creek,

including those areas in the City and Urban Growth Area, which have extremely small buffers (e.g. 15-feet in some areas).

The segment in SMP jurisdiction has existing riparian corridor that varies between 50-100-feet. Mr. Nickel explained that this segment also has rural and agriculture zoning, unlike dense residential development planned for the City and UGA. Approximately 57 lots and 9 residences are estimated to be impacted by the new SMP for Yellowhawk Creek; many of these properties are also limited for new development by floodplain and floodway regulations.

Mr. Nickel presented two options:

1. Require a 100-foot buffer for Yellowhawk Creek while allowing the buffer to be reduced by 25% (to 75-feet) on a case-by-case basis through existing buffer averaging and reduction procedures. This is a common approach already used by the County for critical areas and used by many other jurisdictions in the State.
2. Apply a 75-foot buffer for Yellowhawk Creek, but require the County to increase the buffer to 100-feet based on existing conditions. This option would require a property owner to retain a qualified consultant and more administrative work for county staff. There would also have to be additional work now to establish specific criteria/language and define the procedure.

Mr. Sikes and Ms. Short stated that both of these options are more lenient/flexible than what has been required in other jurisdictions and that 75 or 100-feet are already compromise numbers; the science could support much larger buffers in some cases. Jaime Short also pointed out that the County's consultants have done a good job in making it clear that existing residential uses that do not meet the new regulations are considered "conforming" not "nonconforming." Mr. Stalzer further explained that this is important because nonconforming uses/structures cannot be expanded under the current county zoning standards.

Members discussed these options briefly and Mr. Stalzer stated that they will come back at the October meeting with a final recommendation.

Project Team Leader Update

1. Preliminary Draft SMP June 30th Submittal Status

Mr. Stalzer said that there were no other significance issues with June 30 draft identified by the Department of Ecology.

2. Draft Cumulative Impacts Analysis Status

Mr. Stalzer said that draft CIA is on track.

3. Year 3 Grant Preliminary Schedule and Budget

Mr. Stalzer explained that the review process will now shift from the Regional Working Group (RWG) to the Planning Commissions. There will be some money in the Year 3 budget for consultants to attend Planning Commission and Commissioners or City Council meetings. Jaime Short said she would also attend these meetings. Ms. Short also asked about public outreach and Mr. Stalzer said that informational open houses before Planning Commission meetings have been used in other communities and will be considered.

Ms. Short also mentioned that there will be a competitive process for jurisdictions to get additional funding. This will be announced by Ecology in October. Ms. Short said she

would support an application by the PMT to cover the additional costs incurred in resolving the Yellowhawk Creek issue.

Ms. Chamberlain mentioned that she has four new Planning Commission members (out of seven total). She would like to get them started in reviewing the draft as soon as possible. Mr. Nickel said he could probably move up the task to separate the single SMP draft into individual drafts for each jurisdiction to November.

Next Project Management Team Meeting

The next meeting will likely be scheduled for October 6. This will most likely be rescheduled later in the month.

Public Comment

Commissioner Johnson opened the meeting for public comment. Nancy Ball stated that it would be too bad if issues came up at the Planning Commission when it might be too late in the process to address them.

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn by Bill Stalzer; seconded by Elizabeth Chamberlain. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.