

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Brent A. Butler, AICP, Chief Strategy Officer, Community Development

DATE: August 7, 2023

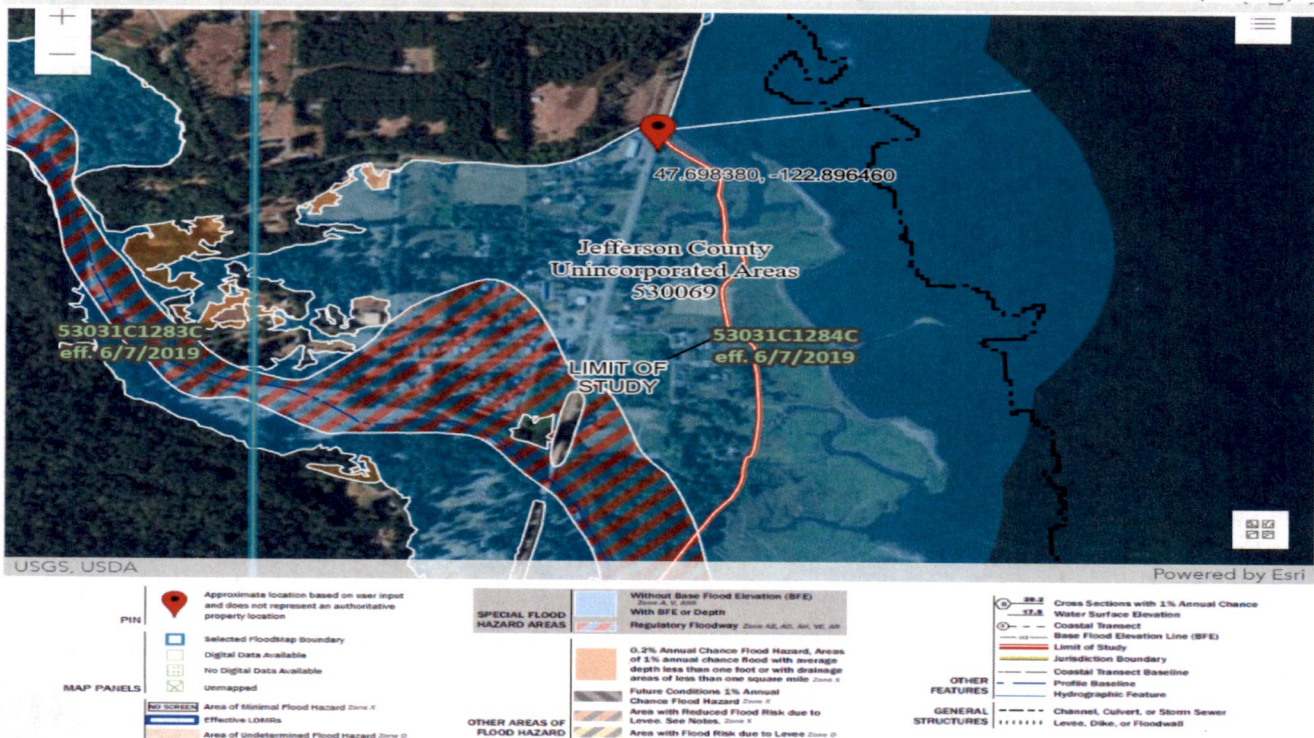
RE: Shoreline Planning Competitive Grant Update

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

Based on several meetings and discussions with county officials, community members, and agencies and the reassignment of a time sensitive assignment, the Chief Strategy Officer recognizes the need to update the Board of County Commissioners (“BoCC”) on revisions to the proposed amended workplan vis-à-vis the Shoreline Planning Competitive Grant.

BACKGROUND:

As shared in the July 10, 2023 agenda request, Brinnon’s downtown core appears to be located within the regulatory floodway (cross hatched area), an especially high-risk Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA).



Several competitive grants could assist the residents better understand risks associated with growth and development unique to these hazards.

The Rural Village Center, which serves the needs of the surrounding Brinnon community is largely within the SFHA which is an area where there is a one percent chance of flooding in any given year and where FEMA regulates improvements to land through the mortgage markets, requiring insurance for any federally guaranteed loan (mortgage). Floodways are located within SFHAs and are extremely hazardous due to the velocity of floodwaters that can carry debris. They also indicate increased erosion potential. Property and casualty insurance policies do not cover losses arising out of flooding so property owners typically purchase a separate flood policy. For these reasons, FEMA offers subsidized flood insurance if community provisions to reduce flood hazards are in place. Jefferson County's flood damage prevention regulations are codified in Chapter 15.15 and meets this general requirement so FEMA authorizes subsidized flood insurance. While the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, which established the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), did not formally mandate individual participation, it did, however, deny disaster relief to persons who could have purchased flood insurance, but did not do so.

The Jefferson County Code sets forth the following provisions for development in the floodway, which goes through Brinnon's Rural Village Center.

1. The code prohibits encroachments, including fill, new construction, substantial improvements, and other development unless a registered professional engineer certifies there no increase in flood levels in the one percent chance of flood through hydrologic and hydraulic analyses.
2. Construction or reconstruction of residential structures is prohibited within designated floodways, except for:
 - a. repairs, reconstruction, or improvements to a structure which do not increase the ground floor area; and
 - b. repairs, reconstruction or improvements to a structure, the cost of which does not exceed 50 percent of the market value of the structure either
 - i. before the repair, or reconstruction is started, or
 - ii. if the structure has been damaged, and is being restored, before the damage occurred. Any project for improvement of a structure to correct existing violations of state or local health, sanitary, or safety code specifications which have been identified by the local code enforcement official and which are the minimum necessary to assure safe living conditions, or to structures identified as historic places, may be excluded in the 50 percent.

ANALYSIS:

Identified methods to reduce, eliminate, avoid or mitigate flood risks include: 1) obtaining grants to better assess vulnerability and implement engineered structural and/or non-structural solutions, and 2) amending the Jefferson County Code to reduce or offset the regulatory burden and, 3) add fiscal incentives to encourage sustainable growth and development.

Brinnon Shoreline Planning Competitive Grant

On July 10, 2023, the County Administrator added a discussion of “Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Assistance Visit / Washington State Department of Ecology sustainable development grants” to the BoCC’s agenda with the recommendation that DCD request BoCC support for submitting two planning grant **applications should there be evidence of community support [emphasis added]**. On August 1, 2023, the Chief Strategy Officer traveled to the Brinnon Community Center to meet with eight residents representing a range of commercial and residential property interests in Brinnon. Those in attendance did not support the county pursuing the grant.

While the grant would identify areas where growth and development could reasonably occur, and how the county may seek to expand the logical outer boundary of the Brinnon Rural Village Center (RVC) and potentially connect the RVC with sewer, community members would not support the grant if it would also identify areas that are not suitable for development because the overlapping hazards suggest that there would be a high risk to people and property.

Given the apparent lack of community support for this grant, and DCD’s fruitful discussions with the Office of the Assessor, DCD could instead apply for a Shoreline Planning Competitive Grant to update the parameters of the county’s Public Benefit Rating System should there be sufficient staff bandwidth after other time-sensitive work is completed.

The Chief Strategy Officer seeks the Board’s position on pursuing this grant given the community’s apparent opposition.

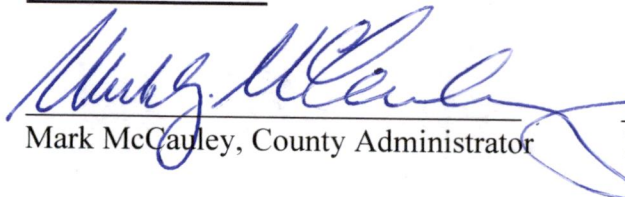
FISCAL IMPACT:

Either grants would be budget neutral as no match is required.

RECOMMENDATION:

Listen to the staff presentation and provide guidance.

REVIEWED BY:

 8/3/23
Mark McCauley, County Administrator Date