

Skagit County Board of County Commissioners
Discussion: Shoreline Master Program Update
May 23, 2022

Commissioners: **Ron Wesen (District 1) – Acting Chair**
 Peter Browning (District 2) – Chair (absent)
 Lisa Janicki (District 3)

Amber Erps, Clerk of the Board

PDS Staff: **Hal Hart, Director**
 Betsy Stevenson, Senior Planner
 Jenn Rogers, Assistant Long Range Planner (via Zoom)

Consultant: **Dan Nickel, The Watershed Group (via Zoom)**

Acting Chair Ron Wesen: (gavel) Good afternoon. I call this session of the Skagit County Commissioners back to order. It is May 23rd, 2022. We are here with Planning and Development Services and we're going to talk about our Shoreline Master Program. Mr. Hart?

Hal Hart: Yep. Betsy is with me. Our assistant planner is with me today as well, listening in, and Dan will be joining us. I don't know if he's on. Is he here?

Amber Erps: He is on Zoom, yes.

Mr. Hart: So I will say we have three documents in front of you. We have a memorandum, one page, that Betsy put together; we have the BoCC Public Comment Matrix Supplement, which is a draft in progress; and we have the larger document, which is a draft in progress, and that's the Master Program Matrix. And so the matrix is: Here are all the people and organizations that have made comments. And then we're recording our responses to them and some require some very in-depth research to respond to them, and I'll let the real team here, Betsy and Dan, take it from there.

Betsy Stevenson: Dan, if you're there, by all means go ahead.

Chair Wesen: He's talking but I can't hear him.

Mr. Hart: You're on mute.

Ms. Stevenson: I think they're switching him over.

Mr. Hart: There he goes, yeah.

Dan Nickel: Can you hear me now?

(sounds of assent)

Mr. Nickel: Okay. I appreciate the introduction. As Hal mentioned, I will spend a little bit of time today walking through most specifically the supplemental document that you have before you. This is a document that addresses a lot of the comments that have come in related to climate change and the concerns regarding sea level rise. And so we have a supplemental document that addresses at this point in time, in-progress Department responses. And then we have also the larger comment matrix, which you've seen a prior version of. You saw the completed comments that were submitted but we're still in progress responding to some of those comments, as Hal alluded to. So we can spend some time discussing today our current responses that we have drafted. You'll see in that document there are still a number of areas where we are in progress of preparing those responses. So (I'm) happy to talk through those today.

But I would like to maybe begin with just speaking to the supplemental document, and I'm happy to share this on my screen so we can walk through this together. So let me go ahead and bring up what I have on my screen. Are you able to see the supplemental matrix on the screen?

(unintelligible comments)

Mr. Nickel: Okay. All right. Well, again, this document was prepared specifically in response to a lot of the comments that were received. There were quite extensive comments from a number of individuals and entities – the Tribe, organizations such as Futurewise – that really were targeted at the County's response or lack thereof in relationship to recognizing climate change and the effects of sea level rise in this Shoreline Master Program. And I think it's important for us to acknowledge the fact that the County has been, you know, working towards developing these responses but incorporating these things into the Shoreline Master Program, and it even dates back to some of the early coordination that was being done, you know, early on in the Shoreline Master Program comprehensive update process many years ago. And I just want to kind of maybe walk through kind of where we are at in terms of developing this further. And so at the very beginning of this supplement –

Chair Wesen: We're not able to see. We can't see your document there.

Mr. Nickel: You're not able to see the document? Okay, I apologize. Let me see if I can...is that showing up now?

(several affirmative sounds)

Mr. Nickel: Okay. I apologize for that. Sorry. So this is just on page 1 of the supplemental document. We are getting to kind of making some recommendations for policies and regulations, but I think it's important for us to understand where we are at right now with the knowledge as it pertains to the County. The Department recognizes that there's – you know, there is additional work that we need to do. I think both the Department as well as the Board has, you know, emphasized the desire to try to incorporate what we can based on the knowledge we have. But we also recognize that there is more work to be done in terms of specific information for Skagit County. The Department plans to submit later this year for some grant funding from the state. The state has allocated in their 2023-2025 biennium – they've allocated money in which to look further into this topic area and specifically fund jurisdictions to, you know, eventually get to more defined policies and regulations. And to do that, we recognize a number of things here, one of which is to, you know, go back out to the community, engage in outreach, discussions with the public, specifically landowners, any affected parties and agencies, as well as the tribes to gather feedback. There is a process to go through looking at – in terms of sea level rise specifically, looking at areas of vulnerability and conducting a risk assessment throughout the county. That

helps identify, you know, really targeted, vulnerable areas that we need to be aware of. And with that comes the development of projections. There is a wide range of projections out there and some decisions need to be made in terms of what to plan for, both in terms of timeline as well as the severity of the potential for sea level rise. So that would be followed with, you know, once we have information regarding areas of vulnerability and have a better understanding about the projections we should be planning for, we can get it more defined or more refined proposed amendments to the Shoreline Master Program. And at that point, we would again engage the public with this information to gather feedback and further refine that, and ultimately get to a public process with proposed amendments. That's likely to be outside of this – of the normal periodic review timeline – which we're currently trying to complete both the comprehensive update as well as the periodic review that's required by the state. The periodic review wouldn't be required for another eight years, and we recognize that is, you know, that's a long ways away. And so this timeline here to utilize additional grant funding would accomplish that in a much quicker timeline, so it would be outside of the normal periodic review process.

So in the interim, we are, you know, recognizing that we really have a need and a desire to acknowledge these issues in the Shoreline Master Program, and we're trying to address ways in which we can bring forward policies and regulations that acknowledge this, that, you know, work to address these concerns. And there's – actually a number of jurisdictions are already incorporating some of this information, and I believe the last meeting we had we submitted with our packet of information a reference to a state summary from the Department of Ecology. They summarized really essentially what other jurisdictions have done throughout Puget Sound more specifically in terms of policies and regulations. And a lot of that language is a good building block because it speaks to how we might consider sea level rise factors when it comes to planning. And so we've got some good examples of how that might be done and there's some really good comments that have come in that are part of your packet that are also good reference for us to help guide this along.

And so at this point I'm just going to walk through some of these policies. We've targeted a number of areas in the current draft Shoreline Master Program both in policies and regulations. So let me just take a few moments here to kind of walk through what those look like. Again, these are a work in progress. These are things that we have identified in terms of areas in which we could either add policy or add regulations that kind of start at that discussion.

So the first two policies are in the Conservation section under Environmental Protection. These are two new policies. This is in Section 6G, ___ Policies 1.4 and 1.5. The first one is speaking to, you know, consideration of sea level rise projections so it addresses applicants proposing shoreline development or uses should be encouraged to consider sea level rise projections when assessing potential project-specific impacts. It's a fairly general statement, a general policy in terms of considering sea level rise projections. And the second one here under 1.5 would be to recognize and monitor the potential effects of sea level rise as additional scientific information becomes available. Consider additional specific policies and regulations based on new and accepted scientific projections. This again is a building block for future information – again, important for us to consider this as we move forward towards applying for future grants.

And then furthermore there are three more specific areas where we have policies under specific shoreline uses and modifications. One is in the Institutional Development section. This policy is a new policy. It's Section 6C. That's a number 6.5. And this speaks to essential public facilities and considering the location of such facilities and associated new developments, considering locating those outside of floodplains and areas of marine shorelines that are likely to be inundated by sea

level rise during the anticipated lifespan of those facilities. Again, it uses the word “consider” repeatedly throughout here.

Under Residential Development Policies is a new policy that’s Section 6C, number 15.12, and this states “future sea level rise and other climate change factors should be considered during the evaluation of residential development siting.” This actually – that policy specifically gets to a number of the comments that have been received to-date related to the, you know, development planning process for residential development.

And then the last specific one was related to shoreline stabilization. This is in Section 6C-16, so it’d be new policy 16.5 stating “Estuarine and marine shoreline processes should be returned to a more natural state where feasible and appropriate through the removal of existing shoreline armoring.” This is a similar policy that we have in the Flood Hazard Reduction section policy language which speaks to the, you know, the removal of armoring where it is no longer necessary. So this policy would speak specifically to the estuarine and marine environments where removal is possible.

So that is the – I guess there’s five proposed policies there. The regulations, I’ll go ahead and just walk through those because they do correspond directly to these policies. We tried to identify specifically where in the Shoreline Master Program these policies would be implemented. So let me just walk through those regulations and then we can maybe take a pause and discuss.

So under the Use and Modifications section, under Commercial Development, this is actually where institutional uses are included so this would be in Section 14.26.430. And in subsection (3)(c) there’s an existing regulation that we’re adding to, so the area in the underline is the additional language. This would add in terms of providing documentation for submittal for review. This speaks specifically to a plan and narrative depicting compliance with Subsection (4). That’s Development Standards for ___ accessory commercial uses provisions for shoreline access orientation of eating and drinking facilities and lodging facilities, and siting the essential public facilities in relationship to floodplains and areas of marine shorelines likely to be inundated by sea level rise. So this again implements that first policy that we mentioned already.

And then the second regulation here is a new one under subsection (4)(e), and that would be to, again, consider locating essential public facilities and associated new development out of floodplains and areas of marine shorelines that are likely to be inundated by sea level rise during the anticipated lifespan of those facilities. And very similar language to the policies that were proposed earlier.

And then we have two – I’m sorry, one residential regulation. Again, it relates directly to the policy that was proposed. This is a modification to the Residential Development section in 14.26.470(4)(b). This regulation would read “The residential development must be located and designed to avoid the need for flood hazard reduction measures, including shoreline stabilization,” with a new additional regulation there tied to this. It says, “Proposals for new residential development must also consider future sea level rise and other climate change factors during the siting and design evaluation process.” I apologize for the misspelling of “climate change” there.

And then lastly under Shoreline Stabilization, this is again Section 14.26.480(4)(b)(vi)(D). This would add the following provision, stating that “removal of existing shoreline armoring in estuarine and marine shoreline areas where feasible and appropriate must be considered as a means to restore natural estuarine and marine processes as part of project development and design.”

And then we have one more additional regulation. This pertains to the pre-existing, single-family residences and appurtenant structures. It's Section 14.26.620 and this is in subsection (3)(a)(vi), where it goes on to state that the enlargement – this shouldn't be – more context here. Let me provide a little bit more background. Just give me one second here. And 16.20, this subsection here is for enlargement or expansion of these pre-existing structures and it's providing a list here, "Pre-Existing Residential and Appurtenant Structures that are nonconforming with respect to dimensional standards may be enlarged or expanded in accordance with the following provisions." And this is one of the provisions under Minor Expansion. "Such that the enlargement of this nonconforming structure does not increase the livable area and is for the sole purpose of raising the structure to minimize and prevent flooding due to sea level rise." What this would do is this would actually allow for a structure to be raised in order to avoid future sea level rise. It is a provision that has been incorporated to some other of the example jurisdictions that we provided from Ecology's summary document.

So I will pause there. That concludes actually the recommendations we have at this point for addressing the climate change and sea level rise comments. Again, these are our work-in-progress. We are still in discussions, both internally as well as meeting with the Swinomish Tribe to continue our discussions there.

So any comments or questions there? Hopefully I can help clarify anything.

Chair Wesen: Commissioner Janicki, any comments?

Commissioner Lisa Janicki: So yeah, thanks for the summary and let me just see if I've got the overall context right – is that we will move forward with the Shoreline Master Program with kind of some modest changes, additions, references that are outlined in the supplement, but that we will also commit to doing a more in depth look at sea level rise, climate change issues before our eight-year cycle is renewed. So we're going to do kind of an interim cycle that's specific to the concerns being raised by the public. Is that – I'm getting head-nodding in here.

Mr. Nickel: Yeah, that's correct. You know, I guess in a – if we had more time at this point in time with our current process, we would have taken the time to do this. It takes several years to gather this information, to do the public process, to go through the vulnerability and risk assessment work, and to ultimately get to making more specific and targeted policies and regulations. Given the current process that we're in in terms of trying to get this comprehensive update as well as this current periodic update of the Shoreline Master Program complete, the Department really feels we need to move forward with the current process. We can put in place these kind of what we called – I wouldn't even say "temporary" but I would say they're building blocks of policies and regulations that get at recognizing the consideration and needs for these issues. And then it gives us time to go forward with this process in the interim between periodic updates. So that is a correct summary of our approach.

Commissioner Janicki: And so that would explain why the language is a little bit soft. We would "consider" this, or that we would "recognize and monitor." So it's kind of nonspecific language but because we're – these are placeholders or building blocks for similar, distinct-maybe language.

Mr. Nickel: That is correct. At this point in time, we have – there's information out there regarding the sea level rise – information that's available – right? – that speaks to projections. That needs to be analyzed in more detail. We need to actually have conversations with the public about these projections and what the County wants to plan for. That has not been decided yet. But we will –

as part of the upcoming process, we hope to begin working on – with some state funding – that’s ultimately what we want to get to.

Commissioner Janicki: Okay. Commissioner Wesen?

Chair Wesen: Yeah, thank you, Dan. Lots of information here. But as you mentioned, we do have some maps already that are out there. Just what level is that sea level rise? Or I know we have the tsunami maps that came through. They updated them a little bit. So it seems to me we ought to have that information available on our website or to the public when they come in and want to get a permit in that area so they *know* that there’s a potential risk in that area. One of the concerns I have about picking a number, I don’t think anybody in this room knows what Mother Nature’s going to throw at us so why would we pick a number when maybe Mother Nature puts something more on us? We look at Whatcom County and the Lake Sumas up there that was drained years ago, more water came down so it overtopped the levees and that’s where all the agricultural land up in Canada was flooded so bad. And so I have concerns about giving false levels of security to property owners that may be coming into the area. And so I’m a little hesitant on yeah, that’s where the maximum flood elevation’s going to be. You can build a foot higher and you’ll be guaranteed. Because I think a lot of it has to do with the property owner and their responsibility and their ability to choose to go higher if they want. Not that this _____level of the county decided. So that’s some of my concerns.

Some of your language here, it’s – who decides what is feasible and appropriate? I mean, a regulator can say it’s feasible and appropriate but the guy paying the bill can say, Well, that’s not feasible or appropriate. I mean, how do we come up with some number there? I mean, I’m looking at the saltwater dikes or levees and, you know, they’ve gotten hit pretty hard in the last couple years – some winter storms. And somebody at some point might say well, it’s not feasible to repair those. And that’s not acceptable to the agriculture community out there that’s trying to farm that ground.

Mr. Nickel: And I think that right now much of that information is going to be – that requirement is going to be on the applicant because the County hasn’t made those decisions. The County hasn’t made those projections and made any determination. And that’s going to take some – that will take some time, that will take some planning, that will take some public input to get to that point. For now, ____ to recognize that these considerations should be made. And so an applicant in these cases would be asked to essentially show your work. You know, in terms of what’s being proposed, why is that appropriate? Or how is that appropriate based on considerations of sea level rise or climate change factors – whatever it might be? But for now that’s a placeholder for more information to be built upon.

Chair Wesen: Yeah, I understand that but it’s somebody on our staff level or somebody’s going to look at that and say, Yes, you did good stuff or no, you didn’t. I mean, how are we going to make that – you know, I think the sea level’s not going to rise so I’m going to put my house the minimum level and my neighbor’s going to go up two feet or ten feet or whatever. And so how do we put some numbers on that? That’s my question. I know that’s our job, but...

Mr. Nickel: Yeah, and I honestly think that’s a bit too hard to answer at this point in time. The County, you know, isn’t going to have that information necessarily at its fingertips at that specific level at this point yet. And the County’s trying to, you know, set the stage for having that as a consideration. How an applicant addresses that is ultimately at this point in time going to be up to them. But you’re right. The County’s ability, the Department’s ability to say yes or no to something like that in terms of what these projections are is going to be difficult without something more

definitive. And so for the time being until that information's out there it's a process in which the Department is going to be asking applicants to evaluate and to consider that information. But until the County comes out with some definitive projections and some, you know, baseline information for an applicant to review, that's going to be on the applicant to put forward a recommendation.

Chair Wesen: And with the legal requirements and so forth, I just want to make sure the applicant realizes the County isn't going to be taking on a lot of liability if we guess wrong. We're not there yet, but we get people coming in now – you know, why'd the County ever permit this facility here when we got flooded or whatever? I mean, we got stormwater. I just want to make sure we're very clear that it's the property owner's responsibility to do what they can to protect their own property. And so we'll help them, we'll give them information, but I can't project the future, just like nobody else can! I mean, things change.

Those are my comments, so thank you. Hal?

Mr. Hart: I want to ask Dan a question. Not to put you on a spot or anything, but when we talk about "essential public facilities" – I'm thinking of other institutions. What's DOT thinking at this point? It makes me want to reach out to DOT and say, Are you thinking of your life cycle? Have they started down that path of looking at the life cycle of major investments in these areas?

Mr. Nickel: A good question, Hal. And I don't have a – I do know that they are planning, yes. I don't know the answer in terms of where they are at making these decisions but they are – you know, this is part of their planning process as well and it's certainly in WSDOT's best interest to make sure that they're planning for future modifications, for future infrastructure, repairs of existing infrastructure – are considering the same things. So I do know that's already part of their conversations that they're having.

Mr. Hart: Thank you. And I think that's my point. If we – it's going to be good to work together with other institutions as they think about institutional planning in these areas and making major investments across the state, in our low areas for sure. We want to understand what they're going to do.

Chair Wesen: But we also need to understand that if they're going to widen I-5 coming through the county here, potentially they're going to have to raise it quite a bit because of our floodplain area. And that will just dramatically increase the cost of the construction so chances are it might not be funded unless some magic money comes out of the air. So that's the one thing we have with the Skagit River and I-5, because my understanding it's not high enough for the projected flood issues.

But on the County facilities, you know, we looked at essential services with the Community Justice Center and that was one of the reasons it was located where it was, because the Mount Vernon flood wall and what the work they did to help protect it there. And I think there was an elevation at a planter box or something and that was our floodplain level. There is a mark there someplace that is what our survey said it's supposed to be. But I'm just coming back with a property owner. They need to decide what they're comfortable with because the County can't protect them for all these unknown things. So we all can plan for it but Mother Nature has a way of throwing extra.

Commissioner Janicki: But that level of specificity is coming at a later point.

Chair Wesen: Yeah, yeah.

Commissioner Janicki: That's not – I mean, we're just kind of setting up framework here for a more specific conversation. Okay.

Chair Wesen: Any other comments? Do you have more, Dan?

Commissioner Janicki: Dan, did you say you're going to –

Mr. Nickel: Go ahead.

Commissioner Janicki: I was just going to say, as far as what we just looked at – proposed supplemental – how well does that cover the public comment matrix? Are there still some gaps, particularly around the climate change/sea level rise conversation?

Mr. Nickel: Yeah, at this point in time, this would cover most of the responses that we would be preparing for the public comments that came out of this regarding climate change and sea level rise. The draft matrix document that you have in your packet, there are issues that are – that some of the commenters were asking about and so we have provided some responses in that document already that are not related to climate change and sea level rise. There are also a number of areas that are still in progress in terms of the responses yet. So I believe there were maybe 16 different topic areas that folks commented on, one of which was the sea level rise and climate change issues. So there were a number of other areas. Again, I'm happy to walk through that if you'd like. Again, it's in progress. We haven't firmed up all of those comments yet, or comment responses yet, but I'm happy to walk through those responses that *are* drafted, if you'd like.

Chair Wesen: And when do you expect to have them finalized or –

Mr. Nickel: Well, we have another meeting with the Tribe, the Swinomish Tribe, coming up here shortly. We wanted to, you know, continue that conversation with them before some of these responses were formalized. So I suspect in the next couple of – hopefully within the next couple of weeks that might be completed. But Hal and Betsy might have more information than I do at that point.

Mr. Hart: Yeah, the meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Commissioners.

Chair Wesen: Commissioner Janicki, you want to go through all these or –

Commissioner Janicki: No. No, no, no. I mean, I've read through them. I just want to know if at a high level there were some obvious gaps that would be filled – you know, especially from anticipating a different or a more complete conversation with the Swinomish. So, yeah. Actually as I was sitting here pondering, Dan, I was just thinking about this – you know, the shoreline armoring, removing armoring when you can. I mean, in a more holistic approach, how – it seems like sometimes we're caught between this. You know, it's better if the shoreline isn't armored and you can do soft armoring, and yet we run into this other issue of depending on – you know, what the property constraints are, you can't actually do soft armoring because that's considered development. But people *presumably* – landowners *presumably* could be planting stuff along the shoreline that might accomplish – it's just – it's kind of a conundrum, I guess, on this thing of, you know, let's soft-armor, but we can't because it requires a permit and that's considered development. But we could plant a whole bunch of, you know, cottonwood down by the water because they like to suck up all the water, but, oh wait, we need that water because we don't have enough water to get down the valley down to the farmers. You know, I just – I get stuck in the circle of what's really best environmentally protecting these shorelines and, you know, and in

the end leaving enough water for fish and agriculture and people. You know, we need all of those sources covered. And, you know, we just came back from western states county conference and this – you know, the issue of water is – I mean, we're going to be – there are fighting words nowadays and even more so. It's not just, you know, here in the Skagit but we want to protect our waterways, we want to control temperature, we want our fish to thrive, and yet sometimes it's like we shoot ourselves in the foot with some of the rules we put in place and we can't do what's best for that waterway for the salmon because of these development rules that we've constricted ourselves to. So I can't quite figure it out, but I know we've got an issue here that we're not really – that we're not addressing in this document. Betsy, you may – on a more – you may be able to articulate that a little more cleanly, but we run into that, right?

Ms. Stevenson: And we have conflicting regulations as well, so that makes it even more difficult.

Commissioner Janicki: So if we have an opportunity to de-conflict now – and Director Hart, I know you know this issue well.

Mr. Hart: Yeah, and I think it's really important that even back in the '70s I think there's a recital of Shoreline Master Program Goals and Objectives, where always a tension between different things. There's always a tension between private property rights and doing the right thing on a case-by-case versus a reach. There's always tension between these larger environmental goals and objectives and what's going on in your specific county as well. And so it's a balancing test and that's why it is a joint city, county, and DOE because their tensions are different in different places. That makes it unique, but it also makes it kind of difficult to administer, I'm sure!

Chair Wesen: So Betsy, you've been working on this for a few years. Are you feeling comfortable with what – the matrix so far?

Ms. Stevenson: That's the million-dollar question! So far, yeah, but as we get into it deeper it's amazing how you find a response to something that you think is totally unrelated to something else. All of a sudden it's like, Oh wait! But if we put that in that section over there about this issue, we need to go back over here and change something there too. So there are a lot of things that are interconnected that don't necessarily seem to be, so it tends to give you a headache before you get done and it always takes a lot longer than you think it's going to to try to sort through all of those things. And we'll never catch them all. As soon as we start working with people after whatever it is gets adopted and we start working through it and we start going through all of that, we'll find things and go, wow. And my staff will look at me and – What were you thinking? It's, like, well, we tried to catch as many of them as we could but this is all part of the process too. That's why we amend them now and we don't wait for 30 years to do that. You know, we did some amendments along the way but for the most part you just keep looking, and especially with climate change and sea level rise. There are so many things that are – the information we're getting is changing so quickly and, just like you said, we don't know. The perfect storm hits at an exact spot. If you're there you're in big trouble, and none of us can plan for that. We can plan for it but I don't think we can effectively stay out of harm's way all the time, I guess is what I'm saying, and we just kind of have to do the best that you can and go with it. And the more people that we get involved with knowledge and information, and the landowners and all the different parties who have different things that they're trying to protect do accomplish whatever it is that they're required to do. It's up to us to lead that, I think, discussion and get things going in this county at least – and, you know, the state has the bigger picture on what they're trying to do statewide, but I still think this is a pretty special place and I think the more that we can do to keep it under our oversight and overview and try to get all those parties together and make for a really good plan, the better off we're going to be. And I guess that's just kind of my reasoning for being a planner in a nutshell.

So I don't know if I answered your question but maybe I distracted you enough so I don't have to! But for now I think we've done the best we can. But we keep going back to all of them again as we make changes and as we add new ones so it's still a work in progress. Even though you see something there that's the response, that doesn't mean that it's not going to change before we get done.

Chair Wesen: Yeah, I didn't mean to put you on the spot, but obviously I did, but that's –

Ms. Stevenson: That's okay, it's part of the job.

Chair Wesen: You have a lot of years of experience and understanding on the shorelines. And the other thing you mentioned, this is a 30-year update, but we've had to follow the new laws that came down from the state anyway, correct?

Ms. Stevenson: Yes and no. Our document is still adopted by the state so they have to recognize that as the rules in place for us. But under exemptions and things where those things have changed a bit we do try to use the new WACs as our guidelines because the exemptions are not real specific anyway. So there's a lot of good language in there that they've learned that we haven't necessarily adopted but we do try to put into play.

Chair Wesen: Yes. It's not like we're still permitting things like we did 30 years ago.

Ms. Stevenson: Yeah, we are!

Chair Wesen: Well, but you still have to do all the other studies and so forth.

Ms. Stevenson: Yes. Yeah.

Chair Wesen: Any other questions or comments?

Commissioner Janicki: No, I'm just – I'm really glad. I think, you know, the document's not perfect and I'm glad we're not going to hold out for perfect. I want to be done so that then we can have those meaningful updates and knowing that we'll be adopting something close to this, and then going into a more in-depth with more information is a good place to be. I think it's a defensible position.

Ms. Stevenson: I'm really thankful for finally getting to have these discussions with you because we've been here before and we didn't quite get that far. So it's really helpful to me and you think of things that we don't necessarily and it's nice to have your direction and feedback all along the way, so thank you for taking the time and giving us the time with you to have these discussions. We want you to be part of this process. It really is important. You're picking out all the really important things that we need to be looking at as a bigger picture than just what the Shoreline Program is talking about.

Mr. Hart: And I think it's important that Dan provided kind of a verbal outline of what the next process would be.

Ms. Stevenson: Yeah.

Chair Wesen: But also the process on our current Shoreline Plan's update – once again, you can review that a little bit so at some point you're going to bring it back to the Commissioners and we're going to –

Ms. Stevenson: Yeah. We have another meeting scheduled with you early in June, and I'm hopeful – now I can't promise because I don't know yet as far as some of the other things that are still outstanding, but we're hopeful to have it a lot closer to being completed than it is now at least, if not fully completed, and by then we should have a better sense and your calendar will have been sorted out, because I know there're some issues in there too along the way. A lot of different things came into play at the same time but I'm really hoping very shortly we'll all feel pretty good about where we are and, like you said, let's try this and move this forward and see what we get with the response to comments and then just getting it off to Ecology at some point before too long. But I hate to put a date on it necessarily –

Chair Wesen: Just the general process.

Ms. Stevenson: – but I will say we'll keep working on it. We get the responses done and start hearing from you as far as what you think of how we're doing and things that you've heard about that you think we need to address and you want us to change and get something put together to get back before you and a resolution and all those things for you to consider.

Mr. Hart: So Commissioners, I personally would like to see our meeting go on Thursday. Staff will then do the analysis of that, keep you in the loop, have our meeting in June, and if we need to have one more meeting after that meeting that's scheduled in June we have that and wrap it up. That would be my ideal. I don't know about yours, Betsy, but does that sound possible? So I think it's how you space that meeting _____.

Ms. Stevenson: And what you guys want to see before you're interested in trying to make a decision too. We need to know what all you want from us because it's a pretty big deal.

Chair Wesen: And then when we send it down to Department of Ecology we believe they'll have a public comment too, correct?

Ms. Stevenson: Yes, I think they've said they intend to probably hold their own hearing as well. So we give them what's our best – this is what we would like to adopt if you approve it – and we write a resolution rather than an ordinance stating all of that and the process that we've been through and that we've met all of their guidelines putting it together and everything else, and then they will take that and look at it and they have some time to get comments back to us. They'll have a hearing. We'll respond to the comments that they get at their hearing. That's part of what we're tasked with so that'll take some time too. And then hopefully at some point – and we've been lucky they have looked at it at least so we know that where we were at the time they were pretty okay with that – at least where the people we were talking to. There are still some more policy people that we'll be hearing from. So we'll get something back from them and then we'll take another look at it.

Chair Wesen: Sounds good. Any other questions or comments?

Mr. Hart: If at the end of the second meeting you want to proceed with funding for something from DOE I'm sure you'll let us know so we can factor that into Betsy's and her team's work program for this next year.

Ms. Stevenson: Okay, and I think the grant applications are due sometime in December – the one that Dan was talking about for the Shoreline work and sea level rise and climate change, which seems like a good next extension of where we're trying to be anyway.

Chair Wesen: And those are available to all the state of Washington or just Puget Sound or –

Mr. Hart: Definitely Puget Sound at this point.

Commissioner Janicki: Well, we can have that conversation –

Chair Wesen: – in the future.

Commissioner Janicki: – to see how it fits with the rest of the work program and how our staffing levels hold up. So there's a lot to be considered there.

Chair Wesen: Very good. So if there's nothing else, we will be adjourning...So with that, we're adjourned. Thank you (gavel).