

# Columbia River Levee Repair and Accreditation Project

## Oregon Solutions Meeting Notes

December 10, 2013 - Multnomah County Drainage District offices

### Welcome, Charge & Introductions.

The project meeting was convened by Portland Mayor Charlie Hales and Multnomah County Chair Marissa Madrigal. In opening remarks, Mayor Hales addressed the complexity of the issues facing all stakeholders within the affected region. Chair Madrigal echoed Mayor Hales' comments, reassuring participants and attendees that their participation in the discussions did not necessarily imply a specific financial commitment to the funding of the proposed solutions.

The Multnomah County Drainage District (MCDD), the City of Portland and the Port of Portland jointly requested and received Oregon Solutions project designation from the Oregon Governor's office to address the issues surrounding the recertification and continued Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) accreditation of the MCDD flood protection system.

Oregon Solutions project team members in attendance introduced themselves:

Participant	Organization
Maryhelen Kincaid	East Columbia Neighborhood Association
Karen Kane	Bridgeton Neighborhood Association
Jane Van Dyke	Columbia Slough Watershed Council
Bob Sallinger	Portland Audubon Society
Corky Collier	Columbia Corridor Association
Vic Stibolt	Jubitz Corporation
David Ratte	Federal Emergency Management Agency – Region X
Tim Warren	Multnomah County Drainage District Board
Reed Wagner	Multnomah County Drainage District
Mark Wigginton	Peninsula Drainage District #1 Board
Dick Shafer	Peninsula Drainage District #2 Board
Phil Ralston	Port of Portland
Jackie Dingfelder	Office of Portland Mayor Charlie Hales
Kimberly Tallant	Portland Bureau of Development Services
Mike Abbate	Portland Bureau of Parks and Recreation
Doug Morgan	City of Portland – NFIP
Casey Filice	Office of Multnomah County Chair Marissa Madrigal
Scott Robinson	Metro Regional Government
Christine Svetkovich	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Christine Shirley	State of Oregon – NFIP Coordinator
Bobby Lee	Oregon Governor's Office
Kevin Brice	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Portland District

Several interested parties from governmental, commercial, environmental and neighborhood organizations attended the meeting. Those attendees included:

Attendee	Organization
Genvieve Angle	NOAA Fisheries
Amanda Hess	Office of State Senator Chip Shields
Andee Shork	Office of State Representative Tina Kotek
Brock Nelson	Union Pacific
Jackie Carter	Pacific Power
Doug Wise	Portland Water Bureau
Byron Woltersdorf	MCDD
Tim Couch	Sauvie Island DIC
Nancy Hendrickson	Bureau of Environmental Services
Katie Gough	NW Natural
Troy Klein	NW Natural
Shanna Brownstein	NW Natural
Ron Myers	East Columbia Neighborhood Association
Karen Myers	Peninsula 2 Board
Susan Barthel	Bureau of Environmental Services
Any Echols	U.S Army Corps of Engineers
Walter Valenta	Bridgeton Neighborhood Association
Matthew Robinson	City of Portland
Jonna Papaefthimion	City of Portland
Nils Tillstrom	City of Portland
Tim Mackaness	Sauvie Island DIC
Bob Wiley	West Mult. Soil & Water Conservation District
Lisa Peffer	Oregon Dept. of Land Conservation & Development
Cristin Bansen	TMT Development
Lauren Reese	Integrated Water Solutions
Guy Fielding	U.S Army Corps of Engineers
Marc Siegel	Office of U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley
Leslie Sawyer	Bridgeton Neighborhood Association
Dick Springer	West Mult. Soil & Water Conservation District
Carla Kelley	Miller Nash Attorneys
Brian Vincent	Multnomah County
Dave Hendricks	Public
Ryan Kilgren	Tetra Tech
Angela Carkner	Multnomah County Drainage District
Kayla Mullis	Multnomah County Drainage District
Ron Delp	Oregon Solutions
Eric (Rick) Mogren	PSU - Center for Public Service
Steve Greenwood	Oregon Solutions
Amanda Siok	FEMA
Hillary Barbour	Office of U.S. Representative Blumenauer
Karen Stewart	CenturyLink

## **Background Presentation.**

Following introductions and opening remarks, MCDD Project Manager, Kayla Mullis, provided a presentation on the geographical, historical, institutional, and regulatory backgrounds of the Peninsula 1 and Peninsula 2 levees (<http://orsolutions.org/beta/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/The-Columbia-River-Levee-System-ppt-10-11.pdf>). The presentation highlighted the following issues:

- The importance of the commercial properties protected by the levee system to the local and regional economies,
- The complexity of the drainage district's infrastructure and the management of stormwater within the district and local watersheds,
- A comparison of district funding to the funding sources of flood control organizations in other western U.S. cities,
- The importance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in the Rehabilitation & Inspection Program (RIP),
- The critical nature of meeting FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program requirements for levee accreditation,
- The importance of balancing all stakeholder priorities when developing solutions.

Kayla also announced that an independent contractor, Cornforth Consultants, is currently investigating the design and current condition of the levees for for MCCD.

## **Roundtable Discussion.**

Oregon Solutions Project Manager, Steve Greenwood, facilitated a discussion by the participants around the question of their specific organizational interests and personal concerns in having a well-maintained, accredited levee system. The participant responses included:

- Continued protection of the levees,
- Receiving/sharing accurate information,
- Collecting/assessing data for accurate decision making,
- Maintaining current risk rating for insurance of properties,
- Protection of economic vitality,
- Assure neighborhood livability
- Public involvement around the issue of changing flood lines,
- Economic benefits – learning the unknown unknowns,
- Keeping businesses financially viable,
- Wildlife habitat,
- Coordinating the complex issues throughout the process,
- Public health and public safety,
- Money spent on improvements reflect community values,
- Managing timelines – help other districts create greater value,
- Ensuring information is shared with the public throughout the process,
- Accurate mapping with an eye toward the ability to maintain property values,

- Sustainable financial and governance models,
- Look toward long term solutions within short term restraints,
- Return on investment – effects on the growth boundary,
- Building zone compliance,
- Gaining public trust and trust of one another,
- Cultivating public understanding,
- Creating new jobs and maintaining livability,
- Natural resources - federal Endangered Species Act,
- Reclamation of ecosystems – implications of court actions in other jurisdictions,
- Evolving standards for compliance,
- Industrial lands protection.

### **Timeline, Action Items, and Agenda Items for the Next Meeting.**

At the request of the facilitator, participants shared their recommendations for short term and long term issues to consider and questions to be answered as the process moves forward. The participant responses included:

- Defining accreditation standards and comparing those with USACE standards,
- Defining timelines,
- Identifying costs and benefits of the levee system, and ensuring the technical support required for this task is available.
- Determining who pays and who benefits and whether there is technical support,
- Exploring funding through Congressional acts,
- Governance structure,
- Reducing the risks behind the levee,
- Impacts and solutions for other flood control jurisdictions,
- Cost sharing for the Oregon Solutions process,
- Managing public messaging,
- Impacts to the utility companies and issues of rights of way,
- Impacts of outside actions by federal agencies to the NFIP.

Oregon Solutions staff provided guiding principles for working together through the Oregon Solutions process. The participants accepted the ground rules as proposed. (see project website)

Oregon Solutions staff proposed the use of “OS – MCDD” in the subject line in email correspondence about issues related to the Oregon Solutions – MCDD process. The group agreed.

Two potential sub-committees were identified for pursuing issues regarding Utilities and Legislative Affairs. Work will be done to convene and identify a purpose for these committees between now and the next Oregon Solutions meeting.

Potential subjects for the next meeting on January 27, 2014: project timeline scenarios, mission and goals for the overall effort, and details on the criteria and process for levee accreditation. Materials will be distributed in advance to help guide the in-meeting conversation.

Meeting notes and additional information will be posted to the Oregon Solutions website at <http://orsolutions.org/osproject/MCDD>.