

Mayor Jones welcomed the representatives from Yakima County and asked that they introduced themselves. Those present were Terry Keenan, Don Gatshalian, Cliff Bennett, Dianna Woods and Joel Freudenthal.

Terry Keenan began the presentation by explaining that they are before the Selah City council today is because the Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan is ready for adoption. He noted the plan was originally adopted in 1998, amended in 2004 and now has undergone further revision. He encouraged those present to ask questions during the presentation.

Mr. Keenan noted the original Plan created Flood Control Zone Districts and established a partnership among the Bureau of Reclamation, the Core of Engineers, the Department of Fish & Wildlife, the Yakama Nation, local cities, citizens, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Ecology.

He noted there is a history of flooding in this area. There was a major flood in 1948, four major floods in the 70's and four more in the 90's, and the result is our becoming more organized every time. He indicated this area might be prone to this type of flooding because both Selah Gap and Union Gap act as barriers or narrowing points to the Yakima River.

Mr. Keenan pointed out the timeline in the handout and explained that this group is now presenting study sessions to staff and to city councils. He explained from this point the Plan will go to the County Commissioners for their consideration, and if adopted, will come back to city councils for their adoption. He noted the Plan is "comprehensive" because it includes all areas and emphasizes their connection with each other. He stated adoption of the Plan will allow the county to seek funding ahead of the time it will be needed, i.e. ahead of the next flood.

The next presenter was Joel Freudenthal, who stated one of the reasons for the Plan is the heavy reliance on levees in the area. He explained that the theory is a levee system concentrates flow and energy in same spot, but the reality is that when there is a flood inside the levee it results in growth and sediment, and when it floods again that will deposit even more sediment. He stated the result is the flood plain rises and there is a danger of undercutting the levee. He emphasized that Federal Project levees and SR 24 levees need to be handled both as transportation systems and levees. He noted there is a lack of flood plain, and in 1996 dump trucks were mobilized to dump big chunks of rock near Buchanan Lake and the Terrace Heights bridge. He stated from the Greenway you can see where the levee sank near Buchanan Lake.

He stated if the levees fail, a flood would take out both the Yakima Wastewater Treatment Plant and State Route 24. Because of that, the Number 1 priority of the Plan is to reconfigure the levee system, to set levees back on the east side of the river below SR 24.

Mr. Freudenthal noted there are seventy recommendations in new plan addressing thirty-four flood issues, and many of them are structural recommendations. He stated in the original CHMP there was almost no attention paid to the Naches River or hazards to the City of Union Gap. He stated the current floodplain map was modeled and mapped without recognizing the levees exist. He stated one reason the Wal-Mart Distribution Center didn't come to Yakima is because site was within the floodplain.

Mayor Jones asked what materials would be used in construction of a 3-4 foot dike

Mr. Freudenthal stated that would be made of heavy-duty standard riprap.

He noted Priority Number 2 is Levee Stabilization below the Terrace Heights Bridge because now the river is channeled directly at the levee at Buchanan Lake. Another part of this is to widen the river in order to slow it down and to better utilize space.

Mr. Freudenthal identified Priority Number 3 as the Prevention of River Avulsion into Gravel Pits, and stated this priority clearly affects Selah's Taylor Ditch. He noted it is a major undertaking to get water into the Taylor Ditch system now because of changes in the course of the Yakima River due to previous floods. He suggested the need to assess the adequacy of levees, because they are time bombs. He noted we want sediment to move through the system.

He said because we live in an arid region, our infrastructure is tied to the river, and nothing happens to the River without impacting the infrastructure.

Mr. Freudenthal identified Priority Number 4 as Continuing the Lower Naches River Working Group and Implementing Actions to Protect Infrastructure. He noted this item, which includes \$36million worth of public works projects, does not directly affect the City of Selah except that the Naches River borders Selah's boundaries. He noted \$20million for these projects is already funded. He described potential relationships of the projects as cost-cutting possibilities.

He noted when the plan was amended in 1998 and was sent out for agency evaluation, the largest number of comments from the City of Yakima because of the impact on their Wastewater Treatment Plant. He stated the need to weigh the possibilities as well as find the funding to make changes. He indicated it might be easier to secure funding for levee setbacks that would slow the river, and there's not a lot of specific funding to set treatment plants back. He stated floodplain maps also need to be updated to reflect the current reality.

Councilman Scott Smeback asked how this plan would tie in with Benton County's plan and if the counties are discussing potential impacts.

Mr. Freudenthal replied that he does not see that happening as part of this plan, but it may happen when they look at the Wapato Reach.

Councilman Scott Smeback asked about the Kittitas County Plan, and Mr. Freudenthal noted there is nothing in this plan to affect Kittitas north of Rosa Dam.

Dianna Woods stated there are some mapping restraints on how new maps fit with existing ones.

Joel Freudenthal noted there are lots of projects working on Highway 12 and I-82.

Mayor Jones stated Toppenish and Wapato were really hit hard by the last flood. He stated what we do here impacts them dramatically.

Joel Freudenthal agreed that we need to work with both Wapato and Toppenish. He said they have a joint agreement with the Yakama Nation to work in the Wapato area.

Dianna Woods invited Council Members to get hold of presenters if they have any questions. She noted CD's are available, and the timeline is in packet. She explained that once this Plan is adopted, it will go back to DOE and that will open up channels of funding.

Mayor Jones stated he had only been in office two months when the flood hit in 1996.

Community Planner Dennis Davison asked how many additional regulations would we need to adopt if we approve this plan, noting the City is already participating in Federal Flood program.

Dianna Woods responded that she is hopeful this will bring more flexibility in urban zoning.

Mr. Davison asked if there is a timeline for when FEMA will redo County flood maps.

Mr. Freudenthal said maps are very expensive, and we are actively part of the process. He predicted eventually there will be one for the gap and another for the lower Yakima section of the River. He noted it takes years, and it may cost about a million dollars.

Mr. Davison asked the presenter to identify the direct economic benefits (or negative impacts) to the City of Selah in the adoption of this plan.

Joel Freudenthal responded that Selah does not have much in the flood plain. If it did, FEMA would only pay to put it back the way it was, but through this Flood Plan, you can put it back the way you want it to be. He noted this qualifies as an emergency plan.

Dianna Woods stated the Plan will reduce collective impact of future floods.

Mayor Jones noted flooding was a major problem when ice hit the sand bar by the Elks in 1996. He thanked the group for coming, noting his hope that floods will not affect Selah again.