



Bulletin

Full Steam Ahead!

City of Burlington Celebrates Grants

U.S. Representative Rick Larsen (WA-02) and officials from the City of Burlington celebrated the announcement that **Burlington was awarded a grant for over \$500,000 from the U.S. Department of Transportation** to help with construction of the **Burlington-Skagit County Regional Scenic Byway Visitor Center**. Larsen supported this project through meetings with local officials and a letter to the Department of Transportation advocating for the grant.

includes 20+ construction jobs and many long term employment opportunities in addition to four immediate permanent positions. It is estimated that once the facility opens, several hundred new jobs will be indirectly created because of the positive economic effects across the city.

Design of the facility was funded with Lodging Tax dollars and the strong support of the local lodging industry."

“ This grant will revolutionize downtown Burlington. . . .we are now truly the Hub City! ”

Duane Stowe, business owner

“The creation of the Burlington-Skagit County Regional Scenic Byway Visitor Center will bring many new visitors to Burlington to stay in our hotels, shop and enjoy the Skagit Valley experience,” Brunz continued.

“Building a new visitor center in Burlington is going to create good jobs in the community now and well into the future,” said Rep. Larsen. “This building will help revitalize the Burlington downtown and attract more visitors to the region who will spend their dollars here and help support businesses and the local economy.”

“This grant will revolutionize downtown Burlington. A group of Burlington citizens have worked for 20 years to achieve this park. Everyone can use the park and we are now truly the Hub City!” Duane Stowe, long time Downtown Business Owner.

“The creation of a focal point for downtown has been a dream of the community for over twenty years. This will move the redevelopment of downtown forward, including new businesses, mixed use development and renovation of existing businesses. This is the economic driver that will bring new businesses and development to the heart of town, and boost sales in the I-5 retail core area substantially,” said Mayor Ed Brunz. “Job creation



Carletti Architects, PS



Yielding to an Emergency Vehicle

What do you do when you see a fire engine, ambulance or police car approaching with its lights and siren on? This is one of the most troublesome safety concerns encountered by emergency personnel and sometimes one of the most confusing for motorists.

The average fire that the Burlington Fire Department responds to will double in size every minute – sometimes faster. Rapid intervention in a medical emergency often makes the difference between a successful or unsuccessful outcome for the patient. We simply must respond to these incidents rapidly but our number one priority as we do respond is the safety of the public and of our personnel. How can we accomplish that?



What WE Do:

All the drivers of our emergency vehicles are extensively trained and tested on driving cautiously and defensively while responding in the emergency mode. Our drivers know how to handle unforeseen traffic situations . . . they expect the unexpected. Each operator must successfully participate in a program we call Emergency Vehicle Incident Prevention.

What YOU Can Do:

When you see (and, we hope, hear) an approaching emergency vehicle that is making use of audible and visual signals the law requires that you yield the right-of-way. It's that simple. Here are six easy rules for doing that:

- ▶ Stay calm. We know that you are not used to dealing with emergency traffic on a regular basis.
- ▶ Move as far to the right side of the road as is safely possible and stop.
- ▶ If you cannot move to the right because of another vehicle or obstacle . . . just slow to a stop.
- ▶ Don't pull into the middle or left turn lane. This happens all the time on Burlington Boulevard and it forces us to pull cautiously into the oncoming traffic lane.
- ▶ Don't drive through a red light or stop sign when an emergency vehicle approaches from behind.
- ▶ Stay at least 500 feet behind fire vehicles using their lights and sirens.

The goal here is for you to safely move your car from the travel path of a responding emergency vehicle and to then quickly get back on your way. Please assist the Burlington Fire Department in its efforts to keep emergency personnel and you and your family safe in the event that our paths ever cross.

Mayor's Message

As your mayor, it is amazing how fast the last three and half years have gone by and the challenges that have faced our City in this short period of time. We have gone from \$7 million sales tax revenue in 2008 to an estimated \$5.5 million for 2011. The City of Burlington has reduced staff by 16 fulltime employees through layoffs or positions vacated and not filled.

When I was elected to this position, I made it my firm commitment to lead the City of Burlington in a positive and beneficial direction, and I believe that has been accomplished with the help of City staff, the business community and citizens who care about making Burlington a place that people want to come to and live in. We are all in this together — ensuring that Burlington moves forward in a positive direction, and I thank you for that.

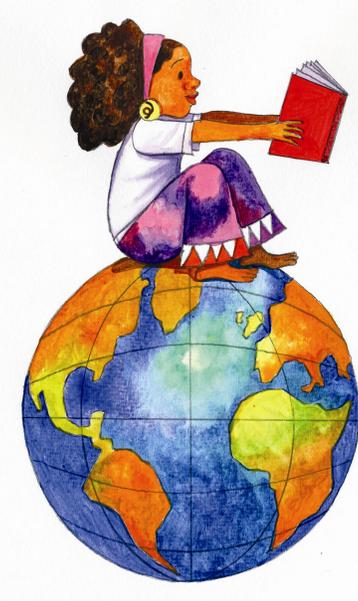
The process of hiring a City Administrator has been put in motion and we hope to have this position filled by July. Our sales tax revenue has increased over the last several months and anticipating this will be a continued trend, I am confident the city can afford to fill this position that will help me, city staff and the council in the future. If the sales tax increases are signs of things to come, then I believe we have turned the corner on this economic recession and look forward to getting the City of Burlington back on track.

As I have said before, my door is always open, so please feel free to come in!

READ the Spring FLOOD BULLETIN located at the end of this newsletter.



**REMEMBER:
BE PREPARED
& STAY PREPARED**



Explore your world! Read for fun! Win prizes! Come to cool events!

JUNE

Tuesday, June 21 at 1:00 p.m.:

Scott Petersen, aka The Reptile Man

Thursday, June 30 at 11:00 a.m.:

Charles the Clown (*suitable for preschoolers through third graders*)

JULY

Wednesday, July 13 at 11:30 a.m.:

Steve Chaney, ventriloquist

Thursday, July 21 from 6:30 p.m.:

Doug Banner, storyteller and musician

Thursday, July 28 at 1:00 p.m.:

Ray Soriano, drummer

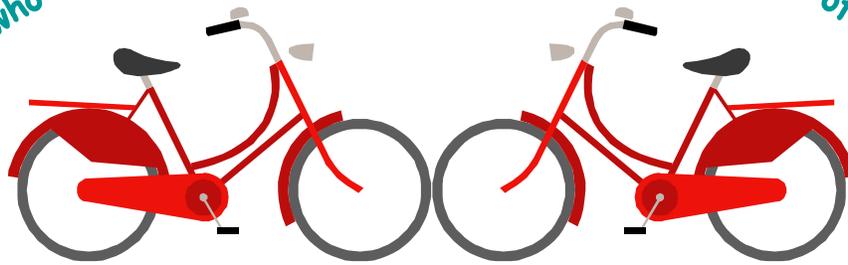
AUGUST

Tuesday, August 2 at 1:30 p.m.:

Summer Reading Grand Finale

Comedian and juggler Alex Zerbe
(*One half of Brothers of Different Mothers!*)

Everyone who turns in reading minutes will be entered to win one of two bikes,
donated by Wal-Mart and Burlington Healthy Community Coalition.



Early Literacy story times will continue through the summer with multicultural stories and songs.

Lapsit Time: Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m.
June 7 – 28 and July 12 – 26

Toddler Time: Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.
June 7- 28 and July 12 – 26

Preschool Time: Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.
June 9 – 23 and July 14 – 28



Burlington Capital Projects Update, Public Works Dept.

Section Street Reconstruction, Rio Vista to Fairhaven

The City was notified in late fall 2010 that its Transportation Improvement Board grant application to reconstruct a portion of Section street between Rio Vista and Fairhaven was approved for \$606,900.



Section Street today

Currently, this block of Section street has no sidewalks, and the street itself is in poor condition. The reconstructed street will have a sidewalk on one side (which side has not yet been determined), new drainage facilities, and new asphalt. Watch for an announcement for a neighborhood meeting with residents and property owners who live along this segment. We need your input to ensure this project is built to meet everyone's needs. The total project cost is expected to be about \$800,000, with the balance coming from the City's Street Fund, which has as its main revenue source, sales taxes. The timeline calls for preparation of the bid package this summer and fall, with the project construction scheduled for spring-summer 2012.

Anacortes Street Sidewalks

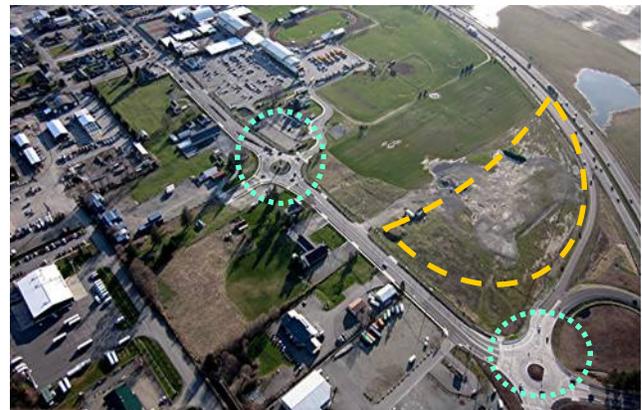
In addition to the Section Street project mentioned above, the City also obtained Transportation Improvement Board grant funding to construct sidewalks along Anacortes street in those blocks that currently have no sidewalks. If you are a resident or property owner along Anacortes, be watching for a neighborhood meeting announcement. Public Works staff needs your input on where to locate the new sidewalks. Again, we want to make sure the final product is what people want. This grant was for \$84,000, and the total project cost is expected to be about \$110,000. Construction is planned for spring-summer 2012.

North Burlington Boulevard, Chuckanut Interchange Roundabout, and Park and Ride Facility

The vision for the north end of the City is coming to fruition. With the completion of the Chuckanut Interchange roundabouts, North Burlington Boulevard was re-channelized with a center median so that traffic entering from a side street must use either the Chuckanut roundabout or the North Burlington Boulevard roundabout to make a left turn. Feedback on the completed facility has been positive. In June, the new 350-stall Park and Ride facility will be operational. This facility will become an important hub in connecting Skagit, Island, and Whatcom Counties with transit services.



North Burlington Boulevard Roundabout



Aerial view of roundabouts and Park & Ride location

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SIGN-UP FOR SIZZLIN' SUMMER FUN!

Visit our
website for full
details!

SUMMER CLASSES

- Kids Computer Animation School
- Excel Business Essentials in 4 hours
- Tuesdays Basic Cartooning for Kids
- Hatha Yoga on Thursday Evenings
- Altered Art Crafting Classes
- Camp Fire USA Babysitting
- Women and Teen Self Defense

REGISTER
TODAY!

SUMMER CAMPS

- KidsQuest Camps ▪ Weekly Theme Camps — **June-August**
- Jr. Golf Camp — **July 11-15**
- Youth Rugby Camp — **July 18-21**
- Just for Kicks Soccer Camp — **August 15-18**
- LifeLong Sports Camp — **August 8-12**
- Skyhawks Sports Academy — www.skyhawks.com
- British Challenger Soccer Camps - www.challengersports.com
- Teen Day Trips to Seattle Eats & Treats & CDR Paintball
- Youth Day Trips to Jetty Island, Waterslides, Sky High Sports & more!
- Trips to Bellingham Bells Baseball Games

SPECIAL EVENTS

- All Comers Track Meets — **June 15, 22, 29 & July 6**
- Berry Dairy Days Festival — **June 16-19**
- Skagit State Bank BDD Fireworks Show — **June 17**
- Burlington Harvest Festival & Pumpkin Pitch — **September 24**

PARKS & RECREATION *Center & Main Office*

900 E. Fairhaven Avenue

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday ▪ 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

PHONE

(360) 755-9649

EMAIL

recreation@ci.burlington.wa.us

WEBSITE

<http://recreation.ci.burlington.wa.us>

VISA/MC accepted



[Burlington Parks & Recreation Page](#)

Saying Goodbye...



Marilyn Dite, Burlington Municipal Court Administrator will retire June 30, 2011 after nearly **27 years of excellent service** to the City and citizens of Burlington.

Marilyn began working for the City of Burlington as a Police Dispatcher in 1984 and transferred to Municipal Court in 1990. She was promoted to Court Administrator in 1998.

We applaud Marilyn for her years of dedicated work in keeping the Municipal Court running smoothly.

Marilyn plans to spend her free time volunteering, gardening and traveling.

We wish Marilyn a much deserved, relaxing and joyful retirement. We will miss you!



FLOOD ISSUES UPDATE, *Spring 2011*

FEMA Flood Map Appeal Skagit River Hydrology Dike 12 Levee Certification Corps of Engineers General Investigation Study Potential BNSF Skagit River Bridge Replacement Flood Storage in the Baker Hydroelectric Project

Burlington elected officials and staff continue to work in close partnership with Skagit County, the Dike Districts, Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley and La Conner on a range of flood issues, with the goal of reducing flood risk in the entire region.

FEMA Flood Map Appeal

In December 2009, FEMA Region X released its long-awaited preliminary flood maps; however, the maps were withdrawn after just a few days when it became apparent the maps contained numerous errors. This provided an opportunity for Burlington to work with other jurisdictions, including Skagit County, to set up a technical conference in Washington D.C. in March 2010 to discuss Skagit River hydrology with FEMA experts, along with the US Geological Survey and the US Army Corps of Engineers. In May 2010, FEMA responded to the information presented in the conference, and unfortunately did not accept any of the technical revisions suggested.

FEMA released a modified work product July 1, 2010, initially stating it expected the “official” preliminary map release to occur about the end of September. The “official” release date was delayed until the end of December, 2010, which triggered a deadline of March 31, 2011 to appeal the preliminary maps. Burlington partnered with Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley and La Conner in developing the appeal to these flood maps, which we believe are inaccurate for many reasons, including the longstanding incorrect estimate of Skagit River hydrology. The appeal package was submitted timely on 30 May 2011, receipt acknowledged from FEMA. This was a significant undertaking, involving hundreds of staff hours from the cities, as well as hundreds of hours of work from our technical consultants. We have not yet heard back from FEMA, but expect to meet with FEMA’s technical representatives over the next

couple of months. The complete appeal report can be viewed on Burlington’s or Mount Vernon’s web page.

Also in July, FEMA released word of a new process local communities could access as part of an appeal. The new process, called a “Scientific Resolution Panel,” or SRP, is a panel of experts that can be formed at the request of the local community if FEMA and the local community cannot agree on the information presented in the appeal package. The panels, organized and overseen by the National Institute of Building Sciences, will consist of either three or five members, with the larger number of panelists chosen by the local community, and the smaller number by FEMA. According to FEMA, “the SRPs will provide communities with an efficient, independent way of resolving conflicting technical data while ensuring that the best science is being utilized for their Flood Insurance Rate Maps.” A pre-qualified list of technical experts will be recruited and maintained by the National Institute of Building Sciences. We are still working to learn more details about exactly how these panels will operate.

On March 10, 2011, just 20 days before the appeal package deadline, FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate issued a policy letter indicating that the longstanding “levee failure” policy was being rescinded. This is the policy which requires flood mapping behind uncertified levees to be conducted as if the levees did not exist at all. This is our situation. As one can visualize, the base flood elevations could be significantly different if the flood modeling included the levees. We do not know whether or how this new FEMA policy will impact our flood map appeal. Our appeal package was compiled in compliance with FEMA’s previous levee failure policy, as there was no time to change the mapping at that late date; further, FEMA itself has still to clarify how it will respond to entities like our partnership that were required to submit an appeal package just as this significant policy change was coming about.

Skagit River Hydrology

Over the years, it is our opinion that Burlington and our partner dike districts, cities and towns have never received a truly independent review of the original research and analysis that the partnership has put forward. That's because there was no other agency, except the agencies which generated the information at issue, to review the research. In our view, it is very difficult for these agencies (i.e., Corps of Engineers; FEMA, and the USGS) to impartially consider information submitted by the partnership (which questions the validity of the work those agencies themselves performed).

It is our hope that through the FEMA appeal process, utilizing the Scientific Resolution Panel, that our technical research and information will finally receive an impartial review. In this way, we hope to change FEMA's official stand on the overstated hydrology. Although the Corps of Engineers has already stated that it will not change the hydrology even if FEMA does, we are hopeful the Corps can eventually be convinced. Our technical arguments are very compelling and it is our expectation that an impartial panel of experts will reverse FEMA's current position regarding overstated Skagit river hydrology.

We are, of course, keeping an eye on climate change research and the impact climate change may have on Skagit River flooding, as well as sea level rise and its impact on flooding. Research on these issues is ongoing and has produced some broad preliminary findings; however, basin-specific information for the Skagit is still under review. Future flood projects will include an assessment of the impacts of climate change.

Dike District 12 Levee Certification Project

Dike 12 will continue work to reinforce its levees to the expected flood elevations associated with the Corps of Engineers hydrology, even though Dike 12 Commissioners and the City believe the Corps hydrology is overstated. The Dike District will be adding additional material to the back slope of its levee system in accordance with the recommendations of a geotechnical study completed in 2009.



2010 Dike 12 levee work:
NW quadrant, looking south



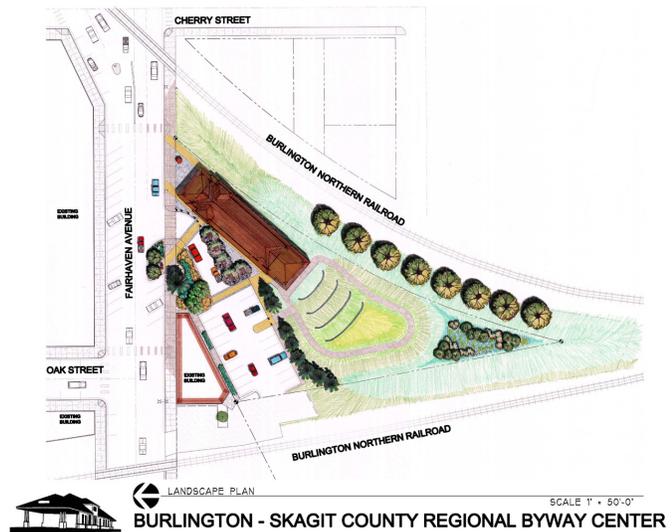
NW quadrant, looking north

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CAPITAL PROJECTS—continued from Page 4

Burlington Regional Byway Visitor's Facility

In early May, the City was notified it had received an additional \$512,000 of Scenic Byways grant funding to go with a previous \$435,000 grant to construct a Visitor's to get construction of this new facility underway as soon as possible. We are hoping that by late summer 2012, the new facility will be ready for the public.



Site plan by Carletti Architects PS



City Energy Savings Awards

We are pleased to report that Burlington, in cooperation with several Skagit County cities, the Skagit Council of Governments, and Puget Sound Energy, reduced its energy consumption in city facilities by 9% in 2010, compared to 2009. This is a significant reduction and saved the City \$16,070. Two City employees, Mary Beth Conlee and Paul Tingley, were recognized by the Regional Conservation Management program for their efforts to help communicate about energy savings (Mary Beth) and manage facilities to conserve energy (Paul).

MUNICIPAL COURT — The Municipal Court collected and disbursed to business owners/citizens over \$10,000 in restitution in year 2010. To date this year, we have collected \$2,817.62. Collecting restitution for victims of crimes is a high priority of the Court, Judges, and prosecution.

On June 30, 2011, I will be retiring from the City of Burlington after 27 years of serving the citizens of Burlington. This is a bittersweet moment for me, while I am looking forward to having time to do the things I don't have time to do now, I will miss all my friends at the City. Mickey Zitkovich has been appointed as my replacement, and I have every confidence that she will do an excellent job. She has been my right hand for the past nine years, and will bring new vision and technology into the position.

Marilyn Dite, Court Administrator



Mickey Zitkovich

PARKS

Although the economy has not yet rebounded, we have plenty of projects to complete this spring and summer.

Dike District 12 has given us the opportunity to use the pasture just south of Skagit River Park and north of the Horseshoe Pits Complex. This pasture will be transformed into an area that will accommodate up to (4) soccer fields with generous donations of \$10,000 from the Northwest United FC Soccer Club and \$10,000 from the Skagit Valley Youth Soccer Association. The property has excellent drainage which will be a huge asset to our park system as we have had to shut down activities at Skagit River Park for the majority of March and April due to playfield conditions caused by inclement weather. This new area will allow field users to play in the future when our other facilities are closed due to weather.



The playfields at Skagit River Park will be irrigated with an additional water cannon thanks to a \$28,000 grant from the Lodging Tax Committee. The new cannon will allow irrigation of the East Playfields in half the typical time which will in turn free up valuable time for our Parks staff.



Another exciting addition to the Skagit River Park playfields is the new sheltered BBQ Pit near the restroom and concessions building. Big thanks to the Burlington-Edison Kiwanis Club which

donated manpower and materials worth an estimated value of \$30,000. The Club completed the project in August 2010.

Walnut Pond, a new park located on South Walnut Street just north of the intersection at E. George Hopper Road/Port Drive has had some work done as well. Crossroads Covenant Church Study Group has poured one of two pads in preparation for picnic tables and one of two pads for park benches as well. Thank you to Rock White and Crossroads for all your help.



The river rock sign at Skagit River Park's main entrance that was demolished in an automobile accident last spring will be replaced as soon as all estimates are received. WCIA (our insurance pool) has reimbursed 50% of the sign cost which makes this possible.

The new restroom facility is complete next to the Covered Picnic Shelter on Whitmarsh Road. This new addition is long overdue as the shelter has become very popular. A \$20,000 donation from the Skagit Valley Horseshoe Club and \$5,000 donation from the Northwest Oval/Off-Road Radio Control Association made the new addition possible. Thank you both!



The Grafton Museum has been demolished and the future of this site will be a new "Grafton Park" thanks to the generous donation of Carrie and Quinton Grafton prior to their passing. Groundbreaking should be late spring or early summer soon after all estimates are in. Renovations to the Grafton property will include paving overlay to the drive way, parking areas in back, picnic tables and benches, a water feature that will include blocks from the barbecue stack which was built in 1934 and a below ground sprinkler system.



There will once again be fireworks at Skagit River Park! The Friday night show will kick off Berry Dairy Days weekend on the evening of June 17. Skagit State Bank stepped forward with a \$6,400 donation to make this event possible as there are no longer funds available for it in the City's budget. Thank you to Skagit State Bank and a special thank you to Cheryl Bishop and Doug Noblet for making this happen.

Memorial Day is just around the corner. The Green Hills Memorial Cemetery is nearly up to speed in preparation for the holiday with the joint efforts of the Parks staff and work crew from the Buildings and Grounds Department.



I want to commend and thank the community for contributions that have enabled us to complete these projects during tough times. It would not be possible without you. As you can see, parks and recreation are important to our community as shown through the overwhelming support to keep our department alive and well.

Loren Cavanaugh, Parks Director

Corps of Engineers General Investigation Study

The Corps of Engineers recently announced it would halt all work on the Skagit General Investigation study, due to lack of federal funds. Congressman Rick Larsen responded by sending the letter below:

Dear General:

I have serious concern about reports that work on the Skagit River General Investigation Study (Skagit G.I.) has been stopped. To abruptly halt forward progress on the Skagit G.I. without exhausting every option available is irresponsible to the mission of protecting lives and property.

The Skagit G.I. has taken over thirteen years and has endured numerous scheduled completion date revisions to get to the point where it is today. The Skagit community cannot afford another delay. For more than a decade the people of the Skagit Valley have looked to the Corps to provide the basis on which they can begin completing flood control projects that will increase safety for those living on the banks of the Skagit River.

The Corps itself has recognized how important this GI study is, the Skagit G.I. has simply taken too long. Through the Reset Initiative the Corps gave the Skagit G.I. a needed higher priority level to urge along its completion in a fiscally responsible manner. Skagit County, the local sponsor of the investigation, has invested their own money and pledged to work with the Corps toward timely completion.

It would be a disservice to the residents of the Skagit Valley to let the Skagit G.I. deviate from its schedule one more time. Less than \$4 million remains to complete the investigation. Stopping the Skagit G.I. will waste the \$6.263 million of federal funds already invested, not including the local community sponsor's match.

With every new flood comes a threat to the community's of Skagit County. The sense of urgency behind the Skagit G.I. has never diminished and the County's intention to complete the study was reiterated in a letter signed in January of this year. It is time to complete the Skagit G.I.

On behalf of the residents of Skagit County, I demand that every program is evaluated to find savings in order to fund and complete the Skagit G.I.

Sincerely,

*Rick Larsen
Member of Congress*

Over the past two years, a partnership of Cities, Towns, and Skagit County worked with Corps of Engineer headquarters to increase the priority of the Skagit GI. Our Federal Congressional delegation then supported this effort by pulling some strings and lining up additional funding for FY11 (\$1.1 million). However, the funding became a victim of budget concerns. It may be possible to restore some of the funding in FY12, but the problem with partial funding is that it is inefficient and extends the time period for completing the study. As of the date of this newsletter, there is no schedule for completing the Skagit River General Investigation Study.

Potential BNSF Skagit River Bridge Replacement

With support from the Governor's Office, our State legislators, and the Washington State Department of Transportation's Rail Office, a 2nd application requesting High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HISPR) money to fund the preliminary engineering and environmental study needed to replace this old bridge, was submitted in April. The application was for \$11.3 million, with the City of Burlington committing \$350,000. Replacing this bridge is critically important to reduce Burlington's flood risk, because if large debris blockages occur upstream of the old bridge (as happened in 1995), water can back up 2-3 feet, making upstream flooding much worse and potentially enabling flood water to enter Burlington from the Sterling area along the Gages Slough corridor. We should hear something from the Federal Rail Administration on whether this project was selected for funding within the next few months.



1995 Skagit River Flood – BNSF Bridge failure



Concept for BNSF Skagit River Bridge replacement

Flood Storage in the Baker Hydroelectric Project

A concept that came out of the Puget Sound Energy Baker Hydroelectric Project relicensing process was to draw down the reservoirs in advance of a flood-producing weather system. This idea was accepted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and FERC directed PSE to provide a report about the viability of this concept within three years of the license being issued. That deadline is in October. Puget Sound Energy, through its consultant, Tetra Tech, has a study under way. The City is concerned that the study is obfuscating the issue through an analysis almost no one can understand, and not focusing on the practical issues that are most important. The concept for drawing down the reservoirs in advance of a flood event came from Puget Sound Energy's operation of the Project during the Skagit flood of record in October 2003. The City and other flood partners would simply like to see protocols put into place that ensure PSE does its best to operate the dams in a similar manner for future floods.

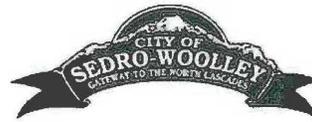


2003 Skagit River Flood – Upper Baker and Lower Baker dams spilling water after the Skagit River flood peak

The Mayors of Burlington, Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley and La Conner sent a letter to Puget Sound Energy's CEO, Kim Harris, requesting Puget's help to address this concern (see attached).

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April 14, 2011

Kimberly J. Harris
President and Chief Executive Officer
Puget Sound Energy
10885 N E Fourth Street, Suite 1200
Bellevue, WA 98004

RE: Baker Hydroelectric Project: Temporary Reservoir Drawdown Prior to a Skagit River Flood

Dear Chief Executive Officer Harris,

As you know, on October 17, 2008, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued a 50-year license to Puget Sound Energy to operate the Baker River Hydroelectric Project. License article 107(c) states:

Licensee shall consult with the ARG (Aquatics Resources Group), and specifically Skagit County and the Corps of Engineers, to develop means and operational methods to operate the Project reservoirs in a manner addressing imminent flood events and consistent with the requirements of the license. Appropriate means and methods may include, without limitation, additional reservoir drawdown below the maximum established flood pool. Licensee shall submit a report to the Commission within three years following license issuance describing any operational changes developed as a result of this consultation.

Puget Sound Energy is working on a report to address the requirements of license article 107(c) through its consultant, Tetra Tech. At a recent briefing to update the Aquatics Working Group, Tetra Tech provided preliminary results indicating virtually no benefit to drawing down the Baker Project reservoirs in advance of a flood. This conclusion was arrived at due to an analytical approach constrained artificially by provisions of an outdated water control manual, the perceived necessity to continually generate electricity through the critical flood peak time period (Puget Sound Energy has already indicated its willingness to shut down generation during the Skagit river flood peak), and additional project outflow constraints contained within the license.

We are concerned with this approach. What is needed in this critically important matter of public safety is a collaborative, responsible and responsive set of protocols that provide a straight-forward way to temporarily maximize the Project's ability to reduce flood damage. Consistent with Settlement Agreement paragraphs 4.1.1, 4.1.2, and License Article 107(c), the simple goal is to employ reasonable best efforts to draw down the Baker reservoirs to identified target levels in advance of a large Skagit river flood

event, and then operate the Project in such a way as to minimize project outflow (to zero if possible), during the critical few hours of the Skagit river flood peak. This concept was developed from analysis of real-world Project operation preceding the October 2003 flood of record. The idea of drawing down the reservoirs in advance of a large flood event made sense to Puget Sound Energy and Skagit County, as this approach provided a pathway to achieve additional flood control only when it was actually needed, thereby increasing operational and environmental flexibility. We appreciate that Puget Sound Energy demonstrated the feasibility of this approach with outstanding results during the largest flood ever recorded on the Skagit River in October, 2003.

Can protocols be developed to address both environmental and public safety concerns, consistent with the new license? Yes. One protocol, for example, might be to set up a process to alert and convene the Aquatics Resources Group (or the Baker River Coordinating Committee) in advance of a Skagit flood for the purpose of determining a course of action. And, in most cases (such as the recent minor flood events in the fall of 2010) no action will be needed to draw down the reservoirs, because precedent reservoir levels will adequately handle the incoming flood within all of the license constraints. Advances in weather forecasting technology will help provide sound information upon which to base drawdown decisions. Our cities support this type of collaborative effort in order to ensure we are addressing the public safety and environmental issues related to flood control. We know Puget Sound Energy also shares this collaborative commitment, which is consistent with the intent of the license.

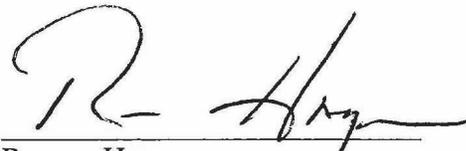
In summary, we are requesting the emphasis of the current study be redirected toward analyzing how to achieve the draw down as required under the settlement agreement, and zero project outflow during the critical few hours before and after a Skagit River flood peak, and developing specific protocols which contain provisions for an inclusive and collaborative decision-making process for imminent flood emergency reservoir drawdown.

We look forward to Puget Sound Energy's response at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



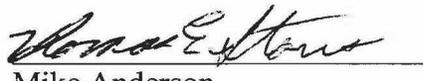
Ed Brunz
Mayor, City of Burlington



Ramon Hayes
Mayor, Town of La Conner



Bud Norris
Mayor, City of Mount Vernon

for 

Mike Anderson
Mayor, City of Sedro-Woolley

c: Skagit County Board of Commissioners

There continues to be much more going on with this issue than we have room to print here. Please feel free to contact Public Works Director Chal Martin at cmartin@ci.burlington.wa.us any time you need the most recent information.

Citizens Patrol in Full Swing

The Burlington Police Community Resource Citizens Patrol Unit is up and running as eleven volunteers complete training to assist the department and our community in a number of vital areas.

Volunteers are a welcome addition to the department and assist staff when patrolling residential neighborhoods, parks and business districts. As an additional set of eyes for police, volunteer patrols report on observed suspicious activity, graffiti tagging, and check the physical security of designated properties.

In addition, volunteer staff assists the department with performing designated records functions and the transfer of sensitive materials to and from the 911 dispatch center, courts and prosecutor's office.

Both George Edmundson and Bill Sparks say they volunteer to give back to their community and to augment the duties of the police department.

So when you see our "Citizens on Patrol" give them a wave and your thanks for helping make Burlington a wonderful place to live, do business, or to visit.



Volunteers Bill Sparks (L) and George Edmundson (R) prepare for duty

CITY CONTACTS

General Information755-0531
Mayor (*home*).....755-1406

CITY COUNCIL

Bill Aslett757-4539
Tonya Bieche757-1020
Edie Edmundson.....757-4575
Chris Loving755-9245
Ted Montgomery.....757-2786
Steve Sexton.....755-9600
Joanne Valentine755-0234

CITY DEPARTMENTS

Building755-0077
Buildings & Grounds757-3450
Cemetery707-2492
Finance755-0531
Fire (*business*)755-0261
Legal755-9473
Library755-0760
Municipal Court755-0492
Parks & Recreation755-9649
Planning/Permit Center.....755-9717
Police (*business*).....755-0921
Public Works/Engineering.....755-9715
Sewer757-4085
Street757-4214

EMERGENCY 911



833 S. Spruce Street
Burlington WA 98233

Phone: 360-755-0531
Fax: 360-755-9565
E-mail: cityhall@ci.burlington.wa.us

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www.ci.burlington.wa.us



FLOOD & NATURAL HAZARD REDUCTION PUBLIC INFORMATION BULLETIN #37

Spring 2011



This Bulletin is being sent to you because your property has been determined to be in the floodplain.

Everyone in Burlington should already be prepared for disaster because of living in the floodplain, and that includes earthquakes that could result in flooding in the event of a problem at one of the upriver dams. The City is in the process of updating the Emergency Plan to be more comprehensive, after the Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, and there is no doubt that everyone needs to keep that Emergency Kit updated and have your family plan organized at all times!

Burlington is in partnership with Dike District #12 as work continues on enlarging the levees so that they will qualify for 100-year flood protection under federal standards. The final project design will add height to the improved levees as needed to comply with the final results of decisions made on the new Flood Insurance Rate Maps that are now in the appeal process. The timeline for changes to the maps is uncertain because of the appeals and because FEMA is changing their methodology for setting the 100-year Base Flood Elevations. This change will hopefully lead to more accurate results and there will be some credit given in the computer model for the existing levees.

Local Flood Hazard Areas

There are three flood zones in the City Limits of Burlington, the Floodway (river side of the levee), the 100 Year Flood Zone and the Special Flood Risk Zone. Most of Burlington is in the 100 Year Flood Zone.

The Special Flood Risk Zone includes all land within 300 feet of the landward toe of the levee. All structures must be designed so that floodwaters can pass underneath and there is no occupied space below one foot above the 100 year flood elevation, unless the site is within 100 feet of the levee where nothing can be built. All property in Gages Slough that is three feet or more below the 100 year flood elevation was designated as Special Flood Risk in the mid-1980's as part of a negotiating process over the uniquely complex Skagit River delta area when the Flood Insurance Rate Maps were finalized. The status of Gages Slough will be revisited when new base flood elevation maps are finalized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The goal for Burlington is to get credit for the levees when the 100-year flood elevations are established on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps. This is only possible if the levees are certified as having 100-year flood protection and the work is accredited by FEMA. The process will take quite a few more years to complete, and in the meanwhile, efforts to get FEMA to use the most accurate data in setting new base flood elevations are underway, with an appeal in process. It is a very difficult challenge because of the federal regulatory framework.

Levee enlargement work started in 1990 and earthwork is still underway. Land acquisition and environmental review are also moving ahead for setting the levees back through the three-bridge corridor (Railroad bridge, Old 99 bridge, and Interstate 5 bridge) to protect the urban areas of Burlington and Mount Vernon in a 100-year flood event.

Flood Safety & Disaster Preparedness

Every home needs to be prepared and STAY PREPARED! Review your Flood procedure at home with your household and take the time to put your Emergency Preparedness Kit together, or check your flashlight batteries in your existing kit. Remember, a supply of drinking water, emergency food and first aid kit are the bare minimums, along with flashlights. In addition to the basic three day supply of food and water, consider having supplies for sheltering for up to two weeks. Keep a small “grab and go” kit for your place of work with food, water, first aid supplies. For the emergency kit in the car, add flares, jumper cables and seasonal supplies.

There is an excellent FEMA publication entitled “Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness” available. This publication offers disaster information for natural hazards, technological hazards and terrorism. It will guide you for preparation in advance and recovery from a disaster. If you want to order a free copy for your home, call 1-800-480-2520. On the internet, <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/> is the website link. A copy is available in the Burlington Public Library. **THIS COVERS THE BASIC DISASTER SUPPLIES KIT IN DETAIL.**

Earthquakes are an example of a disaster that cannot be predicted and that is not seasonal. Be prepared at all times!

Substantial Improvement/Damage Requirements

The National Flood Insurance Program requires that if the cost of reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other improvements to a building equals or exceeds 50% of the building's market value, then the building must meet the construction requirements for a new building. Substantially damaged buildings must also be brought up to the same standard. The major issue is elevating the structure one foot above the 100 year flood elevation, along with all mechanical equipment, ductwork and electrical equipment, and installing properly located and sized vents. However, if you are located in the Gages Slough Special Flood Risk Zone, “breakaway walls” are required below the 100 year flood elevation, and they must be designed by a licensed structural engineer.

Natural & Beneficial Functions of Floodplains

Filling property to increase elevation in the floodplain is allowed today, but the long term goal is to minimize fill to protect fish and wildlife habitat. Burlington supports habitat improvements in the floodplain, and the Gages Slough restoration projects are a major effort in the city. Storm water quality monitoring in Burlington clearly shows that better water quality treatment systems are needed and this is a major focus of the surface water utility. The use of natural rain gardens is one of the ideas included in the low impact development approach that is being promoted as a way to get storm water runoff back into the ground, and to clean up water quality.

The Gages Slough habitat management plan has identified locations for restoration and water quality improvement projects, and one new mitigation project was planted this spring at the site of an old garbage dump, funded by the Burlington Parks Foundation. The community is working towards the goal of clean water entering the Skagit River as the top priority, along with improving public access to habitat areas.

Protecting agricultural lands is part of protecting the Natural and Beneficial Functions of Floodplains. The city has implemented the Burlington Agricultural Heritage Credit program which is a density bonus credit option that will help raise funds for farmland preservation in exchange for increased residential density in mixed use business and commercial areas of the city.

Key elements of the Skagit County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan include protecting existing urban areas and preserving farmland and open space, looking at a variety of measures through the delta area to the mouth of the Skagit River, carefully coordinating and managing the hydroelectric power dams in the river system during a flood event, permanently moving homes and development rights out of the floodway, improving the environment for wildlife, and creating new public access opportunities to improve everyone's quality of life.

Flood Warning System

Each and every citizen has a role to play in the event of a flood. **BE PREPARED!!!** The Burlington Flood Emergency Team prepares and coordinates activities needed to be ready for any flood event with the involvement of all the responsible agencies.

The procedure for warning the public is coordinated through the Skagit County Department of Emergency Management. The Emergency Alert System is activated when necessary and includes the following local radio stations:

KBRC - 1430 AM ■ KWLE - 1340 AM ■ KAPS - 660 AM

If evacuation is necessary, there will also be door-to-door notification and loudspeakers broadcasting from public safety vehicles in the neighborhood. Flaggers will be stationed at key intersections along the Evacuation Route to direct traffic.

Today, there are three neighborhoods in the Neighbor-to-Neighbor notification plan for very early warning. Contact your neighbors to ask if they want to be part of taking responsibility for each other, through a simple Telephone Tree, and call the Planning Department to get on the list. Now is the perfect time to identify your block captains and work together to **BE PREPARED**.

Flood Insurance

Any property owner in the City of Burlington is eligible to obtain Flood Hazard Insurance, since the city participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. Purchasing or refinancing a home will trigger a requirement for flood insurance by the lender. Coverage in the event of flooding is not included in typical homeowner's insurance policies. Flood insurance is available through your own agency or broker and includes flooding from ponding/drainage problems, snowmelt flooding, runoff on hillsides, or any flooding involving surface water. Contents of the building are a separate addition to the policy. There is limited coverage available for flood-related erosion and mudslide. Replacement cost coverage is available for principal residences. *Concerned about high Flood Insurance Rates?* You may qualify for a substantial reduction if you have an Elevation Certificate that shows your home or business is located at or above the 100 year flood elevation. You will have to retain the services of a Licensed Engineer to complete the paperwork, unless an Elevation Certificate is on file already with the Building Department, so please check here first.

Lowering flood insurance premiums: Not only should the lowest floor be elevated but make sure that the floor of the crawlspace meets Technical Bulletin 11-01. Flood insurance rates are higher for buildings with crawlspaces that are two feet or more below the lowest adjacent exterior grade. Also make sure that all mechanical equipment is elevated above the Base Flood Elevation. This includes ductwork, heat pumps, furnaces, and propane tanks or oil tanks. Make sure any garages that have the floor below BFE are also vented along with the crawlspace.

Property Protection Measures

Let's get started on improving flood protection in your home! Staff is available to provide site specific flood and flood-related data, make site visits to review flood, drainage and sewer problems and to advise and assist on retrofitting techniques.

Stop by the Permit Center or give the Building Department a call at 755-0077 and let the city provide you with technical assistance on improving flood protection in your home. A site visit will be scheduled at your convenience to put a checklist together for home flood protection improvements. Staff is also available from the Public Works Department if additional assistance is needed to assist with drainage and sewer problems.

If you want to do your own research, here are some of the recommended FEMA technical bulletins that you will find at the Burlington Public Library and the Building Department for your use:

- Homeowner's Guide to Retrofitting, FEMA-312
- Design Manual for Retrofitting Flood-prone Residential Structures, FEMA-114
- Protecting Building Utilities from Flood Damage, FEMA-348

Take a few minutes to look over the possible areas where you may need to floodproof important parts of your home. A good example is protecting utility systems. This is one of the easiest and least expensive retrofitting methods to accomplish. Whether it is elevating, relocating, or anchoring; items such as electrical panel boxes, furnaces, water heaters, washers/dryers and heating fuel tanks are typically very cost effective items to upgrade. There are also recommendations for drainage and crawl space improvements.

If you have a newer (post 1985) home, check to be sure these items have been taken care of when the home was constructed. Identify the potential for moving essential items and furniture to upper floors or the attic of your home. Materials like sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, and lumber handy for emergency waterproofing can already be on hand. This action will help minimize the amount of damage caused by floodwaters and requires minimal storage space.

Map Determination & Library Information

A map determination is figuring out where the 100 year flood elevation is located relative to the first occupied floor of your home or business. This information is used to prepare an Elevation Certificate. A citywide system of elevation benchmarks is maintained in the Building Department. An average of an additional \$200 in savings is possible on your flood insurance policy if you have an elevation certificate, in addition to the 25% rate reduction available in Burlington on October 1, 2009, as a result of community participation in the federal Community Rating System program. There are issues with lenders and flood insurance providers, and if you feel that you are not getting good information, please contact the city and we will try to help.

Information on other flood improvements, such as elevating your building, filling the crawl space, or floodproofing the lower portion, is available from the City and in the Burlington Public Library. There is a flood reference area in the library and staff will assist in directing you to the information you need.

Every land use newsletter includes a flood and natural hazard mitigation topic. Call the Planning Department at 755-9717 to get on the mailing list! Take the time to participate because your ideas will be taken seriously and you will have a say in the future of your community.

Floodplain Development Permit Requirements

Before you build, add fill, or make changes to your property and structures, be sure to contact the Planning and Building Departments to determine if any permits or approvals are necessary. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the insurance industry make frequent changes in the interpretation of floodplain standards, and you need to be sure you are using the most current information for any construction project.

**DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH
FLOODED AREAS.**

Drainage System Maintenance

This is the eighth year of water quality studies in Gages Slough and wetland restoration projects to improve water quality are a high priority. The commitment to long term maintenance, monitoring and habitat improvement is beginning to show, with the success of the first two wetland restoration projects that are beginning to mature. Clean water, efficient flow of water when needed, and a quality environment are the goals. Gages Slough and the Skagit River are important amenities for the community. Burlington is fortunate to have the Skagit Conservation District as a partner in Gages Slough water quality sampling.

The drainage maintenance and inspection program is part of flood hazard mitigation. Every year, all detention ponds, pipes, catch basins and other drainage control structures are inspected and corrections required as needed to ensure that the capacity of the ponds is maintained and that the ability of the system to clean the storm water is retained, in addition to inspection and maintenance of the city street system. The public drainage system, including culverts, pipes and ditches is well maintained. Gages Slough is maintained at each street intersection and culvert location. A well maintained drainage system that functions in small storms will provide the best assistance possible in large storms and floods, by quickly and efficiently carrying the excess water out of town.

*Thank you for respecting the signs that state “**No Dumping – thank you**” at public access points to Gages Slough! Each property owner along the Slough is responsible for cleaning up any litter or trash that is on their property. The problem of illegal dumping of yard waste in Gages Slough and the problem of trash dumped at points of public access to the River can only be solved if everyone helps out. It is illegal to dump or to fill along Gages Slough or the Skagit River. You may report illegal dumping (this includes yard waste) in the Slough, by calling the Planning Department at 755-9717, or in writing.*

**CITY OF BURLINGTON
Planning Department**

**833 S. Spruce Street
Burlington WA 98233**

Phone: (360) 755-9717

bplanning@ci.burlington.wa.us