



## King County

**Dow Constantine**

King County Executive

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September 29, 2023

The Honorable Dave Upthegrove  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

This letter transmits the 2023 Rural Flooding Assessment Report, in response to Ordinance 19546, Section 80, Proviso P1, and a proposed Motion that would, if enacted, acknowledge receipt of the report.

This report provides an assessment of the three King County programs that address rural flooding: the Neighborhood Drainage Assistance Program (NDAP), the Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program (ADAP), and a Stormwater Capital Improvement Program, known as the Natural Drainage Flooding (NDF) Program.

Assessments of the ADAP and the NDF Program concluded they are operating consistent with their respective authorizing legislation, therefore, no changes to these programs are recommended. Given the changes to the unincorporated area since 1993, when NDAP was created, the changes in the type and scope of drainage complaints received by the program, and state law constraints, the report identifies a need to update NDAP's scope and priority criteria for project selection. The assessment also highlighted that none of the current County programs meet the needs of private landowners experiencing flooding problems in the natural environment; creation of an Integrated Drainage Program (IDP) to meet this need is recommended.

The complaint-based nature of the programs has led to inequities in the distribution of program services. A proactive effort to increase awareness of the programs, how they are accessed, and how they can benefit landowners, historically underserved communities, and non-English-speaking communities is essential to rectifying existing inequities in program resource distribution.

Potential changes to the King County Code would allow for more efficient, focused flood responses and the implementation of multi-objective projects that, in addition to providing flood hazard protection or solving drainage issues, also improve aquatic habitat conditions. The

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2024 update to the King County Comprehensive Plan, which is currently being developed, will provide an opportunity to explore potential code changes.

Finally, the programs would benefit from a standard, objective set of criteria to guide project selection and prioritization. These criteria must reflect the requirements of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) for the use of surface water management fees and the multi-benefit priorities of the Clean Water Healthy Habitat initiative, further Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) objectives, and evaluate life cycle costs.

Thank you for your consideration of this report and proposed Motion. It is important that County services are clear, effective, and timely for rural King County residents who face recurrent flooding challenges.

If your staff have questions, please contact Josh Baldi, Division Director of the Water and Land Resources Division of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-477-9440.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers  
    ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff  
          Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council  
Karan Gill, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive  
Penny Lipsou, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive  
Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)  
Josh Baldi, Division Director, Water and Land Resources Division, DNRP