

Key takeaways from February land use presentation Chehalis Basin Board

- When considering the climate change scenario used in the Programmatic EIS¹, hydraulic modeling of the mainstem Chehalis River forecasts that the synthetic “100-year” floodplain on the mainstem will be larger at the end of this century than the same floodplain now/under current climate conditions. This means more acres of land would be inundated than currently, at varying depths. The model also predicts that if a dam and the airport levee improvements were implemented under the future climate change scenario, the resulting 100-year floodplain would still be larger than the current 100 year floodplain. The extent of increases and decreases vary across the basin.
- The Build Out Analysis done for the Programmatic EIS estimated development potential/population growth in the mainstem floodplain into 2120. There are 2000+ *existing* parcels² (924 are residential) that could develop in the future. Based on estimated development rates of between 4 and 9 new structures per year in the floodplain³, up to another 900 structures could exist in the mainstem floodplain in 2120⁴. At the high end of this estimate, the number of structures added in the floodplain (900) would be slightly less than the number of available residential lots (924).
- Very little subdivision is needed to accommodate predicted future floodplain development; land use management measures designed to minimize creation of future parcels in the modeled 100-year floodplain are not likely to be effective at limiting future development in the floodplain.
- About half of the developable parcels in the floodplain are located in cities and UGAs.
- The ability of counties in the basin to “upzone” parcels in rural areas in general, specifically lands that may no longer be inundated with implementation of a dam and the airport levee improvements, is limited by state law in many locations. For example in Lewis County, many portions of the mainstem floodplain are zoned as agricultural resource land. These lands are designated for long term agricultural use, and current state laws significantly restrict the ability of local jurisdictions to consider or allow other uses on these lands.

Resources:

“Pierce et. al.” [report](#): *Changes in the Chehalis Floodplain – 1938-2013*

PEIS Build Out [Analysis](#) (methodology on page 49 – Appendix D)

Office of Financial Management (OFM) population [forecast](#). The webpage outlines some of the components of population change considered. These include in- and out- migration, natural (births minus deaths), and estimates of housing units and types, school enrollment, and voter and auto registrations.

¹ Flood that is 60% larger than the current 100-year mainstem Chehalis River flood

² Does not account for parcels that could be created through subdivision

³ Based on census data

⁴ If the high rate of development occurred