

Cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam Flood Risk Mitigation Project Fact Sheet

The Cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam have applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) for funding to construct the Aberdeen-Hoquiam North Shore Levee project (Project). The proposed project would construct approximately 4.2 miles of earthen levees, concrete floodwalls, and raised roads across the two cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam to provide flood protection for low-lying parts of the cities.

What is the Purpose of the Project?

The purpose of this proposed project is to reduce flood hazards in parts of Aberdeen and Hoquiam between the Wishkah and Hoquiam Rivers and provide greater financial security to the communities by removing the majority of the area from the 500-year floodplain. The proposed project would be designed to provide protection in a 500-year event to over 3,100 homes, businesses, Tribal facilities, and critical infrastructure (including schools, government offices, emergency services, and health services). Flooding in the area has worsened over the years and the cities flood during King tides, when there is coastal storm surge, and when the surrounding rivers flood from heavy rains and snow melt.



Figure 1. Proposed Action



FEMA



What is the Project?

The Aberdeen-Hoquiam North Shore Levee project would include approximately 4.2 miles of earthen levees, concrete floodwalls, and raised roads across the two cities, between the Wishkah and Hoquiam Rivers. The levee would have openings for road crossings, driveways, boat launches, and shoreline access that would be closed with flood gates or stop logs in the event of a flood.

The proposed levee system would have two segments. The first would start at high ground near Stewart Field and Robert Gray Elementary School, in Aberdeen. It would follow the west bank of the Wishkah River towards the confluence with the Chehalis River. It would then turn west and follow the shoreline above the high tide line to near the intersection of West Heron Street and South Division Street. The second segment would follow the east bank of the Hoquiam River from approximately Ontario Street north to high ground near 16th Street and Broadway Avenue.

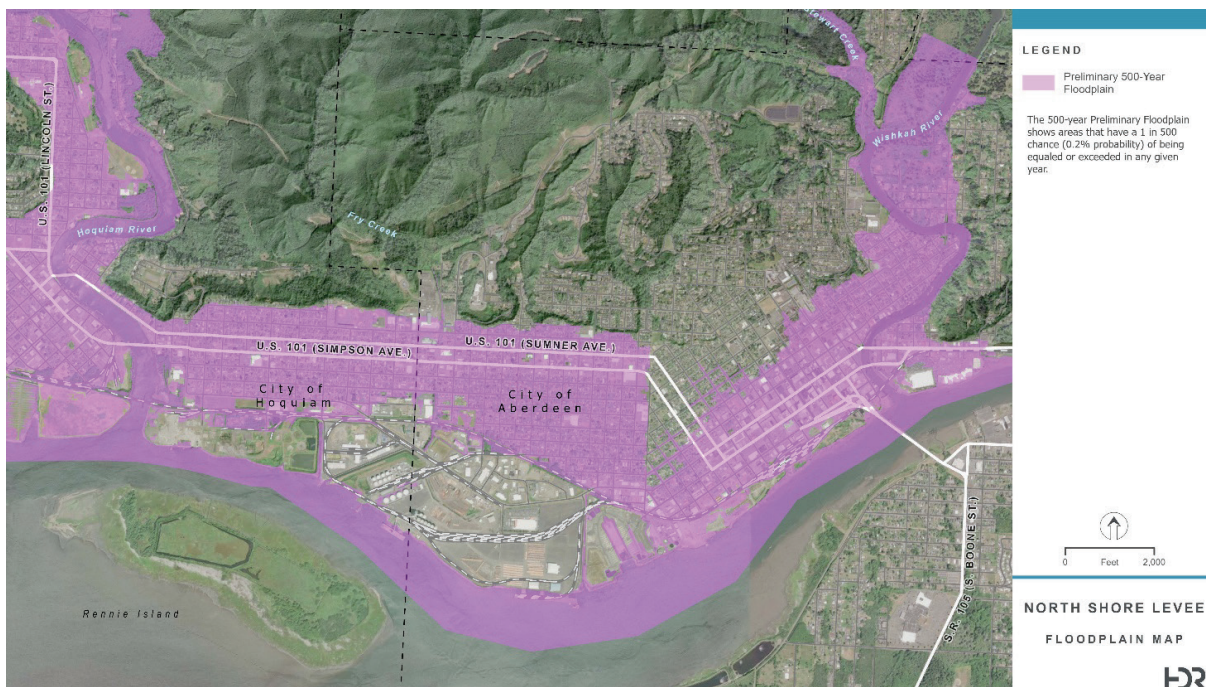


Figure 2. Area Flooded During 500-year Event

What is the Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Review?

FEMA is required by law to ensure that all projects that they fund comply with environmental and historic preservation laws, regulations, and Executive Orders. During the review process, FEMA evaluates the potential impacts of the project on the human and natural environment. FEMA will prepare an environmental document in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that will describe the existing environment, explain the environmental effects of the project and alternative actions, and identify mitigation measures to avoid significant impacts on the human or natural environment. The environmental document would be prepared per Department of Homeland Security Instruction 023-01-001-01 and FEMA Instruction 108-01-1.

Alternatives Considered

NEPA requires federal agencies to consider a range of reasonable alternatives to address the purpose and need for the proposed project. At least two alternatives would be evaluated—the no action alternative and the proposed action. FEMA is requesting input on other potential methods to address the purpose and need for the project. In addition, there are currently three options for the portion of the alignment along Market Street and the Wishkah River, and people are invited to comment on these options.

Option 1: Floodwall along Market Street

Option 1 would construct a concrete floodwall along the center of Market Street. There would be openings in the wall at all intersections that would be closed when a flood threatens.

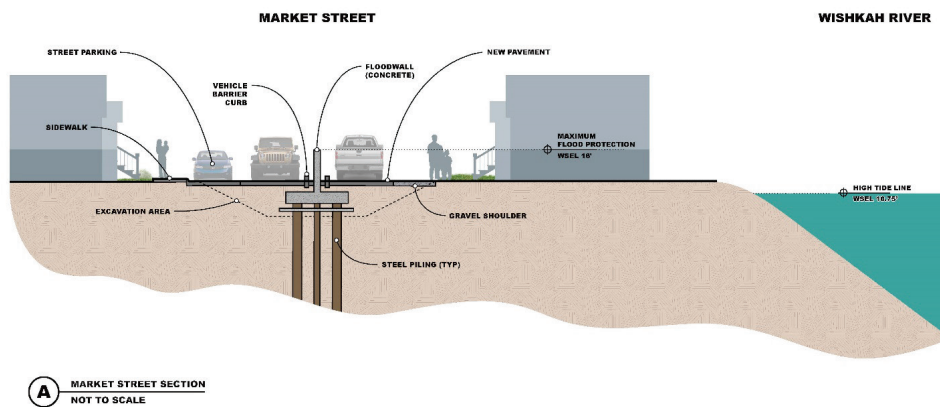


Figure 3. Floodwall along Market Street

Option 2: Floodwall along Wishkah Riverbank

Option 2 would construct a steel piling floodwall along the banks of the Wishkah River. There would be few openings for river access and easements would be needed to provide the city access to close the openings when a flood threatens and to conduct annual inspections.

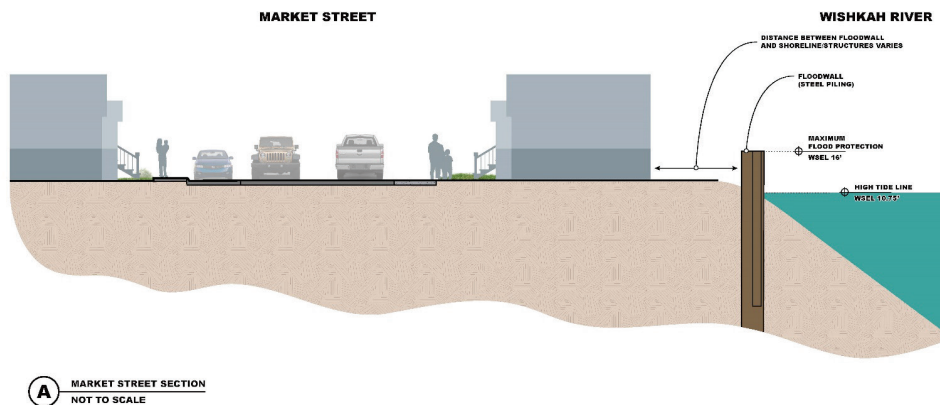


Figure 4. Floodwall along Wishkah Riverbank

Option 3: Earthen Levee

Option 3 would require purchasing properties in the area between Market Street and the Wishkah River. Residents would be provided with relocation assistance in compliance with federal law. Structures would be demolished, and an earthen berm would be constructed following the river. An open area would be maintained on both sides of the levee for maintenance access.

The environmental document will include the “no action” alternative as a comparison with the proposed action (i.e., the Project described above). The “no action” alternative would be the future condition if no action is taken to reduce flood hazards in west Aberdeen and east Hoquiam. Under this alternative, existing conditions would remain the same, but account for increased flood frequency, duration, and depth, with the associated potential for loss of life and property damage.

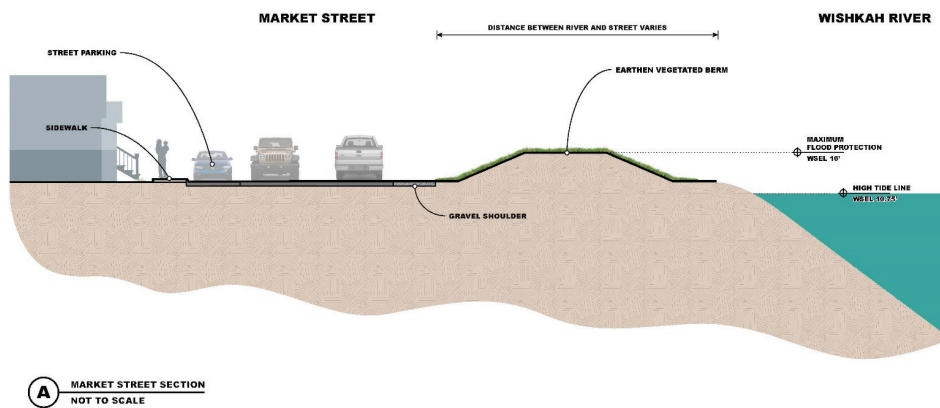


Figure 5. Earthen Levee

Potential Issues and Impacts

FEMA is requesting input on potential issues and impacts of the proposed levee. Some potential issues are listed here, and you are encouraged to share your thoughts and concerns with FEMA as described below.

- Raised road segments may require roads to be closed during construction.
- The levee may impact wetlands or riverbank habitats impacting fish and wildlife or water quality.
- Higher levee segments may block views or unrestricted access to the river. Access to docks will be maintained after construction; however, in areas where a floodwall is close to the riverbank, there would not be unrestricted access to the water.
- If there are too many openings in the levee, City staff may not be able to close all of them quickly in the event of a flood. If there are too few openings in the levee, shoreline or property access may be restricted.
- Annual operation and maintenance work, and any future repairs, would require access through private property.
- Construction would create noise and vibrations, temporary air emissions, increase truck traffic around the construction area, and may require some detours or traffic delays in some locations.

Opportunities for Public Comment

The public will have multiple opportunities to provide comments on the proposed project. The first occurs during this scoping phase, where the public is invited to comment on the scope of the environmental analysis, the proposed action, potential alternatives, and key issues to consider in the analysis. A public open house will be held on November 14, 2023, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Rotary Log Pavilion, 1401 Sargent Blvd, Aberdeen, WA 98520. Comments may be provided at the open house, in writing via email to fema-r10-ehp-comments@fema.dhs.gov, or in a virtual meeting space at <https://gather.cdmsmith.com/v/KNj9mLd5jxB>. The virtual open house will be available until the comment period ends.

Comments must be received by December 21, 2023.

At a future date, the public will be invited to provide input on the information and analyses in the draft environmental document.

For more information about the project, contact:

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Brian Shay, City Administrator, City of Hoquiam, BShay@cityofhoquiam.com



Scan to link to the virtual meeting room.