

The Proposed Levee System

Also known as the Local Actions Non-Dam (LAND) Alternative

About the proposed project

The Local Actions Non-Dam (LAND) Alternative is a proposed system of new and expanded levees, floodwalls, and drainage improvements primarily in and around Centralia and Chehalis that is intended to reduce flood-related damage in the upper Chehalis River Basin. This alternative is still in its early (approx. 10%) design phase.

The Chehalis Basin Board is evaluating whether LAND could be a possible alternative to the proposed Chehalis River flow-through dam for flood control near Pe Ell, or if some segments could be built in combination with the proposed flow-through dam to provide the greatest level of flood protection.

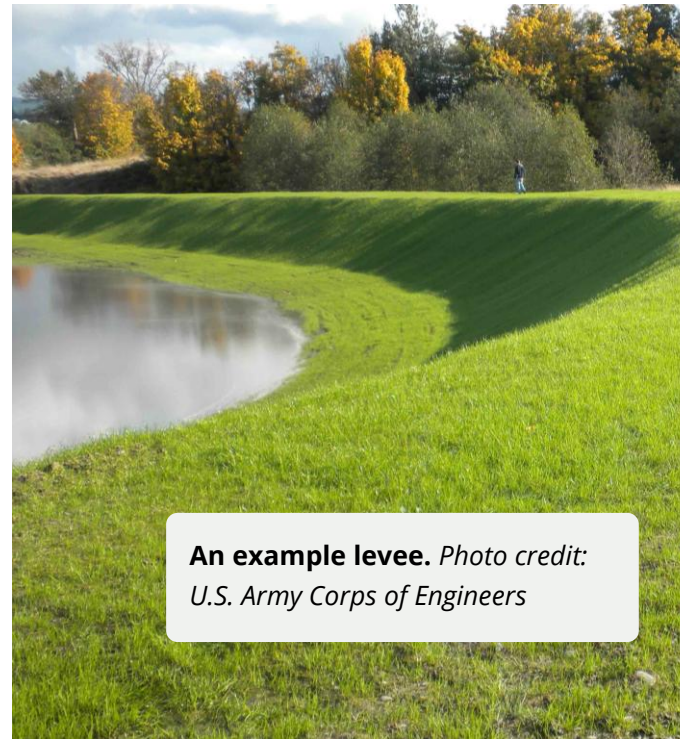
Potential benefits

If fully constructed, these proposed flood protection structures would:

- Protect over 2,000 homes and businesses
- Maintain and enhance emergency routes and road bypasses during floods
- Create a new recreational trail system that improve access to the river and that could connect to existing and proposed park systems
- Lower flood insurance premiums for landowners

Additionally, LAND is designed to have no or negligible impacts to downstream communities and to preserve aquatic habitat by providing room for the river to follow its natural processes.

Just like with the proposed flow-through dam, it won't be possible to protect all homes and businesses with these interventions, however the recommended long-term Chehalis Basin Strategy will include support from the Office of Chehalis Basin to floodproof, elevate, or relocate any structures that would still experience some flooding.



An example levee. *Photo credit:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*

Preliminary concept design

While general areas for the proposed LAND flood protection structures have been identified (shown in the included map), **it is still too early in design to know where the exact alignments would be**; the final alignments could be different based on future analysis. If the Chehalis Basin Board recommends the proposed system (all segments or a subset of them) be built, input from local cities, partners, and community members, as well as further technical studies, will help refine alignment location.

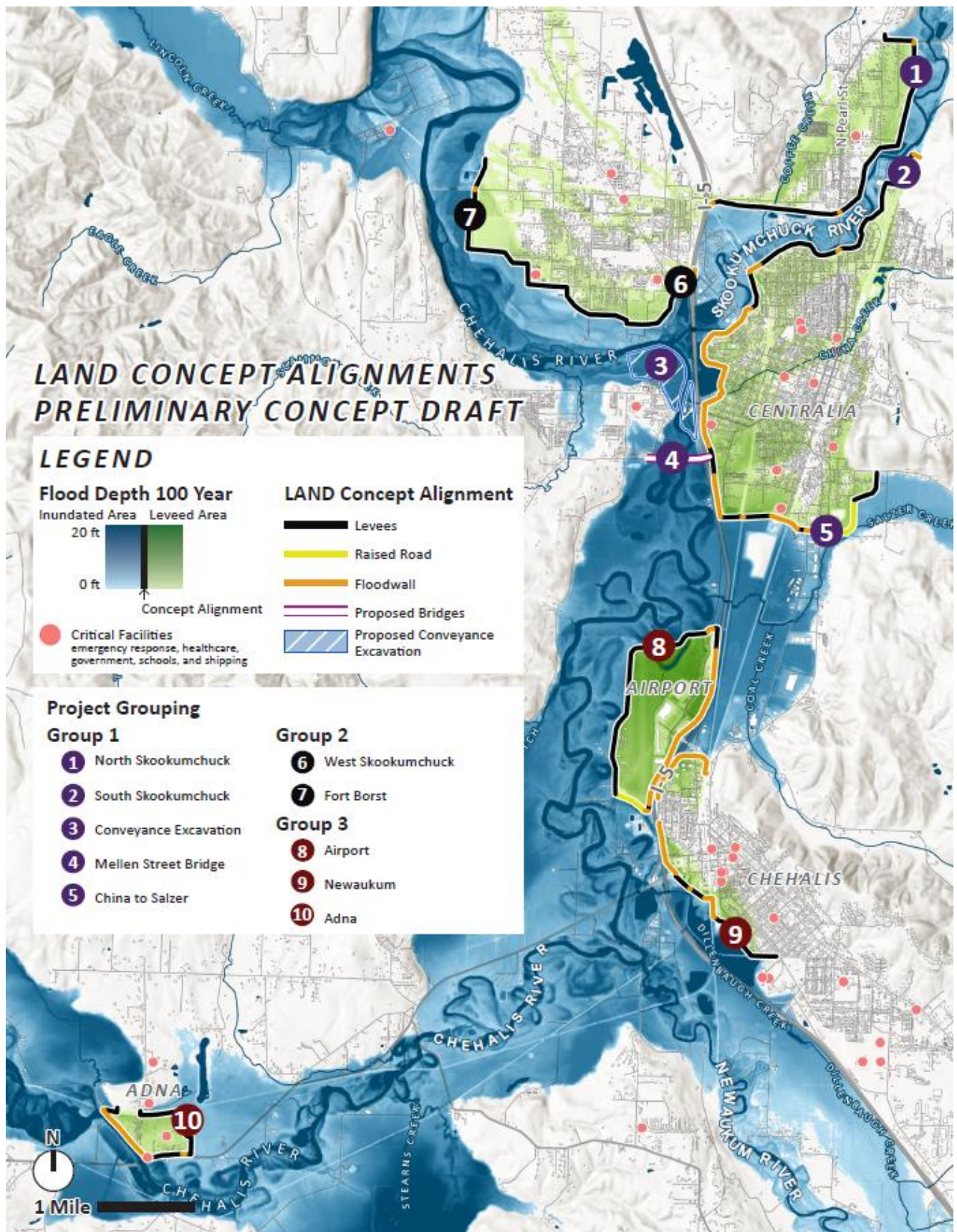
Proposed groupings

One of the goals of LAND is to develop a flood protection alternative that could be implemented fully or partially, at once or incrementally over time. To provide options for how the project could be divided, the design team developed groupings of the proposed levees (see the table and map).

In addition to levees and floodwalls, Group 1 includes excavation of approximately 800,000 cubic yards of material to improve flow in the Chehalis River (3), and removal and replacement of the Mellen Street Bridge (4), which currently restricts flow upstream during flood events.

As part of the long-term strategy development process, **the Chehalis Basin Board is considering all, some, and no segments of the proposed project** alongside other flood protection measures including the proposed Chehalis River flow-through dam for flood control.

- Group 1:**
 - (1) North Skookumchuck
 - (2) South Skookumchuck
 - (3) Improved Chehalis River Conveyance
 - (4) Mellen Street Bridge Replacement
 - (5) China Creek to Salzer Creek
- Group 2:**
 - (6) West Skookumchuck
 - (7) Fort Borst
- Group 3:**
 - (8) Airport
 - (9) Newaukum
 - (10) Adna



An example floodwall in Mt. Vernon, WA on the Skagit River. Photo credit: The Seattle Times



Preliminary cost estimate

Based on the current design, technical experts estimate the project could cost \$900 million - \$1.6 billion. This preliminary cost estimate factors in permitting and construction of the levees, reconstruction of the Mellen Street Bridge, and floodproofing, raising, or relocating of homes or businesses in the area that would still experience some flooding. For context, damage and disruption from the 2007 flood is estimated to have cost \$900 million.

Next steps

While many questions about the LAND alternative have been answered through technical studies in 2025, some important questions still remain. In 2026, the Chehalis Basin Board will provide a concrete plan on how it will address its remaining questions about major projects, including LAND, as part of the long-term Chehalis Basin Strategy. If the Board recommends any of the proposed LAND features in the future, several more steps would need to be completed before anything could be built, such as:

- Additional technical studies to advance design and narrow down cost estimates
- Community engagement to refine location of flood protection structures and determine feasibility
- Identification of project sponsor (e.g., local government or special district) and funding sources
- Environmental review and permitting

For more information



Learn more at <https://officeofchehalisbasin.com/LAND>
Questions? Email info@officeofchehalisbasin.com

