



**TO:** Mark Lauzier, Acting City Manager  
**FROM:** Sue Coffman, Building Official, Planning and Development Services  
Peter Huffman, Planning and Development Services  
**COPY:** Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee  
**SUBJECT:** Ordinance – Modifications to Title 2.02 Building Code to adopt new FEMA flood maps  
**DATE:** February 8, 2017

**SUMMARY:**

This proposed ordinance will make changes to Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) Title 2.02 Building Code to incorporate references to FEMA Region X's updated Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) that identify the Special Flood Hazard Areas within the City of Tacoma. The FIRM map will be effective March 7, 2017 and the City of Tacoma is required to adopt current floodplain management regulations to continue eligibility in the National Flood Insurance Program. The proposed code changes will also additionally incorporate the Puyallup Levee Overtopping Layer as a special flood hazard area. We are seeking recommendation for approval of the proposed ordinance from Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee.

**BACKGROUND:**

On December 1, 1983, the Department of Homeland's Security's FEMA issued a FIRM map that identified the Special Flood Hazard Areas, the areas subject to inundation by the base (1-percent-annual-chance) flood, within the City of Tacoma and surrounding communities. Recently, FEMA completed a re-evaluation of flood hazards for these areas, and on December 19, 2014, issued preliminary copies of the FIRM and Flood Insurance Study (FIS) report that identify existing flood hazards and Base Flood Elevations (BFEs). The proposed flood hazard determinations were published in the News Tribune and Federal Register and the statutory 90-day appeal period has ended with no appeals. Therefore, the final rule for these flood hazard determinations will become effective on March 7, 2017.

To comply with requirements under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1967 and to continue eligibility in the National Flood Insurance Program, the City of Tacoma is required to adopt these current floodplain management regulations. The floodplain management regulations are currently housed within TMC Chapter 2.02- Building Code, and this proposed ordinance will update the current regulations with the new requirements.

The City of Tacoma has been enforcing the 1983 FIRM map since March 25, 1987. In October 2005, through a letter of agreement with FEMA, the City also started enforcing new flood maps from FEMA's 2004 study. PDS later incorporated code changes in TMC Chapter 2.02 to adopt the maps from the 2007 study, which were based on 1990 Lidar topographic mapping and incorporated the NAVD 88 datum. Both the 2004 and 2007 studies also included the Puyallup Levee Overtopping Layer.

The 2017 FIRM maps include higher BFEs in coastal areas, and will therefore require buildings and structures to be built at higher elevations. Additionally, some of the coastline flood zones are changing from V zone to Coastal A zone, which will provide a relief from additional flood zone construction standards for these zones. The 2017 FIRM maps do not include the Puyallup Levee Overtopping layer because this part of the flood study is in litigation; and therefore may be adjusted based on additional studies that FEMA is completing in this area. As the flood study will likely be completed within a few years and the portion within the City of Tacoma will likely incorporate most of the area of the Puyallup



Levee Overtopping Layer in its current boundaries, PDS is recommending inclusion of this area in the special flood hazard areas that the City will enforce with their flood zone regulations.

**ISSUE:**

We are requesting a recommendation from the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee to Council to adopt the proposed ordinance changes to TMC Chapter 2.02.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

No alternatives are being proposed.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Planning and Development Services currently regulates construction within flood hazard areas through TMC Chapter 2.02 that references the 1983 and 2007 FIRM maps. PDS will continue regulate flood zones within the City of Tacoma and will use the new 2017 FIRM maps along with the Puyallup Levee Overtopping layer. The new 2017 maps include higher base flood elevations along coastal areas and some changes to flood zone designations. It is not anticipated the proposed code changes will have a fiscal impact.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

We recommend adopting the proposed ordinance changes to adopt the new 2017 FIRM maps, including the Puyallup Levee Overtopping layer, into TMC Chapter 2.02.