



City Council

Amend Olympia Flood Plain Management Ordinance to Meet FEMA Requirements

Agenda Date: 10/9/2012
Agenda Item Number: 4.D
File Number: 12-0514

Type: ordinance **Version:** 1 **Status:** Passed

Title

Amend Olympia Flood Plain Management Ordinance to Meet FEMA Requirements

Body

Issue:

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has completed review of the City of Olympia Flood Plain Management Ordinance and the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for Thurston County. FEMA Region 'X' requires the City of Olympia to adopt these changes and submit them by October 16, 2012.

Staff Contact:

Tom Hill, Department of Community Planning and Development, Building Official,
360.753.8486

Presenter(s):

Tom Hill

City Manager's Recommendation:

Hear testimony on the proposed Flood Plain Management Ordinance. If no substantive issues are raised in the Public Hearing, move to approve the ordinance on first reading and forward to second reading.

Background and Analysis:

In early 2011 FEMA began the process to review and digitally update the Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Thurston County, including the City of Olympia. As part of their effort, FEMA reviewed the City of Olympia's current Flood Plain Management Ordinance.

The review of the current ordinance with FEMA's recommendations was completed August 10, 2012. The next step is for the City Council to conduct a public hearing on the amendments and adopt the changes in time for the ordinance to be effective and returned to FEMA by October 16, 2012. The City must adopt the FEMA maps to avoid suspension from the National Flood Insurance Program.

The receipt of the August delivery of the City of Olympia Flood Plain Management Ordinance is in conjunction with a requested expedited review by the Washington State Department of Commerce in order to meet the October 16, 2012 deadline.

The State Environmental Policy Act Checklist (SEPA) notice was issued on August 30,

2012. Notice was sent to the Washington State Department of Commerce pursuant to RCW 36.70A.106, and that agency granted expedited statutory review on September 17, 2012.

Edits of the current Flood Plain Management by FEMA addressed the following issues:

- FEMA amended a few definitions clarifying that Olympia does not have 'V' zones, or coastal high hazard areas.
- FEMA clearly emphasized that floodways within Olympia are identified with the Flood Insurance Rate Maps.
- FEMA added information that the City of Olympia Flood Hazard Study and maps are located within Thurston County.
- FEMA added a severability clause.

Scope of Work / Sea Level Rise:

The work which FEMA performed was solely for review and a digital mapping update. This work did not include a review or update of their hydrologic 1970's studies which establishes flood elevations.

However, analysis completed by the City in 2011 suggests that the downtown area may have appreciable risk of flooding under existing as well as future sea level rise conditions. Upon adoption of these maps, staff will commence the formal process for a FEMA review of the additional information we have regarding our downtown flood concerns.

Neighborhood/Community/Business Interests:

Because the City of Olympia is covered under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), compliance with FEMA's mandatory program requirements enables our community to remain in compliance and avoid suspension from the NFIP.

Options:

1. Conduct a public hearing on the proposed Floodplain Management Ordinance, and pass the ordinance to second reading.

By approving the ordinance, Olympia will meet requirements for the National Flood Insurance Program, and can also request a review by FEMA of recent flood risk analysis in the downtown area.

2. Close the Public Hearing and request additional information.

Financial Impact:

None. If adopted, the NFIP is maintained for the community.