



City Hall
601 4th Avenue E.
Olympia, WA 98501
360-753-8244

City Council

Approval of Ordinance Adopting Sea Level Rise Flood Damage Reduction Regulations

Agenda Date: 9/20/2016
Agenda Item Number: 4.F
File Number: 16-0890

Type: ordinance **Version:** 2 **Status:** Passed

Title

Approval of Ordinance Adopting Sea Level Rise Flood Damage Reduction Regulations

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

The Land Use and Environment Committee recommends the City Council approve adoption of the Sea Level Rise Flood Damage Reduction Ordinance.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve the adoption of the Sea Level Rise Flood Damage Reduction Ordinance on second reading.

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve additions to OMC, Chapter 16 for regulations related to Sea Level Rise for buildings in the designated downtown area providing protection of buildings through floodproofing to a maximum 16' elevation.

Staff Contact:

Todd Cunningham, Building Official, Community Planning & Development, 360.753.8486

Presenter(s):

None - Consent Calendar Item.

Background and Analysis:

Background and analysis has not changed from first to second reading.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-established flood hazard areas of the City of Olympia are subject to periodic inundation that can result in property damage, loss of property, creation of health and safety hazards, disruption of commerce and governmental services, extraordinary public expenditures for flood protection and relief, and impairment of the tax base. All of which adversely affect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the city. Downtown Olympia has a history of nuisance flooding during heavy storms, high winds and tidal events. These events

can be exacerbated by climate change effects, specifically conditions created by long-term sea level rise.

Over the long-term there is a concern for continued Sea Level Rise (SLR) related to climate change and the potential to increase flooding in downtown Olympia. While it remains difficult to predict the level or timing of SLR, the City continues to increase its understanding of Olympia-specific implications. The City Council has been briefed numerous times on the subject of SLR and the need for protection of buildings related to SLR. These SLR regulations are a first step in providing for some level of protection addressing SLR now, while Olympia continues to address the implications of SLR in the long-term as climate change scientific analysis predicts.

Currently Olympia is vulnerable to flooding during relatively short-term periods in the winter months which result in, one or two-hour long flooding events. Fortunately, these events are predictable allowing staff to prepare for them. City staff closely monitors weather events reacting to flood hazards as they occur. As SLR is expected to increase, the City will need to continue efforts in addressing flooding events caused or exacerbated by these flooding events.

On July 21, 2016 the FEMA Flood Damage and Sea Level Rise ordinance provisions were presented to the City of Olympia Land Use and Environment Committee for review. The Committee approved the items as presented and moved the items forward to City Council for consent. Although staff presented the committee both the proposed Flood Damage Prevention and the Sea Level Flood Damage Reduction ordinance provisions together, the two subjects are two separate ordinances developed as recommended by our Legal Department and our Building Official in order to provide clarity of application between the two and to not confuse the specific requirements of each with one another - although there are some overlapping areas related to both.

The FEMA Flood Damage ordinance regulations are more restrictive and require specific standards for floodproofing construction practices as required by FEMA. The City's Sea Level Rise ordinance provisions will allow for flexibility in floodproofing, which allow our development community the ability of having choices in the application of floodproofing. FEMA provisions are specific as to the required elevations mapped by FEMA related to the lowest floor of any building governed, while the Sea Level Rise requirements are specific to a maximum of 16 feet.

These differences are demonstrated on the attachment which shows the variation and difference between the two. The Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance was presented for a first reading on August 16, 2016, while the Seal Level Rise Ordinance discussed with this item will be presented at the August 30, 2016, City Council meeting for first reading.

Community/Neighborhood Interests:

As part of flood damage reduction related to the Sea Level Rise elevation of 16'; staff has reached out to various construction community groups such as the Olympia Master Builders, Architects and Citizens in order to provide an understanding of what changes are being proposed to the subject of sea level rise. Olympia Master Builders invited staff to their Government Affairs Committee meeting on 6-30-2016 where the City's Building Official provided a presentation to the members related to flood requirements and sea level rise provisions. Planning staff continues to be actively engaged with the participants of the downtown strategy meetings where discussion of flood prevention and sea level rise continues to be an active discussion item with our development community and citizens.

Options:

1. Approve the adoption of the Sea Level Rise Flood Damage Reduction Ordinance.
2. Do not approve the adoption of the Sea Level Rise Flood Damage Reduction Ordinance.

Financial Impact:

The associated fiscal impact is included in department budget for 2016.

Attachments:

- Map which outlines the downtown 16 foot sea level rise elevation area.