



INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
FROM: Henry Hash, Public Works Director *HH*
BY: Ryan Larson, Senior Program Manager
CC: Mayor Ekberg
DATE: March 23, 2018
SUBJECT: Proposed FEMA Flood Map Update

ISSUE

Provide an update on FEMA's effort to update and modernize Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

BACKGROUND

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is working to modernize and update the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) that are used to regulate development within designated Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) floodplain management regulations mandate that flood insurance be purchased for structures in SFHAs that carry a mortgage backed by a federally regulated lender or servicer. In addition, future development is regulated within the SFHA and all proposed structures must meet FEMA regulations for both flood protection and environmental impacts. The City implements the requirements of the NFIP through our permit process. The current regulatory FIRMs were last updated in 1995.

The goals of this map updating process are:

- Update the FIRM to reflect changes to the developed and natural environments
- Use improved technology and knowledge to better reflect flood hazards
- Update the FIRM to a digital format so they can be included in GIS and web-based images
- Reflect actual flooding risks and improve citizen flood hazard awareness

DISCUSSION

The primary change to the FIRMs that affect the City of Tukwila is that they will contain a designation for seclusion mapping. Any floodplain that is protected by a non-certified levee will be outlined in a solid black line with arrows pointing to the secluded area. The actual flood designation will not change at this time but may be changed to a SFHA if levee certification is not provided to FEMA prior to the next FIRM revision.

As part of the public review and appeal process, an Open House was hosted by the City of Kent on Wednesday, March 21, 2018 for all jurisdictions within the Green/Duwamish Basin. Letters were sent to approximately 1,400 businesses and property owners in Tukwila and within the affected seclusion area. Staff from neighboring jurisdictions including Tukwila were available to answer questions from the public during the Open House.

The next step is for FEMA to start a 10-day appeal period. Notices will be sent to affected jurisdictions and published twice during the appeal period. Once FEMA has completed their process for updating the FIRMs, a letter will be sent to each jurisdiction notifying them through a Letter of Final Determination that new FIRMs will become effective in 6 months.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Additional staff time will be required to implement the map revisions, but no additional financial impacts are anticipated.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only.



City of Tukwila

Public Works Department – Henry Hash, Director

Allan Ekberg, Mayor

March 12, 2018

City of Tukwila Public Works
6300 Southcenter Blvd, Suite 100
Tukwila, WA 98188

Dear Resident, Business, or Property Owner:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is updating flood maps throughout King County based on new data about flood hazards. This is the first update in many years and is an important opportunity for our region to get a better and more accurate assessment of the flood hazards we face.

You are receiving this letter because you are in what FEMA calls a “seclusion area” – a place where further study is needed before FEMA can determine what level of flood risk you and your neighbors face. This means the flood map boundaries in your area are not changing at this time. FEMA, however, plans to use new mapping techniques to review your area in the future.

The City of Tukwila is participating in a public meeting hosted by the City of Kent to discuss FEMA’s new flood maps, what it means to own property in a seclusion area, and the process for further flood hazard analysis. The public meeting will give you an opportunity to learn more about both the current and preliminary floodplain mapping. Please join us to learn more about the flood maps in your area.

Wednesday March 21, 2018 – 6 to 8 p.m.
(presentation at approximately 6:15 p.m.)

Kent City Hall – City Council Chambers
220 4th Avenue South, Kent WA 98032

Flood maps identify areas at risk from flooding and determine communitywide development and land-use. The flood maps also determine flood insurance requirements and help people understand the risks and importance of developing plans for themselves and their families to be prepared in the event of a flood.

We encourage you to attend this upcoming public meeting and to learn more about flood mapping, flood risks, and FEMA’s mapping process. You can also learn more about flooding in King County by visiting www.kingcounty.gov/floodservices. Please contact the City of Tukwila’s Floodplain Manager, Ryan Larson, at (206) 431-2456, if you have specific questions about your property.

Sincerely,

Henry Hash
Director, Tukwila Public Works

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6300 Building ♦ 6300 Southcenter Boulevard Suite 100 ♦ Tukwila, WA 98188 ♦ 206-433-0179

Tukwila City Hall • 6200 Southcenter Boulevard • Tukwila, WA 98188 • 206-433-1800 • Website: TukwilaWA.gov



6 de marzo de 2018

Estimado/a residente:

La Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA, Agencia Federal para la Gestión de Emergencias) está actualizando los mapas de inundaciones a lo largo del condado de King según nueva información acerca de los riesgos de inundaciones. Esta es la primera actualización que se hace en muchos años y es una oportunidad importante para que nuestra región cuente con una mejor y más precisa evaluación de los riesgos de inundaciones a los que nos enfrentamos.

Está recibiendo esta carta porque usted se encuentra en lo que la FEMA llama una “zona aislada”, un lugar que necesita seguir siendo estudiado antes de que la FEMA pueda determinar qué nivel de riesgo de inundación usted y sus vecinos enfrentan. Esto significa que los límites del mapa de inundaciones de su zona no van a cambiar en esta oportunidad. Sin embargo, la FEMA planea usar nuevas técnicas de cartografía para revisar su zona en el futuro.

La ciudad de Kent será sede de una reunión pública donde se discutirá sobre los nuevos mapas de inundaciones, qué significa tener una propiedad en una zona aislada y el proceso para realizar más análisis de riesgos de inundaciones. La reunión le dará la oportunidad de conocer más sobre ambos mapas de terrenos inundables, los actuales y los preliminares. Acompáñenos para saber más acerca de los mapas de inundaciones de su zona.

21 de marzo de 2018, 6:00 a 8:00 p.m.
(la presentación será aproximadamente a las 6:15)

Ayuntamiento de Kent - Salas de audiencias del ayuntamiento
220 4th Avenue South, Kent WA 98032

Los mapas de inundaciones son importantes para las comunidades ubicadas cerca de ríos, arroyos o zonas costeras. Debido a que los mapas identifican las zonas en riesgo de inundación, informan acerca del desarrollo de la comunidad y el uso de la tierra. Determinan los requisitos de los seguros contra inundación. También ayudan a que la gente entienda sus riesgos y la importancia de desarrollar planes para que junto con sus familias estén preparados lo máximo posible en el caso de una inundación.

Lo alentamos a que asista a la reunión y a que se informe más sobre los mapas de inundaciones, los riesgos de inundación y el proceso de la FEMA para realizar los mapas. También puede obtener más información sobre inundaciones en el condado de King en la siguiente página www.kingcounty.gov/floodservices.

Esperamos verlo el 21 de marzo en la reunión.

Atentamente,

Henry Hash
Director, Tukwila obras públicas



Definitions

Levee: Per 44 CFR 59.1, a manmade structure, usually an earthen embankment, designed and constructed in accordance with sound engineering practices to contain, control, or to divert the flow of water so as to provide protection from temporary flooding.

Levee System: Per 44 CFR 59.1, a flood protection system that consists of a levee, or levees, and associated structures, such as closure and drainage devices, which are constructed and operated in accordance with sound engineering practices.

“Non-Accredited” Levee System: A levee system that has not been demonstrated to meet all requirements outlined in Section 65.10 of the NFIP regulations (44CFR65.10).

Resources & Related Links

Code of Federal Regulations:
www.ecfr.gpoaccess.gov

Guidelines and Standards:
www.fema.gov/guidelines-and-standards-flood-risk-analysis-and-mapping

Living with Levees:
www.fema.gov/living-levees-its-shared-responsibility

Updated Analysis and Mapping Procedures for Non-Accredited Levees:
www.fema.gov/final-levee-analysis-and-mapping-approach

Levee Seclusion Mapping

Information for Local Community Officials

In March 2011, FEMA made a commitment to update the way flood hazards for non-accredited levee systems were analyzed and mapped. As a result, some ongoing Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) updates that included non-accredited levee systems were delayed or otherwise impacted while FEMA developed the updated levee analysis and mapping approach. Seclusion mapping was developed by FEMA as a process to allow the release of these impacted FIRM updates. Levee seclusion mapping will maintain the flood hazard information as depicted on the current effective FIRM (the FIRM in effect before the ongoing update) with map notes explaining that these flood hazards will be updated at a later time when the updated levee analysis and mapping approach is applied. Levee seclusion mapping will allow FEMA to provide community officials, residents, and business owners with updated information about their local flood hazards, while identifying those areas where the levee-related flood hazards were not updated.

Eligibility for levee seclusion mapping

Levee seclusion mapping is not appropriate for all FIRM updates. Levee seclusion is intended to allow updated flood hazard information not associated with levees to be released without delays associated with the application of the updated levee analysis and mapping approach to projects, which are already underway. To be eligible for levee seclusion, the ongoing FIRM update must meet the following criteria:

- The ongoing FIRM update was initiated before the July 2013 release of the document titled, Analysis and Mapping Procedures for Non-Accredited Levees - New Approach.
- The ongoing FIRM update is active and results in changes to flood hazard information outside the area impacted by the non-accredited levee system.



- The community does not confirm that a Natural Valley analysis, as outlined in the updated levee analysis and mapping approach and the aforementioned July 2013 document, would sufficiently depict the flood risk reduction associated with the non-accredited levee system.
- The FEMA Regional Office determines that levee seclusion is the appropriate approach for the subject area, in accordance with FEMA Guidelines and Standards.

Restudy of flood hazards associated with the secluded levee

Community officials should understand that the use of levee seclusion mapping does not preclude the levee system from being analyzed with the updated levee analysis and mapping approach for non-accredited levees, or from communities seeking levee system accreditation. Levee system accreditation requirements, as outlined in 44CFR65.10, can be found here: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2002-title44-vol1/pdf/CFR-2002-title44-vol1-sec65-10.pdf>.

FEMA will continue coordination with the community to prioritize the restudy of the secluded areas that require the application of the updated levee analysis and mapping approach.

If, at any time, the community would like to submit a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) request or a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) request to revise a portion of the effective FIRM, the updated levee analysis and mapping approach can be applied and a CLOMR/LOMR request may be submitted to FEMA. As with any CLOMR/LOMR request, the community will be responsible for submitting required supporting data and documentation.

How this will be depicted on the FIRM

The secluded area will be outlined by a solid black line with triangles pointing toward the areas subject to flood hazards from the non-accredited levee system (or systems) awaiting later study using the updated levee analysis and mapping approach. The FIRM and associated Flood Insurance Study report will identify the information that has not been updated through explanatory map notes and notes to users.

A FIRM that includes a secluded area will include the following information, as further described in the November 2014 Levee Seclusion guidance:

Inside the Levee Secluded Area – The seclusion boundary will be noted by a solid black line with triangles to define the secluded area, as shown in Figure 1. Flood hazards related to the non-accredited levee system(s) will remain as depicted on the current effective FIRM. Flood hazard determinations and the applicable flood insurance purchase requirements and building requirements will not change from what was in effect within the secluded area(s). In certain cases, FEMA may be aware of updated flood hazard information that has not been subjected to regulatory due-process requirements, and may be willing to share this with the community as best available data. Any updated flood hazard information of this sort cannot be used for flood insurance premium rating or flood insurance purchase requirements, but could be used to encourage sound floodplain management locally.

Outside the Levee Secluded Area – Existing and updated flood hazard information not associated with the non-accredited levee system that falls outside the seclusion boundary will be depicted on the FIRM without any qualifying notes and will not have any special treatment. This information should be used to rate flood insurance policies and to make flood hazard determinations based on the updated information.

On the FIRM Collar – The Notes to Users section of the FIRM will include clarification that the secluded area depicts a levee system that has not been demonstrated to meet the accreditation requirements of 44CFR65.10. There will also be an explanation that the flood hazard information shown within the seclusion boundary was transferred directly from the effective FIRM without change and will be revisited at a later time to apply the updated levee analysis and mapping approach.

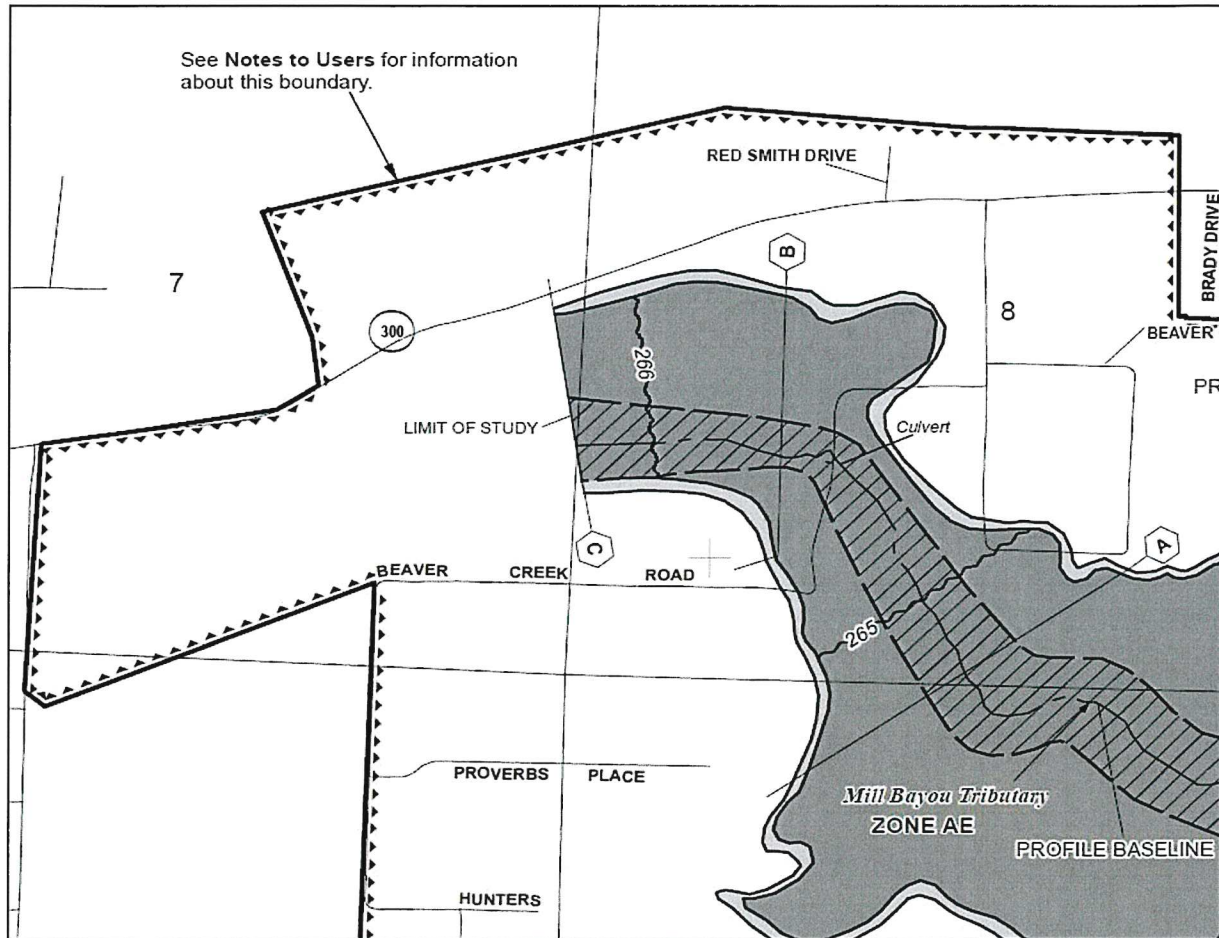


Figure 1: The areas associated with non-accredited levee systems (the secluded area) will be identified with special map symbology and map notes as shown in this figure and as further detailed in the November 2014 Levee Seclusion guidance.

The following clarification will be included in the “Notes to Users” section on the FIRM panel:

The levee, dike, or other structure that impacts flood hazards inside this boundary has not been shown to comply with Section 65.10 of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) regulations. As such, this FIRM panel will be revised at a later date to update the flood hazard information associated with this structure.