

MEMORANDUM**City of Springfield**

To: Gino Grimaldi, City Manager
From: Len Goodwin, Assistant Public Works Director
Date: July 29, 2008
Subject: Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Plain Updates

As I mentioned in a March 25 memorandum that was included in the Council Communication Packet, City staff have been contacted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") concerning work that the agency will be performing to update their Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps over the next several months.

The FEMA maps are official determinations of the locations of floodways and flood plains and are vital to local communities because they delineate the areas that are at risk of local flooding and required to have flood insurance, as well as delineating those areas where no building can occur (floodways) and those areas where restrictions on building activity are required (flood plains).

For some time we have known that the existing maps, which are based on data collected more than 30 years ago, are seriously outdated. This was vividly demonstrated in the 1996 flood event, when flooding occurred almost without regard to where the maps identified floodways and flood plains.

FEMA has requested local governments provide them with topographical data that is both more recent and more accurate than the data relied upon for the maps. They intend to use this data to update their determinations of the accurate locations for both the floodway and flood plain. Springfield participated in a cooperative effort with Eugene, EWEB, SUB and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in a 2004 aerial survey of the McKenzie and of the Coast and Middle Forks of the Willamette. We believe this data is significantly more accurate, and will be making it available to FEMA. We understand that the FEMA project is designed to result in preliminary adjustments to floodway and flood plain maps by fall, 2009, with final maps ready for adoption by fall, 2010.

As part of that effort, staff have supplied FEMA with a proposed Letter of Map Revision requested by the Wildish Company, based on an analysis of updated topographical data derived from orthophotography and digital terrain models developed in 2000 by the City, and an analysis of the river bed performed by Northwest Hydrologic Consultants (nhc). This request, in which the City has concurred, asks for a formal acknowledgement by FEMA that, based on updated information, the floodway or flood plain is different from that documented on the existing map. Such a Letter, which could be issued in as little as three to four months, could make it possible to authorize development to proceed based on the updated floodway and flood plain.

FEMA has acknowledged receipt of this request and ask that the City provide notice to property owners who may be affected. Those letters will probably go out later next week, and will likely result in questions to staff. We will send to each property owner, a layman's summary of the FEMA review process, which contemplates a 90 day review period before FEMA makes a decision. Attached to this memorandum is a copy of the plain language analysis of the FEMA process which we will supply to each property owner and resident.

If appropriate, you may wish to share this information with Council by including a copy of this memorandum in the Communication Packet.