



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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### MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission  
From: Mark Hofman, Community Development Director, CFM  
Jason Rogers, Senior Planner  
Date: June 1, 2020  
Subject: Flood Hazard Regulations

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### BACKGROUND

The National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 was enacted by title XIII of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968. This is codified at 42 U.S.C. 4001-4128, and is also known as the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The purpose of the NFIP was to provide flood insurance protection to property owners in flood-prone areas. Among other things, the NFIP requires that communities containing special flood hazard areas and other flood-prone areas adopt floodplain management regulations that meet certain minimum criteria set by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These regulations are designed to reduce or avoid flood damages.

FEMA designates portions of the City of Snoqualmie as being areas of special flood hazard. These areas are colloquially referred to as the 100-year floodplain. However, the term 100-year floodplain should not be confused with FEMA's formal definitions for flood-prone areas. FEMA's specific definition for areas of special flood hazard is "land within the community subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year." Within this area, the flood hazard regulations apply.

The City's current flood hazard regulations were originally adopted in 1989 (Ord. 621), and have been updated several times since then, including in 2000 (Ord. 856), 2001 (Ord. 890), 2003 (Ord. 920), 2005 (Ord. 976), 2008 (Ord. 1031), 2012 (Ord. 1093), and 2018 (Ord. 1203).

### ANALYSIS

FEMA regularly updates its mapping (e.g. the Flood Insurance Rate Maps, or FIRMs) and applicable regulations at 44 CFR Part 60 Subpart A – Requirements for Flood Plain Management Regulations. When this occurs, the City must update its flood hazard regulations to remain in conformance with federal rules. FEMA has reviewed the City's current flood hazard regulations and provided a checklist showing how the City's regulations conform with FEMA's guidance and model ordinance. FEMA is also issuing updated maps for King County which will take effect on August 19, 2020, however the mapped floodplain and floodway in Snoqualmie is not changing as a result of these map updates.

In reviewing FEMA's checklist, some of the requested change are minor, e.g. changing one word, and the City often has some leeway in phrasing to achieve the intent of the FEMA guidance. In other cases, FEMA asks for inclusion of language verbatim, e.g. for some definitions. FEMA notes some situations where language is optional, such as for sections about coastal flooding that do not apply in Snoqualmie, and others where language is optional but recommended, such as for accessory (appurtenant) structures.

At this time staff is continuing to discuss the proposed changes with FEMA, and detailed amendment language is not available (e.g. with additions and ~~deletions~~). This will be

provided to the Planning Commission as soon as possible.

**NEXT STEPS**

Please review this memo, the attached FEMA Checklist, and Chapter 15.12 SMC Flood Hazard Regulations. The City's current code was distributed with the previous meeting packet (5/18/2020). The City's current code is also available online at <http://www.codepublishing.com/wa/snoqualmie>. You can find the current FIRMs on FEMA's website at <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>. Finally, applicable federal regulations (44 CFR Part 60 Subpart A) can be found at <https://law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/44/part-60/subpart-A>.

The Planning Commission will consider FEMA's recommended changes on June 1, 2020, and the Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing on this item on June 15, 2020. Following the public hearing the Planning Commission should be prepared to make a recommendation on the amendments to the City Council.