



Legislation Text

File #: ORD 18-0006, **Version:** 1

ITEM TITLE:

#18-06 - Amending Chapter 15.30, Section 15.30.030 Relating to Adoption of Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and Flood Maps. Second Reading. Adoption.

SUBMITTED BY: Kate Huber, Senior Planner & Floodplain Administrator

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: N/A

Unencumbered Balance: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Ordinance #18-06, amending VMC Chapter 15.30 to adopt the 2019 FEMA flood insurance rate maps.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

Adoption of the 2019 Flood Insurance Rate Maps is the final step in a multi-year mapping process. In 2011, the City of Valdez began working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to update the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for the City of Valdez.

The FIRMs and FIS are important tools utilized by the community for our participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The NFIP is a voluntary Federal program that enables property owners in participating communities to purchase insurance protection against losses from flooding. It was established to reduce future flood damage through community floodplain management and to provide protection for property owners against potential losses.

In order for the City of Valdez to participate in the NFIP, we must adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations to reduce future flood risks to new construction and substantially improved structures in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs). When we meet this requirement, the Federal Government makes flood insurance available within the community as a financial protection against flood losses. Our floodplain ordinance must meet or exceed the federal standards.

In 1983, the City of Valdez adopted the first FIRMs and FIS for the area. At that time, we also adopted Title 15.30. (See attachment.) In the years since initial adoption a handful of map changes and revisions have also been incorporated. The ordinance tonight will replace existing FIRMs for all areas that are included in the 2019 update.

To maintain good standing with the NFIP, The City of Valdez must adopt the updated 2019 Flood Insurance Rate Maps in advance of their effective date of January 3, 2019.

Through our reviews with FEMA and the State of Alaska, it was determined that significant changes are required to bring the remaining sections of our floodplain ordinance into compliance with the federal standards. At your next meeting on January 2, 2018, staff will bring forward a new draft of Title 15.30 for adoption. This draft is currently in review with legal and the Clerk's Office.

Not Included in the 2019 Map Update

The Alpine Woods and Nordic Subdivision areas are not included in the 2019 Map Update. These areas will continue to utilize the 1984 Letter of Map Revision that has been in place since October 1984. This area was excluded from the 2019 update while the city seeks certifications of the levees constructed on the Lowe River. The decision to exclude this area allowed FEMA to complete the map updates for the remainder of the City. The documentation necessary to pursue levee certification has been submitted to FEMA and we are awaiting a response. Once levee certification is secured, the City will pursue a map revision for the area.

Public Involvement & Communication in 2019 Map Update

Adoption of the 2019 Flood Insurance Rate Maps is an important final step that follows an extensive eight year mapping and public comment/appeal process. Below is a summary of the outreach done within the community by FEMA, the State of Alaska and the City. This list is not comprehensive, but includes all events and mailings that were documented and easily identified in the files currently available to staff.

2016:

- Meeting with property owners impacted by exclusion of Alpine Woods and Nordic Subdivisions area. (01/28)
- City floodplain management webpage updated with information (September)
- Floodplain newsletter with preliminary map information mailed to homeowners in the special flood hazard area (September)
- Public service announcement informing community members of preliminary map draft (10/07)
- Ad published in Valdez Star (10/12)
- Council report - Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) from FEMA (10/19)
- Letter mailed to property owners impacted by exclusion of Alpine Woods and Nordic Subdivisions area. (03/21)
- Letter mailed to all property owners with property subject to change under the 2019 map update. (03/26)

2017-2018:

- FEMA and State of Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development held a Flood Risk Open House at which copies of the preliminary map draft were distributed and the appeals process was explained. (04/06)
- Public notification in the Valdez Star from FEMA concerning the appeals process for the preliminary map draft. (11/22 & 11/29)
- Public appeals period (November 29, 2017 - February 27, 2018)
- Council report - FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map Update Report (12/05)

After the lengthy public comment and appeals process, FEMA finalized the drafts of the 2019 FIRMs and submitted back to the City of Valdez for adoption. The maps are currently available for view in the Community Development Department at City Hall. In the past 2 weeks, we have regained access to GIS software and can now utilize GIS to make maps for the community with the updated special flood hazard area information.

Adopting the updated 2019 FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps will allow the City of Valdez to continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program and provide important tools needed to reduce future flood risks to new and improved structures within the City.