



Legislation Text

File #: 19-0261, **Version:** 1

ITEM TITLE:

Lowe River Levee Certification Update Report

SUBMITTED BY: Kate Huber, Senior Planner and Floodplain Manager

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: N/A

Unencumbered Balance: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

Report only.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

At the end of October 2016, the City of Valdez submitted a request to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for levee certification/accreditation for the Lowe River levee system. The process by which FEMA certifies levees is through a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR). The City of Valdez applied for a LOMR based on a 2D flood hazard analysis to revise FIRM #020094, Panel #0075C, along the Lowe River. As a part of this LOMR request, The City of Valdez is proposing to revise the community's Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) to reflect levee certification/accreditation.

The FIRM for a community depicts the floodplain, the area which has been determined to be subject to a 1 percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year. (This area is also known as the 100-year flood area or special flood hazard area.) The regulatory floodway is the portion of the floodplain that includes the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land area that must be reserved in order to discharge the base (1-percent-annual-chance) flood without cumulatively increasing the water-surface elevation by more than a designated height. The FIRM is used to determine flood insurance rates and to assist the community with floodplain management.

In March 2017, FEMA responded to the City's application with a request for additional data and some repairs to the levee system along the Lowe River. Over the course of 2017, the City completed required improvements to groin 1 and groin 2 and compiled the additional information that was required. On March 6, 2017, individual notices were sent to all property owners affected by the proposed map revision.

Over the course of 2018 and into 2019 there has been ongoing communication with FEMA regarding

necessary data. In April 2019, FEMA requested some changes to the model used and an update to the proposed FIRM map presented by the City. The City has been working with engineering firm, AECOM, on the 2-D hydraulic model and proposed FIRM map. On June 10, 2019, the Planning Department received the updated proposed FIRM from AECOM that will be submitted to FEMA. The Planning Department shared the proposed map with the Flood Mitigation Task Force at their meeting on June 11th and mailed a required public notice to individual property owners in the area on June 25, 2019. The map and public notice are attached.

FEMA has also requested some updates to our emergency plan regarding the levee area. Staff is working on this final request from FEMA and will bring the changes to Council after consulting with the city departments who work on flood mitigation and response, and some residents who live in the Alpine Woods and Nordic Subdivisions.

Staff will work with AECOM to submit all necessary information to FEMA in July 2019. FEMA has 90 days to complete their response, however the review team has stated that it may take less time to prepare a response. If approved, the map will not become effective for 120 days, following a 90-day comment period, and 30-day administrative period.