

CITIES of MOUNT VERNON AND BURLINGTON
Notice of Public Meeting
Revised Base Flood Elevations
Skagit River Hydrology

Tuesday, October 9th, 2007, Burlington City Hall, 833 South Spruce Street
Tuesday, October 23rd, Mount Vernon Municipal Campus, 1805 Continental Place,
Mount Vernon.
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

The City of Burlington, in cooperation with the City of Mount Vernon, and in consultation with the City of Sedro-Woolley, Dike District 12, Dike District 1, Dike District 17, Dike District 3, Dike District 22, Dike District 25, and Skagit County, pursuant to resolution #09-2007, is developing comprehensive technical documentation and the work products necessary to provide the technical basis for revising base flood elevations within the Cities of Mount Vernon and Burlington. Preliminary work products, including maps, will be available for public review at this meeting. Public participation and comment is encouraged and requested.

The Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, pursuant to a national directive to re-study flood plains throughout the country, contracted with the Seattle District, Corps of Engineers (Corps) to conduct a study to revise base flood elevations in the Skagit River basin. Technical consultants retained by the entities listed above, and the City Engineers of Mount Vernon and Burlington, have performed hydrologic and hydraulic analyses that result in 100-year flood elevations that are significantly lower than those being proposed by FEMA. The FEMA estimates are based on analysis performed by the Corps. The technical analysis performed by the Corps relies on estimates of the magnitude of unrecorded floods which occurred around the turn of the last century. The community represented by the entities listed above, believes those estimates are too high. Use of these incorrect estimates for the unrecorded floods skew the hydrologic analysis, resulting in higher estimates of the theoretical 100-year base flood elevation than necessary to accurately communicate to the public a depiction of the actual flood risk.

The Corps' technical analysis indicates a 100-year flood event will discharge 234,820 cubic feet per second (cfs) at Sedro-Woolley (SR-9 Bridge) and 221,510 cfs at Mount Vernon/Burlington (Riverside Bridge). The City of Burlington's analysis shows these peak discharge 100-year estimates should be 180,900 cfs at Sedro-Woolley and 162,100 cfs at Mount Vernon. By comparison, the highest discharges ever recorded at those locations since 1925 are 163,000 cfs at Sedro-Woolley (November 25, 1990 (estimated)) and 152,000 cfs at Mount Vernon (November 25, 1990).

Due to concern that not only are the FEMA-proposed base flood elevations incorrect and too high, but also the underlying incorrect Corps technical analysis will make it nearly impossible to protect the urban areas from a 100-year flood event, it is the intention of the Community to appeal the preliminary base flood elevations which FEMA is expected to publish in December 2007 or January 2008. The information provided at this public meeting, modified with public input, is expected to form the basis of that appeal.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Base flood elevations throughout Burlington and Mount Vernon will be going up dramatically in many areas, even with the correct hydrologic analysis! These new base flood elevations will carry with them significant negative economic consequences to the local economy and tax base, affecting government services, health care providers, schools, and economic activity throughout the region. Important issues:

1) are the new flood elevations accurate, and after the new flood elevations are put into effect, what measures can reasonably and affordably be undertaken, to bring the urban areas back out of the flood plain?

2) for the City of Burlington, how can the City protect itself from the magnitude of the Corps' overstated theoretical 100-year flood event (i.e., will Burlington be declared a Floodway, thereby halting all further development?

3) for the City of Mount Vernon, how will the City protect its key commercial core adjacent to I-5 and SR-538 (College Way) inside the Riverbend area, and bring this critically important regional economic engine out of the flood plain?

This meeting is the first of two public meetings. The 2nd meeting will be held Tuesday, October 23rd, 2007, at the Mount Vernon Municipal campus at 1805 Continental Place, Mount Vernon. The Public is encouraged to attend either or both meetings.

Comments may be submitted to: The City of Burlington
Department of Public Works
833 South Spruce Street
Burlington, WA 98233

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Also **Saturday, October 6, 2007**