



FEMA Flood Mapping: How Will It Affect You?

Presentation and Information Sharing between Concerned Public Officials, Businesses and Citizens

Thursday, May 24, 7:00 p.m.

Burlington High School Cafetorium

Agenda

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
7:00	Introductions and Overview	Dick Irwin; President / CEO Burlington Chamber of Commerce
7:02	Impacts of Questionable Science and Poor Process: Why Obfuscating Federal Process Combined with Questionable Data is Preventing the Local Community from Solving a Serious Flood Problem -- Flood Elevations are Going Up. At Issue is: Will we have a Realistic Chance to Bring Them Back Down? -- Why Critically Needed Additional Baker Flood Storage is Unlikely to Happen	Chal Martin Public Works Director City of Burlington
7:17	Working with State and Federal Agencies on the Flood Issue: Perspective from a City Attorney	Kevin Rogerson City Attorney City of Mount Vernon
7:22	Significance to Our Community	Don Gordon CEO, Villaorba Group; Investor Jeff Hansell Owner, Hansell-Mitzel Homes
7:30	Could it Get Even Worse? Why is FEMA not Addressing the <u>Floodway Issue</u> ?	Bob Rauch Attorney
7:42	The View from FEMA	Ryan Ike Certified Floodplain Manager DHS – FEMA Region X
7:52	Citizen Participation: What Can You Do? -- Learn more: handouts and web resources -- Contact your local, state and federal elected officials	Scott Thomas City Attorney City of Burlington
7:59	Questions and Answers	Dick Irwin
8:30	Adjourn	(Note: Presenters will remain For 1-on-1 questions/answers after 8:30pm)

FLOOD HAZARD MITIGATION -- THE FUTURE OF THE SKAGIT VALLEY

Town Meeting - May 24, 2007

What is happening? What does it mean and why does it matter?

In the process of modernizing the Flood Insurance Rate Maps, the Federal Emergency Management Agency made a decision to rely on data that has been generated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the course of a long term general investigation of the Skagit River.

It is the position of local government and many citizens that the federal government has a responsibility to use the best state of the art scientific and technical data applied correctly to the situation at hand before making decisions that will have very significant adverse impacts on the region and on individual property owners. Both the process and the substance must be of the very highest quality and integrity, and that is not happening today.

RAISING BASE FLOOD ELEVATIONS BY ONE STORY AND ESTABLISHING A REGULATORY FLOODWAY THROUGH THE REGION

Burlington and Mount Vernon are on the hit list for major increases in the 100-year Base Flood Elevations.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is proposing to publish new Flood Insurance Rate Maps and increase the 100-year Base Flood Elevations by about one story (over six feet) in many locations in the Skagit River delta area between Sedro-Woolley and the mouth of the river. The Federal Emergency Management Agency insures local adoption of the new maps because without flood insurance, mortgage loans are not available since they all require Flood Insurance.

Instead of considering all the issues together, the Federal Emergency Management Agency is proposing to establish a Regulatory Floodway through the most densely populated areas of the region *after* the new maps are adopted.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The bottom line is that the proposal to increase the base flood elevations by what amounts to an entire story AND create a regulatory floodway through the area will slowly destroy the economic vitality of the region and stifle future economic development opportunities.

New development will not fit into typical block fronts. Commercial development will be cost prohibitive because of the need for so much additional fill or even more devastating, a floodway designation will prohibit the use of fill altogether, and limit uses of the ground floor to a parking garage with big vents, hardly a commercial draw. New homes will be prohibited in the Floodway, and no substantial improvements will be possible for existing homes. Property values will go down.

FLOOD INSURANCE

Yes, you are “grandfathered in” to the basic program that was in place when you received your Elevation Certificate. BUT if you make improvements, put on an addition, refinance or sell your home, you will likely have your rates increased substantially.

PROTECTING OURSELVES WITHOUT INJURING THE NEIGHBORS

Each community has the right to protect its own interests and for Burlington and Mount Vernon, the urban areas need to be protected by 100-year certified levees.

The best data needs to be used so that we do not overbuild our 100-year levees and adversely impact downstream or upstream flooding.

The proposal to dramatically raise the base flood elevations for the 100-year flood event is based on estimates for 4 historic flood events prepared by James Stewart of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) several years after the floods. This happened before the gages were installed to measure the height and velocity of floodwaters and this data is disputed by several leading experts.

The result is that so much water is estimated to hit the valley floor that all of the proposed flood hazard mitigation projects become too expensive and do not meet the federal funding guidelines for benefit-cost ratios. So, not only are the required elevations for new buildings increased, but the plans for completing projects to raise the levees and other measures to mitigate flood hazards will not qualify for federal funding assistance.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY TO SLOW DOWN AND BE SURE THAT ITS PROPOSED ACTIONS ARE TRULY IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.