


COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number:	20-197	Meeting:	May 4, 2020
	Agenda Item:	53	Roll Call:	20-786
	Submitted by:	Steven L. Naber, P.E., City Engineer		

AGENDA HEADING:

Amending Chapter 50 of the Municipal Code regarding revisions to Floodplain Management Regulations.

SYNOPSIS:

The City of Des Moines has been impacted by substantial flood events, most recently in the summer of 2018. This has resulted in loss of life and extensive property damage that has permanently displaced families from their homes and caused many other property owners to invest considerable capital in repairs. After the 2018 flood event, the City was challenged to develop ideas to decrease flood risk and further protect against loss of life and property (summarized in the 2018 After Action Flood Report). In addition to reducing flood risk, by implementing higher regulatory floodplain development standards the City would qualify its residents and business owners for a reduction in standard National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) flood insurance premium costs.

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The City of Des Moines has participated in the NFIP since 1981. To participate in the program, the City must adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances meant to reduce damage from future flood events. In exchange, the NFIP makes federally-backed flood insurance available to homeowners, renters, and business owners in these communities.
- The City has participated in the Community Rating System (CRS) program since 1991. CRS is a voluntary program for recognizing community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum standards and rewards property owners of those communities with discounts to NFIP flood insurance premium rates. Des Moines is currently designated as a NFIP Class 7 community, which results in a 15% insurance premium reduction for qualifying properties. The proposed amendments would improve Des Moines' designation to a NFIP Class 5 community, which results in a 25% insurance premium reduction for qualifying properties.
- Staff presented code amendments to City Council at work sessions on October 31, 2018 and February 5, 2020. A public meeting for stakeholders was held on December 9, 2019. Invitations were sent to all property owners in Des Moines with a primary structure in the floodplain as well as developers, builders, and civil design consultants who conduct work in Des Moines.

- Summary of code amendments are as follows:
 - Increase the minimum floodproofing/flood protection elevation for new and substantially improved buildings from one (1) foot to three (3) feet.
 - Require that any volume of fill that is added to the floodplain above grade be compensated at a ratio of 1.5:1, with some exceptions.
 - Amend definition of “substantial damage” to include structures that sustain flood-related damage on two (2) separate occasions during any consecutive 10-year period for which the cumulative cost of repairs for both events combined exceeds 50 percent of the market value of the structure immediately before the damage occurred.
 - Require that any building addition to an existing building in the floodplain, regardless of size, be floodproofed or elevated to the minimum floodproofing/flood protection elevation.
 - Define geotechnical requirements, such as soil testing and fill material guidelines, to be enforced for buildings in the floodplain.
 - For new detached accessory buildings in the floodplain that are not elevated to the minimum floodproofing/flood protection elevation, the property owner must sign a nonconversion agreement that states the owner will not convert the structure to a dwelling or livable space and allows the City to inspect the building at any time.
 - Require that all hazardous materials located in the floodplain be stored indoors and elevated to the minimum floodproofing/flood protection elevation.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: March 11, 2019

Roll Call Number: [19-0390](#)

Action: [Receive](#) and file the After Action Flash Flood Report, 2018. Moved by Gatto to receive and file; the City Manager will provide a quarterly report outlining anticipated, current and completed activities. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:**

As part of its next annual CRS review cycle, the City will apply for a CRS class increase, which will reduce standard NFIP flood insurance premium costs for property owners with insurable buildings in the floodplain. The estimated effective date is May 2021.

For more information on this and other agenda items, please call the City Clerk’s Office at 515-283-4209 or visit the Clerk’s Office on the first floor of City Hall, 400 Robert D Ray Drive. Council agendas are available to the public at the City Clerk’s Office on Thursday afternoon preceding Monday’s Council meeting. Citizens can also request to receive meeting notices and agendas by email by calling the Clerk’s Office or sending their request via email to cityclerk@dmgov.org.