



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

P.O. Box 178 - City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia 22313

alexandriava.gov

Engineering & Design Division
703-746-4045

November 23, 2009

Dear Property Owner:

A multi-year project to re-examine Alexandria's flood zones and develop detailed, digital flood hazard maps has been completed. Just released for public review, the new maps -- also known as Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) -- reflect current flood risks, replacing maps that date back to 1991. As a result, you and other property owners throughout the city will have up-to-date, reliable, Internet-accessible information about your flood risk, on a property-by-property basis.

An informational meeting will be held on Monday, December 7th at 7:00pm at the George Washington Middle School auditorium, 1005 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301. City of Alexandria staff, as well as representatives from FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be present to answer questions about the maps and their impact on residents.

How will these changes affect you?

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the parcel identified at the top of this letter has been mapped into a lower risk zone, shown on the FIRM as "X". If you have a mortgage from a federally-regulated lender, you will no longer be required by federal law to maintain flood insurance when the flood maps become effective (your lender still does retain the right to require flood insurance if they feel it is necessary).

While flood insurance becomes optional, maintaining coverage is recommended as the flood risk has only been reduced, *not removed*. Lower cost flood insurance from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is available in low- to moderate-risk areas and you may also qualify for the even lower cost Preferred Risk Policy (PRP). Contact your insurance agent to learn more about how to convert to the PRP. For more information on flood insurance, visit www.floodsmart.gov.

The new maps help promote public safety.

These flood hazard maps are important tools used in the effort to protect lives and properties in Alexandria. By showing the extent to which areas of the city and individual properties are at risk for flooding, the flood maps help business owners and residents make more informed decisions about personal safety and financially protecting their property. These maps also allow community planners, local officials, engineers,

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builders and others to make determinations about where and how new structures and developments should be built.

When do the maps become effective?

The maps that were just released are still known as preliminary. A 90-day Public Comment Period will start shortly; FEMA has not yet informed us of the exact date. This is a time when citizens will have the opportunity to submit technical and/or scientific data to file a protest regarding their individual property, or an appeal regarding the accuracy of the mapping process in general.

Once the appeals and protests are reviewed and once any needed map changes are incorporated, FEMA will issue a Letter of Final Determination. Six months later, City Council will adopt an ordinance approving the new Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map. The maps will then become effective, as will any new flood insurance requirements. However, please be aware that starting immediately these flood hazard maps will be used in helping to determine requirements for construction and development.

Here's where to go for more information.

In addition to the informational meeting on December 7th, further information, including digital copies of the new maps, is available at alexandriava.gov/FloodMap and at Floodsmart.gov. Paper copies of the maps are also available at the City's main libraries.

If you have further questions about the flood maps, you may contact the Engineering and Design Division at 703-746-4045.

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Sincerely,



Emily A. Baker, P.E.
City Engineer