



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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

alexandriava.gov

Engineering & Design Division
703-746-4045

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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 is located in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), and shown as Zone A or AE on the FIRM. If you have a mortgage from a federally-regulated lender and the building(s) on this parcel are within the SFHA, then by federal law, your lender must require you to carry flood insurance when these flood maps become effective. Flood insurance is available through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a federally underwritten program provided by nearly 100 insurance companies and written through licensed insurance agents. **Contact your insurance agent to learn about lower-cost "grandfathering" options offered by the NFIP for properties being mapped into higher-risk areas for the first time.**

If you do not have a mortgage, it is still recommended that you purchase flood insurance. According to FEMA, over the life of a 30-year loan, there is about a three times greater chance of having a flood in your home than having a fire. And most homeowners insurance policies do not provide coverage for damage due to flooding. For more information on flood insurance, visit the National Flood Insurance Program's website, www.floodsmart.gov.

The new maps help promote public safety.

Entering SFHA Letter

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

If you feel there has been an error, you can file a protest or appeal.

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.

When do the maps become effective?

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, an ordinance approving the new Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map will be adopted. 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.

Sincerely,



Emily A. Baker, P.E.
City Engineer