

March 26, 2007

SUBJECT: AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION FROM THE CITY OF SALEM

You are receiving this letter because you provide information to the public relating to properties possibly located within the Floodplain. The City of Salem has information available to you and the public at large regarding the Floodplain. We will provide to you Elevation Certificates, if available, and information regarding the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM).

Elevation Certificates:

The **Elevation Certificate** is an important administrative tool of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). It is used to determine the proper flood insurance premium rate; it can be used to document elevation information necessary to ensure compliance with community floodplain management regulations; and it may be used to support a request for a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) or Letter of Map Revision based on fill (LOMR-F).

Because a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Elevation Certificate is needed before most flood insurance policies can be issued under the NFIP, communities are encouraged to obtain and maintain Elevation Certificates so that residents and businesses can easily obtain flood insurance. In addition, to participate in the NFIP Community Rating System (CRS), communities must require and maintain the Elevation Certificate for all new and substantially improved structures.

The City of Salem has Elevation Certificates on file for many of the properties that have developed. If an Elevation Certificate has not been completed for a particular property, the City will provide a blank Elevation Certificate that the landowner can have a Public Land Surveyor complete. The City will keep all Elevation Certificates it receives on file for future availability to the public and to you.

FIRM:

In keeping with the directive of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, initial flood study and mapping efforts of the NFIP were focused on identifying all flood-prone areas within the United States. Flood data and floodplain information from many sources — such as soils mapping, actual high water profiles, aerial photographs of previous floods, topographic maps, etc. — were used to overlay the *approximate* outline of the base (100-year) floodplain for specific stream reaches on available community maps, usually U. S. Geological Survey topographic quadrangle maps. These documents were referred to as Flood Hazard Boundary Maps and were based on approximate studies.

As money was appropriated by Congress, FEMA performed more detailed studies for many communities, resulting in the publication of Flood Insurance Study (FIS) reports and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). These studies provided Salem with data needed to adopt and implement a more comprehensive floodplain management ordinance and to enter the Regular Phase of the NFIP.

A FIS is a compilation and presentation of flood risk data for specific watercourses and lakes within our community. The FIS report and associated FIRM's delineate the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), designate flood risk zones, and establish base flood elevations. The FIRM contains approximate and/or detailed flood hazard analyses. Together they serve as the basis for rating flood insurance, for regulating floodplain development, and for carrying out other floodplain management measures.

When new FISs are completed, the FIRM is updated. The last time the City of Salem had a detailed analysis completed was following the 1996 Flood. As a result of the detailed study, the City of Salem has updated FISs and FIRMs. Flood maps are one of the most vital parts of a floodplain management program, so it is important to understand how the maps were created and to be familiar with the information that is available within the accompanying flood study.

The City of Salem can determine the relationship of a particular property to the floodplain, including: 1) whether the property is located within the Special Flood Hazard Area; 2) FIRM Zone for the property; 3) Base Flood Elevation for property, if available; and 4) whether the property is located within the Floodway. Contact the Public Works Department, Development Services Section, at 503-588-6211 for further information.

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