



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Jack Louws, Whatcom County Executive and
The Honorable Members of the Whatcom County Council

THROUGH: Jon Hutchings, Public Works Director *JH*

FROM: Paula J. Harris, River and Flood Manager *PJH*
Gary Stoyka, Natural Resources Manager *GS*

RE: Proposed Amendments to Whatcom County Code Title 17 Flood Damage
Prevention

DATE: November 16, 2018

Enclosed is an ordinance adopting amendments to Whatcom County Code Title 17 Flood Damage Prevention for your consideration.

▪ **Requested Action**

Public Works respectfully requests that the Whatcom County Council consider the proposed amendments to Title 17 and approve the ordinance adopting the amended code, subject to a public hearing and SEPA threshold determination.

▪ **Background and Purpose**

Whatcom County is a participating community in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) which is administered locally by Whatcom County Public Works through WCC Title 17, Flood Damage Prevention. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has completed a new Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panels for Unincorporated and Incorporated areas of Whatcom County. The new mapping covers all of the coastline, most streams, rivers and lakes within the County with the exception of the Lower Nooksack River from Deming to Bellingham Bay and the Everson-Sumas overflow corridor.

FEMA held a public meeting/workshop in February of 2016 where residents were able to see what the impacts of the new mapping would be on their properties. The owners of all of the parcels that will be affected by the new mapping were sent a notice prior to the meeting. The Letter of Final Determination (LFD) from FEMA for the new study and mapping sets the date for them to become effective on January 18, 2019. To avoid suspension in the flood insurance program, Whatcom County must amend our floodplain management ordinance to reference the new FIS and FIRM's by January 18, 2019.

FEMA and the State NFIP Coordinator reviewed Whatcom County Code Title 17 in its entirety to ensure it is compliant with federal and state requirements and provided comments on October 23, 2018. The revised code proposed for adoption references the new study and mapping and

incorporates additional revisions deemed necessary by FEMA for consistency with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR's) along with some recommended clarifications. The revisions will not change how the code is administered or standards required for floodplain construction, other than to change the floodplain maps used in the administration.

We intend to take the revised code to the Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee in December for their review and recommendation.

A final staff report is enclosed which provides a detailed analysis of each section of code proposed for revision.

Encl.