

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****May 10, 2016****SUBJECT: REPORT ON THE ACCURACY OF FEMA FLOODPLAIN MAPS AND THE CITY'S PROCESS AND COST ON UPDATING THEM**

This Informal Report is provided in response to a recent City Council question about the accuracy of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain maps and the City's process for requesting that FEMA issue map corrections.

In the years after FEMA updated their floodplain maps in 2009, City staff and private property owners identified 52 areas within the City of Fort Worth where the maps appeared to contain inaccuracies that resulted in an erroneous flood insurance requirement. Staff has successfully pursued map corrections in 48 of those 52 areas. The detailed drainage engineering information needed in order for FEMA to revise the maps in the remaining 4 areas has been more difficult to acquire. The technical information needed has been, or soon will be, submitted to FEMA. FEMA's process to approve map corrections for these areas is expected to take from 9-24 months. During this time period the City continues to interact with FEMA relative to status and provide any additional information such that the time duration is minimized.

Background

FEMA initiated the 2009 map update process due to the availability of more accurate topographic information than was previously available. This was the first time since FEMA established floodplain maps for this area where the format of the maps made it reasonably possible to identify specific inaccuracies.

Private property-owners can initiate the process for correcting FEMA floodplain maps. However, the Floodplain Administration section of TPW Stormwater Management has historically worked cooperatively with property owners to assemble and submit the necessary information to FEMA. As a result of these efforts, hundreds of property owners have saved thousands of dollars each in eliminated insurance premiums.

Since being designated a Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) by FEMA in FY 13, the Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) has been leveraging FEMA grant funds to develop more accurate models of floodplain areas where the maps are still based on the outdated models. In the first 2 years of participation in the CTP program, the FEMA grant funds totaled nearly \$2 million, with a direct expense to the City for matching funds of \$140,000. This effort resulted in updated models for 46 floodplain areas.

In the next 10 years, through the CTP program, updated drainage models will be developed for all remaining areas where the floodplain map is based on outdated engineering. This effort will provide the data needed to pursue correction of any other floodplain map inaccuracies that are discovered through the updated models.

If you should have questions, please contact Clair Davis, Floodplain Administrator, at 817-392-5981.

**David Cooke
City Manager**