



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Planning and Building



Date: June 1, 2015
Board Meeting Date: June 16, 2015
Special Notice / Hearing: 10 days; within 500 feet
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Steve Monowitz, Acting Community Development Director

Subject: Consideration of amendments to the San Mateo County Zoning Regulations (Chapter 35.5 - Flood Hazard Areas) to add and amend specific language in the "General Provisions" section of this chapter.

County File Number: PLN 2015-00149 (Planning and Building Department)

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt an ordinance amending the San Mateo County Zoning Regulations (Chapter 35.5 of the County Ordinance Code) to add and amend specific language regarding flood hazards in the "General Provisions" section of this chapter, previously introduced at the Planning Commission hearing on May 13, 2015, and waive the reading of the ordinance in its entirety.

BACKGROUND:

Proposal: The Planning Department is proposing amendments to the San Mateo County Zoning Regulations (Chapter 35.5 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code) that:

- A. Adds specific language that identifies which Flood Insurance Study that the County uses for determination of flood hazards. This new language supersedes the previous, less precise language in the County's regulations. The new language also includes an auto-adopt clause. This ensures that any future updates of the Flood Insurance Study (and/or the associated Flood Hazard Maps) will automatically become the County's standard without the need for further amendments of the Flood Hazards Chapter.
- B. Adds specific language designating the position of "Floodplain Administrator."

Planning Commission Action: The Planning Commission considered the proposed amendments at its May 13, 2015 public hearing and unanimously recommended approval of the project.

Report Prepared By: Michael Schaller, Senior Planner, Telephone 650/363-1849

Applicant: San Mateo County Planning and Building Department

Location: Countywide

DISCUSSION:

A. THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has informed the County that our current Flood Hazard Regulations are missing two key components, specifically, language that designates a "Floodplain Administrator" and an "auto-adopt clause" which includes the adoption date of the most recent Flood Insurance Study. The County was informed by FEMA that the two amendments must be adopted by June 30, 2015, in order for the County to remain within the National Flood Insurance Program. Failure to meet the June deadline will result in the County being placed on probationary status; this would result in flood insurance policy holders paying an additional premium on their policies. The two major proposed amendments to the Flood Hazard Chapter are:

SECTION 6824.2. BASIS FOR ESTABLISHING AREAS OF SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD.

The areas of special flood hazard identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the "Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for San Mateo County," dated October 16, 2014, with accompanying Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and Flood Boundary and Floodway Maps (FBFMs), dated October 16, 2012, and all subsequent amendments and/or revisions, are hereby adopted by reference and declared to be a part of this Chapter. This FIS and attendant mapping is the minimum area of applicability of this Chapter and may be supplemented by studies for other areas which allow implementation of this ordinance and which are recommended to the Board of Supervisors by the Floodplain Administrator. The study, FIRMs and FBFMs are on file at the San Mateo County Planning and Building Department, 455 County Center, Second Floor, Redwood City, CA 94063.

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SECTION 6824.9. DESIGNATION OF THE FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATOR.

The San Mateo County Community Development Director is hereby appointed to administer, implement, and enforce this Chapter by granting or denying development permits in accord with its provisions.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed Ordinance Code amendments are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to California Public Resources Code, Section 15061(b)(3). The amendments are covered by the General Rule, which states that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed amendments to the Zoning Regulations will have a significant impact on the natural or built environment.

C. REVIEWING AGENCIES

County Counsel

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the proposed materials as to form and content.

The approval of the proposed amendments to the County's Flood Hazard Regulations contributes to the 2025 Shared Vision outcome of a Livable Community by increasing the accuracy by which flood hazards are identified and by limiting potential increases in flood insurance premiums within San Mateo County.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the County as a result of this amendment.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Recommended Findings
- B. Revised Chapter 35.5 (Flood Hazard Areas)