

BUILDERS / DEVELOPERS / ENGINEERS / SURVEYORS

NEW FLOOD MAPS: BUILDING TO A SAFER STANDARD

Flood hazard maps can be valuable tools in the effort to protect lives and properties. The city's current flood maps are over 20 years out-of-date. The proposed new flood maps are intended to provide a much more accurate picture of flood risks and flood elevations to guide in land development and building decisions.

Engineers / Developers / Builders can plan for safer construction

When preliminary flood maps are released, the building industry will need to know the differences between the preliminary maps and the current effective map. The data from the current effective map is typically used by communities for regulatory and permitting purposes. This will remain the case until the preliminary maps become effective. When the preliminary map shows less restrictive information, it usually cannot be used until that map becomes effective.

Surveyors - The vertical datum is changing

As new flood maps are issued, they will not longer be using the National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (NGVD29) as the vertical datum (see the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Procedure Memorandum 41). Instead, they will use the North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD88). Floodplain managers, surveyors, engineers, builders and other users of elevation data from multiple sources (e.g., a FIRM and elevation certificate) must take care that the elevation values they use are based on the same vertical datum. If they are not the same, the values need to be converted to the same datum. Failure to do so can result in improper design such as building at the wrong elevation. Note that a property owners' risk is not affected by a vertical datum change because all elevations in the local area are changed by the same amount.