

Public Hearing: February 26, 2007

## **F A C T   S H E E T**

**TITLE:** Resolution to Recognize the Salt Creek Floodprone Area and revised Floodway as Best Available Information

**SPONSORS:** Public Works & Utilities  
Lower Platte South NRD

**OPPONENTS:** Unknown

**OTHER DEPARTMENTS AFFECTED:**

Building and Safety  
Planning

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** For

**APPLICANT:** Public Works & Utilities

**REASON FOR LEGISLATION:**

To formally recognize the Salt Creek 100-year Floodprone Areas and revised Floodway as the best available information for local flood regulation purposes.

## **D I S C U S S I O N**

This is a resolution to formally recognize the floodprone areas of Salt Creek as shown on Attachments 1 and 2 as the best available information for local regulatory purposes. The adoption of the best available flood information is in conformance with the Flood Standards for both the Existing Urban Area and New Growth Areas. Adoption of the Salt Creek Floodprone Area map requires a companion ordinance revision to insure that the specified amount of flood storage in each Flood Storage Area is preserved by limiting the percentage of allowable fill.

### ***Floodplain Mapping Update***

The Salt Creek mapping update associated with this text change updates the floodplain and floodway extending from approximately ½ mile south of Saltillo Road to the confluence with Stevens Creek. The information has been submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for adoption on the FEMA floodplain maps, but the FEMA maps are not expected to be officially adopted until 2008. This is the fifth of five stream reaches which are part of the same FEMA map update, where more accurate flood hazard information has been generated as part of Lincoln's Cooperating Technical Partnership with FEMA. Updated information for four other stream reaches (Beal Slough, SE Upper Salt Creek, Stevens Creek, and Cardwell Branch) was adopted by the City Council on January 9, 2006. Adoption of the Salt Creek Floodprone Area as best available information will be consistent with the approach on these other watersheds.

### ***Companion Ordinance - Zoning Text Change for Flood Storage Areas***

The companion ordinance addresses some unique features of the Salt Creek floodplain. If the floodway were mapped in a traditional fashion along Salt Creek, it would extend outside of the levees and into the existing neighborhoods and business areas at some locations. This is significant, because regulations for what can be built in the floodway are much more restrictive than the flood fringe. Due to the circumstances along Salt Creek relating to the levee and Flood Storage Areas, FEMA will allow the floodway to remain along the levee system with the condition that a portion of the flood storage volume in each flood storage area is preserved. (See attached Salt Creek Floodplain Mapping pamphlet for additional information). The companion ordinance is needed to insure that the specified amount of flood storage in each Flood Storage Area is preserved by limiting the percentage of

allowable fill.

### ***Technical Review***

The City, as a Cooperating Technical Partner with FEMA, contracted with a consulting firm to update the floodplain mapping for Salt Creek. The technical floodplain study has been completed in compliance with FEMA's Guidelines and Specifications for Flood Hazard Mapping Partners, certified by a licensed engineer, and submitted to FEMA. FEMA has completed an initial review of the study and map update. In addition, the proposed standards for Salt Creek Flood Storage Areas have been reviewed by FEMA and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and found to be satisfactory. Furthermore, the draft technical information was made available to the engineering community beginning in March of 2006, with a technical briefing in May.

### ***Mayor's Floodplain Task Force and Comprehensive Plan***

The Salt Creek Floodplain Mapping Update was undertaken largely in response to the recommendations of the Mayor's Floodplain Task Force, which acknowledged the risks and challenges associated with managing the Salt Creek floodplain based upon data that is more than 20 years out of date. This outdated information was recognized to be especially problematic for Salt Creek, because the flood storage areas identified in the early 1980's were never regulated by ordinance. The Task Force specifically recommended "a new, comprehensive floodplain study and FEMA floodplain mapping effort" for Salt Creek.

This text change and the associated map adoption are also in conformance with the Lincoln-Lancaster Co. Comprehensive Plan, including the following two strategies:

*"Give special consideration to the Salt Creek floodplain from Van Dorn Street to Superior Street where the FEMA Flood Insurance Study recommends preserving flood storage so as not to increase flood heights greater than one foot.*

*Improve the accuracy of floodplain mapping and make it a priority to which specific resources are dedicated. Continue to develop a comprehensive, watershed approach to floodplain mapping."*

### ***Floodplain Standards***

While the Floodplain Task Force recommended that No Net Rise/Compensatory Storage standards be adopted for the Existing Urban Area (which incorporates a large portion of Salt Creek), the Task Force also "acknowledged that to accurately and completely address the impacts of alternative floodplain management concepts specifically on Salt Creek would require an extensive study of the of the entire basin with new mapping, new hydrology and new hydraulics..." Accordingly, it is important to note that **the currently proposed text change relates strictly to the mapping of the Salt Creek floodplain and regulation in accordance with the minimum state and federal standards.** The restriction on percentage of allowable fill by flood storage area assures only that fill in the floodplain will not increase flood heights greater than one foot. After the completion of the Salt Creek mapping update, it is expected that the dialogue will continue regarding the potential for more restrictive flood standards in the Existing Urban Area.

### ***Public Process***

The Salt Creek Floodplain Mapping Update has had an extremely extensive public process that began in March of 2005, and included the following:

- 3 open houses
- multiple mailings to property owners, agencies, engineers, neighborhood and business

- associations, and other interest groups (approx. 12,000 total)
- approximately 30 presentations and meetings with a range of agency and interest groups
- personal contacts
- technical briefing for engineers
- flood insurance seminar
- extensive website with maps and information at lincoln.ne.gov keyword: Salt Creek
- surveys at no cost for properties with buildings at the edge of the floodprone area to provide certainty about whether the structure is in the floodprone area.

***Conclusion***

It is anticipated to be a year or more before the FEMA floodplain maps are updated to reflect this technical update. In the meantime, it is critical that we use the best available flood hazard information for Salt Creek for local regulation, just as we have on the other stream reaches in Lincoln for which flood hazard information has been updated. For Salt Creek, this requires a companion text change to address the unique flood storage areas.

**POLICY OR PROGRAM CHANGE:** No. This resolution is consistent with Flood Standards, the flood mapping policies in the Comprehensive Plan, and the local adoption of best available information for four other stream reaches in the Lincoln Area.

**FACT SHEET PREPARED BY:** Nicole Fleck-Tooze

**REVIEWED BY:** Karl Fredrickson, Director of Public Works/Utilities