



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FEMA APPROVES MOUNT VERNON'S PROPOSED DOWNTOWN FLOOD PROTECTION PROJECT

MOUNT VERNON – Today Mayor Bud Norris was notified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that FEMA has approved the City's request for a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) for the City's proposed downtown flood protection project. A CLOMR is FEMA's comment on a proposed project that would, upon construction, be recognized by FEMA and thus result in the modification of the regulatory floodplain identified on effective National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) maps. Once the flood project is completed and certified by an engineer to the design approved through the CLOMR, the City can then request a revision to FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) to reflect the project and remove Mount Vernon's historic downtown from the 100-year floodplain.

Mayor Norris believes this approval is a turning point in the City's effort to increase public safety and attract re-development in its downtown. "This is monumental news for the City and represents a milestone in accomplishing our goal of better flood protection for downtown Mount Vernon. This project, and its success, is a critical component to the City's ongoing efforts to reduce the dangers that flooding presents to Mount Vernon citizens and visitors every year." Mayor Norris goes on to say, "The success is key to creating a vibrant, beautiful downtown that will attract long term commercial investment and as a result enhance quality of life for Mount Vernon, its citizens and visitors to the area."

For the past five years, Mount Vernon has worked diligently on designing a project to protect its downtown core from flooding and allow for the historic downtown to be revitalized. The four years includes an exhaustive public process providing for local input, evaluating the environmental and flood related impacts, and coordinating with local, state and federal agencies. The result is a project that includes a 1.75 mile river promenade and riverfront park enhancing public river access and providing more public open space downtown near the river. It is anticipated that the combination of increased flood protection and riverfront amenities will attract mixed use re-development, generate jobs and increase housing resulting in a larger commercial tax base while preserving Mount Vernon's downtown character. The project is fully permitted, designed and ready for construction with the first phase between Lion's Park and the Division Street Bridge already under construction and scheduled to be completed in September.

Mount Vernon City officials have been working with FEMA officials over the past 15 months following the appropriate steps and process in order to design a flood protection project, that

once constructed, receives a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) removing downtown Mount Vernon from the 100-year floodplain. The engineering firm Pacific International Engineering, PLLC designed and provided the engineering studies which formed the basis of FEMA's approval. FEMA's rigorous review, high standards and ultimate approval acknowledges the soundness of and high quality of design work the City received.

Mayor Norris acknowledged the help received from others in getting to this point. "I would like to give special thanks to our partners in this project, Dike District 3 for their cooperation and financial support. I would also like to acknowledge our community partners for their support of this project - Mount Vernon School District, Skagit Valley Hospital, Skagit Valley College, Skagit County, Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Association of Skagit County, as well as the cities of Burlington, Sedro- Woolley, town of La Conner and the Port of Skagit."

Contact: Jana Hanson, City of Mount Vernon Community and Economic Development Director (360-336-6214)