



# PROPOSED TEXT CHANGES TO YAKIMA COUNTY CRITICAL AREAS ORDINANCE – YCC 16C TO ADOPT UPDATED FEMA FLOODPLAIN MAPS AND TEXT

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

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As a condition of Yakima County's continued eligibility in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), these amendments are required to be adopted or show evidence of adoption to ensure Yakima County's floodplain management regulations (i.e., Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) development regulations) are compliant with the standards of Paragraph 60.3(d) of the NFIP. Furthermore, the adoption of these amendments coincides with the October 21, 2021 effectiveness date of updated flood insurance rate maps (FIRMs) for portions of Cowiche Creek and Upper Naches River, in conformance with specific sections of the National Flood Insurance Act (Section 1361).

Sandra Floyd, Floodplain Management Specialist, Ecology (Certified Floodplain Manager) provided an extensive review of the special flood hazard area provisions within Title 16C (CAO) of the Yakima County Code (YCC) in 2020. She highlighted required amendments AND recommended changes to these applicable sections. The amendments recommended for approval are the **required minimum** standards that must be adopted prior to the effectiveness of the pending Cowiche Creek and Upper Naches flood insurance rate maps, to remain eligible for FEMA's NFIP program – i.e., these amendments are required for Yakima County residents to receive flood insurance and federal emergency disaster relief.

## CONSISTENCY WITH CHANGES IN STATE LAW

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These changes are the required minimum standards an NFIP-participating County must adopt to remain compliant with Paragraph 60.4(d) of the NFIP. These changes are intended to provide clarity of development regulations within SFHAs and must be adopted for County residents to remain eligible to receive flood insurance and federal flood disaster relief funding for the County.

### Significant change

- None. These are the **required minimum** standards that must be adopted prior to the new FIRMs becoming effective on October 21, 2021. Also, it shall be noted that 1 of the standards and processes presented are already required by [Section G of the 2018 International Building Code](#), adopted by reference in Yakima County Code [Title 13 \(the Building Code\)](#).

## POSITIVE CHANGES

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- Allows for continued and federal flood disaster relief funding for our community.
- Allows for continued participation in the National Flood Insurance Program and availability of flood insurance for our community.

- 42 less structures in the SFHA for the Upper Naches and Cowiche watersheds.
- 88 less acres of SFHA – more potential development opportunity.
- 650 additional acres of floodway – less damage to property, displacement of people, more natural flood regimes and habitat area creation.
- More accurately characterizes watersheds flood risk with a detailed study vs the outdated approximate study – flood risks more well-known and can be planned for accordingly.
- More clarity on SFHA development requirements in the Yakima County Code (YCC) rather than “adopted by reference” – easier to understand standards and processes.

## OTHER CHANGES

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Other Changes required as part of this ordinance code update include:

- No longer a development review exemption for agricultural and accessory structures located within SFHAs – must be reviewed through building permit application process (currently in practice with Building, per IBC).
- 27 amendments to SFHA definitions (14 new; 13 revised)
- Base Flood Elevation definition updated to match FEMA definition:

16C.02.220 Floodway.

“Floodway” means the regular channel of a river, stream, or other watercourse, plus the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than ~~one foot~~ a designated height. Also referred to as “Regulatory Floodway.”

- Violations and fines were incorporated from Title 16C.04.03 (Penalties) to Title 16C

### Guide to Title 16C Changes

All new text is identified by the blue, underlined text. This is text that we have added.

All deleted text is ~~identified by red, strike-through text~~. This is text that we have deleted.

Any reference materials that are not available within the document are available upon request by contacting Yakima County Public Services Department  
Karri Espinoza by phone at 509-574-2300 or email at [Karri Espinoza@co.yakima.wa.us](mailto:Karri.Espinoza@co.yakima.wa.us).