



City of Tenino Planning Commission

Public Hearing

Flood Hazard Regulation Update

To: Dave Watterson, City of Tenino Mayor
City of Tenino Planning Commission

From: SCJ Alliance

Date: May 13, 2026

Project: City of Tenino Periodic Development Code Update

Subject: Flood Hazard Regulation Update

Purpose

The Planning Commission is asked to hold a public hearing on the proposed amendments to Tenino Municipal Code (TMC) Chapter 5.24, Flood Hazard Regulations, and provide a recommendation to City Council regarding adoption. The proposed amendments are intended to maintain consistency with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), incorporate Washington State Department of Ecology review comments, and update the City's floodplain management regulations to reflect current federal and state requirements.

1 Background

The City of Tenino currently regulates flood hazard areas through TMC Chapter 5.24. Flood hazard regulations are intended to:

- Reduce risks to public health, safety, and property by establishing standards for development in special flood hazard areas.
- Support the City's continued participation in the NFIP, which makes federally backed flood insurance available to eligible property owners within the community.

The existing chapter includes findings, purpose statements, definitions, permit requirements, variance procedures, general standards, specific construction standards, and floodway provisions. The proposed amendments retain the overall structure of Chapter 5.24 while updating required language, clarifying administration, and adding provisions consistent with Ecology's model ordinance guidance and federal floodplain management criteria in Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Ecology reviewed the City's flood hazard regulations and provided edits identifying mandatory, recommended, and clarifying updates. The draft ordinance responds to those comments by adding or revising definitions, permit

review criteria, records retention requirements, watercourse alteration procedures, construction standards, and floodway standards.

2 Summary of Proposed Amendments

The proposed amendments generally address the following areas:

- Update definitions to align with federal floodplain management terminology, including definitions for alteration of watercourse, area of special flood hazard, base flood elevation, floodplain administrator, flood proofing, functionally dependent use, highest adjacent grade, historic structure, mean sea level, new construction, and start of construction.
- Adopt by reference the current Flood Insurance Study for Thurston County, Washington and incorporated areas, dated October 19, 2023, together with the applicable Flood Insurance Rate Maps dated June 19, 2020, and any subsequent revisions.
- Clarify that a floodplain development permit is required before construction or development begins within any area of special flood hazard.
- Add application requirements for floodplain development permits, including elevation information, flood proofing certifications, watercourse alteration information, floodway analysis, and other information reasonably required by the Floodplain Administrator.
- Designate a Floodplain Administrator and clarify the duties of that official, including permit review, use of other base flood data, recordkeeping, watercourse alteration notifications, and interpretation of flood map boundaries.
- Update general standards for anchoring, construction materials and methods, utilities, subdivision and new development review, and storage of materials and equipment in special flood hazard areas.
- Update residential and nonresidential construction standards, including elevation, flood proofing, enclosure, mechanical equipment, and utility protection requirements.
- Retain and clarify provisions for manufactured homes, recreational vehicles, critical facilities, fill, clearing and grading, hazardous materials, accessory structures, and floodway development.
- Add standards for AE and A1-30 zones where base flood elevations are available, but no regulatory floodway has been designated.
- Add or clarify severability, variance records, appeals, and other administrative provisions needed for implementation and enforceability.

3 Key Policy and Implementation Considerations

The amendments are primarily technical and compliance oriented. They are not intended to create a new local floodplain management program, but rather to update the City’s existing regulations so they continue to meet NFIP minimum requirements and provide clearer direction to applicants, staff, and decision makers.

- Before City Council adoption, staff should confirm the following local implementation details in the ordinance:
- The job title of the City official who will serve as the Floodplain Administrator.
- The City address or office location where the adopted Flood Insurance Study and Flood Insurance Rate Maps will be kept on file for public inspection.
- Whether livestock sanctuary language should be retained based on whether livestock uses are allowed within the City and whether the provision is necessary for local implementation.
- Internal consistency of section numbering after final edits are incorporated into the adopting ordinance.

4 Staff Analysis

Staff find that the proposed amendments are appropriate for Planning Commission consideration and are consistent with the purpose of local flood hazard regulation. The amendments strengthen the City’s ability to administer floodplain development review, reduce flood-related risks, and maintain compliance with federal and state floodplain management expectations.

The proposed amendments:

- Support public health, safety, and welfare by reducing exposure to flood damage and clarifying development standards in special flood hazard areas.
- Maintain consistency with the NFIP by incorporating required terminology, permit review procedures, recordkeeping, variance criteria, and floodway standards.
- Improve local administration by clarifying the role and duties of the Floodplain Administrator and identifying application materials needed for review.
- Provide clearer standards for residential, nonresidential, manufactured home, recreational vehicle, critical facility, fill, accessory structure, and floodway development.
- Support implementation of the City’s broader periodic update work by ensuring flood hazard regulations remain current, enforceable, and aligned with applicable state and federal requirements.

Staff does not anticipate that the amendments will substantially change the City’s policy direction for flood hazard management. Instead, the amendments update the existing chapter to reflect current regulatory language and improve procedural clarity for future permit review.

5 Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend that the Planning Commission hold the public hearing and forward a recommendation of approval to City Council for adoption of the proposed amendments to TMC Chapter 5.24, Flood Hazard Regulations, subject to final review for local placeholders, section numbering, and any modifications the Commission or City Council deems necessary following the public hearing.

Recommended motion: *I move that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the proposed amendments to Tenino Municipal Code Chapter 5.24, Flood Hazard Regulations, and forward the amendments to City Council for adoption, subject to final review for local placeholders, section numbering, and any minor corrections necessary to prepare the ordinance for City Council consideration.*

6 Next Steps

- Planning Commission forwards a recommendation to City Council.
- Staff finalizes the draft for final adoption.
- City Council considers adoption of the ordinance.
- Following adoption, the City maintains the adopted Flood Insurance Study and Flood Insurance Rate Maps on file and administers the updated regulations through the floodplain development permit process.

Conclusion

The proposed Flood Hazard Regulation amendments provide an important update to Tenino's existing floodplain management regulations. The amendments respond to Ecology review comments, incorporate required federal floodplain management language, and improve clarity for applicants and staff administering development review within special flood hazard areas.

Staff conclude that the proposed amendments are consistent with the City's responsibility to protect public health, safety, and welfare; support continued NFIP participation; and maintain clear, enforceable development standards for flood hazard areas. Staff recommend that the Planning Commission forward the draft amendments to City Council with a recommendation of approval, with any adjustments the Commission deems appropriate following the public hearing.

Attachments include the draft TMC Chapter 5.24 Flood Hazard Regulations amendments and the Washington State Department of Ecology review comments.

Attachments

1. Tenino_FLOOD_HAZARD_REGULATIONS_5.7.26