

Report

City of Merritt
REGULAR Council Meeting
January 24, 2023

File Number: 7130-09-02

To: Sean Smith, Chief Administrative Officer

From: Lacey McRae Williams, Director of Planning & Development Services

Date: January 18, 2023

Subject: Revisions to Flood Inundation Zone Building Measures Adopted December 7, 2021

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council adopt revisions to the Flood Inundation Zone Building Measures as outlined in the staff report.

Background:

On December 7, 2021 Council adopted Flood Inundation Zone building measures to reduce barriers for flood affected home and property owners by waiving fees and/or permit applications for those affected. Please see the staff report attached dated December 2, 2021 for more information.

Since then, our department has received a number of inquiries from developers and/or new property owners who have purchased properties in this area post-flood. We are receiving some pressure from new property owners regarding the need to apply for permits and/or pay fees. Staff feel this is missing the intent of the original staff report.

Options / discussion

Many of these new developments require a significant amount of staff time and resources as we are working through a less prescriptive zoning bylaw, which can permit higher density in residential areas, as well as working through a newly adopted OCP which includes the addition of Development Permit Areas to ensure environmental protection and health and safety standards are met.

Staff would like to provide clarification in the following sections of the report:

- Earthworks Permits
- Development Permits
- Building Permits
- Plumbing Permits
- Demolition Permits.

Staff recommends that the following wording is added to provide clarity to the development and building measures:

Earthworks Permits

To allow ~~residents~~ *flood affected home and/or property owners* to deposit or remove soil while reducing administrative process, staff recommend that Council waive the requirement to apply and pay fees for an Earthworks Permit for properties within in the flood inundation zone until December 31, 2023.

**This exemption does not apply to property and/or homeowners or developers who have purchased the property after November 15th, 2021.*

Development Permits

As per the ~~existing~~ *former* Official Community Plan (OCP), affected properties in the City Centre would require a Development Permit prior to exterior renovations.

The ~~proposed~~ existing OCP ~~would~~ requires Development Permits for any multiple unit residential, commercial, mixed use, or industrial developments in the city, including properties throughout the flood inundation zone.

Form and Character DPs:

Staff recommend that Council waive the requirement for *flood affected home and/or property owners* ~~properties~~ to apply for form and character Development Permits for properties in the flood inundation zone that are zoned R1 or R2, and that Council direct staff to revise the draft OCP to remove the requirement for Development Permits for *flood affected home and/or property owners* ~~properties in the~~ with this zoning within the flood inundation zone until December 31, 2023.

By removing the requirement to apply for a Development Permit, *flood affected home and/or property owners* will be able to go directly to the Building Permit stage, reducing the processing time for approval of renovations. The property owner would also avoid the \$1,561 (2022 fee) application fee.

**This exemption does not apply to property and/or homeowners or developers who have purchased the property after November 15th, 2021.*

Technical DPs:

There are several technical Development Permits that ~~could be~~ are required for properties that are in the flood inundation zone.

Staff recommend that Council waive the application fee *for flood affected home and/or property owners* of \$312 (2022 fee) for riparian, geotechnical and wildfire Development Permits within the flood inundation zone until December 31, 2023. Staff will also ensure these applications are expedited.

**This exemption does not apply to property and/or homeowners or developers who have purchased the property after November 15th, 2021.*

Building Permits

Staff recommend that Council waive the Building Permit fees for *flood affected home and/or property owners'* renovations in the flood inundation zone until December 31, 2023. Staff also recommend that Building Permit fees are waived for new construction that is replacing demolished buildings in the flood inundation zone until December 31, 2023. Staff will ensure that these Building Permit applications are expedited.

**This exemption does not apply to property and/or homeowners or developers who have purchased the property after November 15th, 2021.*

Plumbing Permits

Staff recommend that Plumbing Permit fees are waived for *flood affected home and/or property owners* ~~properties~~ in the flood inundation zone until December 31, 2023.

**This exemption does not apply to property and/or homeowners or developers who have purchased the property after November 15th, 2021.*

Demolition Permits

Staff recommend that Council waive the fees for *flood affected home and/or property owners* Demolition Permits for building in the flood inundation zone until December 31, 2023.

**This exemption does not apply to property and/or homeowners or developers who have purchased the property after November 15th, 2021.*

Financial / Risk Implications:

Many of these new developments require a significant amount of staff time and resources as we are working through a less prescriptive zoning bylaw, which can permit higher density in residential areas, as well as working through a newly adopted OCP which includes the addition of Development Permit Areas to ensure environmental protection and health and safety standards are met.

Attachments:

Please see Staff Report dated December 2, 2021 attached.

Respectfully submitted,

Lacey McRae Williams
Director of Planning and Development Services