

# Floodplain Ordinance Update

ZTA #2023-0005

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City Council

November 18, 2023





# Why we are here...

- The City of Alexandria participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- The federal requirement for this participation (adoption of floodplain ordinance) allows all residents and property owners to purchase federal flood insurance.
- Recent changes to Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Alexandria require text amendment updates and adoption of a revised section of the Alexandria zoning ordinance.

## **Article VI – Special and Overlay Zones** **Section 6-300 Floodplain District**



# National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

## NFIP Quick Facts:

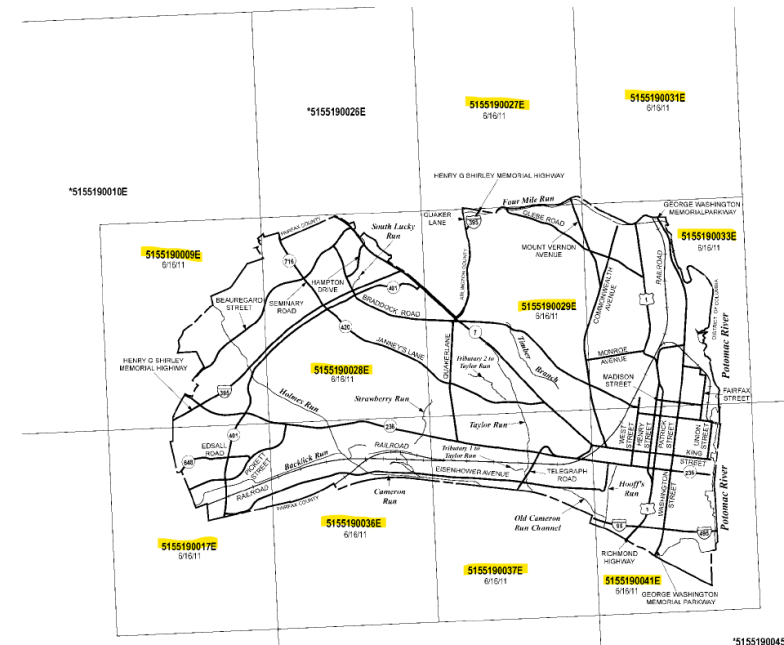
- Established in 1968
- Alexandria began participation in 1969
- Alexandria's first Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) was published in 1970
- Mandatory Flood Insurance began in 1973
- Alexandria began participation in the Community Rating System (CRS) in 1992 (Flood Insurance discounts)
- Last update to Alexandria's maps became effective on June 16, 2011

# What are the FEMA Flood Maps?

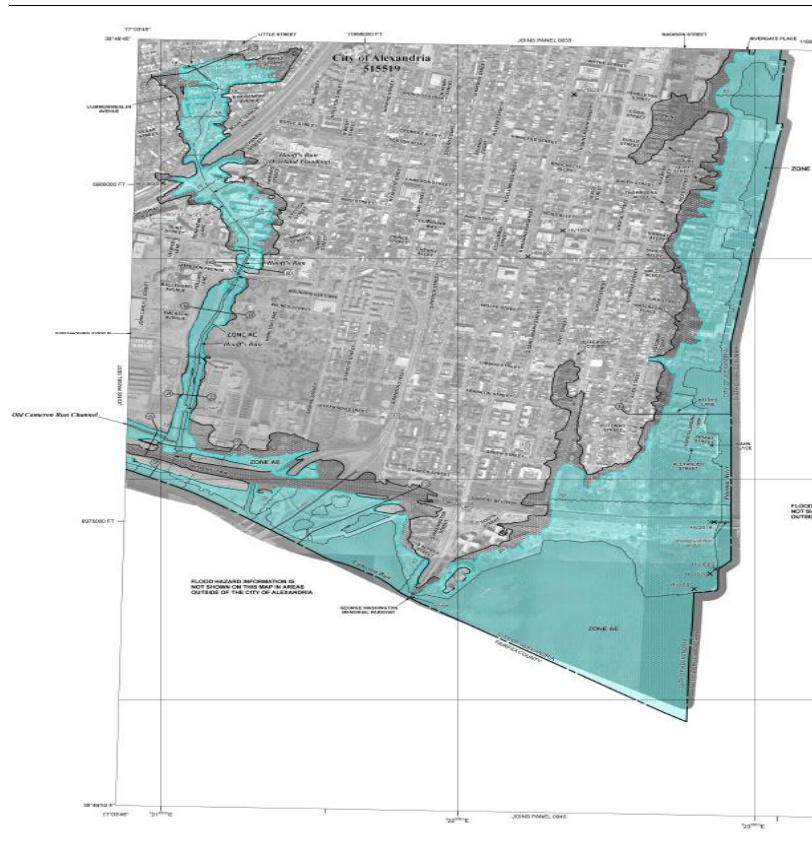
The regulatory FEMA floodplain, is officially shown on FEMA's published maps, also known as:

## FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAPs (FIRMs)

Alexandria has 10 FEMA map panels



# What are the FEMA Flood Maps?



2011



2024



# What is the FEMA Floodplain?

The regulatory FEMA floodplain, as shown on the maps, is known as:

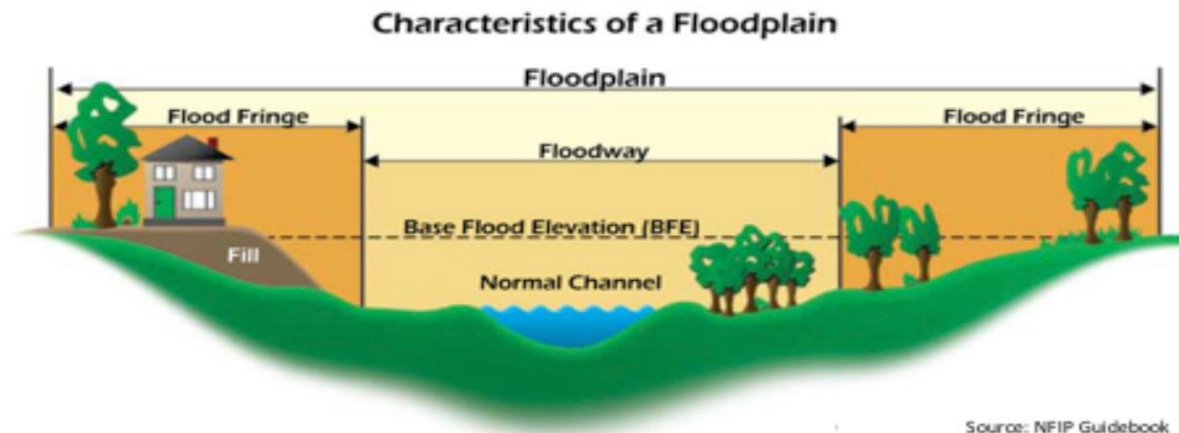
**Zone AE:** An area inundated by 1% annual chance flood, for which Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) have been determined by detailed methods (H&H). Other zones defined by flooding source.

**AKA:** Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA),  
100-year floodplain.

# What is the FEMA Floodplain?

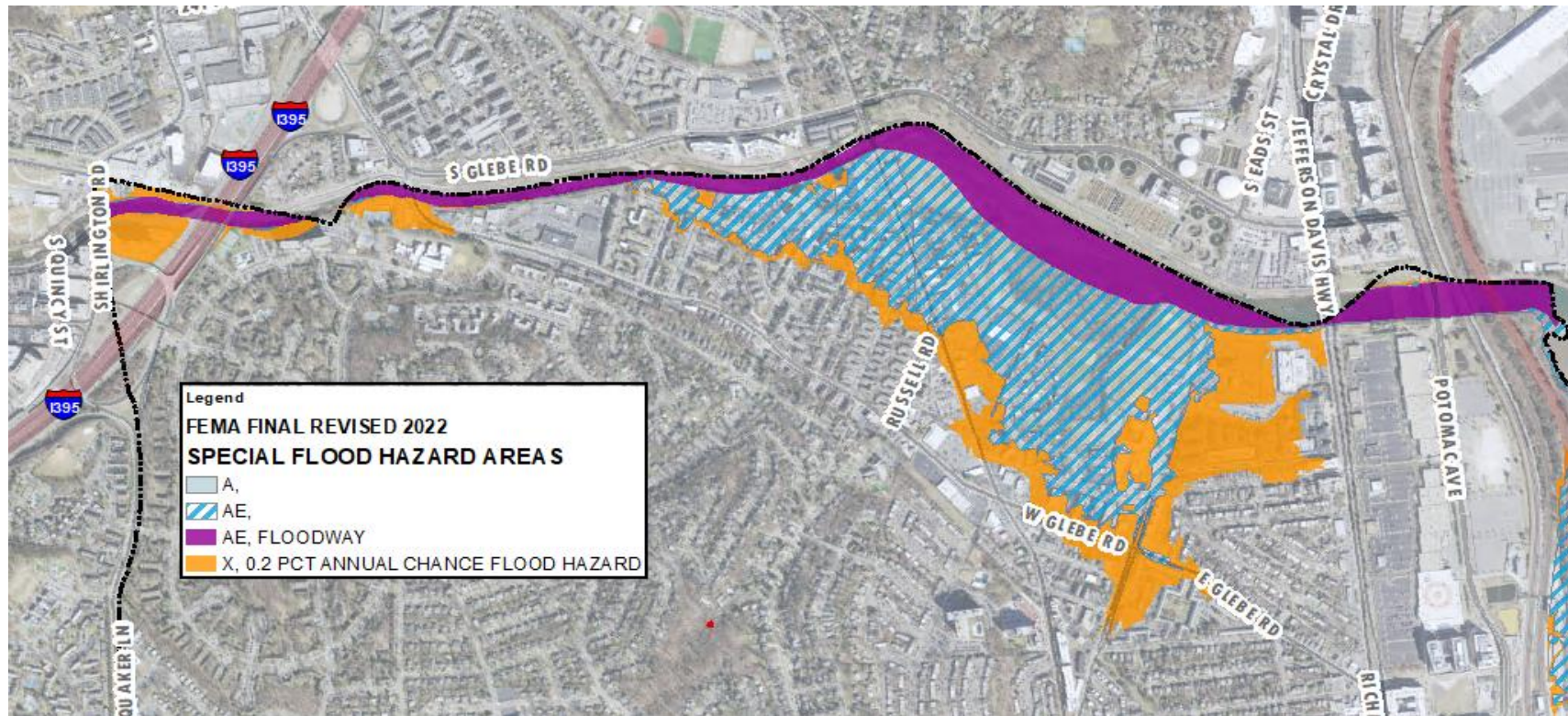
A NEW regulatory FEMA floodplain, as shown on the NEW maps, is known as:

**Zone AE Floodway:** A "Regulatory Floodway" means the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than 1-foot.



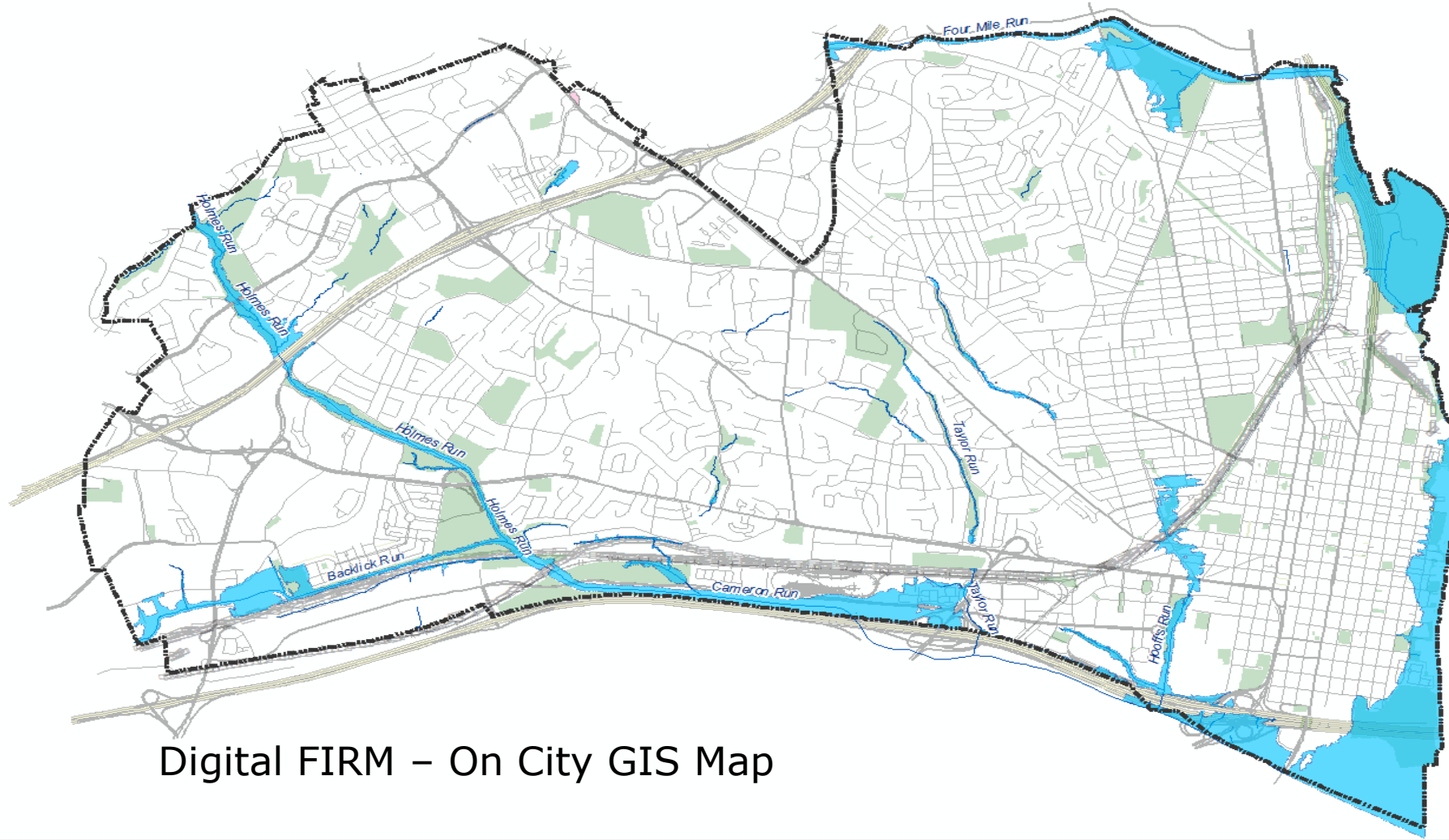
# What is the FEMA Floodplain?

The new **Floodway** delineation is 100% contained in the US Army Corps of Engineer's Four Mile Run Flood Control Project. USACE jurisdiction over the Flood Control Channel supersedes FEMA's regulations and provides greater restrictions on development.



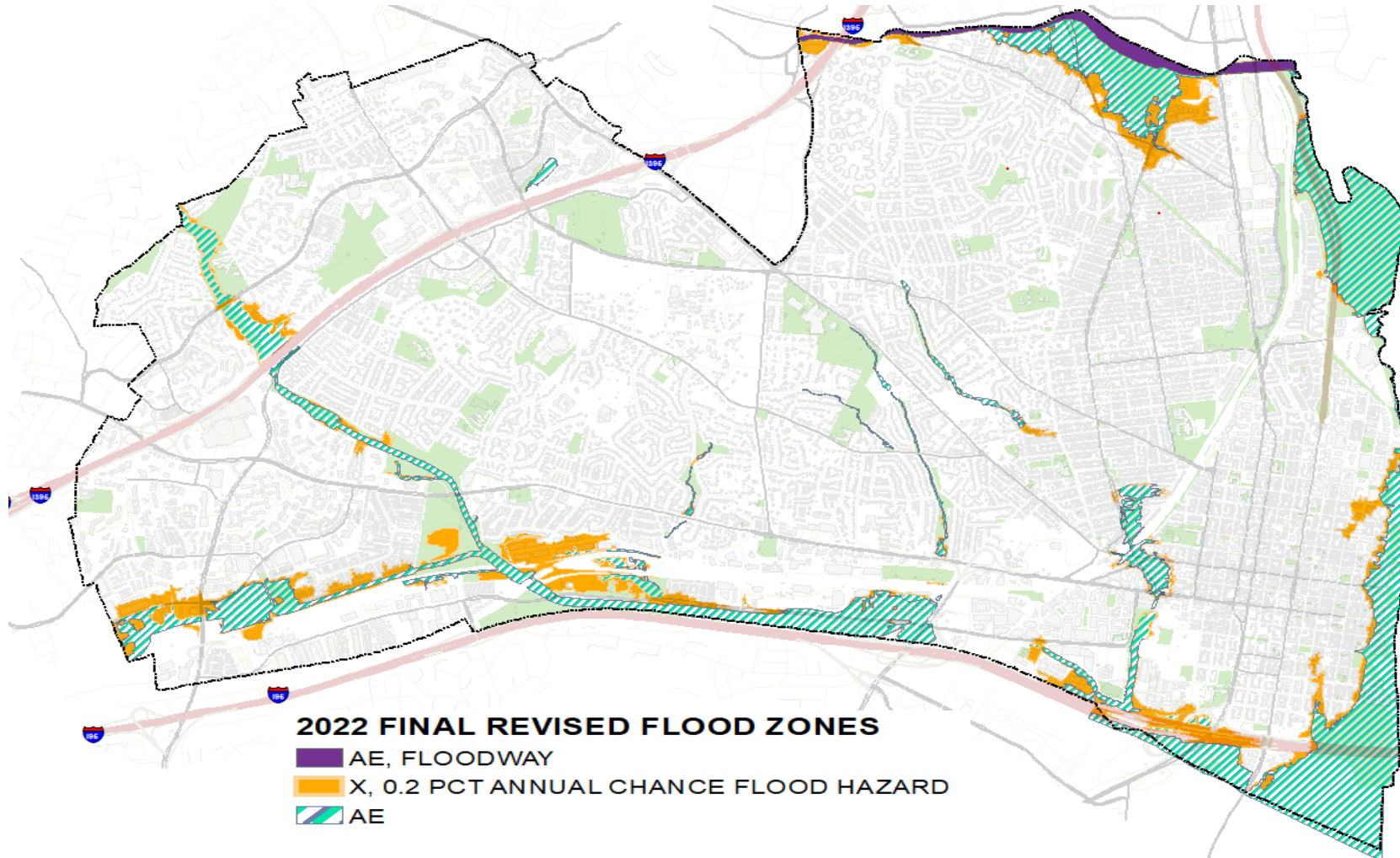


# Alexandria's Floodplains Effective June 16, 2011



Digital FIRM – On City GIS Map

# Alexandria's Floodplains Effective January 11, 2024



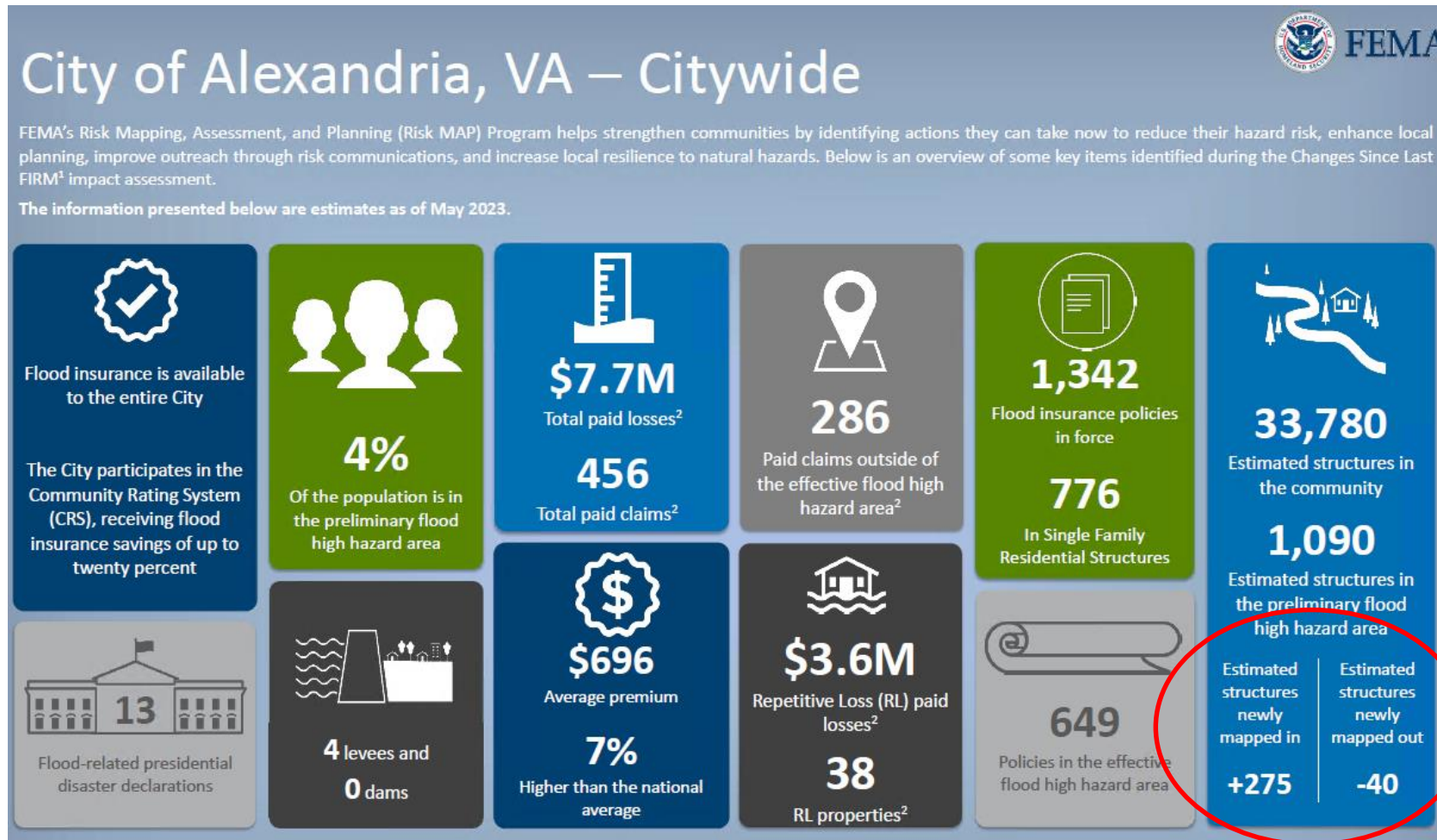
**2022 FINAL REVISED FLOOD ZONES**  
■ AE, FLOODWAY  
■ X, 0.2 PCT ANNUAL CHANCE FLOOD HAZARD  
■ AE

Digital FIRM – On City GIS Map



# Alexandria's Floodplains Effective January 11, 2024

## FEMA'S IMPACT DASHBOARD





# Alexandria's Floodplain Administration by Ordinance

- Alexandria's Floodplain District
  - Zoning Ordinance: **ARTICLE VI – SPECIAL AND OVERLAY ZONES, Section 6-300 Floodplain District**
- Regulation of Development
  - Development:

“Any man-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including, but not limited to, the construction of buildings or other structures, the placement of manufactured homes, the construction of streets, the installation of utilities and other activities or operations involving paving, filling, grading, excavating, mining, dredging or drilling, the storage of equipment or materials.”



# Regulation of Development

## When does the Ordinance apply?

- **New Construction in Floodplain**
  - Always
- **Existing Buildings in Floodplain**
  - Substantial Improvement:
    - Any repair, reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition or other improvement of a building or structure, the cost of which equals or exceeds 50% of the market value of the building or structure.
  - Any improvements to Substantially Damaged buildings or structures.
  - Historic buildings are exempt.



# Regulation of Development

- Three Major Uses:
  - **Residential Building**
    - Any single-family dwelling, two-family dwelling, row or townhouse dwelling, or multi-family dwelling, and any accessory building or structure. Floodproofing is not permitted.
  - **Nonresidential Building**
    - Any building or structure which is not a residential building or a mixed-use building. Floodproofing is permitted.
  - **Mixed-Use Building**
    - Any building or structure that is used or intended for use in a mixture of nonresidential and residential uses in the same building or structure. For floodplain management purposes, **a mixed-use building is subject to the same rules and conditions as a residential building** unless all of the provisions set forth more specifically in Section 6-307(B)(5) are met. Floodproofing is conditional.



# Proposed Text Amendment

## Administrative Amendments Required by FEMA map changes:

- Match dates of new FIRM effective dates
- Updates Map Effective dates to January 11, 2024
- Add required regulations for new "Floodway" Special Flood Hazard Area in Four Mile Run channel
- Required by 44 CFR for participation in NFIP

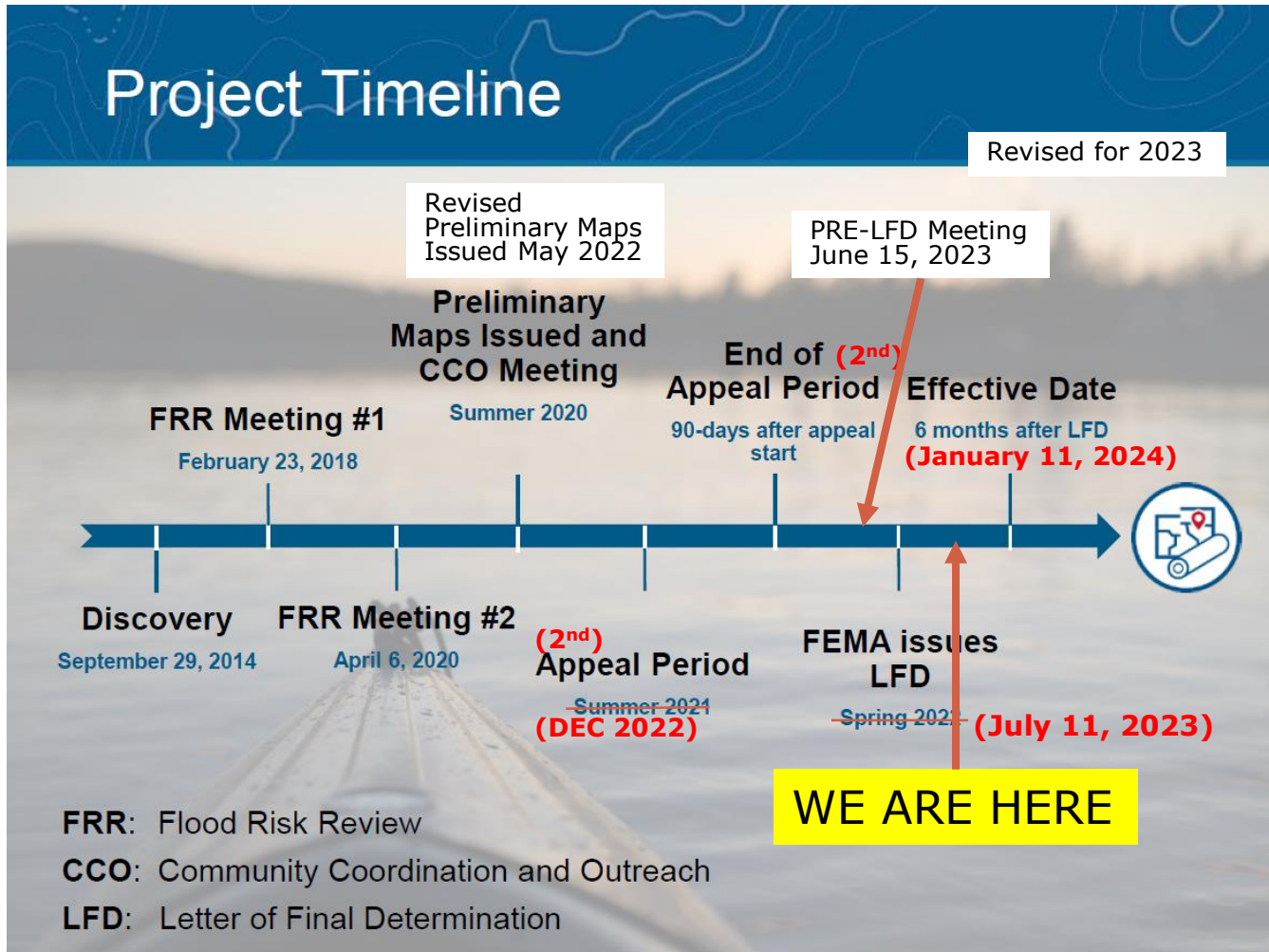
## Other Amendments:

- Revisions for closer compliance to VA Model Ordinance (definitions, etc.)
- Modernizes text sections carrying legacy language and other minor clarifications
- Maintains existing higher standards than NFIP minimums (CRS points)

## Future Amendments:

Staff will propose additional higher standards to this ordinance as part of the upcoming Alexandria Flood Resiliency Plan at a future date.

# FEMA PROCESS







# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **PUBLIC WEBINARS**

- **FEMA Map Update Open House**  
March 1, 2021
- **Four Mile Run**  
May 19, 2021
- **Potomac River/Old Town**  
May 24, 2021
- **Hooffs Run**  
June 2, 2021
- **Cameron, Backlick, Strawberry, Taylor Runs**  
June 7, 2021
- **VA Requirement for Notice of Map Changes**  
Mailers sent April 2021
- **Appeals Period 2021 Notice**  
eNews July 22, 2021
- **Appeals Period 2022 Notice**  
eNews December 8, 2022
- **FEMA Letter of Final Determination Notice**  
eNews – Flood Action Alexandria Newsletter August 1, 2023
- **NAIOP presentation October 18, 2023**
- **Website updates and Appeals records online**  
<https://alexandriava.gov/floodmap>



# What's Next?

**New Maps are effective January 11, 2024**

## **Planning Commission Recommendation & City Council Adoption**

Before a public hearing for ordinance adoption, DCR must review the draft to confirm that it complies with NFIP requirements.

**VA DCR Approved September 7, 2023**

- Alexandria notices and holds public hearings as needed in November.
- Alexandria submits the final, adopted ordinance to DCR no later than December 11.

***The ordinance must be amended, reviewed, and adopted before the FIRM effective date, or the community will be suspended from the NFIP.***

# Questions?





# Planning Commission initiated and recommended approval