

City of Cincinnati



Interdepartmental
Correspondence
Sheet

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Date: May 9, 2008

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Milton R. Dohoney, Jr., City Manager *MD*

Subject: **LUNKEN FIELD AIRPORT LEVEE DE-ACCREDITATION**

In the attached letter dated September 5, 2007, the Lunken Airport Manager was notified by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that the Lunken Field Airport Levee will no longer be shown to protect to the Base Flood Elevation on the new countywide Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) for Hamilton County. This levee protects the Lunken Airport, Lunken Playfield, Reeves Golf Course, and businesses and residences along Wilmer Avenue. The walking/biking trail is located on top of this levee.

The Base Flood Elevation (BFE) is the modeled pooling elevation of flood waters based on a 1-percent-chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. In the past, this term was incorrectly referred to as the 100-year flood elevation. The Lunken Airport, Lunken Playfield, and properties immediately to the west of Wilmer Avenue will be remapped and shown as not having the BFE protection.

Background

Upon receiving the initial notification of FEMA's DFIRM remapping efforts for Hamilton County, the City Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE) contacted FEMA, and provided various survey data and other information in order to determine if the existing levee currently provided the needed base flood protection as outlined in Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations Section 65.10 (44 CFR 65.10). This regulation specifies various flood levee compliance criteria that can be separated into the following five categories:

1. General Criteria
2. Design Criteria
3. Operations Plans and Criteria
4. Maintenance Plans and Criteria
5. Certification Requirements

Under the Design Criteria category, an established levee must have a minimum freeboard of 3 feet above the water-surface level of the Base Flood Elevation. A spot survey provided by DOTE staff showed that the levee fell below the freeboard requirement and that it did not appear to meet the limited exceptions as also outlined further in the regulation.

Property Owner Impact

Later this year, FEMA will issue Preliminary Maps and meet with City staff and the public regarding the revised maps. Following this meeting, a 90-day Appeal/Protest Period will be held concerning the proposed mapping changes. When all Appeals/Protests are resolved, FEMA will issue the Letter of Determination. Final DFIRMS will be distributed that will become effective 6 months after the date of the Letter of Final Determination.

The area behind the levee will be re-designated as high-risk zone, or Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). As a result, the businesses and homes within the remapped area will not be eligible to receive reduced-cost Preferred Risk Policies (PRP) through the National Flood Insurance Program.

Flood insurance will be required for structures with a federally backed mortgage. Existing property owners may be able to save on the cost of this insurance by being "grandfathered". Buildings covered by flood insurance before the effective date of the new maps can be "grandfathered" in at more favorable insurance rates. Also, the provisions of Chapter 1109 of the Cincinnati Building Code titled "Flood Plain Management" shall apply to new construction, substantial improvements, and development in all areas of this updated SFHA.

The remapping of the area affected by this change will show that it does not have the BFE protection; however, City staff will continue to operate and maintain the levee so that the risk of flood damage is minimized.

This report is for informational purposes only. No action is required.

cc: James A. Parrott, Executive Director, MSD
Eileen Enabnit, Director, DOTE