



September 9, 2025

City of Portsmouth Public Statement Regarding Abandoned Floodwall-West Front Street

- It is understood there is a perception that residents believe the abandoned wall offers some level of flood protection. Any obstruction in a floodway/flood plain may deter some water in certain events, in some way. However, the City has not modeled the hydraulics of the immediate area to identify how or if the abandoned existing wall might affect localized flooding.
- The abandoned wall was not required to be, nor was it reviewed, during the flood defense system review that was required by the United States Army Corps of Engineers several years ago.
- The abandoned wall was part of the original flood wall that was topped in 1937, prior to the construction of the City's current flood defense system.
- The abandoned wall is not intended, relied upon, or maintained to offer any level of flood protection.
- The abandoned wall is not recognized by the City as any official part of the flood protection, nor is it recognized by US Army Corps of Engineers to be part of the City's flood defense system.
- The wall only functions as a retaining wall for Front Street, nothing more.
- Homes, business, and other structures outside of the City's maintained flood defense system are not guaranteed any flood defense as part of the City's flood defense policy or operating procedures.
- Homes, businesses, and other structures outside the City's floodwall system are required to meet certain requirements associated with flooding areas. The requirements can be verified with the City's engineering office.

The City may at some point need to repair or replace the abandoned wall with a more modern retaining wall. There is no guarantee that a replacement of the retaining wall will match the existing size, height, type or otherwise.