

CITY OF SUMAS

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Sumas Flood Awareness Week Monday October 13, 2025 Summary of Flood Hazard

Welcome to Sumas Flood Awareness Week! This week, the City will be sending out a series of publications which we think will help our residents be better prepared for whatever may come this Fall/Winter season. To start off this week of information, we will be reviewing the flood hazard and how the waters reach us from such a far distance. To end the week, please join Mayor Bosch and members of the Sumas City Council for a Flood Awareness Open House on Friday and Saturday in the Sumas City Council Chambers at 433 Cherry St. More details regarding this Open House will be released at a later date.

The Flood

Flooding in Sumas generally occurs as a result of recent heavy rainfall and a large amount of snowmelt in the higher elevations around Mt. Baker. In the winter, when there are clouds and rain, the air temperature at ground level tends to be warmer as the clouds tend to trap the heat at the surface. If there is a large amount of snow that has accumulated in the mountains, then that snow can melt in great abundance during this warmer period.

When the snow melts in great abundance, that excess water rushes down the creeks and streams that ultimately contribute to the Nooksack River and increase the volume of the River beyond its capacity. At a point just east of Everson, there is a sharp bend in the river made worse by a gravel bar and the Highway 544 Bridge restricting flow. This flow restriction bottlenecks the river during floods and forces the water to overflow out of the river's banks.

On the south bank of the Nooksack River at this location is a levee named the Twin View Levee, which protects the land on the south side of the river from a majority of the flooding. Since very little of the water can overflow onto the south bank of the river because of the Twin View Levee, it all overtops the north bank. On the north bank of the Nooksack River at this location is downtown Everson as well as the south side of Nooksack. The water floods these areas heavily and then continues heading north, due to a gentle slope that continues getting lower in elevation the more north you get.

An old elevated abandoned rail line exists in the northwest corner of Everson that heads in a northerly direction until it meets up in an intersection with lines heading to Sumas and Lynden. The Sumas line continues to be elevated as it heads towards town,

finally flattening out as the line enters Sumas City Limits. This elevated rail line, starting in Everson and ending in Sumas, guides a majority of the Nooksack River flood waters directly towards Sumas. Some flood waters are sent to Sumas by flowing along the Sumas River channel, but a majority are guided by the rail line.

As the abandoned rail line flattens out when it reaches Sumas, flood waters are allowed to flow over it and finally accumulate along the south face of Moe Hill on the north side of Kneuman Road. At this point, the water is then blocked by another elevated rail line, this time, it's the main rail line that runs North to South and bisects Sumas. The water accumulates at the intersection of the Moe Hill slope and the rail line and builds up pressure.

The water then finds any hole in the water line it can get through, mainly where Johnson Creek flows under the rail line just southeast of Bob's Burgers and Brew. The waters that couldn't find their way across fill so high at the Moe Hill intersection that they flow over the railroad tracks and flood the rest of the town. In the November 2021 flood event, the worst in recent history, the pressure that was built on the rail line was so great that the gravel elevating the tracks was washed out, allowing the rest of the flood waters to go through the rail line and substantially raise the flood elevation throughout Sumas. In the November 2021 event, all told, roughly 85% of homes in Sumas were damaged by the flood and in some areas of town, the floodwater reached as high as 5 feet.

Eventually, as the flood waters continue through town, they leave in a north and northeast direction, heading into Canada and flooding the rural communities outside Abbotsford, BC as well as the Sumas Prairie until they find their way to the Fraser River and ultimately out into the Strait of Georgia.

Conclusion

Although flooding is not a yearly occurrence, Sumas is at serious risk of flooding from the above-described manner. Knowing the flood hazard allows you to know what to do and where to go in the event that a flood does come, and it allows you to keep yourself and your loved ones out of harm's way.

In tomorrow's publication, the City will be providing you with a list of items that you can store and prepare now to make sure that you have everything that you may need in the event that you decide to stay in your homes.



Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- ☐ **Water and non-perishable food for several days**
- ☐ **Extra cell phone battery or charger**
- ☐ **Battery-powered or hand crank radio that can receive NOAA Weather Radio tone alerts and extra batteries**
- ☐ **Flashlight and extra batteries**
- ☐ **First aid kit**
- ☐ **Whistle to signal for help**
- ☐ **Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place**
- ☐ **Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation**
- ☐ **Non-sparking wrench or pliers to turn off utilities**
- ☐ **Can opener (if kit contains canned food)**
- ☐ **Local maps**

FEMA's Ready Campaign

educates and empowers Americans to take some simple steps to prepare for and respond to potential emergencies, including those from natural hazards and man-made disasters. Ready asks individuals to do three key things: get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and appropriate responses. Everyone should have some basic supplies on hand in order to survive several days if an emergency occurs. This list of emergency supply kit items is only a starting point. It is important that individuals review this list and consider the unique needs of their family, including pets, for items to include. Individuals should also consider having at least two emergency supply kits, one full kit at home and smaller portable kits in their workplace, vehicle or other places they spend time.



FEMA

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Washington, DC 20472



Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:

- ☐ **Prescription medications and glasses**
- ☐ **Infant formula and diapers**
- ☐ **Pet food, water and supplies for your pet**
- ☐ **Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a portable waterproof container**
- ☐ **Cash and change**
- ☐ **Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov**
- ☐ **Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.**
- ☐ **Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.**
- ☐ **Fire Extinguisher**
- ☐ **Matches in a waterproof container**
- ☐ **Feminine supplies, personal hygiene items and hand sanitizer**
- ☐ **Mess kits, Paper cups, plates and disposable utensils, paper towels**
- ☐ **Paper and pencil**
- ☐ **Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children**



Ready

Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed.®



Emergency Supply List



FEMA

www.ready.gov

Sumas Flood Awareness Week – Wednesday – Ready, Set, Go!

For Wednesday of Flood Awareness Week, the City of Sumas wants to remind residents of the emergency preparedness procedures that are already in place. The system, called Ready, Set, Go!, is a three-stage procedure as the City monitors a potential flood event.

All Sumas residents should be receiving a physical brochure on the Ready, Set, Go! system in their mail sometime next week. We also wanted to post the brochure here as part of Flood Awareness Week, so that as many residents as possible are fully prepared for when these alerts are given.

Please review the Ready, Set, Go! brochure provided below to prepare you and your family on the City's emergency alert procedure.

Emergency Checklist

Use the checklist below to assemble your 'Go Bag'

- ☐ Have drinking water in an easy to reach place
- ☐ Non-perishable food for all family members and pets
- ☐ Prescriptions or special medications
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Flashlight, battery-powered radio, and extra batteries
- ☐ An extra set of car keys, credit cards, cash
- ☐ Sanitation supplies
- ☐ Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses
- ☐ Important family documents and contact numbers
- ☐ Map marked with evacuation routes
- ☐ Family photos and other irreplaceable items
- ☐ Easily carried valuables
- ☐ Personal computers (information on hard drives and disks)
- ☐ Chargers for cell phones, laptops, etc.

Emergency Shelter Locations

North County Christ the King

1816 18th St.
Lynden, WA 98264
360-318-9446

Sonlight Church

8800 Bender Rd.
Lynden, WA 98264
360-354-4673

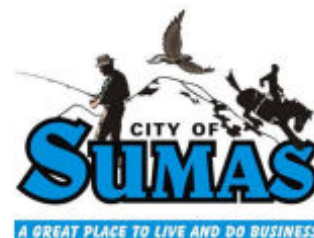
(Check with
Voyent Alert! for
confirmation on
emergency
shelter locations)

First Reformed Church

610 Grover St.
Lynden, WA 98264
360-354-4221

Storage for Household Belongings

In the event you would like to remove your household belongings and have them taken elsewhere, Stow-It located in Ferndale will take reservations in advance for containers to be dispatched to your residence for filling then pick-up and taken to your designated location. There is a cost for this service so you will have to make arrangements with Stow-It directly. Their contact info is: 360-734-1112 or email at scrapitstowit@gmail.com



Ready. Set. Go!

Be Prepared for a Flood





- ☐ **Create a plan now for your household**, including your pets, so that you and your family know what to do, where to go, and what you will need to protect yourselves from flooding.
- ☐ **Learn and practice evacuation routes, shelter plans, and flood response.**
- ☐ **Make arrangements in advance** where to take spare vehicles, belongings, etc.
- ☐ **Prepare a 'Go Bag' to prepare for an emergency.**
- ☐ **Sign up for the Voyent Alert! System.**



The City of Sumas has subscribed to the Voyent Alert system which is a non-intrusive alert system used to notify the public of current or pending situations or emergencies. If you are interested in receiving alerts by phone, email, mobile app, or text message, please see additional information attached to this packet. A get ready alert can be sent up to 72 hours in advance by City officials once we receive information from (NOAA).

- **When you receive an alert for a flood warning be ready to put your plan in place.**
 - **Gather your 'Go bag' and any other items you made need in case of an evacuation order.**
 - **Be sure to maintain a list of emergency contact numbers in your 'Go bag'.**
 - **Locate and be ready to shut off your main electrical breaker.**
 - **Contact friends and neighbors to let them know your plans and to make sure they are doing okay.**

Emergency Updates:

- **Check Voyent Alert!**
- **Check the City of Sumas's website and Facebook page for updates** (CityofSumas.com or www.facebook.com/sumascityhall)
- **Tune into KGMI (790 AM)**
- **Check for updates from the Department of Emergency Management** (Whatcom County Sheriff's Office) at www.whatcomcounty.us/201/Emergency-Management or www.facebook.com/WhatcomSheriff

When you receive the Go alert:

- **Flooding in Sumas is imminent.** City officials will send the alert via the Voyent Alert! system and will sound the Flood Siren at City Hall.
- **It is time to evacuate.**
- **Leave as soon as possible.**
- **Alert family and neighbors. Dress appropriately.**
- **If you do not have a place to go, there will be available emergency shelters posted.**

Sumas Flood Awareness Week – Thursday – Pet Safety and Preparedness

For Thursday of Sumas Flood Awareness Week, the City of Sumas wants to make sure that all members of the family are kept safe during a flood, even the furry ones! Today, the City has cultivated a selection of articles from reputable sources with information on how to keep your pets safe during a flood event.

American Kennel Club – How to Keep Your Dog Safe in a Flood - <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/health/keep-dog-safe-flood/>

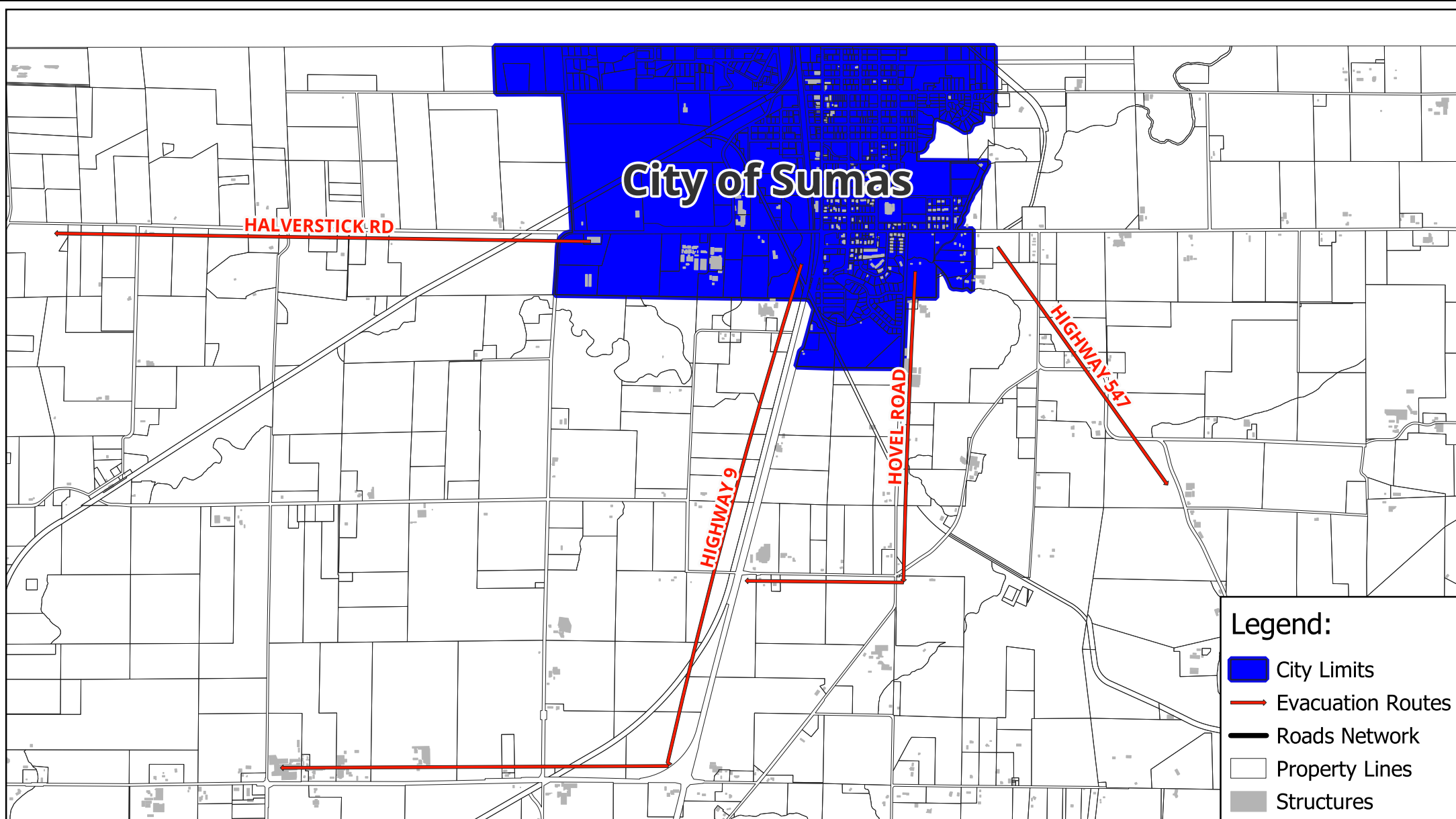
American Red Cross - Pet Disaster Preparedness - <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/pet-disaster-preparedness.html>

Wag! – How to Keep you Pets Safe in a Flood - <https://wagwalking.com/wellness/how-to-keep-your-pets-safe-in-a-flood>

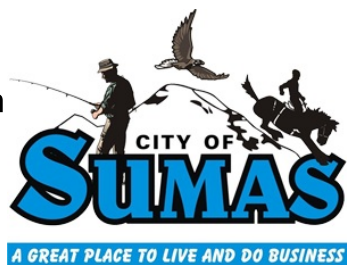
Welcome to the final day of Sumas Flood Awareness Week! Thank you to those of you who have been following along. We hope that the information provided this week has proved helpful to residents looking to prepare for a flood event at any time.

For Friday of Flood Awareness Week, the City wanted to provide some maps that will be useful to know for the next flood event. The maps are, location and lineup route of the Sandbagging Machine, Emergency Evacuation Routes, and Emergency Shelter Locations.

Please keep in mind that all of this information may change in a flood event as conditions change with every event. The best way to keep informed with the latest communications from the City is to sign up for Voyent Alert!, the City's emergency alert system. If you have not signed up for Voyent Alert!, you can do so at the following link: <https://us.voyent-alert.com/vras/client.html#!/registration>. Having the Voyent Alert! app downloaded on your phone allows you to get the best information about road closures, which shelters are open, and (the most important) whether to evacuate.



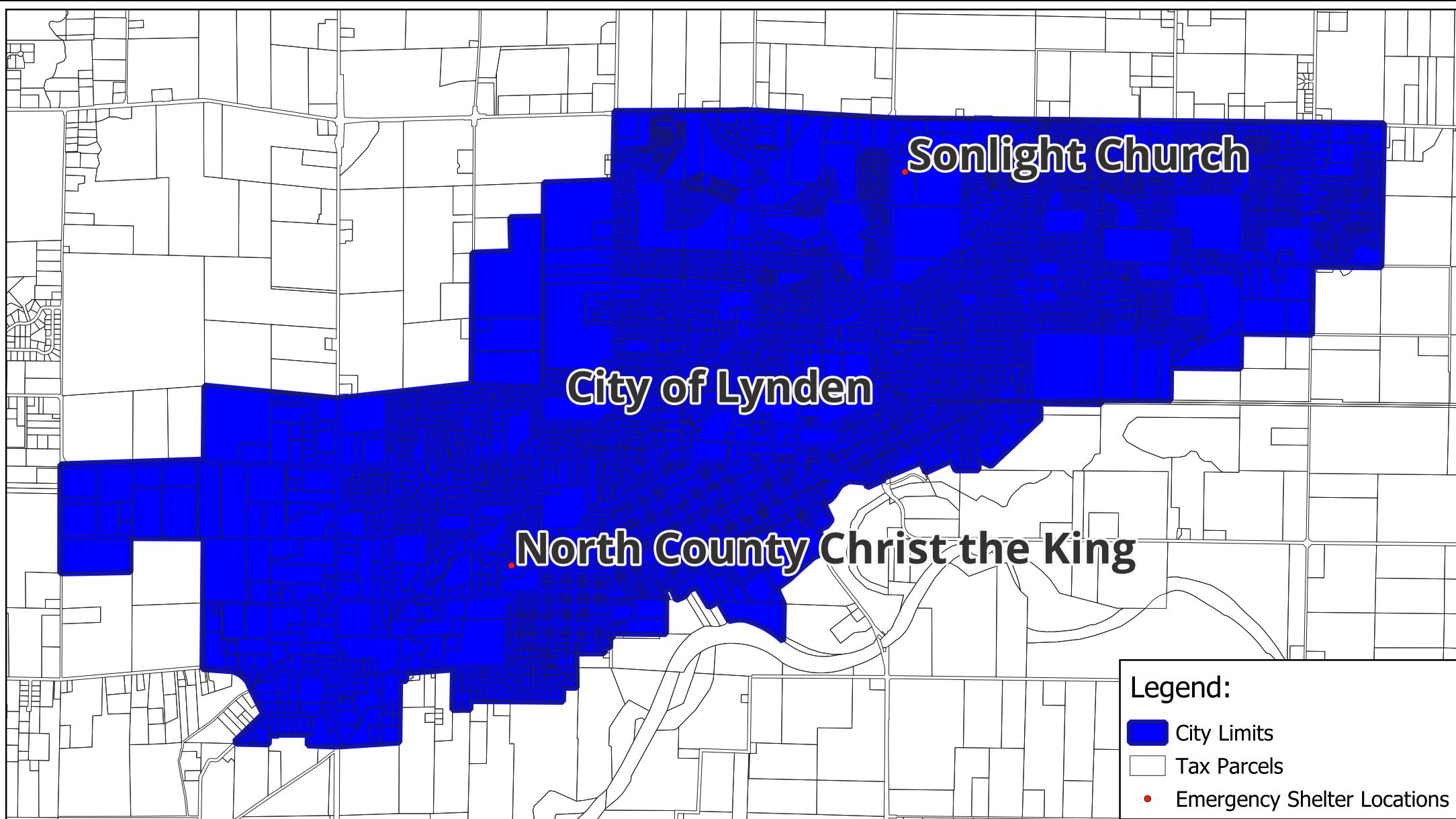
0 750 1,500 m



CITY OF SUMAS FLOOD EVACUATION ROUTES

DATA SOURCES:
Whatcom County Assessor's
Office & Planning Department
and the City of Sumas

PROJECTION:
UTM Zone 10 North
NAD 27
Scale: 1:47,000



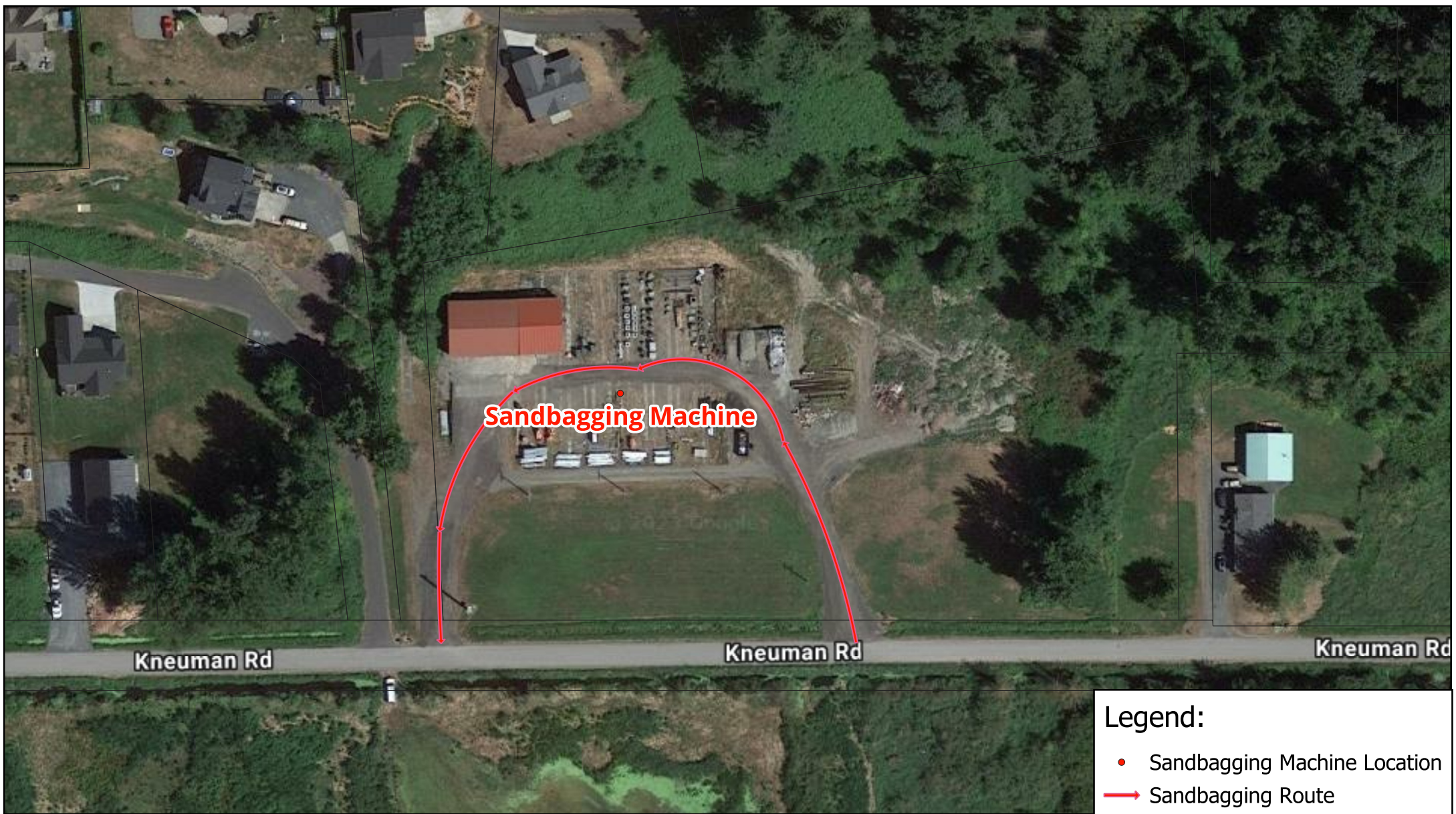
0 750 1,500 m



CITY OF SUMAS EMERGENCY SHELTER LOCATIONS

DATA SOURCES:
Whatcom County Assessor's
Office & Planning Department
and the City of Sumas

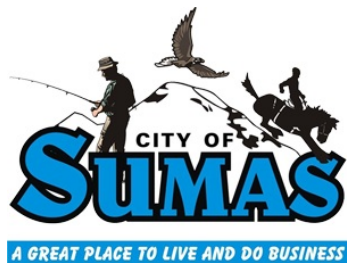
PROJECTION:
UTM Zone 10 North
NAD 27
Scale: 1:45,000



Legend:

- Sandbagging Machine Location
- Sandbagging Route

0 100 200 ft



**CITY OF SUMAS
SANDBAGGING
MACHINE LINEUP
ROUTE**

DATA SOURCES:
Whatcom County Assessor's
Office & Planning Department
and the City of Sumas

PROJECTION:
UTM Zone 10 North
NAD 27
Scale: 1:47,000