

**ALBANY DOUGHERTY  
FLOOD HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN  
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

**Prepared by**

**Planning and Development Services  
City of Albany, Georgia**

**September 30, 2010**

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Purpose of Annual Progress Report

The City of Albany and Dougherty County participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) through the Community Rating System (CRS) Program, which enables property owners in the city and county to obtain flood insurance. A requirement for participation in this program is the adoption and utilization of a flood hazard mitigation plan. This process includes a procedure by which certain city and county departments incorporate, as appropriate, the requirements of the mitigation plan into other planning implementation tools, such as the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan, Albany Dougherty Comprehensive Plan, Albany Dougherty Zoning Ordinance, Development Handbook, Floodplain Management Ordinances, and the Capital Improvements Plan. The Albany Dougherty Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan was adopted by the City of Albany, April 28, 2009, and by Dougherty County, May 11, 2009. Our ratings in the NFIP Community Rating System Program have recently been upgraded, which lowers the cost of flood insurance in the city and county. The City of Albany is now a Class 8 (a 10% discount); Dougherty County is now a Class 6 (a 20% discount).

One requirement in the annual recertification process for the CRS Program is to monitor, evaluate, and update the mitigation actions recommended in the Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan. The review of these mitigation actions is to be presented in an Annual Progress Report made available to the public. This Annual Progress Report constitutes the first review of the Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan since its adoption. The following information presents the progress made to date on specific mitigation actions proposed in the Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Mitigation Actions

**Mitigation Action 1**

**Apply for Flood Mitigation Assistance funds to make the buyout option available to willing owners of properties vulnerable to flood damage in the City of Albany and Dougherty County. Repetitive Loss Properties would be top priority.**

Planning researched possible funding under the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program to acquire a specific repetitive loss property. This action was initiated by an interested property owner who has experienced repetitive flooding. However, due to current economic conditions and other more pressing needs for funding, the county is currently not adding to its inventory of flood buyout properties. Repetitive Loss Properties will

continue to be a priority as funding becomes available. Staff will research the possibility of alternative funding sources to provide the local match.

## **Mitigation Action 2**

**Maintain the three-foot freeboard requirement in effect for Dougherty County since 1999. (Freeboard is the elevation of the finished floor above the level of the 100-year flood required for new construction). Propose that the City of Albany amend its Floodplain Management Ordinance to adopt this standard.**

The existing three-foot freeboard requirement was maintained in the county's rewritten Floodplain Management Ordinance, adopted, August 17, 2009. The three-foot freeboard requirement has not been proposed to the City Commission.

It is recommended that a future presentation to the City Commission on the CRS Program should include the following components: class levels and additional points for a three-foot freeboard requirement, which would result in the following: an improved class rating; lower flood insurance premiums; and greater protection of life and property.

## **Mitigation Action 3**

**Continue diligent enforcement of building codes and floodplain management regulations to maximize property protection and safety of residents and to maintain the good standing of the city and county with the National Flood Insurance Program.**

### Enforcement of Building Codes

The recommendation states that policies will be developed to keep the city and county in compliance with floodplain management regulations; however, the existing regulations and codes are adequate to enforce violations.

To assist with enforcement of floodplain ordinance construction codes, it is recommended that a system of blue folders and cards be utilized by the Building Inspection Department to signify that a property is in the Special Flood Hazard Area. Also, an informational flyer, which outlines construction requirements and the inspection process for properties in the Special Flood Hazard Area, will be prepared and distributed to property owners and contractors during the site plan review process.

### Floodplain Management Regulations

The city and county revised their floodplain management ordinances in 2009 in order to comply with the current effective FIRM, dated September 25, 2009. Dougherty County's ordinance was rewritten and adopted on August 17, 2009. The City of Albany's revised ordinance was adopted on September 22, 2009.

The preparation and adoption of the Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan assisted in the improvement of the CRS ratings for both the city and county. Dougherty County improved from a class 7 to a class 6; the City of Albany improved from a class 9 to a class 8.

Floodplain Management Ordinance regulations are enforced through the subdivision and site plan review process and the building permitting process. The Floodplain Management Review Board reviews applications for variances to the ordinance and follows ordinance guidelines for the granting or denial of variances.

#### **Mitigation Action 4**

**Continue to protect from additional development properties that are vulnerable to flood damage; Flint River Corridor properties and other wetlands are priorities.**

A number of properties in the floodplain have been purchased and protected from development. The Greenspace Committee purchased Radium Springs Country Club, a former golf course, for passive recreation and conservation. This group continues to seek funding to buy properties that are in the flood hazard area. The former Radium Springs Casino property, now known as Radium Springs Gardens, opened this year as a passive recreation park with gardens. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources purchased 85 acres along the river to preserve the Flint River Corridor.

#### **Mitigation Action 5**

**When the final report is received from Phase II of the USGS 2-dimensional model study of the Flint River corridor, carefully assess the resulting recommendations. Take action as indicated. Include the results in the review of this document.**

Phase II of the USGS 2-Dimensional Model Study of the Flint River Corridor, as referenced there, has been completed and is posted at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2008/5223/>.

Over the years, a number of measures have been proposed by various engineers and the Corps of Engineers 205 Study to reduce the impact of floods on the Flint River. These include dredging and widening the Flint River channel beneath the Oakridge Drive Bridge, digging an overflow canal across the ox-bow above the Oakridge Drive Bridge, and removing the man-made island located just down stream from the Oglethorpe Boulevard Bridge. The idea is that if you can move the water downstream faster, then the overall height of the Flint River will be reduced during flood stage.

These would be costly measures to implement. The flood model developed by the USGS provides a cost effective means of testing the results of these actions without actually having to implement them. The results of the study are that none of these proposed solutions significantly reduce the impact of flooding.

In other developments, the City of Albany has been working with the USGS and the National Weather Service to post the results from the original Flood Inundation Study on a website to be hosted by the National Weather Service as an emergency response tool. A copy of the original study is available as a PDF on our old GIS server at [\\gis1\Library\flood\\_model](\\gis1\Library\flood_model). A Beta version of the web page can be seen at <http://beta.enable-us.com/ahps2/inundation/inundation.php?wfo=tae&gage=abng1>.

## **Mitigation Action 6**

### **Increase the level of citizen education on flood issues in Albany and Dougherty County.**

Annual public outreach efforts continue to expand, including more use of the internet for information. Outreach efforts completed this year include the following:

1. Updated and expanded flood-related reference materials in the Central Public Library and the Planning and Development Services library.
2. Published a pamphlet and cover letter on services provided by Planning and Development, flooding, flood protection, and flood insurance. This information was mailed to flood hazard area property owners, repetitive loss area property owners, and distributed to public locations throughout the city and county, including placement on the City of Albany and Dougherty County Website and in the City of Albany E-Newsletter. This pamphlet also includes information on flood preparedness, registration for CodeRED, and website addresses for ready.gov, FEMA, floodsmart, NOAA, Map Service Center, and City of Albany and Dougherty County.
3. Published and distributed a newsletter with information on flood insurance to public locations throughout the city and county, including placement on the City of Albany and Dougherty County Website and in the City of Albany E-Newsletter.
4. Distributed flood information pamphlet and cover letter regarding flood services to lenders, real estate agents, and insurance agents.
5. Public GIS Web Browser, with use instructions, was placed on the City of Albany and Dougherty County Website, which allows the public to view Special Flood Hazard Areas as an overlay on aerial photo and parcel boundary layers. Instructions on how to use the Public GIS Browser and the FEMA Map Service Center to view DFIRMs are provided to the public on a regular basis as part of the response to the public's flood hazard area and zoning inquiries. These instructions were also sent to real estate agents, insurance agents, and lenders.
6. Notified real estate and insurance agents, lenders, and those in the study area of a Letter of Map Revision for the Percosin Creek drainage canal area.

It is recommended that press releases on flood protection, flood insurance, flood hazard areas, and floodplain management regulations be prepared and sent to the local media. Also, this information should be delivered to the public through a county-wide

information meeting. It is also recommended that reference materials be placed in the branch libraries.

### **Mitigation Action 7**

**Continue to maintain and refine warning systems to provide timely, accurate information to citizens of the City of Albany and Dougherty County, thus promoting public safety.**

CodeRED is a voice notification system designed to meet emergency alert situations on a 24/7 basis; it is used in the event of an emergency requiring immediate notification. CodeRED is controlled from a web browser that operates accordingly:

1. Uses a combination of database and GIS mapping technologies to deliver notification. No specialized warning device is required.
2. Quickly targets a precise geographic area and saturates it with thousands of calls per hour (the original Dougherty database is 43,667 numbers).
3. Includes a National Weather Service automated weather warning to alert severe weather warnings at the home or cell phone (the current customer registration is 31,250).
4. Recorded message describes the situation and recommends actions.
5. If phone lines are busy, the system will attempt to redial those numbers and will leave a message if an answering machine picks up the call.

Dougherty County citizens are encouraged to register for CodeRED via the City of Albany Website. Citizens may also call the Albany Fire Department/EMA. Other possible uses of CodeRED include notification for evacuations, missing persons, natural and manmade disasters, HAZMAT leaks, and homeland security.

The siren warning system continues to be utilized and maintained. There are 14 sirens within the city limits. If funding becomes available, EMA should upgrade the existing sirens and consider installing additional sirens in developed areas of the county, such as Putney and College Park and Radial Subdivisions.

The Dougherty County Floodplain Management Ordinance requires commercial and multi-family properties constructed in the floodway to include an automated flood warning system that is activated by rising flood waters. The audible alarm sounds at one-foot below the base flood elevation.

There is a river gauge on the railroad trestle below the bridge downstream from Liberty Expressway. River gauge information can be viewed on the USGS and the NOAA websites. It is recommended that the City of Albany Website contain a link to this NOAA website page.

## **Mitigation Action 8**

**In preparation for the next SPLOST referendum and other funding opportunities, identify needed storm water management projects to be included in infrastructure work in city and county. Include an analysis of the need for additional back-up power generation for the Joshua Street Wastewater Treatment System.**

Dougherty County Public Works has a priority list of storm drainage improvements that are implemented as funding becomes available. This department is currently focusing on storm drainage improvement projects (Priority No. 1), including the purchase of two six-inch portable pumps, with total approved funding of \$650,000.

In the event of a 100-year flood (or worse), the Joshua Street Wastewater Treatment Plant would have to be shut down. Back-up power generation could be utilized for other emergencies, but not for a flood situation. This situation would be more appropriate for inclusion in the Albany Dougherty Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan.

## Release of Annual Progress Report for Public Review

Copies of this Annual Progress Report have been submitted to the Mayor and Board of City Commissioners and the Chairman and Board of County Commissioners. A press release announcing the report and its availability to the public has been sent to the Albany Herald. The Annual Progress Report is available for public review at the following locations:

Planning and Development Services  
240 Pine Avenue, Suite 300  
Albany GA 31701  
229-438-3901

Central Library  
Reference Section  
300 Pine Avenue  
Albany, GA 31701  
229-420-3200

A copy of this report is posted on the City of Albany and Dougherty County Website under the City of Albany Planning and Development Services section, "Ordinances and Regulations": [www.albany.ga.us](http://www.albany.ga.us).