

Floodplain Management Plan Meeting Series: Meeting 5
March 15, 2023, 3-4 pm
Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Lori Rafferty (MSD Floodplain), Jennifer Caummisar-Kern (MSD Floodplain), Matt Schaaf (MSD Floodplain), Sheryl Lauder (MSD Communications), Angela Richardson (Louisville Metro Public Works), Jason Brandt (Louisville Metro Public Works), Jessica Kane (Louisville Metro Parks), Teena Halbig, Brad Allgeier, Bethany Shain, Josh Hunn, Marilyn Coffey, Lucas Frazier, Tim Corrigan, JP Carstone, David Wicks, Mark Long, Jeff Frank, Patricia Jennings, Juva Barber

Lori Rafferty reviewed the Flood and Dam & Levee activities adopted in the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Jeff Frank would like to see metrics to track percentage of ground coverage such as impervious and tree cover to determine a score card of where we are. Teena Halbig brought up tree canopy losses due to specific projects and disease. Juva expressed she did not believe this to be the correct venue to discuss tree canopy requirements. JP Carstone cautioned that the Floodplain Management Plan activities should be general/broad rather than too specific to give more flexibility to the plan actions.

David Wicks stated he would like to see language be more specific regarding riparian protections and protection of natural floodplains from development. Juva Barber cited existing ordinances already outline what is permitted and give guidance.

Jeff Frank expressed concern that cut and fill for wetlands in the floodplain was not covered. Juva Barber stated that this is already covered by current rules and additional restrictions should not be added for development plans. Jeff Frank is concerned that the plan does allow changes to the floodplain and he would like to see stronger language regarding modification of the floodplain. David Wicks stated he would like to see more protections and no build in riparian corridors identified. Also, he would like MSD take a more active role in moving forward with ordinances and restrictions to limit work in these areas. Lori explained that stream buffer requirements are outlined in Land Development Code and Floodplain Ordinance. Jeff Frank agreed with this but has concerns that the buffer areas still allow disturbances in the floodplain including detention and compensation. He would like to see increased coordination between Louisville Metro Planning & Design and MSD moving forward. He would also like to see meaningful changes made in the design manual to increase buffer requirements.

Teena Halbig stated she has concerns regarding modeling being prepared by private developers. Lori explained this modeling is submitted to and reviewed by MSD staff prior to issuance of construction approvals.

Lori Rafferty then presented a summary of goals and activities developed in the previous meetings for discussion:

Proposed Goals and Activities

1. Reduce the loss of life and injuries that could be caused by flooding.

Activities:

- Provide more education about turn around, don't drown and emergency planning.
- Promote the use of available emergency notification methods.
- Construct flood mitigation basins or other drainage improvement projects.
- Compare current flood mapping with available flood mapping that considers climate change to identify those areas most impacted by future increased rainfall events.

- Review options for more localized stream monitoring and tie in warnings and outreach at more floodprone areas.

2. Reduce the impacts to property that could be caused by flooding.

Activities:

- Continue flood acquisition projects and prioritize repetitive loss properties.
- Increase outreach for flood insurance and CRS knowledge.
- Promote flood mitigation retrofitting to include installation of flood vents, raising utilities and equipment.
- Target most vulnerable populations with outreach regarding retrofitting options and funding options.

3. Promote flood safety and awareness of flood impacts.

Activities:

- Expand audience of flood messaging by sharing outreach materials with partners.
- Expand methods of education outreach to include YouTube videos, etc.
- Create an online reporting system or app for neighborhood flooding to collect public-reported information about incidents of flooding to aid in future planning and flood modeling.
- Work with Metro TV to present educational information on exploring watersheds and the Ohio River.
- Expand available information about historic and recent flooding such as: high water markers, monuments in Metro Parks for recent flood elevations, signage for “Turn Around Don’t Drown”. Use available imagery of previous floods and recent floods in outreach.
- Expand outreach education to include flood pump station function and the flood protection infrastructure required to keep the city safe.

It was suggested that the items regarding Metro TV be less specific as to not limit possible opportunities. Teena Halbig states she would like to see referrals to the Louisville Metro health department for cleaning up after flooding. Lori explained that MSD’s current post flood outreach projects include information on cleanup but that this information could be shared directly with health department.

David Wicks asked about decorative painting of floodwalls. Lori explained this would not be permitted by MSD due to concerns about limitations of structural inspection.

4. Protect and improve natural floodplain functions.

Activities:

- Promote the use of green infrastructure through social media, workshops, etc.
- Promote the use of riparian buffer zones and improvement of existing buffer zones.
- Review opportunities for incentives for homeowners to install raingardens or other green infrastructure.
- Encourage use of underutilized green infrastructure design methods in the MSD Design Manual.
- Provide green infrastructure demonstration areas in parks.
- Create a stream buffer guide for homeowners and HOAs
- Research opportunities for restoration or improvements of wetlands to reduce flooding.

Teena Halbig asked if MSD had considered inviting HOAs to review floodplain materials. Lori explained that MSD does attend these types of events as requested. Teena would still like to see HOAs have an annual meeting regarding riparian zones, buffer zones, etc.

Mark Long asked to change “review opportunities for incentives for homeowners” to stronger language. He would like to see incentives developed for property owners. Lori explained that there were complications with implementing this due to how MSD currently charges a flat fee for residential properties but that an existing, underutilized program could be promoted for commercial properties that infiltrate stormwater to reduce their charges. For this program to be extended to residential properties, MSD would need to change how residential bills are calculated.

David asked if floodplain buyout properties are deed restricted as open space and if there are other areas of floodplain/riparian corridor that could be purchased. Lori explained that yes, floodplain buyout properties are deed restricted as open space but that purchases of already vacant areas would need to be undertaken by a different entity as grants can only be used to purchase structures.

David Wicks stated he would like to see language increasing the use green infrastructure. Lori added that outreach and education could be used to demonstrate the use of underutilized green infrastructure methods.

Teena asked that the second bullet be changed from “Promote the use of riparian buffer zones” to “promote the retention of riparian buffer zones”.

The group decided to accept all activities related to flood hazards and dam & levees adopted by the Hazard Mitigation plan. Other activities created by the group will be updated per today’s discussion and any that overlap with those in the Hazard Mitigation Plan will be removed.

Lori reviewed next steps in the process, which are to circulate a draft version of the plan for comment by May 1, 2023 with the goal to finalize and adopt the plan in June 2023.