

Activity 510

Albany Dougherty Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan Progress Report

Prepared by
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City of Albany, Georgia

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2018 Drainage Pond, Radium Springs Golf Course Area. Photo by Dougherty County Public Works

**ALBANY-DOUGHERTY
ALL-HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN
Section IV. Natural Hazard – Flood
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
2024**

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, enabling city and county property owners to obtain flood insurance. The county joined the CRS Program in 1992, and the city joined in 1993. Participating in this program requires adopting and utilizing a flood hazard mitigation plan. This process includes a procedure by which city and county departments incorporate, as appropriate, the requirements of the mitigation plan into other plans and planning implementation tools, such as the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan, Emergency Operations Plan, Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Development Handbook, Floodplain Management Ordinances, Stormwater Management Plans, and Capital Improvement Plans. The five-year update of the All-Hazards Plan was completed in August 2021. The 2020-2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan, Chapter 4, provides Mitigation Action and strategies for natural hazards. This progress report responds to Mitigation Action items for Natural Hazard-Flood.

The NFIP Community Rating System Ratings result from various ongoing mitigation activities and public education. These efforts lowered the cost of flood insurance in the city and county. The City of Albany is a Class 7; a 15% discount in the high-risk zone and a 5% discount in the lower-risk zones. Dougherty County is a Class 6; a 20% discount in the high-risk zone and a 10% discount in the lower-risk zones. These classifications became effective for five years, starting April 1, 2022. The communities may submit modifications to increase the community's classification at any time.

A requirement in the annual recertification process for the CRS Program is to monitor, evaluate, and update the mitigation actions recommended in an applicable Plan. This review will be presented in a Progress Report made available to the public. This Annual Progress Report constitutes the review of the relevant sections of the 2020-2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan Natural Hazard – Flood Section. The review year begins October 2023 and runs through October 13, 2024. This report presents the progress on specific mitigation actions proposed in the All-Hazards Plan, Section IV. Natural Hazard – Flood. This report will be updated annually moving forward. The next annual progress reporting year will begin in October 2024 and run through October 2025.

Updates to previous Annual Progress reports: Mitigation Actions

Mitigation Actions— Reduce damage to property and loss of life through the utilization of preventative activities.

- Maintain NFIP Compliance.
 - The City of Albany and Dougherty County continue to proactively participate and improve mitigation activities and public education efforts to maintain NFIP Compliance.
- Update and Improve floodplain maps.
 - As of February 2022, the City and County received correspondence advising a flood study is progressing for this community as part of the Lower Flint Flood Risk Project. Preliminary results of the hydrologic and hydraulic modeling conducted were made available for review. Flood Risk Review Meetings are ongoing throughout the review, and meeting information is sent out by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The flood study is expected to be completed, and new floodplain maps may be ready for adoption by late December 2025.
 - As of July 2024, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) issued Preliminary Flood Insurance Products for the City of Albany and Dougherty County. The draft maps are in review.
- Continue enforcement of building codes and floodplain management.
 - Beginning in October 2017, the City of Albany began contracting inspections and permitting services with Charles Abbott Associates (CAA). All permitting procedures have been re-evaluated for completeness and streamlining, including adherence to floodplain management requirements. CAA's services are ongoing. The Development Services Division and CAA have improved the permit application and inspection process. Applications can now be applied online via a permitting portal. Inspections are scheduled, and complete plan check information is available to most all city and county departments responsible for the plan review and approval of permits.
 - Permits are categorized, and flood zone parcels can now be identified more efficiently and timely.
 - Since 2017, several storm events caused significant damage throughout both the city and county. Approximately 2,300 building permits were issued for storm-related repairs. The intake of permits for the construction and repairs process was updated. All permit applications are reviewed for location in the SFHA, and for Substantial Damage determination in

- compliance with the local Flood Ordinances. Permits are still being issued for storm damage properties from the results of the 2017 storm events.
- Update the stormwater management plan to ensure it is current and consistent with the latest FIRM (Flood Insurance Rating Maps).
 - HMGP funding was received for emergency portable and fixed generators to power wastewater lift stations. The final installation of generators was completed in 2022.
 - As of July 15, 2024, the City of Albany was approved for two fixed generators and three portable generators HMGP 4400-0066.
 - Additional funding requests for remaining unmet infrastructure improvement needs for Albany and Dougherty County will be submitted under CDBG-DR. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded Georgia \$26,961,000 in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds for mitigation activities related to the 2017 tornados and Hurricane Irma.
 - The city has the advantage of already operating a viable Sanitary Sewer System Enterprise Fund, which can fully incorporate a user-fee-based stormwater services component into its operational model. It has been calculated that full implementation of a user fee-based Stormwater Utility system at the appropriate billing rate will generate sufficient revenue to fund the SWMP services.
 - Dougherty County began rapidly implementing the multi-phase Road and Drainage Plan in the heavily storm-damaged Radium Springs area, reallocating \$2 million in SPLOST funds to the first phase. Nearly all of this area is in the SFHA and will significantly improve stormwater management. This includes reconstructing severely damaged roads, converting open ditch drainage to curb and gutter, and constructing two new drainage ponds. As of August 2019, the reconstruction of the roads and the conversion from open ditch to curb and gutter is completed.
 - 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 of Properties would be a top priority.
 - In October 2018, Albany and Dougherty County experienced damage from Hurricane Michael, which was declared a Federal Disaster (DR-4400-GA). In January 2017, Albany and Dougherty County experienced two severe storm events that were declared Federal Disasters (DR-4294 and DR-4297). These declarations made Hazard Mitigation Grant Funds available for buyout or elevation of homes.
 - Albany and Dougherty County did not specifically target repetitive loss or severe repetitive loss properties in 2017, 2018, and 2019 since public outreach included all homes in the Special Flood Hazard Area. Outreach

- following Hurricane Michael identified one willing owner of a Repetitive or Severe Repetitive Loss property. Previous outreach during 2017 and 2018 following DR-4294 and DR-4297 did not identify any willing owners of a Repetitive or Severe Repetitive Loss property.
- In June 2017, approximately 32 willing owners submitted information to meet application requirements and deadlines.
 - As of October 2018, 31 property owners remained interested in the HMGP program. Between October 2018 and July 2019, an additional eight property owners submitted information to meet application requirements and deadlines. One of these properties is identified as a Repetitive or Severe Repetitive Loss property.
 - Final applications were completed from July 2019 through October 2023. The county has only acquired one property through the HMGP 4297-008 acquisition program. Neither the city nor the county has acquired additional properties through the HMGP 4400. HMGP for elevation was not pursued for the city or county.
 - The HMGP project implementation and completion are pending final notification from the state and federal Hazard Mitigation Program coordinators/ agencies.
- 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.
 - From September 2020 through October 2023, the City of Albany has taken no action to increase the freeboard to three feet for new construction within the city. The existing three-foot freeboard requirement is maintained in the county's Floodplain Management Ordinance, adopted on August 17, 2009.
 - The Flood Management Review Board met on October 12, 2022, and approved a Special Use Permit in the Floodplain. The City of Albany applied for the special use permit to upgrade the dewatering building with appurtenant access road and parking areas at the Joshua Street Water Pollution Control Plant.
 - The Floodplain Management Review Board met on September 14, 2023, and approved a Special Use Permit in the Floodplain. Miller Valentine Construction (Proctor & Gamble) applied for a special use permit to construct a new bridge over the Marine Corps Canal.
 - The Floodplain Management Review Board did not receive an application for variance during the October 2023-2024 reporting period.
 - The Planning & Development Services Department reviews all Overview & Concurrence Forms submitted for CLOMRs or LOMRs. In November 2023, a

LOMR request was submitted for the Spring Flats Branch.

- Utilize codes and other planning/zoning initiatives to encourage the hardening of structures against natural hazards.
 - The Planning Department conducts staff meetings to coordinate efforts to educate and assist owners and their contractors. These meetings provide networking and communication between all city and county staff tasked with maintaining a good standing with the NFIP.
 - The city website provides construction code updates and links to construction manuals that provide public information. The website also provides public access to floodplain management and flood zone construction requirements.
 - The Planning Department has an education initiative, "There's an Ordinance for That," which provides brochures on ordinances related to construction, flooding, and other community issues.
- Continue to protect from additional development properties that are vulnerable to flood damage with a priority focus on the Flint River corridor properties and wetlands.
 - Staff has continued an ongoing process to map and audit the following deed-restricted conservation properties: FEMA Hazard Mitigation funded properties, Greenspace properties, and Rivercare properties. A Protected River Corridor GIS layer has been prepared. The Repetitive Loss Area delineations were reviewed based on the criteria of the revised CRS Manual and the LIDAR topography information acquired in 2011. A GIS layer of the Repetitive Loss Areas was prepared and is currently maintained.
 - In 2020, the grant-funded trailhead bathroom was completed and constructed with flood vents appropriate for an accessory structure.
 - Since October 2022, several multi-use trails extending through the Flint River Corridor have been completed. This includes approximately four miles of trails near Radium Springs and a one-and-a-half-mile trail connecting downtown to the Albany State University campus. These projects are outlined in the Flint River Trails Master Plan. The plan is available for public review on the city website.
- Increase citizen education on flood issues in Albany and Dougherty County.
 - In 2020, the City of Albany and Dougherty County applied for CDBG-DR Planning funds. The city and county received a Community Development Block Grant for Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) to survey every parcel within their jurisdictions. The survey is an inventory of property conditions that will be used to develop a publicly accessible database. Many City Departments and the general public will utilize the information. The data

- will also be analyzed to create a resiliency plan that identifies building codes, utilities, and flood prevention, which could be modified to make the community more resistant to future natural disasters.
- The surveys are completed, and the City and County Resiliency Plan has been drafted and ready for approval by both City of Albany and Dougherty County.
 - Following the disastrous storms of 2017 and 2018, the city and county distributed handouts and flyers providing floodplain information throughout the SFHA. New construction and rehabilitation efforts continue within many areas heavily impacted by the storms of 2017 and Hurricane Michael in October 2018. Many damaged properties were located within the SFHA. Owners and contractors are encouraged to work closely with staff in all departments to ensure all Federal, State, and Local regulations are followed.
 - The city and county continue annual public outreach activities, including more informational use of the Internet. The Planning & Development Services Department conducts most of the outreach activities, with other departments working on additional outreach activities. County Public Works mails an information letter and brochure to property owners whose ponds the department inspects. City Engineering participates in a “No Dumping” storm drain campaign with Keep Albany Dougherty Beautiful. The Department of Community and Economic Development staff provides flood insurance information to housing loan recipients.
 - The revised CRS Manual was reviewed to ascertain additional outreach activities that benefit CRS ratings.
- Continue to maintain and refine warning systems to provide timely, accurate information to the City of Albany and Dougherty County citizens, thus promoting public safety.
 - Following Federal Disaster declarations in 2017 and 2018, Hazard Mitigation Grant Funds were made available, and Dougherty County applied additional sirens to expand the coverage area. On November 25, 2020, Dougherty County received a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program award (HMGP 4284-0057) to purchase and install twenty (20) outdoor weather warning sirens. The warning sirens have been installed in the incorporated areas of Dougherty County. The sirens are operable and can be used if necessary. However, the project has not been fully completed. To complete the project, a computer will be added to the 911 Center sometime after the 2024 New Year.
 - The city and county continue utilizing the CodeRED phone alert and siren warning systems. 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. Flash flooding notification was added in 2014 to the existing tornado and thunderstorm alerts. If necessary, CodeRED can also send warnings to specifically delineated areas, such as low-lying areas that tend to flood.

- Dougherty County and City of Albany citizens are encouraged to register for CodeRED via the City of Albany Website. Citizens may also call the Albany Fire Department's Emergency Management Agency. At this time, there are over 32,000 subscribers to the CodeRED system.
- Emergency Response in the event of flood is detailed in the Albany Dougherty All-Hazards Plan. This plan also mirrors the objectives of the Albany Dougherty Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan. A five-year update of the plan was updated and signed by both City and County governments in August 2021. *Dougherty County's Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2020 – 2025*

Conclusion

The City of Albany and Dougherty County strives to improve their flood mitigation, outreach, warning, and response measures with guidance from the Community Rating System.

In 2020, Albany and Dougherty County received notice that, following a five-year Field Certification of the CRS application, Dougherty County retained Class 6, and the City of Albany was increased to Class 7.

Release of Annual Progress Report for Public Review

Copies of this Annual Progress Report were submitted to the Mayor and Board of City Commissioners, the Chairman and Board of County Commissioners, and The Albany Herald in October 2024. The Annual Progress Report is available for public review at the following locations:

Planning & 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 Website (www.albanyga.gov) under the City of Albany Planning & Development Services section, "Ordinances and Regulations."