

**Appendix D**  
**Mitigation Capabilities Assessment**



## App. D – Mitigation Capabilities Assessment

### 1.0 Summary of Findings

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The City of Tuscaloosa has exceptional capabilities for implementation of a full range of mitigation activities. This finding is based upon the five measures of capability identified below:

##### 1. Planning and Regulatory Tools.

- *Hazard mitigation planning.* The City has a record of experience in hazard mitigation planning. It has been an active participant on the Tuscaloosa County Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee since it was first created in 2003. They participated in the planning processes for the initial 2004 plan and the 2009 update and adopted both editions of the plan. Most recently the City again participated in the 2014 plan update and adopted the 2014 Tuscaloosa County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan includes a Community Action Program of mitigation measures that respond to flooding and related natural hazards, in addition to other natural and manmade and technological hazards.
- *Comprehensive planning.* The City's first comprehensive plan, the General Development Plan for the City of Tuscaloosa, was developed in 1972 by the Tuscaloosa Area Council of Local Governments (now the West Alabama Planning and Development Commission). The 1972 plan formed the basis for a new City zoning ordinance adopted the same year. In 2003, the City launched a community-wide visioning process, which culminated with Tuscaloosa 2020: A Consensus Strategic Plan. The plan called for the "preservation of watersheds, floodplains, and improvement of water quality" through a series of activities. One of the recommended activities was to "(a) adhere strictly to requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program and revise existing ordinances to further enhance floodplain protection," among other floodplain management measures.

The most recent comprehensive land use plan The City of Tuscaloosa Citywide Future Land Use Plan was prepared in 2007. "Green Infrastructure" is an important strategic development concept of the 2007 plan and promotes development balanced with the conservation of wetlands and floodplains to improve quality of life. The 2007 citywide

plan has been supplemented by a number of area and special plans, which address flooding issues where there is a concern.

Following the widespread devastation of the April 27, 2011, EF 4 tornado, the City embarked on Tuscaloosa Forward: A Strategic Community Plan to Renew and Rebuild to guide recovery. With much of the tornado path intersecting floodplains, this renewal plan recognizes the opportunity presented by the tornado impacts on the floodplains and makes a bold recommendation: “A greenway corridor tracing the floodways along the tornado path presents an opportunity to address these long-standing issues in a comprehensive and sustainable way that was not possible before.” The Tuscaloosa Forward Generational Master Plan, endorsed by the City Council on April 24, 2012, provides the framework for implementation of the many infrastructure improvements recommended by the strategic plan. This follow up plan presents many details of the “greenway corridor,” which has been named the “City Walk.”

- *Zoning Ordinance.* The current Zoning Ordinance of the City of Tuscaloosa was adopted in 1972. It is a conventional zoning ordinance, which regulates land uses and development standards by district. Floodplain management provisions are included in a separate ordinance. The Department of Planning and Development Services administers and enforces the zoning ordinance.
- *Subdivision Regulations.* The Department of Planning and Development Services administers the City of Tuscaloosa Subdivision Regulations, which set forth platting requirements and design and construction standards, which include standards for drainage improvements.
- *Building Codes.* The City enforces the International Building Code, 2009 edition through the Department of Planning and Development Services.
- *Stormwater Management Ordinance.* The Office of the City Engineer administers the City’s stormwater regulations for erosion and sedimentation control, stormwater discharge, and drainage improvements.
- *Floodplain Management Ordinance.* The Office of the City Engineer administers the Floodplain Management and Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. This ordinance is based upon the model recommended by the Alabama State Floodplain Administrator. It includes a freeboard of one foot, and some higher regulatory standards have been added to the model.

- *Land Development Ordinance.* The land development ordinance supplements other City codes and ordinances through a land development permit (LDP). The LDP requires certain engineering design and construction standards, including drainage standards, be met for any land disturbance activity.
2. GIS Resources.
    - The City maintains GIS data and software by trained GIS technicians and provides full access for use by City staff.
    - Flood hazard maps and data are maintained in GIS, in addition to a complete inventory of other essential City attributes.
  3. Staffing and Administrative Resources.
  4. Fiscal Resources.
  5. Public Education and Outreach Programs.
  6. Insurance Services Office (ISO) Ratings.