

Chapter 3 – Planning Process

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3.1 Organization

The 2015 City of Tuscaloosa Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) was developed in accordance with the National Flood Insurance Program’s Community Rating System CRS Coordinator’s Manual (FEMA, FIA-15/2013), Activity 510 “Floodplain Management Planning.” The corresponding FMP chapters for each of the 10 CRS Planning Steps are described in the table below. Supporting documentation, Appendices A – H, accompany the main document and are noted throughout.

Table 3-1. 10-Step Planning Process

FMP Chapters	CRS Planning Step
Chapter 1 – Introduction	
Chapter 2 – Community Profile	
Chapter 3 – The Planning Process	Step 1: Organize to prepare the plan Step 2: Involve the public Step 3: Coordinate
Chapter 4 – Risk Assessment	Step 4: Assess the hazard Step 5: Assess the problem
Chapter 5 – Mitigation Strategy	Step 6: Set goals Step 7: Review possible activities Step 8: Draft an action plan
Chapter 6 – Plan Maintenance	Step 9: Adopt the plan Step 10: Implement, evaluate, revise

Floodplain Management Planning Committee

Prior to beginning the plan drafting process, the Tuscaloosa City Council adopted Resolution A15-0583 on May 12, 2015, which created the City of Tuscaloosa Floodplain Management Planning Committee (FMPC). (A copy of this signed resolution is in Appendix A). The Council resolution appoints 14 members to oversee the preparation of this plan and its ongoing implementation and maintenance. Among the 14 members, appointments include the City’s Floodplain Administrator who serves as Chairman, the CRS Coordinator, and the Deputy Director for Land Use Controls of the Department of

Planning and Development Services, who is actively involved in the floodplain management planning process.

The FMPC is comprised of seven members from various City departments that will be assigned lead responsibility for plan implementation. They have expertise in the following six categories of floodplain management activities:

- 1) Preventive measures (e.g., land use and development codes and ordinances);
- 2) Property protection (e.g., building elevation and floodproofing);
- 3) Natural resource protection;
- 4) Emergency services;
- 5) Structural flood control projects; and
- 6) Public information.

In addition to the City Department Representatives, the City Council has appointed seven Public Representatives to represent the following special areas of interest:

- 1) Civic group;
- 2) Business owner;
- 3) Environmental organization;
- 4) Academia;
- 5) Realtor;
- 6) Home builders; and
- 7) Local engineer.

Although not formally appointed to the FMPC membership by the Council resolution, several stakeholders were asked to participate in the drafting of this plan, including representatives from the Tuscaloosa County EMA, the neighboring City of Northport, and Tuscaloosa County.

Table 3-2 “Floodplain Management Planning Committee” on the following page shows the initial membership and stakeholders that participated in the drafting phase of this plan. Their meeting attendance is documented in Appendix E. In some circumstances, the appointed FMPC member may designate an alternative member to attend the FMPC meeting.

Table 3-2. City of Tuscaloosa Floodplain Management Committee

Members

City Department Representatives	<i>Floodplain Management Activity</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Department</i>
Josh Yates, CFM, Chair, Floodplain Admin.	Structural Flood Control Projects	Storm Drainage Engineer	City Engineer
Kevin Turner, CFM, CRS Coordinator	Natural Resource Protection	Engr. Environ. Compliance Coord.	City Engineer
Philip O'Leary, AICP	Preventive Measures	Deputy Director	Planning and Development Services
Deidre Stalnaker	Public Information	Public Relations Coordinator	Public Relations
Kip Tyner	Public Information	Councilor	City Council
John Brook	Emergency Services	Deputy Chief	Fire & Rescue Services
LaParry Howell	Property Protection	Director	Federal Programs
Public Representatives	<i>Interest</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Organization</i>
Joseph A. Robinson, PE	Civic Group	Retired Tuscaloosa City Engineer	City Resident
Abner Patton, PG	Business Owner	President	Patton Geologics, Inc.
Anne Wynn, GISP	Environmental Organization	GIS Specialist	Geologic Survey of Alabama
Mary Wallace Pitts	Academia	Instructor	University of Alabama
Brienna Bayles	Realtor	Real Estate Agent	Duckworth Morris
Brock Corder	Home Builders	Member	Homebuilders Association
Rick Deerman, PE, CFM	Local Engineer	Civil Engineer	CFM Group

Other Participating Stakeholders

Participant	<i>Area of Interest</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Organization</i>
Rob Robertson	Emergency Management	Director	Tuscaloosa County EMA
John Powell Webb, PE, CFM	Neighboring Municipality	Assistant City Engineer	City of Northport
Katherine Holloway, PE	Tuscaloosa County	Civil Engineer	Tuscaloosa County Public Works

The process began with step 1 of the 10 step CRS planning process, which was conducted through the organization of the FMPC. The FMPC met five times throughout the drafting phase of the plan. All meetings were held at the Daugherty Conference Room in City Hall at 10:30 a.m. At each meeting, committee members would review and discuss plan materials presented by the planning team. The materials covered all of the key steps of the floodplain management planning process, as described in Table 3-3 below. Although the FMPC met to review and plan for all chapters of the plan, it was especially important that the key steps of the planning process, Steps 4-8 were sufficiently discussed. The table below shows at which meetings each of the key steps were covered.

Table 3-3. Key Steps at FMPC Meetings

FMPC Meetings	Chapters Reviewed	CRS Key Planning Steps
1. Thursday, May 14, 2015	1. Introduction; 6. Plan Maintenance	
2. Wednesday, July 8, 2015	2. Community Profile; 4 Part I. Risk Assessment	Step 4. Assess the hazard; Step 5. Assess the problem
3. Wednesday, September 16, 2015	4 Part II. Risk Assessment	Step 4. Assess the hazard; Step 5. Assess the problem
4. Wednesday, November 18, 2015	5 Part I. Mitigation Strategy	Step 6. Set goals; Step 7. Review possible activities
5. Tuesday, January 19, 2016	5 Part II. Mitigation Strategy; 3. Planning Process	Step 8. Draft an action plan

Meeting materials, including agendas, slide presentations, committee exercises, and supplemental information were made available to FMPC members and the general public via the project website. Appendix E includes meeting agendas and sign in sheets.

3.2 Public Involvement

As indicated in the previous section, the Floodplain Management Planning Committee included members of the public. Of the 14 total FMPC members, seven represented the public (see Table 3-2), which comprises half of the total representation. All of the five FMPC meetings were open meetings and well-advertised via the project website at tuscaloosa.floodplainmanagementplan.com. Public information is also provided on the City’s Stormwater Management Program website at www.tuscaloosa.com/Government/Departments/City-Engineer/townstormwater; and via the City of Tuscaloosa Twitter feed (@tuscaloosacity).

Community Meetings

The first community meeting was held November 3, 2015 at 5 o'clock p.m. in the City of Tuscaloosa Council Chambers, during the drafting phase of the planning process.



The meeting's purpose was to allow interested citizens, especially those subjected to flooding or living in the floodplain, to provide input on areas that are susceptible to widespread or localized flooding. The project team made available maps portraying flood prone areas and asked citizens to identify potential issues or problem areas. In addition, community

members were asked to complete a Community Survey (located in Appendix F) gauging interest and concern with flooding issues. Members of the Floodplain Management Planning Committee (FMPC) were in attendance and on hand to answer questions. Citizen input helps shape the plan and provides invaluable support to the planning process. A media release detailing this information was issued October 12, 2015 (copy in Appendix F), in conjunction with the meeting announcement via the City of Tuscaloosa's Twitter feed (@tuscaloosacity) and the plan website (tuscaloosa.floodplainmanagementplan.com).

Upon completion of the draft plan, the City held a second community meeting for the public to review the final plan and offer public comments. This public meeting was held in the Council Chambers on March 1, 2016 at 5 p.m. Once again, the City issued a media release and posted meeting announcements on social media and the plan website. The purpose of this second community meeting was to display the final draft plan and encourage for public review and feedback. Representatives from the Floodplain Management Planning Committee (FMPC) were available to answer questions. Attendees were encouraged to submit written comments on the Public Review Comments form (located in Appendix F).



Additional Public Outreach Efforts

In addition to the community meetings and open-forum FMPC meetings, the planning team created a website (tuscaloosa.floodplainmanagementplan.com) detailing the floodplain management planning process, providing up-to-date meeting information, as well as making available for download draft plan chapters, appendices, agendas, slide presentations, and other meeting materials. As previously mentioned, the Community Survey (located in Appendix F), distributed during the first community meeting and made available via the website, allowed for members of the public to document and submit their concerns and questions regarding floodplain management. During the second community meeting, attendees were likewise given opportunity to voice their concerns and encouraged to submit written comments to the FMPC.

3.3 Coordination

Coordination among the Floodplain Management Planning Committee (FMPC), and the lead City staff – the Floodplain Administrator and CRS Coordinator – with the planning consultant team was crucial to the successful development of this plan. The FMPC itself represents membership from widely diverse agencies and interests. Moreover, the FMPC involved the Tuscaloosa EMA, the neighboring City of Northport, and Tuscaloosa County in the planning process as stakeholders to contribute their valued feedback. These stakeholders completed the “Alternative Mitigation Measures Exercise” (Appendix G), along with the rest of the FMPC members. This exercise provided a means to review and evaluate potential floodplain mitigation measures to be selected for the Floodplain Mitigation Action Plan (Chapter 5). The Floodplain Mitigation Action Plan includes measures that are consistent with the six floodplain management activities recognized by the CRS Program and takes into consideration City funding and technical capabilities, among other considerations. (See Chapter 5 “Mitigation Strategy” for a complete discussion of the development of the Floodplain Management Action Plan).

In addition to coordination with various agencies, the planning team collected and reviewed applicable plans, studies and reports. Review of existing documents, data and technical information is very useful in the drafting of the plan, in that it supports the risk assessment and helps develop the mitigation strategy to further the goals of floodplain management planning. Specifically, in the drafting of Chapters 2 “Community Profile,” 4 “Risk Assessment,” and 5 “Mitigation Strategy” the planning team reviewed and incorporated information from the following plans and studies:

- 2014 Tuscaloosa County Hazard Mitigation Plan;
- Tuscaloosa 2020, A Consensus Strategic Plan (January 2005);
- City of Tuscaloosa Citywide Future Land Use Plan, Preliminary Review (Draft, August 2007);
- Tuscaloosa Forward, A Strategic Community Plan to Renew and Rebuild (August, 2011);

- FEMA Flood Insurance Study, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama and Incorporated Areas (January 2014);
- NFIP's Repetitive Loss Inventory;
- City of Tuscaloosa Subdivision Regulations;
- City of Tuscaloosa Zoning Ordinance;
- City of Tuscaloosa Stormwater Management Ordinance;
- City of Tuscaloosa Floodplain Management Ordinance; and
- City of Tuscaloosa Building and Technical Codes.

Other public outreach activities related to floodplain management planning typically falls under the umbrella of multi-hazard mitigation planning activities conducted by the Tuscaloosa County Emergency Management Agency (EMA). The Tuscaloosa County EMA oversees the preparation and implementation of the 2015 Tuscaloosa County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan and subsequent updates. The EMA holds mitigation classes, organizes broadcast and social media awareness efforts for severe weather and flooding issues (such as "Turn Around, Don't Drown"), presents at local emergency management meetings, and showcases mitigation projects (including floodplain management activities) at the annual "Be Ready Day" event. The Floodplain Management Planning Committee is fully supportive of and an active participant in these county-wide activities conducted by the Tuscaloosa County EMA.

