

# DEKALB COUNTY FLOOD HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

## ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

OCTOBER 2023

**NAME OF COMMUNITY:** DeKalb County, GA

**COMMUNITY ID:** 130065

**NAME OF PLAN:** DeKalb County Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan - 2023 Progress Report

**DATE OF PLAN:** October 5, 2023

**DATE OF ADOPTION OF PLAN:** October 11, 2023

**5-YEAR CRS EXPIRATION DATE:** October 15, 2024

**PLAN AVAILABILITY:** This progress report has been released to the media through the County's Communications Department and is also available online on the floodplain management webpage using the link [www.dekalbcountyga.gov/roads-drainage/floodplain-management](http://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/roads-drainage/floodplain-management).

Electronic copies are available by email request to [FloodplainManagement@dekalbcountyga.gov](mailto:FloodplainManagement@dekalbcountyga.gov) and a hard copy can be obtained from the Floodplain Management office at 729B Camp Circle Road, Decatur, GA 30032.

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

DeKalb County's implementation of its floodplain management plan for the 2023 reporting year shows the continued efforts of the county in implementing its mitigation plans and strategies for a resilient DeKalb as identified in its updated Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). The 2022 update to the Countywide Hazard Mitigation remains the foundational document upon which the framework for our floodplain management and mitigation strategies were based. The unincorporated DeKalb County focused on strategies that will ultimately reduce and/or eliminate potential hazards to life and property within its jurisdiction and more particularly, in areas with histories of repetitive flooding.

The reported mitigation action items in the preceding year's report under the identified six (6) mitigation framework of the Hazard Mitigation Plan continues to be implemented and ongoing. The policies and procedures used were guided by the County's Development standards and Floodplain regulations.

The County continues to seek available Mitigation grants from FEMA (BRIC, FMA, HMGP etc.) and other sources to execute these action items and address flooding as it affects our community lifelines. In the current year, the County applied for BRIC, FMA and HMGP grants for some properties and still working with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and FEMA on HMGP on the necessary steps to finalize on them.

In Summary, the County made tremendous progress in implementing our action items for flood mitigation and thus, meeting its mitigation goals for this reporting period.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the report of the preceding year and to assess the effectiveness of DeKalb County's hazard mitigation plan. The plan outlines the implementation of each recommendation or action item in the approved county-wide hazard mitigation plan in line with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 as recorded in 44 CFR 201.6.

Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) NFIP/Community Rating System (CRS) requires that an annual progress report on the implementation of recommendations or actions items in the County's action plan be prepared and submitted along with other recertification documents each year for the annual recertification under the NFIP/CRS program. It is on this basis and for the purpose outlined above that this report is prepared and submitted.

## **REPORT PREPARATION**

This report was prepared by the floodplain management office under the supervision of the County's Community Rating System (CRS) Coordinator. Information contained in the report were collected from different units, divisions and departments having direct responsibility for actions outlined and described within it. The report was then presented to the governing body of the County through the County's Chief Operating Officer who oversees the day-to-day operations of the County and vested with such authority as may be required to ensure the smooth operation of the County's programs and more importantly, the actualization of the county mitigation objectives as set out in the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The report is publicized in the local media through the DeKalb County Communications department. It is also available to the public for download from the DeKalb County Roads and Drainage Floodplain Management webpage and can be accessed through a link to the document at [www.dekalbcountyga.gov/roads-drainage/floodplain-management](http://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/roads-drainage/floodplain-management). In addition, electronic copies are made available by email request to [FloodplainManagement@dekalbcountyga.gov](mailto:FloodplainManagement@dekalbcountyga.gov) and a hard copy can be obtained upon request at the Floodplain Management office at 729B Camp Circle Road, Decatur, GA 30032.

## DEKALB COUNTY FLOOD HAZARD ASSESSMENT

Dekalb County hazard risk assessment in the 2022 update to the county-wide hazard mitigation plan evaluated the hazards in the previous (2016) mitigation update as well as those identified in the State of Georgia 2019 Hazard Mitigation Strategy, Standard and Enhanced Plan. The hazard assessment showed that Flood hazard – including dam failure is the most prevalent hazards identified to impact DeKalb County in any given year. Historically in DeKalb county, flooding may occur during any season of the year but are more likely to occur during winter and spring when runoff conditions tend to be more favorable. This is due to the many water bodies; rivers, creeks and streams that traverse the landscape of the county. Some of these areas fall within the 14.75 square miles of the County floodplain in the different watersheds. Several people, structures and transportation corridors are at risk of flooding impacts of Nancy Creek, Peachtree Creek, North Fork Peachtree Creek and South Fork Peachtree Creek. There are also some high hazard potential dams otherwise classified as categories I and II dams within the county jurisdiction that contributes to this vulnerability. Currently though, geographic location and severity of a failure is not a standard or scale for determining the extent or damage a dam failure could cause. It is on this basis that flood hazard is ranked highest with appropriate considerations given to strategies for its mitigation. We would maintain the preceding year information format contained in the table 1 below which shows the types of flood hazards ranking and planning considerations to address it.

***Table 1: Flood Hazard Ranking and Planning Consideration***

Hazard	Hazard Type	Probability	Impact			Hazard Planning Consideration 2011	Hazard Planning Consideration 2016	Hazard Planning Consideration 2022
			Affected Area	Primary Impact	Secondary Impact			
Flooding	Flooding	Highly Likely 100% annual probability	Medium Between 10 and 50% of area affected	Critical Between 25% and 50% damage	High Major loss of function	Significant	Significant	Significant
	Dam Failure	Unlikely Less than 1% annual probability	Isolated Less than 1% of area affected	Critical Between 25% and 50% damage	High Major Loss of function	Limited	Limited	Limited

## MITIGATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mitigation goals are general explanations of what hazards are being addressed and how the losses due to the hazards should be prevented. They are typically long-range visions oriented toward jurisdictional policy. Objectives thus, define strategies to attain the mitigation goals. The 2016 County-wide Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan that formed the basis for the development of mitigation strategies focused county resources on identified hazards that would meet the overall mitigation goals and objectives. The five (5) mitigation goals and objectives are shown in table 2 below emanated from the 2016 plan update while the 2022 plan update has three (3) identified goals. In both instances, they are based on consistent and complementary goals contained within existing local plans, policy documents, and regulations and public input.

**Table 2: Mitigation Goals and Objectives - 2016 Plan Update**

MITIGATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
<b>Goal 1: Promote disaster resistant future development</b>
<i>Objective 1.A: Facilitate the development or updating of the Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinances to limit (or ensure safe) development in hazard areas.</i>
<i>Objective 1.B: Facilitate the adoption of building codes that protect existing assets and restrict new development in hazard areas.</i>
<i>Objective 1.C: Facilitate consistent enforcement of the Comprehensive Plan, zoning ordinances, and building code.</i>
<b>Goal 2: Increase public understanding and support for effective hazard mitigation.</b>
<i>Objective 2.A: Educate the public to increase awareness of hazards and opportunities for mitigation activities.</i>
<i>Objective 2.B: Increase public understanding, support and demand for hazard mitigation for new developments.</i>
<i>Objective 2.C: Promote hazard mitigation in the business community.</i>
<i>Objective 2.D: Monitor and publicize the effectiveness of mitigation actions implemented countywide.</i>
<b>Goal 3: Build and support capacity and commitment to become less vulnerable to hazards.</b>
<i>Objective 3.A: Increase awareness and knowledge of hazard mitigation principles and practice among County Department officials.</i>
<i>Objective 3.B: Provide technical assistance to city jurisdictions to implement their mitigation plans.</i>
<i>Objective 3.C: Address identified data limitations regarding the lack of information about new development and build-out potential in hazard areas.</i>

<i>Objective 3.D: Address data limitations identified in Hazard Profiling and Risk Assessment.</i>
<b>Goal 4: Enhance hazard mitigation coordination and communication with federal, state, and local governments.</b>
<i>Objective 4.A: Participate in initiatives that have mutual hazard mitigation benefits for the county, cities, state, and federal governments.</i>
<i>Objective 4.B: Encourage other organizations to incorporate hazard mitigation activities into their existing programs and plans.</i>

<b>MITIGATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</b>
<i>Objective 4.C: Continue partnerships between the state and local governments to identify, prioritize, and implement mitigation actions.</i>
<i>Objective 4.D: Continuously improve the County's capability and efficiency at administering</i>
<i>Objective 4.E: Provide technical support to cities in administering pre- and post-disaster mitigation programs.</i>
<i>Objective 4.F: Coordinate recovery activities while restoring and maintaining public services.</i>
<b>Goal 5: Reduce the possibility of damage and losses to existing assets, including people, critical facilities/ infrastructure, and public facilities due to all hazards found in DeKalb</b>
<i>Objective 5.A: Educate loco/ residents and businesses on the range of flooding that could affect the County and the potential impact.</i>
<i>Objective 5.B: Participate in initiatives that result in better risk communication and the evaluation of threats.</i>
<i>Objective 5.C: Decrease the vulnerability of public infrastructure including facilities, roadways, and utilities.</i>
<i>Objective 5.D: Record, collect, and maintain a comprehensive list of hazard related data.</i>
<i>Objective 5.E: Minimize repetitive losses caused by flooding.</i>
<i>Objective 5.F: Protect existing assets with the highest relative vulnerability to the effects of floods within the 100-year floodplain.</i>
<i>Objective 5.G: Strengthen existing development standards in high threat areas.</i>
<i>Objective 5H: Address identified data limitations regarding the lack of information about the relative vulnerability of assets from the various hazards.</i>
<i>Objective 5.I: Obtain better information on highest risk county-owned buildings in the County.</i>
<i>Objective 5.J: Perform mitigation alternative studies at known hazard areas.</i>
<i>Objective 5.K: Educate property owners in hazard areas on preparation and mitigation techniques.</i>
<i>Objective 5.L: Protect floodplains from inappropriate development.</i>

## MITIGATION ACTIONS.

The mitigation actions carried out during this reporting period remain the same as that of the preceding year and are all compatible with the goals and objectives already outlined in table 2 above. The actions are broadly grouped under the following mitigation framework.

- a. Prevention Measures:** The County made significant progress on taking necessary preventive measures by ensuring that undeveloped or sparsely developed areas of the county where capital investment has not been very substantial are left undisturbed. This measure helped in achieving the following.

  - Keep the current hazard risk level from getting worse.
  - Ensure that future development does not increase hazard losses; and,
  - Guide future development away from hazards, while maintaining other community goals such as economic development and quality of life and environment.
  
- b. Property Protection Measures:** Building protection measures are sound management technique to protect and maintain the historic and cultural status of sites through measures that does not affect their appearance.

  - Modify existing buildings subject to hazard risk through floodproofing techniques, or their surroundings.
  - Directly protect people and property at risk; and,
  - Are often inexpensive because they are implemented or cost-shared with property owners.
  
- c. Public Education and Awareness Measures:** This forms part of our Educational outreach and awareness measures which are tailored to different stakeholders and audiences within the County. These audiences include but are not limited to property owners, potential property owners, real estate agents, insurance brokers, business owners, etc. Trifold brochure on “the need to know” your risk from flood hazard was distributed across public libraries within the county as well for further enlightenment at town hall meetings with residents of different districts of the County.

  - Inform and remind people about hazardous areas and the measures they can take to avoid potential damage and injury.

- Educate on flood warnings and how to prepare for flood and receive emergency notifications and create communication plans in the case of flooding.
- d. Natural Resource Protection Measures:** Parks and recreation, Green DeKalb initiative and Planning and Sustainability Low Impact Development and Green Infrastructure program are some of the mitigation actions by which the county goals and objectives are achieved. As part of this measure, the county continues to ensure the functionality of our open space initiative to ensure and protect the natural functions of its floodplain.
- Reduce the intensity of hazard effects and improve the quality of the environment and wildlife habitats.
- e. Emergency Services Measures:** These are actions that are taken to ensure the continuity of emergency services. The county currently utilizes the CodeRed™ emergency notification system to subscribers who opt-in into the system. This system provides rapid notification residents and businesses regarding emergency events within DeKalb County. Also, the county maintains “Crisis Track” - a self-reporting database that allow residents to report damage assessed from severe, inclement weather within DeKalb County.
- Protect people before and after a hazard event.
- f. Structural Measures:** These are man-made structures that are constructed to control and mitigate known hazards hence, the term “structural”. Some structural mitigation measures include, but are not limited to culvert expansion and improvements, detention and retention basins etc.
- Directly protect people and property at risk.

## **ACTION ITEMS IMPLEMENTATION AND STATUS**

The goals, objectives, actions and implementation strategies outlined in the county-wide plan forms the templates used by the unincorporated DeKalb county to address its mitigation tasks in order to be compliant with the overarching goals and achieve its unique objectives. From the multi-hazard mitigation plan, the unincorporated DeKalb county has five (5) goals and seven (7)



action items for flood mitigation; four items completed and closed out, one item has been deferred due to funding (FLD #4) and two items are on-going (FLD #5 & #6). The strategies for implementing these actions were developed with full cognizance of the capabilities of various responsible offices and agencies of the county and their available funding, personnel and technical resources. The status on implementation of the on-going and deferred action items are as presented below.

**FLD #4 – Medlock Park Area Flood Property Acquisitions:** The County is yet to receive funding for this Action item but shall continue to seek all available funding opportunities to be able to implement it. The action item is again deferred due to lack of funding.

**FLD #5 – Enhanced Property Acquisition Program in All Repetitive Loss Areas:** This is an on-going process to mitigate repetitive flooding in each of the identified areas as funds becomes available. In the current year the county applied for the FEMA HMGP funding grant to acquire and demolish five (5) properties. After FEMA review, one application was selected for further review and the status of the application’s status outcome is yet to be communicated but the County continues to work with the GEMA seek more and other opportunities to secure and receive required fundings for our mitigation activities.

**FLD #6 – Monitor Repetitive Loss Properties for Substantial Improvement:** The County continue to use the already established Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for tracking Substantial Improvement/Substantial Damage (SI/SD). All properties in the county regulatory floodplain and especially the Repetitive Loss properties are monitored and tracked using the County Permitting system (Infor Public Sector-Hansen) for Substantial Improvement/Substantial Damage (SI/SD). In line with requirements in the 2021 addendum to the Community Rating System, a Substantial Improvement/Substantial Damage (SI/SD) Plan has been developed to further provide guidance on SI/SD and their tracking. Data from this tracking is used to annually update the NFIP Repetitive Loss (RL) worksheet that is made available by FEMA.

**Table 3: Action Items and Status (from the DeKalb County Multi-Hazard, Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan)**

Jurisdiction	Action Item Number	Hazard	Action Item	Coordinating Organizations	Status	POC
DeKalb County	FLD #1 Drew Valley Subdivision Property Acquisitions	Flood	Conduct voluntary property acquisition program for the 15 homes, create open space with vacant lots, preserve perpetuity.	Public Works, Roads and Drainage	Completed and closed out.	Floodplain Management Office: 404-297-4518
DeKalb County	FLD #2: Drew Valley Subdivision Drainage Improvements	Flood	Construct the already designed drainage improvements	Public Works, Roads and Drainage	Completed and closed out.	Floodplain Management Office: 404-297-4518
DeKalb County	FLD #3: Jackson Square Condominium Acquisitions	Flood	Conduct property acquisitions and develop permanent open space at the site.	Public Works, Roads and Drainage	Completed and legally transferred to City of Brookhaven	Floodplain Management Office: 404-297-4518
DeKalb County	FLD #4: Medlock Park Area Flood Property Acquisitions	Flood	Develop Cost-Benefit Analysis, Seek Grant Funding, acquire and demolish homes, develop permanent open space on the site	County Roads & Drainage Division	Deferred pending funding availability.	Floodplain Management Office: 404-297-4518
DeKalb County	FLD #5: Enhance Property Acquisition Program in All Repetitive Loss Areas	Flood	Develop Cost-Benefit Analysis, Seek Grant Funding, acquire and demolish homes, preserve permanent open space in perpetuity	Public Works, Roads and Drainage	On-going process, Additional funding expected	Floodplain Management Office: 404-297-4518
DeKalb County	FLD #7: Monitor Repetitive Loss Properties for substantial improvement	Flood	During the permitting process, the county will continuously monitor existing repetitive loss structures for substantial improvement. Develop a system of record keeping to easily track and update annually repetitive loss properties as per FEMA's repetitive loss verification sheets.	Public Works, Planning and Sustainability,	Ongoing. All properties in the Floodplain and Repetitive. Loss properties are currently being monitored using the County Permitting system (Infor Public Sector) for SI/SD and updated annually with the NFIP Repetitive Loss (RL) worksheet.	Floodplain Management Office: 404-297-4518
City of Chamblee	FLD #2: Floodplain Property Acquisitions	Flood	Chamblee would like to coordinate with the county to incorporate some properties within the City of Chamblee into the County's existing property acquisition program.	City Administrator or Floodplain Administrator	Legal transfer of affected properties completed	Floodplain Management Office: 404-297-4518

## ON-GOING AND PROPOSED PROJECTS

For this reporting period, only five (5) out of the eight (8) projects reported last year to further increase the resilience of the community against future flood risks are still active. Some of the projects include but are not limited to Road Culvert improvements, Storm Drainage Improvements; Pipe cleaning/replacement among others. For this reporting period, one of the projects has been transferred to the City of Tucker based and inter-governmental agreement. two others are in advanced stage; their plans completed, funds appropriated and are currently in land acquisition phase. However, the status of the remaining three projects have not changed (see table 4 below) and are all captured under the Stormwater Master Plan currently being developed. The County will continue to carry out additional project scoping to further consolidate on successes so far recorded.

**Table 4: Proposed and On-going Projects**

S/N	Project	Hazard	Project Description	Coordinating Organizations	Status
1.	Briarcliff and Briarlake Road Culvert Improvement	FLD	Drainage improvement to optimize solution to reduce the frequency of roadway overtopping at the intersection of Briarcliff Road and Briarlake Road.	Public Works, Roads and Drainage	The project is in land acquisition phase.
2.	Crabapple Circle Drainage	FLD	Stormwater Drainage Improvements for Crabapple Circle	Public Works, Roads and Drainage	The project is in land acquisition phase.
3.	Pine Lake Road Culvert	FLD	Pine Lake Road/Oak Avenue Culvert & Drainage Improvement	Public Works, Roads and Drainage	Transferred to the City of Tucker
4.	Randolph Estate Drainage Assessment	FLD	Drainage Improvement to address flooding problems on public streets and private properties along McCully Drive and Zelda Drive	Public Works, Roads and Drainage	No status change. Project is captured under the Stormwater Master Plan.

S/N	Project	Hazard	Project Description	Coordinating Organizations	Status
5.	Regalwoods Drainage	FLD	Culvert and Drainage improvements with additional Mitigation strategies around the I-85 and I-285 interchange around Regalwoods Drive to address repetitive flooding from runoff and overflow of the nearby North Fork Peachtree Creek.	Public Works, Roads and Drainage	No status change. BCA complete, Project is still pending.
6.	Riderwood Culvert	FLD	Culvert and Drainage Improvements to address repetitive flooding on Riderwood Road	Public Works, Roads and Drainage	No status change. Project is captured under the Stormwater Master Plan.

### Recommendations

The impact of budget constraints on the ability of the county to meet its mitigation goals is very significant. Most of the mitigation action items reported in this report would have received a great boost if funding had been available. It is recommended that increased funding be appropriated to support on-going mitigation project while at the same time provisions be made for project scoping and for the determination of the benefit-cost ratio of conceptualized projects in order to sustain or improve the present tempo of various works towards making the county more resilient.

### Conclusion

This report showed that DeKalb County made tremendous improvement over the year on the implementation of its Floodplain management plan. More importantly, the mitigation actions taken accomplished the goals outlined in the overarching hazard mitigation plans of the county especially as it relates to areas with history of repetitive flooding thus, making the county more resilient. With the newly updated County-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan and the identified goals, the county is on the path to drastically reducing flooding within this jurisdiction and ultimately eliminates its occurrence.