

2018 All Hazards and Flood Mitigation Plans

Howard County, Maryland

DISASTER MANAGEMENT



PROJECT DETAILS

DIFFICULTY: Medium

COST: \$60,000 - \$70,000

TIMEFRAME: Eleven (11) Months

DELIVERABLES: Updated County-Wide All-Hazards and Flood Vulnerability Analyses and Mitigation Plans

CORE COMPETENCIES:

- Hazard Mitigation Planning
- Hazard Vulnerability Analysis
- Disaster Preparedness
- Public Outreach and Education
- Inter-Departmental Cooperation

PROJECT TEAM

Vision Planning and Consulting
ExaSpatial, LLC.

CLIENT CONTACT

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Vision Planning and Consulting (VPC) was selected by the Howard County Government to develop the County's Flood and All-Hazard Mitigation Plan Updates. The process for both plans was conducted concurrently to ensure plan integration and process efficiency. VPC also developed Mitigation Annexes for Man Made and Technological hazards. Howard County is one of the first counties in Maryland to augment the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan with the Technological and Man-Made Hazard Mitigation Plan and a Historic and Cultural Resources Hazard Mitigation Plan, all being developed by VPC.

PROJECT SUMMARY

VPC developed the previous (2009) Flood and All Hazards Mitigation Plan, which provided us detailed knowledge of the County's vulnerability to flooding. A Joint Steering Committee was formed, to incorporate Emergency Management officials and stakeholders for the Hazard Mitigation Plan updates. While the planning process ran concurrently and followed the required methodologies, VPC introduced new components based on more recent hazard events and future hazard considerations.

After the Ellicott City Flood of 2016, community advisory groups, flood task forces, and hydrology and hydraulic studies were commissioned and multiple reports on recommendations produced. VPC conducted a detailed review of these plans to glean the most feasible actions developed, for inclusion in the 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

In 2018, Ellicott City was ravaged again by flash floodwaters that cost one life and over \$20 million in damages. This event also underscored the need for appropriate mitigation measures for historic properties. VPC worked with the Joint Steering Committee on the inclusion of mitigation considerations for historic and cultural resources such as increasing the use of "Green Infrastructure" in flood-prone areas and identifying vulnerable historic properties within the 100-year floodplain.

The vulnerability analysis was developed using FEMA's Hazus software, which provided a realistic look at potential damages from flood, hurricane, and earthquake events.

Public involvement through: open houses, committee meetings, online property-owner surveys and the extensive use of social media made for an impressive level of citizen participation. The survey addressed: the type of damages observed after various hazard events; frequency of hazard events; and any resident-implemented mitigation actions. Approximately 65% of respondents considered their property at "low risk" to flooding; and over 62% of respondents implemented mitigation actions on their own.