

CITIZENS ADVISORY

LOCAL FLOOD HAZARD

The City of College Park is situated on a ridge between two drainage basins. Most of the City northwest of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) drains to Camp Creek. The properties southeast of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) drains to the Flint River by way of Sullivan Creek, Flint River East Fork, and Flint River West Fork. Most flood hazard areas in the City are associated with these creeks and their tributaries. However, some areas experience localized flooding not directly associated with a river or creek.

Because the contributing drainage areas for the above referenced creeks are relatively small (less than five square miles), floods in College Park are of short duration. For example, a major flood in College Park would reach its maximum flood stage one to two hours after an intense rainfall. During this time floodwaters can rise at a rate of two to three feet per hour. Floodwater velocities are variable. Velocities could range from 1.5 feet per second and less in wide, flat, vegetated areas to 2-8 feet per second in the main drainage channels to over 12 feet per second in or near culverts and drainage structures.

FLOOD SAFETY

Flooding can be hazardous to your health. Here are some tips that will help to insure your personal safety during a flood event:

- Turn off your electricity by flipping the circuit breakers off or removing fuses.
- Turn off natural gas connections.
- Plan a safe escape route to higher ground.
- Avoid stream banks that may be unstable.
- Do not attempt to cross a flooded stream on foot or by car. Very strong currents or deep water may not be evident on the surface.
- Do not attempt to cross a flooded creek or sidewalk. Water does not have to be very deep to float a car or to cause you to lose your footing.

PROPERTY PROTECTION

Many existing buildings can be protected against flooding by retrofitting. Retrofitting includes techniques such as waterproofing walls and doors on those buildings which can structurally withstand the pressures exerted by the water, adding waterproof fences (usually brick or concrete) with sealing gates, or even elevating the building above flood levels. You can review printed material on retrofitting at the College Park Branch of the Fulton County Public Library next door to City Hall.

Emergency measures you can take during a flood that will help reduce property damage include:

- Place furniture on beds, then personal items on top of the furniture.

- Anchor, secure or weigh down items that may float or move and become "battering rams."
- Move cardboard and newspapers to higher ground. Otherwise, they may disintegrate and/or clog drains when the floodwaters recede.
- Remove wood drawers from built-ins (i.e., cabinets, etc.) and furniture. The wood can swell when wet and damage the unit.
- Place glass items in plastic bags to prevent pieces from spreading if breakage occurs.
- Put chemicals (insecticides, weed killers, those that give off heat, or explosive or toxic gases when exposed to water) in waterproof containers and remove to high areas of the building.
- Protect valuable machinery and equipment by enclosing them in waterproof containers. Weigh down large appliances with sandbags or if possible, fill dishwasher, clothes washers, and horizontal freezers with clean water.
- If a qualified structural engineer has determined that your structure can withstand the anticipated floodwater depths, seal all water entry points. Otherwise, let the floodwater in by propping open all doors (inside and out) and opening windows whenever you expect floodwater to rise above table height on the first floor.
- Avoid backflow of sewer lines by closing off all sewer line entries into the house. If sewage backup is a regular occurrence during heavy rains, you may want to consider installing a backflow prevention valve on your sewer line. If you already have a backflow prevention valve, make sure it is properly maintained.
- Unplug all heavy, unmovable appliances, since all appliances must be disconnected before reestablishing electrical service and because debris and wreckage after flooding will make it difficult to reach the electrical outlet.

FLOOD INSURANCE

Most homeowners' insurance policies do not cover damage from rising water. As a result, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has made low cost insurance available through licensed property insurance agents via the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Because of this public information program, in addition to other ordinance enforcement and public works activities, the City of College Park earns credit under the Community Rating System (CRS) of the National Flood Insurance Program. These credits allow the citizens of College Park who wish to purchase flood insurance to receive an insurance premium discount of approximately 20%.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE FLOODPLAIN

All land disturbances (over 2000 square feet) and building construction within the City limits requires a permit. During permit review, developments are checked for compliance with the City's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. The City closely regulates work in the floodplain. Developments that result in an increase in the offsite flood hazard will not be issued a permit. In this instance "development" means any manmade change to improved or unimproved real estate, including but not limited to buildings or other structures, mining, dredging, tilling, grading,

paving, excavating, drilling operations or permanent storage of materials. You should always check with the building inspector before engaging in any of these activities and report cases of suspected, illegal developments to the City.

DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Another method of flood prevention is the proper maintenance of drainage ways, storm structures, and floodplains. The City maintains only those drainage features on City property (i.e., City parks or City right-of-way) or those drainage features for which the City has explicitly accepted maintenance responsibility and has a recorded drainage easement. Maintenance of all other drainage features is the responsibility of the individual property owner. Maintenance should include removal of accumulated debris and manmade obstructions to allow for the free flow of water within the floodplain. You should report improper maintenance to the City Inspection Department at (404) 669-3762.

FLOOD PROTECTION ASSISTANCE

The Assistant City Engineer and Building Inspector are available to make site visits to advise property owners on appropriate protection measures and can review retrofitting plans for feasibility and effectiveness. For additional information, contact the City Engineering Department at (404) 669-3763 or visit the College Park Branch of the Fulton County Public Library to review available reference material on the topics covered above.