

## **Flood Mitigation Planning: Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***Why does the city work to mitigate floods?***

The City of Boulder has a significant flood risk due to its location at the mouth of Boulder Canyon and other canyon creeks. The city has a long history of flooding and has developed a comprehensive flood management program designed to identify flood risks along major drainageways, reduce those risks, minimize loss of life and property damage, and support recovery following a major flood.

### ***What is a flood mitigation study?***

Flood mitigation studies are conducted to evaluate opportunities to reduce flood risks along drainageways. During a study, different alternatives for mitigation are analyzed and presented for review and comment at public engagement meetings. The flood mitigation study is used to inform the final flood mitigation plan.

### ***What is a flood mitigation plan?***

A flood mitigation plan is a **long-range (>20-year) plan** which identifies future flood mitigation projects at a conceptual level, that reduce the impacts from flooding from a creek or major drainageway. Each project identified will be evaluated at a more detailed level and refined through the city's Community and Environmental Assessment Process (CEAP) as projects are programmed into the Capital Improvement Program budget.

### ***How will improvements be selected to be included in the plan?***

Improvements will be selected based on their ability to meet flood mitigation objectives including; improving public safety and access during a flood event and reducing property damage, recognizing the benefit of each project when compared to its cost (including on-going maintenance) and taking into account impacts on the community and the environment. This will require balancing trade-offs to minimize project impacts with reducing flood risk.

### ***How does the public provide input, and how does that input get included in the review process?***

Input is typically gathered through open houses, feedback questionnaires, public hearings at the Water Resources Advisory Board meetings or online. Input from the public will be taken into consideration in understanding how project alternatives might impact the community. Selection of project alternatives will require balancing trade-offs to minimize project impacts with reducing flood risk.

### ***Who approves the flood mitigation plan?***

The Water Resources Advisory Board is tasked with reviewing Flood Mitigation Plans and making a recommendation to City Council on acceptance of the plan. City Council is ultimately responsible for approving the final plan.

### ***How are projects identified in a flood mitigation plan funded?***

Projects identified in a flood mitigation plan are programmed into the Stormwater/Flood six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) based on prioritization guiding principles established in the Comprehensive Stormwater and Flood Master Plan. The Stormwater/Flood CIP is reviewed by the Water Resources Advisory Board, who then makes a recommendation to Planning Board and City Council, as part of the annual budget process. The city's flood and stormwater programs and projects are funded from fees included on monthly utility bills.

Larger capital projects often include multiple sources of funding through resources such as the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District (UDFCD), the Federal government, and city acquired bonds.

### ***When will projects identified in the plan be built?***

Since mitigation plans are long-range plans, projects identified within a mitigation plan can take years if not decades to construct.

### ***What types of alternatives are being considered?***

Alternatives that are being considered include detention, sediment capture, roadway conveyance and culvert and channel improvements that range from conveying the 100-year storm event to smaller storms.

### ***When will the plan be approved?***

Staff is currently seeking input on mitigation strategies and is anticipating presenting a draft plan to the Water Resources Advisory Board during the fall of 2018.

### ***Are the floodplain maps changing?***

The flood mitigation plan does not change the floodplain maps. It is a long-range plan that identifies feasible projects to reduce the flood risk. Once a project is completed, a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) will be submitted for approval by FEMA that reflects the physical modifications made as a result of a project. Upon approval by FEMA, the floodplain map will be revised.

### ***How can the city build projects on private property?***

The city only constructs flood mitigation projects within a flood/drainage easement or on city owned land. If utilization of private property is determined necessary for a specific project, then the city purchases property and easements at fair market value.

### ***What is the difference between an irrigation ditch and a creek?***

Creeks are channels that naturally convey water from the watershed. Irrigation ditches are manmade channels that take water from creeks for delivery to homes, farms, businesses, industries and other uses. The water flowing in creeks is generally naturally occurring. The flow of water in a ditch is controlled by people who work for a ditch company. Most ditches deliver water from April to October, but some ditches continue to run year-round. The amount, timing, and use of the water diverted into a ditch are based upon one or multiple water rights.