

Memorandum

To: Programs, Projects and Operations Subcommittee
From: Lori Ann Laster, Stormwater Management Engineer
Date: August 2, 2019
Re: Review and Recommendation of Application for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for Douglas County Floodplain Buyouts

Acquisition and demolition of structures in the floodplain (or buyouts) is a widely-accepted flood mitigation technique for many years. Several groups including FEMA, the International Code Council, the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety, and the American Institute of Architects agree that buyouts are one of the most effective ways of reducing losses from flooding.

In December 2017, the National Institute of Building Sciences released a report that looked at 23 years of mitigation projects for all types of natural hazards. Their conclusion was that mitigation techniques such as buyouts, potentially save \$7 for every \$1 spent. The benefits are calculated based on historical data related to injuries and deaths, repair costs, sheltering costs for displaced households, business disruptions, and search and rescue costs.

Since the District began buyout projects, approximately \$14 million dollars has been spent, with a District contribution of only \$1.2 million. The estimated benefits of these projects are over \$99 million.

In March 2019, many areas within the District were affected by flooding. The flood events led to a Presidential Disaster Declaration, which made funds available through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for mitigation projects, such as buyouts. The District was notified of the opportunity to apply for funds on June 13, 2019.

Many people throughout the District along the Elkhorn, Platte, and Missouri Rivers have contacted the District to indicate they would be interested in a buyout program. District staff held a meeting in Valley, Nebraska on June 28, 2019 to discuss a buyout program. To date, approximately 70 people have contacted the District to indicate interest.

The first step in the grant process is to submit a Notice of Intent to apply. This notice was submitted to the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency on July 1, 2019. The Governor's Taskforce for Disaster Recovery met on July 16, 2019 to select the projects from all applicants within the state. If the District is notified that our project has been selected as a priority a full grant application is due by August 30, 2019.

Staff reviewed the statements of interest submitted to the District and determined there are currently 45 properties that are eligible for the program in Douglas County. The eligibility requirements are that there must be a structure on the property and the property must be located within a mapped FEMA floodplain.

The District is proposing to submit an application for the 45 properties in Douglas County with a project cost of approximately \$5,625,000. Federal funds would cover 75% leaving approximately \$1,407,000 as the local share.

It is Management's recommendation that the General Manager be authorized to fully execute for and on behalf of the District an application for Hazard Mitigation Grant Funding for the Douglas County Floodplain Buyout Program.