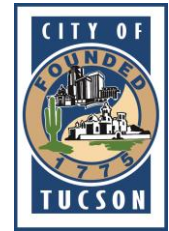




Frequently Asked Questions

Ruthrauff Basin Management Plan



I – The Ruthrauff Basin Management Plan

Q. What is the purpose of the Ruthrauff Basin Management Plan?

A. *The purpose of the Ruthrauff Basin Management Plan is to identify flood areas and drainage problems, and develop a plan for cost-effective solutions to reduce or manage flooding in the project area.*

Q. When did the project start, and how long will it take?

A. *The project started in April 2014 and is expected to last two years. When the flooding and drainage problem analysis is completed, the Pima County Regional Flood Control District can move into the solution alternatives analysis.*

Q. Will this project address flooding from the Rillito and Santa Cruz rivers?

A. *No, this project will evaluate the drainage flowing into the Rillito and Santa Cruz rivers. Previous flood control projects on the Rillito and Santa Cruz have limited the amount of flooding we have along those watercourses. For example, the July 31, 2006, flood on the Rillito exceeded the estimated 100-year flood, with less flood damage than the floods of 1993 and 1983.*

Q. If I don't live near a wash or other drainageway that floods, how will this project help me?

A. *Sheet flow is the most common problem we have observed in the Ruthrauff Basin. Sheet flow is shallow, relatively slow moving floodwater. In many cases, this results in flooding in streets and backyards, which are not washes or drainageways. The project intends to address both sheet flooding and flooding associated with drainageways.*

Q. What will the completed Plan do to address flooding we see in the Ruthrauff Basin?

A. *The completed Plan will present a list of possible structural and non-structural solutions to problems identified in collaboration with the community. At this point, there is no specific funding source for paying for these solutions. However, the Plan will include an implementation component that describes possible funding sources and phasing that might be necessary for the solutions to occur.*

II – Flooding and Regulatory Floodplain Regulations

Q. Who do I call if I see a clogged culvert or other drainage problem?

A. *In unincorporated Pima County call the Pima County Regional Flood Control District at 724-4600. In the City of Tucson call the City Department of Transportation at 791-3154.*

Q. Are there regular maintenance schedules for inspections on grates and drainage structures, or is maintenance scheduled only after complaints or flood events?

A. *There are both regular maintenance schedules and maintenance that occurs after complaints. Pima County has limited staff, so people need to call us if they observe problems. Pima County knows many problem areas and checks on them before anticipated events and also follows up on complaints.*

Q. Where is the existing 100-year floodplain?

A. *There are both “FEMA” and “local” Regulatory Floodplains, which show the limits of the 1 percent annual chance flood (often called the 100-year flood). The FEMA-adopted floodplain is used for showing flood insurance requirements. The City and County have floodplain maps that extend further than the FEMA maps to regulate in the interest of public safety. New developments in existing floodplains in the City and County must show they can deal with existing drainage water and won’t increase flood hazards on adjacent properties.*

Q. If my property is removed from the 100-year floodplain during the proposed remapping, does it mean it will never flood?

A. *Not necessarily. Storms do occur that have intensities greater than the 100-year event. In addition, changes in river or watershed characteristics could increase flood depths and discharges.*

Q. How do the floods we had last summer compare with what to expect in the 100-year flood?

A. *The September 8, 2014, rainfall was a little over 1 inch in three hours. The rainfall that causes the 100-year flood is estimated to be about 3.2 inches in three hours. Therefore, we expect much more flooding in a 100-year flood.*

Q. Older commercial developments were built before requirements to capture water on property. Properties downstream experience sheet flooding. What public policy frameworks or solutions exist to take care of this?

A. *The implementation plan will have recommended alternatives, which can either be structural, like a channel; or non-structural, like an ordinance. Since the early 1980s, all new developments have been required to have drainage detention basins, which reduce flood peaks, or retention basins which hold the water on site.*

III – Alternatives Analysis and Recommended Solutions

Q. How do you gather interested stakeholders?

A. *We are beginning to meet with interested stakeholders now, including local government, regulatory agencies, elected officials, utilities, wastewater, neighborhood associations and interested citizens’ groups.*

Q. We live in a desert where water is scarce. How will you consider that stormwater is a resource, even though too much of it at a time causes flooding?

A. *During the Alternatives Analysis process the Flood Control District will consider options that utilize stormwater as part of the drainage solution. In addition, we will evaluate more frequent floods, such as the 5-year and 25-year events, which may be reduced by using water harvesting techniques. These techniques are now included in the Pima County Regional Flood Control District’s guidance for stormwater management.*