

## City of Arvada Attributes Successful Mitigation to Cooperative Efforts

**JEFFERSON COUNTY, CO** – Arvada City Officials have been working together on mitigation projects that have paid off for the community.

“It is really the work of all these folks – our engineers, city planner, city managers, public works director, stormwater manager, and parks and recreation director, working together on a common goal – to protect lives and property,” said Patrick Douherty, city engineer. “We have also collaborated with other agencies and neighboring cities.”

Dating back to the early 1970’s, Arvada was one of the first cities in the United States to begin flood flow attenuation and to manage development in the floodplain. Projects included small channelization, bridge replacements, large storm sewers, and regional detention.

Funding for these projects came out of the city’s General Fund-Capital Improvement Projects. In 2000, a stormwater utility was funded. Through the stormwater utility, the city has been able to fund more mitigation projects.

“We certainly have significant projects that are the showcase, but it is numerous activities (what people would call mundane or ordinary) – year after year upkeep, collaboration, replacements, improvements, and modifications – taken in its totality, that make mitigation work,” Douherty said. “As a group, we take on the responsibility of assuring that our projects work effectively.”

As of 2013, Arvada has spent more than \$35 million (funding from local sources) on various projects throughout the city. Projects have been as small as putting in a more efficient inlet to major channelization projects. Small projects to eliminate localized flooding have cost the city \$4.2 million.

One of the city’s major projects was the rehabilitation of Leyden Dam, a stormwater control facility. It was rehabilitated in 2001 and put to the test in September 2013 when record flooding wreaked havoc. The dam filled up, minimizing damages to homes and businesses.

Another project requiring a major collaborative effort was the Ralston Creek Drainage-Garrison Street Bridge Project. It had been included in the city plans for years as a part of the city’s commitment to remove properties from the FEMA designated 100-year floodplain.

Approximately 93 homes were no longer categorized as being within the designated floodplain because the reconfigured park included the anticipated Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). The water flows within the park itself, instead of flooding into the adjoining neighborhood.

Other projects that kept Arvada virtually unscathed by the September 2013 flooding included:

- Continuous cleanup of debris in channels;
- Regular maintenance of stormwater drains;
- Well flowing sewer system;
- Global Positioning System (GPS) database on all manageable valve boxes and culverts;



- Development and updates on Master Drainage Plan; and
- Additional drainage projects, as a result of lessons learned from minor flooding, such as localized street flooding.

The city continues to be proactive in identifying risks. As a group, city officials meet regularly to reflect on problems encountered within each division and to identify issues and remediation (including projects). All projects are prioritized and preliminary plans as well as bids for each project are reviewed by the group.

“We meet and we have these discussions,” said Vicky Reier, assistant city manager. “We discuss the project to determine what makes sense, its cost-effectiveness, components of the project and its execution. Planning is also paramount for us.”

The NFIP’s CRS is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements.

As a result, flood insurance premium rates are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from the community actions, which meets the three goals of the CRS:

1. Reduce flood damage to insurable property;
2. Strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the NFIP; and
3. Encourage a comprehensive approach to floodplain management.

Arvada is striving to preserve and enhance existing residential and commercial areas to live and shop, as well as to provide a quality environment for its citizens. In accomplishing this mission, the city is ensuring:

- the regulation of nuisance Codes and Zoning Ordinances;
- the development and implementation of the standards for street construction, utility work and stormwater drainage on all projects in the city;
- the planning, maintaining and improving of its infrastructure;
- quality stormwater management practices;
- maintained and monitored floodplain regulations; and
- a rich array of natural, historic and cultural resources.

For additional information, visit:

[www.arvada.org](http://www.arvada.org)

[www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program](http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program)

[www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program-community-rating-system](http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program-community-rating-system).