



Floodplain Risk Management

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Scope

The policy applies to all flood prone land, whether private or publically owned, anywhere in the Local Government Area.

Purpose

The primary objective of the Parramatta Floodplain Risk Management Policy is to encourage measures that:

“Reduce or eliminate the impact of flooding and flood liability on individual owners and occupiers of flood prone property, and reduce private and public losses resulting from floods.”

Policy

Background

Council’s Floodplain Risk Management Policy (this document) applies the flood management principles of the NSW Government at a local level. The Policy establishes Parramatta City Council’s strategic approach to floodplain risk management for the whole Parramatta Local Government Area (LGA). Details about specific flood management rules are described in a separate documents, specifically the Local Environmental Plan and the Development Control Plan.

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Owner: Director Outcomes and Development	Area: Outcomes and Development	POL No: 234
Date of Commencement: 26/06/06 Version 2	Approval Authority: Council Date of Next Review:27/10/19	Date Approved:27/10/14 Review: 5 years

Flooding is an important issue that affects significant parts of the Parramatta LGA. There are 24 Creeks and Rivers of significant size within the LGA all of which, at some point in the future, will flood.

Flooding may occur from a range of sources, including:-

- relatively high water flows which overtop the natural or artificial banks along any part of a watercourse (stream, river), lake or dam – “mainstream flooding”
- localised “overland flow” caused by heavy rainfall flowing across the ground or overflowing pipes, pits and gutters
- minor inundation resulting from abnormally high sea levels in the estuarine parts of the LGA (downstream of Charles St Weir in the CBD)

The consequences of flooding can range from minor inconvenience through to major social, environmental and economic damage, with loss of life being the most serious of all possible consequences.

Flooding in the Parramatta area is managed according to a risk management process which refers to the NSW Government’s Floodplain Development Manual (FDM) 2005, subsequent circulars and guidelines from the State Government and according to generally accepted best practice for flood management.

Policy Objective

The primary objective of the Parramatta City Floodplain Risk Management Policy is to encourage measures that:

“Reduce or eliminate the impact of flooding and flood liability on individual owners and occupiers of flood prone property, and reduce private and public losses resulting from floods.”

Four principles influence this Policy:

1. Flood prone land is a valuable resource that should be managed and developed, subject to a merit approach that provides due consideration to social, economic and environmental criteria, as well as any flooding criteria, as identified in flood studies, independent assessments or strategically developed floodplain risk management studies and plans.
2. Both mainstream and overland flooding are to be considered when assessing flood risk.
3. Flood prone land should not be sterilised by unnecessarily precluding development through the application of rigid and prescriptive criteria, however inappropriate proposals should not be accepted.
4. Measures to increase resilience across the LGA should be encouraged so as to reduce the long term effects of flooding when it occurs.

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Application

The Policy Objective and principles will be achieved through:

1. Preparing co-ordinated development controls to ensure that:
 - a. The risk to human life and damage to property caused by flooding is managed and, where possible, reduced through controlling development on land affected by potential floods and applying a “merit-based approach” to all development decisions which take account of social, economic and ecological considerations, and also their effect on infrastructure and services;
 - b. Developments with high sensitivity to flood risk (e.g. “critical” and “sensitive” land uses)¹ are sited and designed to provide reliable access and minimise risk from flooding - in general this would not be anywhere within the extent of the Probable Maximum Flood (the largest flood that could ever occur);
 - c. In general developments with a lower sensitivity to flood risk (e.g. everything other than “critical” or “sensitive”) may be located within the Flood Planning Area (area covered by water in a 1 in 100 year flood + additional half meter depth), subject to appropriate design and siting controls and provided that the potential consequences that could still arise from flooding remain acceptable;
 - d. In the specific case of properties in the high hazard flood zone (located within the Flood Planning Area) any new development should reduce the risks from flooding compared with the existing development;
 - e. Controls are provided in the Parramatta Local Environment Plan (LEP) and Parramatta Development Control Plan (DCP) for the assessment of applications lodged in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 on land affected by potential floods;
 - f. Controls are consistent with relevant State Government Guidelines ², that relate to the classification, use and development of land subject to all potential floods in the floodplain;
 - g. A proposed development does not expose this property or any other property to increased flood inundation or increased flood risk;
 - h. Building design and location address flood hazard and do not result in adverse flood impact and unreasonable impacts upon the aesthetic, recreational and ecological value of the waterway corridors;
 - i. The risk to life is minimised through the provision of appropriate escape and evacuation routes from areas affected by flooding, including floods greater than the 100 year average recurrence interval (ARI) flood up to and including the Probable Maximum Flood; and
 - j. Any development does not adversely affect the environment or cause avoidable erosion, siltation, destruction of riparian vegetation or a reduction in the stability of river banks or watercourses.

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2. Establishing a development application process that details:
 - a. The pre-lodgement (or concept development) communication, particularly the early identification of potential flooding constraints;
 - b. The type of information to be provided by the proponent to Council, including how the assumptions and methodologies used in preparing the models and maps should be presented; and
 - c. Suggestions for methods that might be employed to mitigate, if possible, any flood impacts
3. Where appropriate and feasible, encouraging the conversion of “High Risk Hazard Zones” or “Floodways” to natural waterway corridors.
4. Establishing a rolling program of reviews of floodplain risk management studies and plans to ensure flood data is as up-to-date as possible, especially in Council’s priority and growth areas.
5. Establishing an access portal on Council’s website to display relevant flood studies, plans and maps adopted by Council.
6. Implementing a community engagement program, designed to ensure the community in general, and specifically any proponents of development, are aware of the potential flood hazard and consequent risk and liability associated with the use and development of flood liable land.

Endnotes

- 1) Such uses are defined in the Parramatta Development Control Plan 2011
- 2) Section 117 Ministerial Direction No.15 Flood Prone Land (January 2007) prepared by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure; Floodway Definition (October 2007) prepared by the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change; Planning Manual (2007) prepared by the NSW State Emergency Service

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