Rapid Development of a Flood Acquisition Project

Decisions and Opportunities

Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management

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What makes a “good” project?

- Review of risk and/or previous damage caused by hazards, matched with an activity that produces a reasonable level of protection for the cost involved
Benefits of Project Scoping

- Helps establish that you’re on the right track

- Develops alternatives that ensures the selected action is eligible and competitive

- Allows you to “sync” your mitigation idea with the appropriate funding mechanism
Initial Project Scoping

- Use the best information available to identify:
  - Vulnerable areas
  - Mitigation solutions and alternatives

- Best information may include documents such as:
  - Local hazard mitigation plan
  - Special studies and reports
  - Flood Insurance Rate Maps
  - Preliminary Damage Assessment Data
Scoping Components

- Cost Effectiveness
- Eligibility and Feasibility
- Environmental Impacts
- Other Factors
  Historic Preservation
  Community Support

Eligible Project?
Scoping “Project Eligibility”

- Confirm that the project:
  - Community has an approved local mitigation plan
  - Conforms with state and local mitigation plans
  - Meets all program-specific eligibility requirements
  - Independently solves a problem caused by hazards
  - Directly reduces damages
Scoping “Feasibility”

- Project Effectiveness
  - how well will the project reduce losses?
  - defined by the level of protection provided by the project

- Since project effectiveness is generally linked to the level of design, some amount of conceptual engineering review will be required
Scoping “Feasibility”

- How will it mitigate the losses?

- What is the proposed and possible level of protection of mitigating the hazard?

- What will be the residual risk after mitigation?

- Can the project be constructed?

- What are the anticipated impacts of construction?
Scoping “Cost Effectiveness”

- Calculation of risk is based on frequency and severity of the hazard(s)
- Higher the frequency and severity, the higher the risk
- Projects that effectively mitigate high risk situations are usually cost-effective
- Cost effectiveness represents how often the investment of mitigation will produce a return
- Addresses expected and historical damages
Scoping “Cost Effectiveness”

- Accurate preparation of a BCA is a critical element of a project application
- Project subapplication BCR must be 1.0 or greater
- All data entries (other than FEMA standard or default values) MUST be documented in the application
- Data MUST be from a credible source
- Contact your SHMO about BCA technical assistance and training opportunities
Scoping “Environmental Impacts”

- What are environmental concerns of the project?
  - Minor or negligible
  - Major (e.g. moving flooding problem downstream)
- Can the project be permitted?
- Will environmental issues impact project design?
  - Adjust cost estimate accordingly
- Does environmental remediation need to be included in the project design?
  - Adjust cost estimate accordingly
Scoping “Historic Preservation”

- Structures over 50 years old require a historic preservation review
- Coordinate with the SHMO and SHPO
- May require actions such as recordation before demolition
  - Adjust cost estimate accordingly
- Scope the proper mitigation action for the structure
  - Consider elevation or relocation vs. demolition
Scoping “Community Support”

- Is the project acceptable to the community?
- Is the project acceptable to the jurisdiction’s legislative body?
- Are property owners interested in participating?
- Can the community, State or property owner supply the local match?
- Can the community manage the project?
- Does the community have the necessary technical resources to develop and implement the project?
- Is the community willing and able to maintain the implemented measure?
Scoping Summary

- By using a scoping and selection process, you can confirm that you have a good project, or eliminate a poor project early in the process.

- Next step is to clearly and completely articulate how you have established a good project through application development.

- The comparison of alternatives should be documented and you should have a complete decision making process outlined.
Available Funding Sources

- Federal programs such as HMGP, PDM, FMA, RFC, SRL
  - Consult with your SHMO on the best funding source for your project

- Local programs
  - General or capital funds
  - Revolving loan funds
  - CDBG Funds Pass Through
  - Utility taxes (e.g. stormwater)
  - Property owner responsibility
  - In-Kind
    - Project management
    - Labor, equipment, materials
Important Considerations for Project Application Development

- Coordinate with your SHMO early in the process
- Assume the reviewer does not know anything about your area/region and may never be able to visit the project site
- Most of the information used to evaluate alternative projects will be needed in the application
- Fully describe the results of the project’s decision making process
- Read the program guidance carefully and provide information accordingly
- Begin preparing the environmental work early in the process
Typical Application Shortcomings

- Project is not eligible under the respective program
- Scope-of-work is inadequate, too little detail, descriptions unclear, key data missing, poor quality photographs, no supporting maps/diagrams
- Not a well-developed, well-screened project
  - Addressed a “nuisance” issue rather than a real property threat
  - Risk was not high enough
  - Mitigation measure did not provide adequate protection
  - Cost of measure was too high for level of protection provided
- Supporting documentation/detail was incomplete, inaccurate, and/or not credible
Summary

- Well-prepared applications do not always mean you have an eligible and competitive project
  - The best prepared application will not be successful if the project is not feasible and effective in mitigating the hazard(s) identified

- Effective project identification, scoping, and screening is essential

- Start early!

- Not all mitigation activities are eligible for FEMA funding. A project may be a high community priority but just not the right fit under FEMA HMA programs