



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of Audits and Investigations

October 12, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert J. Williams, Jr.
Council Administrator

William M. Hunt
Deputy Council Administrator

THRU: Josh Hamlin *JH*
Senior Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

FROM: Alex Hirtle *AJH*
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement
CR-056-2020 Army Corps of Engineer Assessment and Study

CB-056-2020 (*proposed by:* Council Members Anderson-Walker, Ivey, Streeter, Franklin, Hawkins, and Dernoga)

Assigned to Committee of the Whole (COW)

AN ACT CONCERNING AN ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEER ASSESSMENT AND STUDY for the purpose of declaring the intent of the Prince George's County Council (the "County Council") to commence a stormwater assessment, performed by the Army Corps of Engineers, to assist in future planning considering the impact of bioretention and sprawl.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact:

Expenditures: Modest

Revenues: None

Indirect Impact:

Potentially positive.

Legislative Summary:

CR-056-2020 was introduced on June 23, 2020 and was referred to the Council of the Whole (COW). The Resolution declares the intent of the County Council to commence a stormwater assessment, performed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to assist in future planning considering the impact of bioretention and sprawl.

Current Law/Background:

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (“the Corps”) has the authority to assist state and local governments, and other non-federal entities in assisting with the preparation of comprehensive plans for the development, utilization, and conservation of water and related land resources.¹ Typically the studies are only at the planning level of detail, and do not include detailed design for project construction. The studies include water supply and demand, water conservation and environmental conservation, flood damage reduction, among others.²

In 2012, the Department of Environmental Resources (now Department of the Environment) requested assistance from the Corps to conduct a flood risk management study and assess flood risks and management measures to reduce flooding. In large part, it was due to the September 2011 flooding that caused \$30 Million in damage throughout the area. A total of \$426,500 was allocated to that study, of which \$321,500 was actually used to complete it.³ The Department used the remainder as part of the implementation of the Upper Marlboro Flood Damage Reduction Project (UMFDRP), which was part of a larger plan that has successfully reduced flooding issues in the Town of Upper Marlboro and the adjacent area.

Resource Personnel:

Isabel Williams, Policy Analyst

Discussion/Policy Analysis:

Prince George’s County Government has stormwater projects throughout the County that are used to mitigate the effects of development and an aging infrastructure that generally do not meet current code standards. Storm drain infrastructure repair and stormwater management pond remediation are common tools used to mitigate the County’s flooding concerns, but a lack of resources and modeling that is less than accurate in practical application, as well as higher incidents of heavy precipitation episodes has created increased flooding in the County.⁴

Given the success of the County’s partnership with the Corps, a stormwater assessment and mapping study in the area(s) indicated by the Resolution to focus on areas of the watershed appears to be in order.

¹ <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Public-Services/Planning-Assistance-to-States/>

² IBID.

³ Flood Risk Management Study for Upper Marlboro, Maryland, USACE, Scope Completion Memorandum (Draft) November, 2019.

⁴ Zoom meeting with Storm Drain Management Division of Dept. of Public Works & Transportation, July 2020.

Additionally, a report that lays out a plan of action, provides best practices, as well as mitigation and remedies related to the given area(s), as well as impact of development in the floodplain and its displacement will provide guidance for decisions by both the Council in its capacity as District Council, and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) in its evaluation of transfer capacity rights from parcels to development sites.

Fiscal Impact:

- *Direct Impact*

Enactment of CR-056-2020 will have a negative fiscal impact on the County by the cost of the stormwater assessment and mapping study performed by the Corps. However, some of this cost can be mitigated by partnering with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other entities identifying sources of grants to help cover the cost.

- *Indirect Impact*

Enactment of CR-056-2020 could have a positive indirect impact by reducing the amount of flooding, and thus reduce future damage by water to commercial, residential, and governmental structures resulting in cost savings to the County for emergency and crisis response. Furthermore, mitigating flooding can incentivize economic development by providing additional assurance to both business persons and homeowners of safety in areas that currently may be more vulnerable to flooding.

- *Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget*

No.

Issues for Committee Consideration:

- The County is under an obligation to pay for a certain percentage of the stormwater assessment and mapping study once it agrees to partner with the Corps on this project.
 - The study by the Corps is detailed at the planning level, and does not include detailed designs for project construction.⁵
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Effective Date of Proposed Legislation:

This Resolution goes into effect on the date of its adoption.

If you require additional information, or have questions about this fiscal impact statement, please reach me via phone or email.

⁵ <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Public-Services/Planning-Assistance-to-States/>