
DRAINAGE POLICY

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Flooding is a significant concern which affects the use of property, the provision of public services and the health of City residents. Provision for adequate drainage in urban areas is necessary to preserve and promote the general health, welfare and economic well-being of the region. Drainage is a regional feature that affects all governmental agencies and all parcels of land, making it necessary to formulate a program that balances both public and private interests.

The City of Hemet has expended a significant amount of resources to plan and develop a drainage system that provides considerable benefit to the public. The long-term goal of the City is to complete the improvements specified in the City's Master Flood Control and Drainage Plan or any update thereto.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives have been established:

- Reduce the hazards to individuals and property caused by undertaking both short- and long-term improvements to protect the health, safety and welfare of area residents.
- Improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation.
- Improve the ability of emergency services to provide timely and necessary assistance.
- Control the quality of water that is either released onto downstream properties or allowed to percolate into groundwater basins.
- Ensure downstream properties are not adversely affected by upstream improvements.

These objectives can be made operational through a set of policy statements. The application of the policy is in turn facilitated by technical criteria and data. The following sections present policy statements to be enacted as part of the manual. Each statement is preceded by a brief discussion of the requirements or basis for the policy, followed by the actual policy statement.

3.1 FACILITIES PLANNING

3.1.1 Master Planning

As the City of Hemet continues to grow, drainage and flooding will remain significant concerns. The planning of drainage facilities must be included in the urbanization process. The first step is to include drainage planning with all regional and local development master plans.

Storm water management facilities, such as storm drains and channels provide both a conveyance and storage function. When a channel is planned as a conveyance feature, it requires an outlet as well as downstream storage space. When the space requirements are considered, the provision for adequate drainage becomes a competing use for space along with other land uses. If adequate provision is not made in a land use plan for drainage requirements, storm water runoff will conflict with either land uses and will result in storm water damage, and will impair or even disrupt the ability of other infrastructure systems to function.

The policy of the City shall be to require storm drainage planning, including allocation of space for drainage facilities, for all development and redevelopment.

In recognition that drainage boundaries are non-jurisdictional, the City has prepared a City-wide Master Flood Control and Drainage Plan that defines major facilities. The City will also encourage and participate in future master plans on the regional and local level.

The policy of the City shall be to encourage the development, and periodic update, of detailed regional drainage master plans which set forth requirements for new development and identify the required public improvements.

As a result of the planning process a fee structure shall be developed to provide funding for the public improvements. The fees will be based on the total cost of the required public improvements within an area of benefit; the area of benefit being defined as a drainage basin. As fees are collected, they will be applied to the construction of master planned facilities, or the acquisition of facilities, on a priority basis.

The policy of the City shall be to apply fees collected for the installation of master planned drainage facilities toward those locations or projects which exhibit the following characteristics:

- A. The construction or purchase of downstream facilities/properties deemed to be of the highest importance.**
- B. Projects which are needed to alleviate a safety hazard.**
- C. Projects with the maximum benefit for the cost of improvements.**
- D. The purchase of vacant downstream property which does not have a strong likelihood for development and has been identified as important to the completion the master planned system.**

- E. The construction of storm water/drainage facilities within existing street or road rights-of-way.**
- F. The construction of storm water/drainage facilities on land which has been dedicated to the City for use as part of the master planned system and which is adjacent to or a logical extension of an existing master planned facility.**
- G. The construction of storm water/drainage facilities on land which has been dedicated to the City, but is not a logical extension of an existing master planned facility.**

Recognizing that the cost to construct drainage facilities is generally high and that drainage fees on a per-acre basis are slow to accrue, it will be necessary for the City to rely on development to carry its fair share of the cost burden of the construction of master planned facilities.

The policy of the City shall be to require all development projects adjacent to master planned facilities to construct said facilities. Development projects shall bear the total cost of constructing a master planned facility excluding land costs. This cost shall be credited against the total amount of drainage impact fees due on the project. Dependent upon the area and the benefit provided, the City may use a recapture or reimbursement agreement to appropriately allocate construction costs based on benefit received.

Master planned facilities constructed for development projects shall also:

- A. Provide for the retention of the incremental increase in storm water runoff to the extent regional retention basins are added to the master plan.**
- B. Provide an inlet for tributary upstream runoff and a method of metering the downstream discharge.**

Realizing that a master plan is a document used to guide the development of an adequate drainage system, provisions must be made for the introduction of alternate methods of controlling storm water. There must be enough flexibility in the plan that the creativity of the engineers and planners preparing development master plans is not stifled.

It shall be the policy of the City to allow for the installation of drainage facilities which differ from the design characteristics contained in the City's Master Flood Control and Drainage Plan, provided such facilities have the same design capacity, function and purpose. In addition, the type of facility proposed shall be consistent with the types of facilities or improvements which exist in the area.

3.1.2 Special Planning Areas

Currently, there are areas in the City where significant drainage problems exist. Any new development or redevelopment in these areas may compound the existing drainage problems.

The policy of the City will be to condition development projects to construct the drainage facilities necessary to meet the needs and mitigate the impacts created by each development proposal. A project which is phased or constructed in an incremental manner shall either be designed to accommodate, or have in place, a mechanism to ensure that each portion of the project bears its proportionate cost of the project improvements.

In addition to these areas, there are areas in the City where presently no adequate outlet exists for drainage by gravity. In general, there are no major drainage facilities or natural water courses in these areas.

The policy of the City shall be to require development projects to construct additional drainage facilities to meet one or more of the following needs:

- A. A development project exacerbates existing drainage problems.**
- B. A development project creates drainage problems downstream.**
- C. Facilities are necessary to protect downstream properties from storm water runoff caused by development.**
- D. Facilities are necessary to mitigate identified environmental impacts caused by development.**

There also exist development projects which do not produce a significant impact on the environment. In these cases, it may be not necessary to provide a high level of analysis to arrive at measures which will adequately remove storm water from the project site.

It shall be the policy of the City to require a hydrology study for all development projects, except the following:

- A. Single family home construction on existing lots.**
- B. Subdivisions that create more than two (2) separate parcels.**
- C. Commercial and industrial development on less than one-half (1/2) acre.**

3.1.3 Floodplain Management

The City has adopted a floodplain ordinance which sets forth regulations for the development of mapped floodplains. The ordinance has been written in a manner which enforces federal regulations related to the development of floodplains. The ordinance has been reproduced and included for information in the appendix of this manual. The designer is referred to the City's ordinance for guidance during the planning phase of development projects in flood-prone areas.

It shall be the policy of the City to have a development review process consistent with FEMA guidelines that includes the filing of the following documentation by the applicant:

- A. A development permit consistent with FEMA criteria.**
- B. Certification of the lowest floor elevation by an engineer and/or architect depending upon the location of the property and its relationship to the floodplain.**

During design development of a project, instances may arise where the requirements of the floodplain ordinance cannot be met. In this instance, it may be prudent for a variance to be granted. If this option is to be advanced, a full report of the circumstances requiring this approach should be prepared by the developer and submitted for review.

Variances for floodplain development shall be reviewed and approved by the City Council.

3.2 STORM RUNOFF RETENTION

3.2.1 Storm Runoff Retention

The value of storm runoff retention as part of a master plan has been explored by many individuals, agencies and professional societies. Retention is considered a viable method to reduce the costs associated with the development of a drainage system. Temporarily retaining a few acre-feet of runoff can significantly reduce downstream flood hazards as well as downstream facility requirements. Storage also provides for sediment and debris collection which helps maintain the quality of water in streams and rivers. Thus, public health benefits may accrue from storage of storm runoff. However, all benefits can only be obtained through consistent administration of the retention policy.

The goal of the City is to require the installation of on-site retention facilities, or if applicable, the payment of in-lieu fees for the construction of such facilities. The realization of this goal will allow for the development of land while producing no net increase in storm runoff.

The policy of the City requires all development projects to provide for the on-site retention of storm water runoff. In those cases where projects are not located adjacent to a master planned drainage facility and are less than one-half (1/2) acre in size, the City Public Works Director, or his representative, shall have the option of either:

- A. Requiring the development of onsite retention, or;**
- B. Allowing the payment of a retention fee in lieu of providing a facility, if adverse affects are not caused downstream, or;**
- C. Requiring the installation of drainage facilities which connect to Master Plan or other facilities.**

As retention facilities increase in size, it may become reasonable to incorporate them into the existing master drainage plan.

3.2.2 Multi-Purpose Concept

Design development of retention facilities should not only consider their primary function. During the early stages of design development consideration should be given to additional uses for these facilities. Considerable effort should be expended to develop a facility that can be used as a park, or integrated into the development such that additional uses can be identified and planned. This is not to say that the primary purpose of the facility should be overlooked; however, whenever possible these facilities should serve multiple purposes to the community.

The policy of the City shall require all retention facilities to be designed as usable open space or formal park sites. To implement this policy the following shall apply:

- A. All facilities shall have appropriate pedestrian access, landscaping and irrigation systems.**
- B. Park development impact fees may be applied to those facilities which are specifically designed as park sites consistent with the City's General Plan.**

In addition to those considerations noted above, thought should be given to the development patterns in the area. If development patterns and timing are such that a group of developments can utilize an appropriately located retention facility, every effort should be to develop a site agreeable to all concerns. These efforts will help reduce the number of minimally sized retention basins while respecting the intent of the City's policy decision.

It shall be the policy of the City to encourage property owners who are seeking to develop adjacent parcels to join together to construct a single retention facility that will be of mutual benefit. The City will assist in providing a mechanism to equitably distribute the facility's development costs to all property owners benefiting from such an agreement. Such a mechanism could include:

- A. The reduction or elimination of development impact fees.**
- B. A recapture or reimbursement agreement.**
- C. A memorandum of understanding.**
- D. A combination of all the above.**

As retention facilities increase in size, the area benefiting from the construction of the facilities also increases. Therefore, during the design development phase, not only local concerns, but regional concerns should be considered when locating and developing large retention basins. In general, retention facilities one-half (1/2) acre in size or greater should be considered for permanent inclusion in the master plan storm drain system.

It shall be the policy of the City to consider retention facilities of one-half (1/2) acre or greater in size for incorporation into the Master Plan system as a permanent feature. Consideration for inclusion in the Master Plan system should be based on the following criteria, in order of priority:

- A. The facility will not have an adverse affect upon the health or safety and welfare of adjoining properties.**
- B. The facility shall be sited such that on-site activities can be properly policed through visual surveillance.**
- C. The facility shall include appropriate and safe access for vehicles and pedestrians using the site.**
- D. The facility shall provide a safe environment for park users which is free from adverse affects of adjoining uses or activities.**

3.2.3 Design Development Criteria

Previous discussion has centered on the usefulness of retention facilities as part of an overall drainage system, the goals of City, and general guidelines to be considered during design development of retention facilities. To further clarify the design development process, certain general criteria must be defined.

The policy of the City requires on-site retention facilities to meet the following criteria:

- A. The facility shall be integrated into the project's design using one of the methods listed below, which may render certain portions of the property unusable for short periods after each storm. If the type of facility used is intended primarily to retain storm water runoff, then a method shall be employed to meter the discharge and ensure all water is removed within 72 hours after the storm.**
 - 1. Facilities for single family subdivisions shall be constructed and deeded to the City on one or more parcels. The size of the property to be deeded shall be in conformance with the City development standards and subdivided consistent with the existing subdivision pattern. Upon completion of the necessary downstream drainage system, the property can be sold by the City for conversion to residential uses.**
 - 2. Facilities for multiple family projects shall be integrated into on-site landscaping, parking or recreation areas.**
 - 3. Facilities for commercial or industrial projects shall be integrated into parking and/or landscape areas.**
- B. All facilities shall be constructed in accordance with the requirements of this manual.**
- C. All retention facilities shall have an inlet for tributary runoff and a method of ensuring the basin discharge is metered to drain the basin within 72 hours. The characteristics of such facilities shall be determined based upon the following general criteria, in order of priority:**
 - 1. The facility shall be consistent with the needs of the City's Master Flood Control and Drainage Plan.**
 - 2. The facility will not have adverse affects upon the health, safety or welfare of area residents.**
 - 3. The facility shall provide for dual use, such as open space or park facilities.**