

Floodwater Forum

On June 25th, 2006 rain fell steadily in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Within a 24-hour period, stormwater flooded Constitution Avenue, a number of prominent Federal buildings, two Metro stations, and roadway tunnels under the National Mall, making them impassable. While no one was physically harmed and irreplaceable national treasures in the National Archives and National Gallery of Art remained safe, the flooding was responsible for property damage in excess of \$30 million.

The flooding within Washington D.C.'s Monumental Core was caused by the sewer system's inability to handle excessive storm water. Subsequent research by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPCC) on the District's hydrology, topography, and geography indicated that Monumental Core flooding was closely tied to the city's aging and inadequate sewer infrastructure.

NCPCC, along with co-sponsors the General Services Administration, the Department of Homeland Security and the District of Columbia organized a two-day forum to better understand the flood risks in the Monumental Core. Participants from a variety of Federal and District agencies developed consensus around government coordination, emergency management, and infrastructure. Working groups explored risk minimization options, identified strategic actions for measurable risk reduction, and developed strategies for improved interagency coordination.

Justice and Sustainability Associates (JSA) was invited to design the two-day process and to facilitate the proceedings. The overall design called for an opening session, simultaneous working groups, and a closing public session where each work group reported on outstanding issues and potential solutions that were identified.

Don Edwards led the JSA facilitation team, comprised of colleagues Gary Willoughby and Matt Larsen, in conducting the opening session, three working groups, and the closing public session. The process design reached a successful outcome with the participation of nearly thirty Federal and District agencies yielding strong recommendations that will serve as the basis for a review of stormwater management policy, procedures, and infrastructure investment in the District of Columbia and other cities.



Location	Washington, DC
Client	National Capitol Planning Commission
Contract amount	\$7,000
Project duration	June 12-13, 2007

