

Location: Napa

Issue: Napa's Flood Protection and Watershed Management Plan

Methodology: Strategic Planning with Expert Assistance (MIG) – Participatory Planning Process

Link to more: <http://www.migcom.com/projects/view/69>

In order to alleviate the destruction from any possible flood or watershed disasters, the City of Napa brought in MIG to facilitate and form a "Community Coalition" of more than 20 community-based organizations to develop a local flood protection and watershed management plan. MIG's Napa River Flood Protection and Watershed Management Plan takes environmental factors of the region into consideration and is environmentally sensitive. In addition MIG's plan was created in a manner to be financially feasible for the residents of Napa County. For this project MIG collaborated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, and the Napa River Flood Control District. MIG took the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' existing flood control plan into consideration while further developing recommendations for a comprehensive flood protection plan.

The Napa River Flood Protection and Watershed Management Plan employs a "living river" approach to flood control, which combines ecology and engineering, natural landscapes and constructed diversions, unfettered freedom and controlled management. MIG's Napa River Flood Protection and Watershed Management Plan eventually led to the revitalization of Downtown Napa and the project became an award-winning national model for integrated flood protection and watershed management. MIG's project received national coverage for its revolutionary solution to flood control and even received the 1998 National Planning Honor Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects. The revolutionary solution to controlling possible floods and watershed management included removing the existing system of dikes and levees, allowing the river to run free.

In order to financially support MIG's Napa River Flood Protection and Watershed Management project, Napa County residents voted to fund the project by passing with a two-thirds majority a measure to raise the sales tax within Napa County. Napa County residents, ranging from their city officials to farmers to winemakers to environmentalists to business owners all found common ground in the project and supported its implementation even if that meant an increase in the sales tax.