

**HARRIS COUNTY**  
**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ENGINEER**

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**1001 Preston, Suite 500  
Houston, Texas 77002  
(713) 755-5370**

May 12, 2020

Honorable County Judge  
& Commissioners

**SUBJECT: Recommendation on Minimum Standards for Communities in Harris County and Draining to Harris County**

Dear Court Members:

At the April 28, 2020, Commissioners Court, we were directed to recommend minimum standards for adoption by communities located in Harris County to ensure the benefits achieved by the 2018 Harris County Flood Control Bond Program are protected.

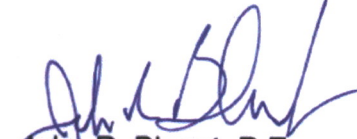
Our recommendation is that all cities within Harris County, and those entities located outside of Harris County but drain to Harris County, adopt the following minimum standards by December 31, 2020, and be effective within their municipal boundaries and extraterritorial jurisdiction:

- Use Atlas 14 rainfall rates for sizing storm water conveyance and detention systems.
- Require a minimum detention rate of 0.55 acre feet per acre of detention for any new development on tracts one acre or larger in size. However, a single family residential structure and accessory buildings proposed on an existing lot is exempt from providing detention.
- Prohibit the use of hydrograph timing as a substitution for detention on any project, unless it directly outfalls into Galveston Bay.
- Require no net fill in the current mapped 500-year floodplain, except in areas identified as coastal zones only
- Require the minimum Finished Floor Elevation (FFE) of new habitable structures be established at or waterproofed to the 500-year flood elevation as shown on the effective Flood Insurance Study.


It is further recommended that the County Engineer extend the current agreement with EHRA Engineering to assist communities in evaluating and updating their policies and ordinances upon their request at no cost to the community. As part of this process, these communities may identify additional requirements or criteria to implement depending on their flood risk and storm water infrastructure capacity.

To help reinforce participation, we also recommend that no partnership projects, including flood control or county roadway projects, be constructed in these communities after December 31, 2020, until such time their criteria is updated to reflect the above minimum standards. Partnership projects that are currently scheduled for construction in these communities before December 31, 2020, may continue as scheduled provided the communities are actively working with us to update their criteria. It should be noted that this effort is part of a larger Fix Flooding First initiative that will be presented to Commissioners Court for an official roll out in June 2020.

Sincerely,



John R. Blount, P.E.  
County Engineer



Russell A. Poppe, P.E.  
Executive Director  
Harris County Flood Control District

JRB/RP/ed