

HARRIS COUNTY

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ENGINEER

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

May 22, 2020

Honorable Mayors of Cities Located Within Harris County

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

Dear Honorable Mayors of Harris County Cities:

On Tuesday, May 19, 2020, Harris County Commissioners Court adopted the attached letter to encourage a minimum level of flood resiliency across all of Harris County. Adoption of the minimum standards listed in the letter by communities across Harris County will result in an increased flood resiliency for the entirety of Harris County.

We will be hosting an online information session on **June 2, 2020 at 3:00pm** concerning the initiative for you and any of your staff. The meeting can be accessed at: <https://harriscounty.webex.com/harriscounty/j.php?MTID=m7f419f25deacef15e76825cbfbb32732> or you may call in to the meeting at (408) 418-9388 (meeting access code: 966 199 817).

The purpose of this policy is to provide a minimum set of drainage regulations and development policies that will allow all municipalities in Harris County to have a consistent set of standards that incorporate NOAA Atlas 14 rainfall rates. The proposed standards are intended to preserve the capacity and purpose of the ongoing Harris County Flood Control District (District) Bond Projects and make Harris County more resilient to future flooding events. Nothing in this policy is intended to reduce the level of current regulation within any municipality or to prevent any municipality from enacting more stringent standards.

These recommendations will NOT affect the status or scheduling of projects included on the 2018 Bond Project List. All 2018 Bond Projects will be completed as planned with the funding shown in the bond program.

If a municipality chooses not to update their regulations to these minimum standards, the municipality would not be eligible for participation in the Partnership Projects funding included in the 2018 Bond (Bond Project ID Z-02 – Partnership Projects with Municipalities, Authorities, and Other Districts in Harris County) projects until they do so. This fund amount is authorized at \$175,000,000 and allows for joint funding of unidentified future projects between the District and a participating municipality. If the participating municipality chooses not to update their standards and they currently have

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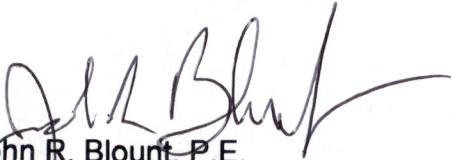
an active partnership project or projects with the District funded through Z-02, the project would be cancelled if not completed by December 31, 2020, and any remaining bond funds will be refunded to the Bond Project ID Z-02. Additionally, Harris County roadway partnership projects that have not begun construction prior to December 31, 2020 will be similarly impacted. Ongoing partnership projects can continue as long as the partnering municipality is actively working toward updating their standards.

If your city has interest, Harris County has engaged an engineering consultant that can assist in updating your regulations to meet the minimum standards listed in the attached letter at no cost to your city.


If you have any questions concerning the update of your regulations or would like assistance from Harris County's engineering consultant, please contact Alisa Max, P.E., Harris County Engineering Department, at alisa.max@eng.hctx.net. If you have any questions concerning your District Bond projects or partnership projects, please contact Matthew Zeve, P.E., Harris County Flood Control District, at matthew.zeve@hcfcd.hctx.net.

We are here to assist your city in becoming more flood resilient.

Sincerely,



John R. Blount, P.E.
County Engineer
Office of the County Engineer



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

Attachment

JB/AM

HARRIS COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ENGINEER

**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.

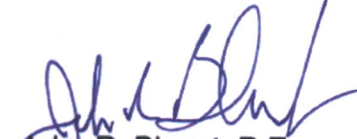
Our recommendation is that all cities within Harris County, and those entities located outside of Harris County but drain to Harris County, adopt the following minimum standards by December 31, 2020, and be effective within their municipal boundaries and extraterritorial jurisdiction:

- 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