



HARRIS COUNTY COMMUNITY FLOOD RESILIENCE TASK FORCE

General Task Force Meeting

Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. CST via ZOOM

AGENDA

5:30 p.m.	Welcome	Facilitator – Erica De La Mota	5 min
5:35 p.m.	Climate Resilience Award Presentation	Seven Lakes High School Students	20 min
5:55 p.m.	Harris County Drainage Master Plan Update	Steve Albert, DCCM	15 min
6:10 p.m.	Priority Group Updates	Priority Leaders	20 min
6:30 p.m.	Flood Resilience Plan Update	HCFCD/AECOM	45 min
7:15 p.m.	Public Comment	Facilitator – Erica De La Mota	10 min
7:25 p.m.	Upcoming Meetings & Wrap Up	Facilitator – Erica De La Mota	5 min

Task Force Meeting

Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. CST

MEETING MATERIALS & RECORDING

ATTENDANCE

Task Force (CFRTF)

- Dr. Pamela Hernandez – Founder and Researcher of Educo Research
- Bob Rehak (absent, Precinct 3) – Founder of ReduceFlooding.com
- Mary Anne Piacentini – President and CEO at Coastal Prairie Conservancy
- Connie Esparza – President of the Castlewood Civic Club

- Stephany (Steph) Valdez – CEER Houston
- Dr. Andrew Juan (absent, Precinct 4) – Associate Research Scientist at the Institute for a Disaster Resilient Texas
- Adam Eaton (absent, Precinct 2) – Senior Project Manager Resiliency Lead, Ardurra Group
- Dr. Allie Falender – Nature and Energy Program Director at The Nature Conservancy Texas
- Chris Valdez (Precinct 1) – Self-Employed
- Paresh Lad (absent) – City of Houston
- Beth Guide – Owner of Vertical Web
- Bill Callegari (absent) – Owner of AM-TEX Corporation

Infrastructure Resilience Team (IRT)

- Carolyn White – Harris County Flood Control District
- Daniel Will – Harris County Housing & Community Development
- Kevin Garza – Harris County Housing & Community Development
- Kelli Medbury – Harris County Housing & Community Development
- Jai'Myah Henderson – Harris County Public Health – Urban Planner
- Lizeth Hernandez – Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- Angelique Bartholomew – Harris County Toll Road Authority

Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD)

- Sofia Font – Senior Strategic Planner
- Lisa Tauser
- Priya Zachariah (absent) – Chief Resilience Officer

Guest Speakers

- Andy Chen – Seven Lakes High School
- Kushagra Nagar – Seven Lakes High School
- Steve Albert – Program Manager, Harris County Drainage Master Plan, DCCM

Outreach Strategists (OS)

- Erica De La Mota – Facilitator
- Rebecca Block – COO
- David Crowl – Community Engagement
- Hondo Chavez – Project Support

AECOM Team

- Chris Levitz – Coastal & Riverine Resilience Practice Lead
- Tatum Lau – Social Value Lead
- Grace Regnier – Environmental Specialist
- Amelia Cane
- Aryeh Cohen

Public Visitors/Attendees

- Chuck Stilwell
- CM Lindsay
- Jim Robertson
- Shaquaya Frank
- One call-in participant (phone)

MINUTES

1. Welcome - Erica De La Mota

- Erica De La Mota welcomed Task Force members, Harris County Flood Control District staff, AECOM representatives, guest speakers, and members of the public to the September 22 General Task Force meeting and reviewed the evening's agenda. She noted that questions and comments could be submitted through the Q&A throughout the meeting, that any items not addressed during the meeting would be followed up on via email, and that the meeting was being recorded and transcribed. She then played the community norms video.
- Dr. Hernandez deferred opening remarks in the interest of time given the full agenda.

2. Climate Resilience Award Presentation - Seven Lakes High School

- Erica De La Mota introduced Andy Chen and Kushagra Nagar, seniors at Seven Lakes High School, whose team won the Climate Resilience Award in the Modeling the Future Challenge, a nationwide data science competition with more than 300 teams. She noted Outreach Strategists has been working closely with the students as part of the Task Force's youth engagement efforts.
- Andy Chen explained that the project was inspired by the students' own experiences during Hurricane Harvey. He reviewed Harvey's impacts (more than 68 deaths and over \$125 billion in damage, with 36 deaths in Harris County) and the team's analysis showing storms have grown more frequent and intense, including a doubling in the frequency of Category 4 and 5 storms since 1975, amid a Gulf warming faster than the global ocean.
- Mr. Chen noted that Harris County is one of only two counties in the country with a 100 out of 100 hurricane risk rating on the FEMA National Risk Index, and that the county's flat terrain and clay soils (draining roughly 0.1-0.3 inches per hour) make heavy, sustained rainfall a primary flood driver.
- The team focused its analysis on the Greater Greenspoint neighborhood, which experiences 10-14 floods per decade, has more than 30% of homes at high flood risk, and has over 36% of residents living below the poverty line (compared with 16% countywide). Its largely flat terrain (under 2% slope) also makes it well suited to solutions such as permeable pavement.
- Using housing price, hurricane landfall, macroeconomic, and Greens Bayou peak flow data and a Log-Pearson Type III model, the team projected increased flood risk under moderate and high emissions scenarios. They estimated that each storm reduces home prices by about 1%, equating to \$70-100 billion in housing losses across the Gulf Coast over the next two decades (about \$2,800 per Harris County home), with compounding impacts from insurance withdrawal or underinsurance, displacement, and job disruption in Greenspoint's service-based economy.
- Kushagra Nagar acknowledged existing County investments, including the 2018 flood bond, and presented a proposed micro-detention retrofit program to hold

water at the neighborhood level. The program pairs permeable pavement on four Greenspoint streets (Regional Park Drive, Harvest Time Lane, Imperial Valley Drive, and Wake Forest Drive), selected in part because an existing \$2.5 million sidewalk grant has already completed some site groundwork, with a rain barrel distribution program for approximately 60 homes.

- The team estimated the permeable pavement would prevent about \$482,000 per year in flood damage and the rain barrel program an additional \$92,000 in avoided losses. Rain barrels would include inlet and overflow mesh to prevent mosquito breeding (adding about 10% to each barrel's cost). Estimated costs were approximately \$7.16 million for permeable pavement (including a 15% contingency) and about \$91 per rain barrel, with potential funding from federal grants, County allocations, and philanthropic giving.
- Mr. Nagar emphasized that community adoption depends on outreach, including multilingual campaigns, bilingual community meetings in Greenspoint and Aldine, and multiple pick-up, drop-off, and home delivery options. The proposed timeline spans 19 months to five years, with rain barrels deployable in under two years and permeable pavement requiring about five years for permitting and construction. The students invited feedback and connections to help move the proposal toward implementation.
- Mary Anne Piacentini asked whether the analysis could be scaled countywide to estimate total savings. The students said scaling is possible over time, and that their approach is to pilot in one area first and expand to other communities if results are positive.
- Sofia Font commended the presentation and suggested the students connect with the Greenspoint super neighborhood or civic clubs to present the proposal and consider a 6-month to 1-year pilot study measuring results before and after implementation. The students said they had not yet made those connections and welcomed recommendations; Ms. Font offered to help.
- Next Steps:
 - Sofia Font to help connect the students with Greenspoint super neighborhood and civic club contacts; Erica De La Mota to follow up with the students via email on any additional questions.

3. Harris County Drainage Master Plan Update - Steve Albert, DCCM

- Steve Albert, Program Manager with DCCM, the consultant leading the Harris County Drainage Master Plan, reported that the project is a little over halfway complete. A similar presentation was given at a virtual community meeting the previous week to begin gathering resident input.
- The plan will recommend neighborhood flood reduction projects in unincorporated Harris County areas not covered by previous or ongoing drainage projects—roughly two-thirds of the county's approximately 1,800 square miles. The effort is led by the Office of the County Engineer, with DCCM serving as program manager over four regional, watershed-based vendors: AECOM (Region 1, northwest), Michael Baker International (Region 2, south), HR Green (central), and

LAN (east). The project was originally funded through a \$12.5 million Texas General Land Office (GLO) grant.

- The project has seven phases and is currently in the prioritization phase. Data collection includes flood claims and predicted flooding from the County's new MAAPnext modeling. Mr. Albert noted that Precinct 3 contains a large share of the unincorporated area and is therefore likely to have more projects.
- Mr. Albert explained the plan focuses on smaller, more frequent storm events and neighborhoods whose local drainage systems cannot convey water to the bayous, since many communities experience flooding well outside formal floodplain boundaries. Street flooding and mobility impacts are a key concern.
- Two hundred project areas have been identified (50 per region), each with a focus area data sheet describing location, watershed, estimated cost, and expected benefits. Sixty projects (15 per region) will undergo enhanced modeling to develop realistic project costs. Enhanced modeling is expected to be complete in January 2027, with the final report issued before March 2027 for Commissioners Court approval.
- Mr. Albert demonstrated the project's public online viewer, which includes layers for the four regions, the 200 identified project areas, watershed boundaries, the Harris County channel system, current effective FEMA floodplains (with the current 500-year floodplain serving as a proxy for the future 100-year floodplain), HCFCD detention basins, municipal utility districts (MUDs), and government facilities, as well as an address search. He walked through how users can add comments directly to the map. The viewer will remain open for comments through approximately the end of October, and he shared the link in the chat.
- In response to a question from Mary Anne Piacentini, Mr. Albert explained that the hexagons shown on the map are roughly 200-acre units (about 4,000-5,000 countywide) used to score flood potential, and the 200 displayed represent the highest-scoring areas. **There is currently no funding for the resulting projects, though a future bond program has been discussed.** The intent is to give precincts an engineering-based list from which to select projects based on local knowledge and priorities; projects were selected based on their ability to reduce flooded homes and flooded roadway length while minimizing complexity.
- Dr. Hernandez asked what types of comments residents should submit. Mr. Albert said comments can be as simple as reporting backyard or street flooding from a small rain event, or identifying specific intersections or routes that become impassable.
- In response to a Q&A question from Jim Robertson, Mr. Albert explained that a cluster of hexagons does not necessarily equal one project; projects are sized by local drainage area and may span several hexagons. Projects are generally intended to be in the \$1-20 million range and are modeled on the roughly 100 neighborhood-based drainage projects completed under the 2018 bond program, targeting more frequent (1- to 2-year) storm events.

4. Priority Group Updates

Priority Group 1: Equity and Vulnerable Communities

- Lead: Dr. Pamela Hernandez
- Dr. Hernandez reported that Michael Bloom has been scheduled to speak at the October meeting on the Flood Mitigation Benefit Index (FMBI), an index that examines whether a neighborhood has received its fair share of flood protection spending given its population and flood risk. Mr. Bloom will provide historical context, and the Task Force will consider whether to take up the FMBI as a discussion point and as input to the Flood Resilience Plan.
- Next Steps:
 - Michael Bloom to present on the FMBI at the October 27 meeting; Erica De La Mota to continue coordinating logistics with Dr. Hernandez.

Priority Group 2: Nature-Based Flood Solutions

- Leads: Mary Anne Piacentini and Dr. Allie Falender
- Dr. Falender reported on the September 17 panel at Houston Energy and Climate Startup Week featuring Mary Anne Piacentini, Dr. Justin Kozak (The Nature Conservancy), and Justin Schultz (Houston Parks Board). The session drew approximately 80 attendees from Harris County, the City of Houston, nonprofits, and the private sector, with many staying well past the hour for discussion.
- Dr. Falender highlighted the Hill at Sims Bayou, the first new park in Sunnyside in a generation, built on top of a stormwater detention basin, as an example of the community benefits of nature-based solutions.
- Dr. Kozak has agreed to meet with Chris Levitz and Priya Zachariah in the coming weeks to provide input on the nature-based solutions section of the Flood Resilience Plan. Dr. Falender requested that the meeting be kept small (ideally Mr. Levitz, Ms. Zachariah, and potentially Ms. Piacentini) to maximize the value of Dr. Kozak's time. Ms. Piacentini added that the goal is for Dr. Kozak to show how the 313-page Nature-Based Solutions Guidance Manual applies to the plan's recommended actions.
- In response to a Q&A question from Jim Robertson on how to access the Nature-Based Solutions Guidance Manual, Dr. Falender offered to share the link in the chat for inclusion in the meeting notes.
- Next Steps:
 - Erica De La Mota to coordinate scheduling of the Dr. Kozak/AECOM/HCFCD meeting with Dr. Falender (who has access to Dr. Kozak's calendar) once Priya Zachariah returns, keeping Sofia Font informed.
 - Dr. Falender to share the link to the Nature-Based Solutions Guidance Manual.

Priority Group 3: Connectivity Among Organizations and Community Outreach Groups

- Lead: Chris Valdez
- Chris Valdez reported no substantive updates, noting outstanding follow-up items with the Flood Control District and Outreach Strategists. Erica De La Mota confirmed the related correspondence has been sent.
- Next Steps:
 - Chris Valdez to report back at the next meeting on outstanding items.

Priority Group 4: Improving Transparency

- Lead: Steph Valdez
- Steph Valdez reported no updates.
- Next Steps:
 - None at this time.

Priority Group 7: Community Outreach and Education

- Leads: Dr. Andrew Juan and Steph Valdez
- On behalf of the group, Erica De La Mota reported that the Task Force social media strategy, content calendar, flyers, and templates—led by Dr. Juan and Steph Valdez in partnership with Outreach Strategists’ social and content lead, Sabiha Gire—were well received at the September 10 Executive Committee meeting. The materials have been revised based on that feedback, including the addition of an education component to the templates.
- Steph Valdez noted a review meeting is scheduled for Thursday, followed by Dr. Juan’s input upon his return from travel (tentatively September 28 and October 1).
- In response to a question from Dr. Hernandez, Erica De La Mota said the goal is to launch in October, shortly after final review with Ms. Valdez and Dr. Juan. Dr. Hernandez encouraged launching as soon as possible.
- Next Steps:
 - Steph Valdez and Outreach Strategists to review materials Thursday; Dr. Juan to provide final input; Outreach Strategists to target an October launch.

5. Flood Resilience Plan Update - HCFCD/AECOM

- Chris Levitz (AECOM) led the update in Priya Zachariah’s absence. He noted this was the second of a three-month series on Flood Resilience Plan strategies and actions, with a shorter presentation to allow more time for group discussion.
- Mr. Levitz recapped that the plan is in Step 3, focused on implementation and on delivering and tracking outcomes, with the plan targeted for early 2027. The action evaluation is not a priority ranking but a way to organize actions and link them to specific opportunities and needs; the team is now gathering feedback on evaluations and developing “portfolios” of connected actions.
- Step 3 engagement includes October follow-up presentations to civic clubs and community groups requested at the open houses (including a follow-up with CEER Houston), IRT departmental advisory meetings, precinct meetings, and virtual focus group presentations. Recent sessions covered senior and disability organizations and educational institutions, with upcoming sessions for environmental organizations, utilities, municipalities, and nonprofit emergency managers. Task Force members are welcome to attend these hour-long sessions. A final open house will preview the plan before its release.
- Mr. Levitz reviewed how strategies are organized around the vulnerability assessment. August focused on reducing flood exposure (Stormwater Management and Maintenance; Ecological Health and Natural Resources). This month’s discussion focused on reducing physical sensitivity (Housing and Shelter; Mobility and Access; Power and Telecommunications) and increasing social adaptive capacity (Healthcare and Social Safety Net; Community Facilities and

Resources; Emergency Services; Environmental Hazards and Exposures; Economic Continuity). October will focus on Collaborative Governance Structures and Resilient Development and Strategic Growth.

- Mr. Levitz posed three discussion prompts: (1) What is the Task Force's role in stewarding implementation of the plan once adopted? (2) Who are key community partners for implementing plan actions? (3) What are key considerations for approaching those groups as implementation supporters? Grace Regnier shared the working catalog database on screen to guide the discussion.
- Buyouts: Mary Anne Piacentini asked how the plan addresses the "checkerboard" effect of voluntary buyouts and whether whole areas could be acquired for detention, parkland, or natural space. Mr. Levitz pointed to the Housing and Shelter strategy on improving voluntary buyout and relocation programs, including actions to pair buyouts with buy-in programs, wraparound support, legal assistance, and affordable housing to help residents relocate within their community, and to develop a countywide geodatabase of planned and completed buyouts to guide reuse of acquired properties. Ms. Piacentini supported keeping communities socially cohesive and suggested community development corporations (CDCs) as potential implementation partners.
- Resilience Hubs: Chuck Stilwell noted that the Task Force can help coordinate community efforts once a lead entity is identified for an action, citing resilience hubs as an example where three or four community organizations are working without a central coordinator. Mr. Levitz noted the Community Facilities strategy on countywide resilience hub coverage and that the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is beginning a funded effort on a county resilience hub plan, and suggested this may be an area with a distinct Task Force role. Erica De La Mota noted that Chuck Stilwell and Joe will provide a resilience hubs update at the October 27 meeting.
- Education: Sofia Font suggested the education component of the plan as an example of where Task Force priorities and plan actions align. Mr. Levitz noted that the recent session with universities and school districts emphasized their role as trusted sources for disseminating information to communities.
- Task Force Role: Dr. Hernandez said the Task Force cannot take on every action but could serve as stewards, educators, and advocates for actions connected to its priorities. She emphasized tracking which actions are selected and funded by elected officials, engaging at public meetings, and ensuring the plan does not sit on a shelf. Mr. Levitz proposed that the Task Force could release its own priority recommendations for implementation alongside the plan's release; Dr. Hernandez supported the idea pending input from other members. Mr. Levitz added that implementation metrics will likely be brought to the Task Force around November.
- Tatum Lau (AECOM) noted that many actions—such as economic continuity, emergency services education, and some housing and shelter actions—depend on community-level participation and awareness, and that the Task Force could serve as a connector between the County and community organizations. She noted this discussion will continue next month.

- Dr. Falender noted that the 10-year anniversary of Hurricane Harvey is about a year away and suggested the plan's communications highlight actions already implemented successfully since Harvey (for example, improvements near Meyerland), since much of that progress is not visible to the public. Mr. Levitz said the team is working with the IRT to capture this in the plan and invited members to share examples.
- Environmental Hazards: Mr. Levitz reviewed strategies to integrate environmental monitoring with flood control efforts and to strengthen pathways for facilities and residents to reduce flood-related environmental risk, noting community concerns about trust and access to information. Mary Anne Piacentini suggested acquiring and restoring brownfields and other polluted or underused lands (as well as addressing areas such as rail embankments that impede drainage) for wet-bottom detention or prairie. Chuck Stilwell supported repurposing low-value land for nature-based flood control, but offered his view that chemical hazards during floods affect relatively few communities compared with flooding itself, and suggested the relevant existing agency coordinate with HCFCD on flood-event environmental monitoring. Mr. Levitz said the team will explore linking these concepts through action portfolios and noted the goal is to put trusted information in communities' hands, citing groups such as Bayou City Waterkeeper as potential partners.
- Mr. Levitz noted an upcoming utility session with CenterPoint Energy and AT&T and reminded members of office hours on Friday, September 25, for any topics not covered.
- Next Steps:
 - Task Force members to share examples of successful post-Harvey flood resilience projects and recommended implementation partners with AECOM and Outreach Strategists.
 - Task Force to consider developing its own implementation priority recommendations to accompany the plan's release.
 - AECOM/HCFCD to explore action portfolios linking land acquisition, brownfield restoration, and nature-based solutions, and to return with draft implementation metrics (anticipated November).

6. Public Comment - Erica De La Mota

- Erica De La Mota opened the floor for public comment. No additional public comments were raised beyond those addressed during the presentations and Q&A.

7. Wrap Up - Erica De La Mota

- Flood Resilience Plan office hours will be held Friday, September 25, from 9:30-11:00 a.m. Dr. Hernandez encouraged members to drop in even for 20-30 minutes if they cannot attend the full session.

- The next Flood Resilience Plan virtual focus group session will be held Monday, September 28, focused on educational institutions and emergency managers. Registration information was sent via email.
- Upcoming community events where the Task Force will have a table and flyers include a South Union Community Development Corporation community meeting on September 23 at BakerRipley Pasadena, a Hispanic Heritage event on September 26 (Sofia Font attending), and the Kashmere Gardens Civic Club meeting in October (Precinct 4 attending).
- The October 27 meeting will include a resilience hubs update from Chuck Stilwell and Joe, a presentation on the FMBI by Michael Bloom, and a Flood Resilience Plan update focused on collaborative governance and resilient development and strategic growth.
- Erica De La Mota thanked the Task Force and members of the public for their continued engagement and reminded members that the next CFRTF meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 27, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:26 p.m.