

Early Notice and Public Review of a Proposed Activity in a Wetland

To: All interested Agencies (FEMA, U.S. EPA Region 6, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Harris County Flood Control District, Texas Floodplain Management Association, Texas GLO, Texas Water Development Board, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Park and Wildlife Department and City of Houston Floodplain Administrator), Groups and Individuals (Super Neighborhood)

This is to give notice that the **City of Houston Housing & Community Development Department (HCDD)** has determined that the following proposed action under **Section 108** and **B-16-MH-48-0001 grant number** is located partly within the **100-year floodplain and wetlands**. Land is being turned from residential and commercial land to flood control detention basin space, so it falls into the exception found at 24 CFR 55.12(c)(3) which states that the project is exempt from the 8-step process for floodplains. Nevertheless, this exception does not apply for wetlands in this case, since no wetland restoration is involved, and an impact to a wetlands area is expected; therefore, an 8-step process for wetlands will be required.

HCDD will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the action in the **wetland** and the potential impacts on the **wetland** from the proposed action, as required by **Executive Order 11990**, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands.

This project area totals approximately 10 acres and is generally bound by Bankside Rd. on the north, Bellbrook Dr. on the east, West Belfort St. on the south and Unit No. D140-00-00 (Fondren Diversion Channel) to the west, Houston, Harris County, TX 77096.

The City has identified three parcels of land adjacent to Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) Unit No. D140-00-00 (Fondren Diversion Channel) in the Brays Bayou watershed, on which to locate a detention basin.

The project consists of real estate acquisition of three parcels, clearing of undeveloped land, pavement repairs, demolition of existing structures for nine (9) storage facilities and a library and excavation and construction of a detention basin. In addition, storm sewer improvements along West Belfort, and associated pavement repairs, will be included.

The detention basin will provide a reduction in the water surface elevation during the 100-year storm event for both Willow Waterhole and the Fondren Diversion Channel. The basin is proposed to have a maximum volume of 208 acre-feet. This Project will benefit approximately 309 houses.

Two emergent wetlands and one scrub-shrub wetland were observed within the project area. No stream features were observed within or near the study area. The observed wetland features are partially located within the 500-year floodplain (Zone X shaded– 0.2% annual chance flood hazard area). No wetland features are located within the 100-year floodplain (Zone AE - 1% annual chance flood hazard area). The area of wetland features totals 1.11 acres.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in **wetlands** and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an

opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Commenters are encouraged to offer alternative sites outside of the **wetlands**, alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate impacts. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about **wetlands** can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in **wetlands**, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by HCDD at the following address on or before April 27, 2020: City of Houston, Housing & Community Development Department, 2100 Travis, 9th Floor, Houston, Harris County, Texas, 77002 or by email to hcdenvironmental@houstontx.gov. Attention: HCDD Environmental Team. A full description of the project may also be reviewed from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the address provided above. Comments may also be submitted via phone at (832) 394-6018 or via email at matthew.jenkins@houstontx.gov and julia.thorp@houstontx.gov.

Date: Friday, April 10, 2020