



FEMA

*September 30, 2010*

The Honorable Ed Emmett  
Harris County Judge  
1001 Preston Street, Suite 911  
Houston, Texas 77002

PRELIM/EXISTING/BFE

Community Name: Harris County,  
Texas  
(Unincorporated Areas)

Community No.: 480287

Dear Judge Emmett:

Please find enclosed a copy of the preliminary Flood Insurance Study (FIS) report and Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) for the unincorporated areas of Harris County. This preliminary edition of the FIS report and the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) reflects changes within the Cypress Creek watershed. Only the FIRM panels with these changes are being revised and transmitted with this letter. The following items are included in the package:

- Floodplain Management Bulletin 1-98, *Use of Flood Insurance Study (FIS) Data as Available Data*;
- Paper copies of the Preliminary FIS report and DFIRM panels 0170, 0195, 0235, 0240, 0245, 0265, 0270, 0290, 0360, 0370, 0380, 0385, 0390, 0395, 0405, 0410, 0415, 0420, 0430, 0435, and 0460; and
- CD containing the Preliminary DFIRMs in digital format:
  - Preliminary FIS report and DFIRMs for the entire county in .pdf format. To view these files, you must have Adobe Acrobat installed on your computer. The Acrobat software may be downloaded from the following website free of charge: [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)
  - Preliminary DFIRM Database and shapefiles. In order to view the Preliminary DFIRM database ArcExplorer or ArcMap and MapInfo is needed. ArcExplorer can be downloaded from the following website free of charge: <http://www.esri.com/software/arcexplorer> and MapInfo Free Viewer can be downloaded from <http://www.mapinfo.com>. Database lookup tables or .dbf files can be opened with Microsoft Excel. **NOTE: The information provided in these files can be incorporated into your local community Geographic Information System (GIS). This data is intended for individuals with GIS knowledge and experience.**

To assist your community in maintaining the DFIRM, we have enclosed a Summary of Map Actions (SOMA) to document previous Letters of Map Change (LOMCs) (i.e., Letters of Map Amendment [LOMAs], Letters of Map Revision [LOMRs]) that will be superseded when the DFIRM becomes effective. Information on LOMCs is presented in the following four categories: (1) LOMCs for which results have been included on the DFIRM; (2) LOMCs for which results could not be shown on the DFIRM because of scale limitations or because the LOMC issued had determined that the lots or structures involved were outside the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) as shown on the DFIRM; (3) LOMCs for which results have not been included on the DFIRM because the flood hazard information on which the original determinations were based is being superseded by new flood hazard information; and (4) LOMCs issued for multiple lots or structures where the determination for one or more of the lots or

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structures cannot be revalidated through an administrative process like the LOMCs in Category 2 above. LOMCs in Category 2 will be revalidated through a single letter that reaffirms the validity of a previously issued LOMC; the letter will be sent to your community shortly before the effective date of the DFIRM and will become effective 1 day after the DFIRM becomes effective. For the LOMCs listed in Category 4, we will review the data previously submitted for the LOMA or LOMR request and issue a new determination for the affected properties after the DFIRM becomes effective.

We are sending the Preliminary copies at this time to give your community an opportunity to review them. We will contact you shortly to schedule the coordination meeting. In the meantime, we encourage you to circulate the enclosed copies as widely as possible among elected officials, staff, citizens, and other interested local stakeholders so that they will have the opportunity to review them thoroughly before the meeting. The review period provides community officials and citizens in the affected communities with an opportunity to correct or add to the non-technical information presented on the Preliminary FIS report and DFIRM, including the configuration and labeling of physical features such as roads (within or adjacent to the SFHAs), bridges, and streams, prior to the formal appeal period. If available, please provide data in a digital format (shapefiles preferred) to correct configuration and labeling of physical features. Please return either hard copy or digital comments and/or data to:

Mr. Keith Smathers  
URS Corporation  
10550 Richmond Avenue  
Houston, Texas 77042  
(713) 914-6477  
Keith\_Smathers@URSCorp.com

After the formal meeting is held, we may initiate a statutory 90-day appeal period for any new or modified BFEs that were identified in your community during the course of preparing the Preliminary FIS report and DFIRM. If your community has been identified as one in which the BFEs have changed, we will send you a letter approximately 2 weeks before the start of the 90-day appeal period to detail the appeal process. The letter will forward information regarding the notification of BFEs to be published in your local newspaper in a "Notice of Proposed Flood Elevation Determinations," and will provide the first and second publication dates. The appeal period will start on the second publication date. During the appeal period, community officials and/or other interested parties may submit scientific or technical information that would serve to refute the proposed or proposed modified BFEs. Additional instructions concerning the 90-day appeal period will be provided during the formal coordination meeting.

After the appeal and review periods have ended and all appeals and comments have been addressed, we will initiate final preparation of the DFIRM. The new DFIRM for your community will become effective approximately 6 months later. Before the effective date, you will be reminded that your community must adopt new floodplain ordinances or modify existing ordinances as necessary to reflect any changes in the DFIRM, including reference to the new effective date. If you or other community officials have any questions regarding the floodplain ordinance for your community, you may raise them at the community coordination meeting or you may discuss those issues with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) State Coordinator or our Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Regional Office. Information regarding the NFIP State Coordinator and our FEMA Regional Office is provided at the bottom of this letter. Approximately 2 months before the effective date, we will send your community printed copies of the DFIRM.

Once the FIS report and DFIRM are printed and distributed, the digital files containing the flood hazard data for the entire county can be provided to your community for use in a computer mapping system. These files can be used in conjunction with other thematic data for floodplain management purposes, insurance purchase and rating requirements, and many other planning applications. In addition, your community may be eligible for additional credits under our Community Rating System if you implement your activities using digital mapping files.

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FEMA maintains information about map features, such as street locations and names, in or near designated SFHAs. Requests to revise such information in or near designated SFHAs may be provided to FEMA during the community review period, at the previously referenced community coordination meeting, or during the statutory 90-day appeal period. Approved requests for changes will be shown on the final printed DFIRM.

Your community's comments on the enclosed materials are an important part of our review process and will be carefully considered before we publish the DFIRM in its final form. If you are interested in discussing the enclosed materials or if you have questions about the formal community coordination meeting, please contact the Floodplain Management Program at the at the Texas Water Development Board. Mr. Michael Segner, the NFIP State Coordinator, is accessible by telephone at (512) 463-7771, in writing at 1700 North Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas 78701. In addition, you may reach the FEMA Regional Office in Denton, Texas by telephone at (940) 898-5127.

Sincerely,



Frank Pagano  
Director, Mitigation Division

Enclosures:

Floodplain Management Bulletin 1-98, *Use of Flood Insurance Study (FIS) Data as Available Data*  
Preliminary FIS report and DFIRM panels 0170, 0195, 0235, 0240, 0245, 0265, 0270, 0290, 0360, 0370, 0380, 0385, 0390, 0395, 0405, 0410, 0415, 0420, 0430, 0435, and 0460  
CD containing the Preliminary DFIRMs in digital format  
Preliminary SOMA

cc: Mr. Raymond Anderson, Harris County Permit Office  
Mr. Michael Segner, NFIP State Coordinator, Texas Water Development Board  
Mr. Keith Smathers, RAMPP JV, Houston, Texas (*without enclosures*)  
Ms. Elizabeth Savage, P.E., CFM, RSC 6 (*without enclosures*)