Local Regulatory Changes
Affecting All New Development and Redevelopment

Hurricane Harvey caused unprecedented damage to Harris County’s infrastructure. As part of a post-Harvey assessment, the city and multiple organizations embarked on a mission to restore areas damaged by the storm and better protect the community from future flooding events.

County and city officials quickly moved to update development regulations, with Harris County (January 2018) and the City of Houston (April 2018 and April 2021) making considerable changes to multiple building codes and ordinances since the storm.

Summary of Changes

⭐ Updates to Chapter 19 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances
  - Require structures within a floodplain to have a minimum finished floor elevation of 2 ft above the 500-year floodplain
  - Required compensation for any fill added to reach the new elevation standards, which is known as zero-net fill

⭐ The City of Houston Adopted Recommended Updates to the Infrastructure Design Manual
  - Eliminated detention credits for existing impervious cover, offered detention credits for low impact development, eliminated payment of fees in lieu of detention, significantly increased the required detention rate on site

⭐ Revisions to Harris County’s Floodplain Regulations
  - Adopted similar floodplain development regulations to the City of Houston and added the requirement for retention upstream of Addicks Reservoir for all new development

Every drop of water stored will minimize the risk of flooding for all existing, redeveloped, and newly developed structures in the City of Houston and Harris County. These new regulations will improve the community’s resiliency following any future storm event.