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HCFCFD to Receive First Allocation of Funding to Support Voluntary Home Buyouts in Response to Hurricane Harvey

Since Hurricane Harvey made landfall in August 2017, the Harris County Flood Control District has been working with its many local, state, and federal partners to address the flood risk reduction needs of the county. This includes responding to and addressing volunteers for the Flood Control District Home Buyout Program by maintaining a Home Buyout Hotline, collecting information from thousands of home buyout volunteers, reviewing and identifying properties that meet the Flood Control District Home Buyout eligibility criteria, and submitting grant applications for funding to support home buyouts in response to Hurricane Harvey.

Home buyouts are used by the Flood Control District to reduce flood damages in areas hopelessly deep in the floodplain where structural projects to reduce flooding are not cost effective and/or beneficial. Since the Flood Control District's voluntary buyout program began in 1985, more than 2,075 structures have been purchased with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants and more than 960 properties (with and without structures) have been purchased with local Flood Control District funds.

As announced by the Texas Division of Emergency Management, Harris County will receive its first allocation of FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds in response to Hurricane Harvey. Twenty-five million six hundred thousand dollars are estimated to be received out of the total \$163.5 million that the Flood Control District requested for home buyouts through HMGP. The Flood Control District will be able to purchase approximately 169 homes with \$8.6 million required local matching funds and the \$25.6 million in HMGP funds. Additional funding allocations from the same grant application are expected later this year.

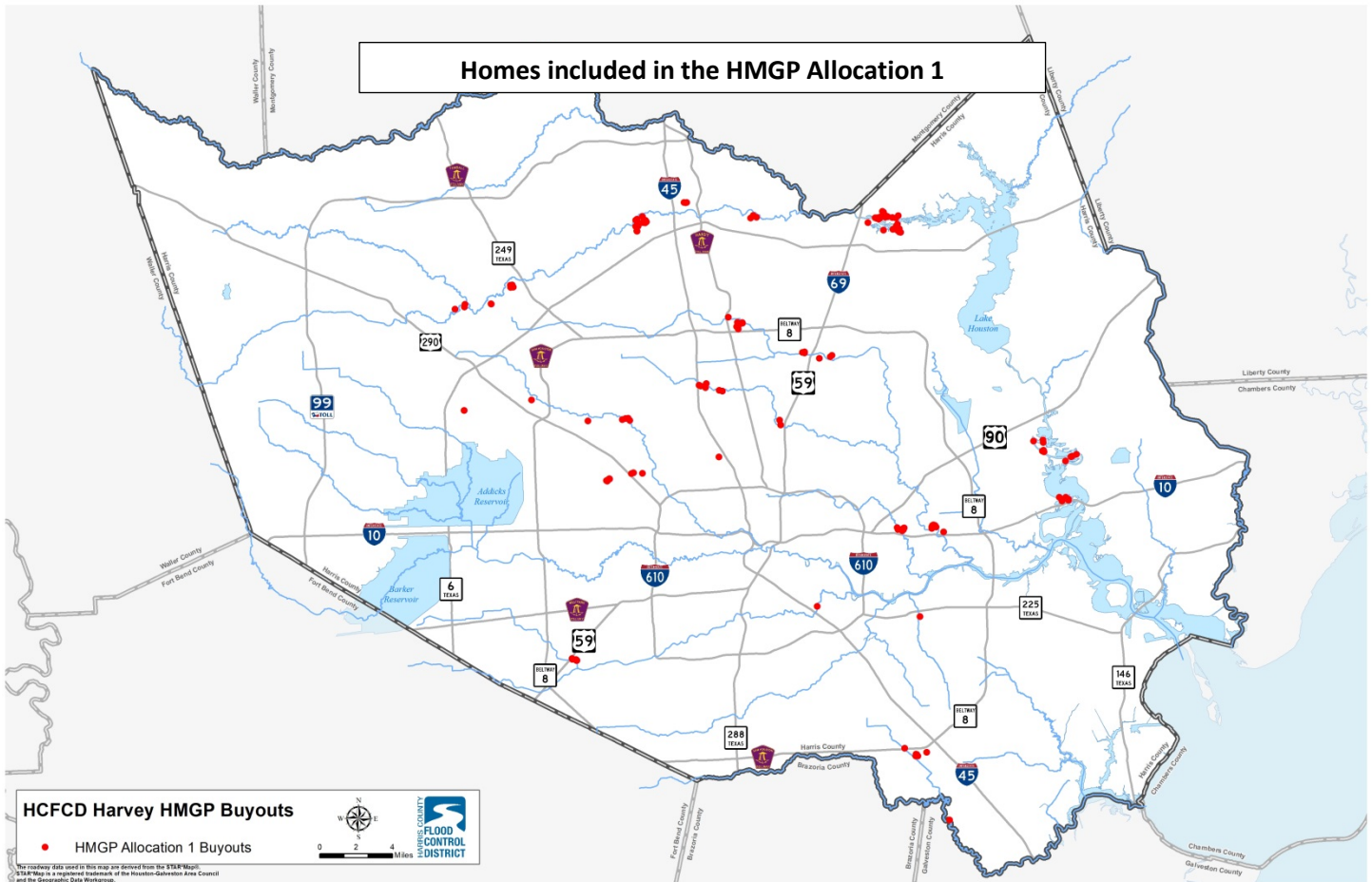
In April 2018, the Flood Control District submitted a grant application to Texas Division of Emergency Management and FEMA to request funding through the HMGP. This grant application included approximately 1,000 homes for potential home buyout (totaling approximately \$163.5 million in federal funding requests to the State). To utilize the new HGMP funding, the Harris County Commissioners Court must first authorize a local funding match of \$54.5 million, or 25 percent of the total amount needed (approximately \$218 million total) to support purchasing the proposed 1,000 homes.

The 1,000 homes were included in the grant application because they meet the Flood Control District's Home Buyout Program eligibility requirements, including:

- ✓ The home is located in Harris County, Texas.
- ✓ The home's flooding is from a bayou, creek, or smaller tributary that feeds into the bayou system.
- ✓ The home is located in a mapped floodplain and/or subject to repetitive flooding caused by out-of-bank bayou flooding.
- ✓ A home buyout must be the most beneficial solution to a home's flooding problem (as opposed to a structural solution, such as a channel conveyance improvement or stormwater detention basin).

- ✓ The home is strategically located for potential or future flood damage reduction projects and/or floodplain preservation.
- ✓ The home is located in a community that has expressed general support for buyouts.

The map below indicates where these approximately 169 homes are located within Harris County.



The first funding allocation of \$25.6 million will support the purchase of approximately 169 homes dispersed throughout the county. These homes were initially selected because they meet the Flood Control District Home Buyout Program eligibility criteria, and these homes were prioritized because they have been designated as “substantially damaged” by building code officials at the Harris County Engineering Department or the City of Houston’s Public Works & Engineering Department. Once a property has received a “substantially damaged” designation, homeowners have limited options to bring homes back into compliance with current floodplain regulations, as a “substantially damaged” designation means the cost to repair the home is assumed to be equal to or more than 50 percent of the market value of the home itself.

The remaining funds requested by the Flood Control District in the April 2018 grant application are still under review by the Texas Division of Emergency Management for future authorization, and subsequent funding authorized by the Texas Division of Emergency Management will be used to purchase additional homes that were included in the April 2018 HMGP application.

“I recognize the determination of the residents of this county, and we are continuously working on our residents’ behalf to secure every avenue of federal, state, and even local funding available to move people out of harm’s way before the next storm or flooding event. This is just the first allotment of FEMA funding for home buyouts, and we are looking forward to the ability to do more work for our residents,” said County Judge Emmett.

The Flood Control District’s Home Buyout Program is ongoing, and home owners may volunteer to be considered for the program at any time. The Flood Control District is continually reevaluating and reassessing the needs for home buyouts across the county as additional funding becomes available.

For more information about how to participate in a potential home buyout, please contact the Flood Control District at (713) 684-4020 or visit www.hcfcd.org/homebuyout.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, with appropriate regard for community and natural values. With more than 1,500 bayous and creeks totaling approximately 2,500 miles in length, the Flood Control District accomplishes its mission by devising flood damage reduction plans, implementing the plans and maintaining the infrastructure. To learn more about the Flood Control District, visit www.hcfcd.org.

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