

Meeting Report: Harris County Flood Control District's community meeting on Oct 17th seeking public comments on 'Study to Evaluate Bridges and Bypass Channels'.

BFP Steering Committee members Patrick Friend and David Clark attended HCFCD's community engagement meeting on a study to evaluate the effects on water surface elevations of raising bridges and creating channel bypasses on meanders along Buffalo Bayou between HWY 6 and BW 8. The study is now in the scoping period, inviting public comments until Oct 31st.

32 bridge crossings and 18 channel meanders were examined. The study found that the combined effect of raising the bridges and bypassing the meanders would only create a little over a half foot reduction in water surface elevation. The number of structures that would potentially benefit would be 40 in the 100-yr floodplain, and 174 in the 500-yr floodplain.

Based on the results of a study in Brays Bayou, the consulting company then examined the effects on water surface elevation of widening the channel within the existing Right of Way (ROW) on either side of Buffalo Bayou between HWY 6 and BW 8. The model results showed that by removing bank on either side of the existing channel within the ROW, while maintaining park activity (replacing bike paths and relocating/replacing/keeping trees), the benefit/cost ratio and surface elevation reduction improved significantly.

The 'Channel Widening' option created an elevation reduction of over 4 ft. between HWY 6 and BW 8, benefiting 240 structures in the 100-yr floodplain, and 877 structures in the 500-yr floodplain. The main challenge to this option is the requirement to for property acquisition for mitigation against detention flooding.

How does the channel widening approach benefit the aims and objectives of BFP?

Although the main focus of this study was to examine water surface elevation from rainfall events in the Buffalo Bayou watershed – and not to increase conveyance from the Barker and Addicks reservoirs – it is possible that the channel widening option proposed here could help to facilitate discharge from the two reservoirs.

The full presentation and more information can be found here:

<https://www.hcfcd.org/projects-studies/buffalo-bayou/ci-016-study-to-evaluate-bridges-and-high-flow-bypasses/>

Patrick Friend
David Clark