Policy Criteria and Procedure Manual July 2019 Amendments

The Policy Criteria & Procedure Manual (PCPM) is the criteria engineers and developers must follow when designing and constructing flood control features as part of development within Harris County. The July 2019 amendment of the PCPM is based on the revised precipitation data included in the December 2018 release of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Atlas 14 Precipitation-Frequency Atlas of the United States, Volume 11 Version 2.0 Texas (Atlas 14).

The data included in Atlas 14 updates rainfall depth information that has been used since the 1960s. Atlas 14 also provides estimates of the depth of rainfall for average recurrence intervals of 1 year through 1,000 years, and durations from 5 minutes to 60 days. NOAA collected this data in Texas through December 2017, which includes rainfall from Hurricane Harvey.

Interim Criteria Changes

The amended PCPM adopts the increased precipitation and provides more rigorous criteria for detention basins and fill within the floodplain. The amendments anticipate that the future Atlas 14 1% (100-year) floodplain can be estimated by using the current published 0.2% (500-year) floodplain. Therefore, these amendments are considered to be interim and will be reevaluated once new floodplains have been produced as part of HCFCD’s Modeling Assessment and Awareness Project (MAAPnext) in late 2021. More information on MAAPnext can be found at www.maapnext.org.

Floodplain Fill Mitigation Changes

The addition of fill to an area must be equivalently balanced with excavation elsewhere on the property within the floodplain.

Detention Rate Increases

The average volume of stormwater within detention basins will increase by about 20%, or about 32,500 additional gallons per acre.

Transition Period

The revised PCPM will go before Harris County Commissioners Court for approval on July 9, 2019. New projects submitted after Commissioners Court approval must incorporate the new criteria into their drainage reports and plans.