



HARRIS COUNTY COMMUNITY FLOOD RESILIENCE TASK FORCE

CFRTF Ad Hoc Prioritization Framework Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 2, 2022 | 5:30-7:30pm CST on zoom

Virtual meeting via Zoom

During the meeting we experienced technical difficulties, therefore we were unable to record the meeting. If you have any clarifying questions or concerns, please feel free to email us at CFRTFpubliccomment@gmail.com

1. Introduction – Kenneth D. Williams, CFRTF, and Leah Chambers, CFRTF Facilitation Team

- Kenneth opens the meeting and reminds everyone that the Ad Hoc Prioritization Framework Committee is set up to continue discussion from the January 19, 2022 meeting and evaluate the proposed revisions to the Prioritization Framework.
- Leah Chambers briefly reminds the committee on the community norms, and introduces Vanessa, the Flood Resilience Senior Planner from the Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD), Alan Black, Interim Executive Director of HCFCD, and Peter Key from the Office of the County Administrator. Kaylee Stephenson and Selena Palacios are part of the Facilitation Team providing technical support.
- Leah then shares the context ideas, goals, and agenda for the meeting.
- The agenda for the meeting is:
 - Welcome + Introductions, Facilitators
 - Overview of Previous Meeting and Current Status, Facilitator
 - Questions 1 + 2: Framing, County Staff and Facilitator
 - Questions 1 + 2: Public Comment and Committee Discussion, Facilitator
 - Questions 3 + 4: Framing, County Staff and Facilitator
 - Questions 3 + 4: Public Comment and Committee Discussion, Facilitator
 - Final Recommendations, Facilitator

2. Overview of Previous Meeting and Current Status – Leah Chambers, CFRTF Facilitation Team

- Leah goes over the consensus points reached on January 19th. The recommendations established in today's meeting will be presented to the full Task Force on February 8, 2022. Once the Task Force votes on the recommendations and comes to a consensus, a letter will be sent to the Harris County Flood Control and the Office of the County Administrator by February 11, 2022.
- Leah then reviews the four topics that the Committee plans to discuss.

Topic 1- People or Structures

Topic 2- Including or not including committed partnership funding

Topic 3- Determining assigned values for projects without structures

Topic 4- Recommendations on data sets for Level of Service for Subdivision Drainage

3. Questions 1 + 2: Framing – Vanessa Toro Barragan, Harris County Flood Control District, and Leah Chambers, CFRTF Facilitation Team

- Vanessa reviews the Prioritization Framework Metric, and the Benefits Efficiency Formula.
- Vanessa then introduces the first topic **People OR Structures** and provides a potential proposed formula.
- Vanessa provides two options for the first topic.
 - Option 1: Use a number of structures to measure people benefited.
 - Option 2: Use a new formula to measure the number of people benefited.
- A question is asked on how the data on tax accounts is captured
 - Vanessa and Dr. Lorente provide an answer
- Vanessa then introduces the second topic, Committed Partnership Funding.
- Vanessa provides two options for the second topic.
 - Option 1: Include committed partnership funding.
 - Option 2: Don't include committed partnership funding.
- Opens up the opportunity for clarifying questions.

4. Questions 1 + 2: Public Comment and Committee Discussion – Leah Chambers, CFRTF Facilitation Team

- Leah now opens up the floor for public comments giving 1 minute each.
 - Comment 1: How are you considering HUD funding? Would you all consider this as partnership funding? What about cost sharing with County funding?
- Leah begins discussion on Topic 1: People OR Structures.
- Floor is now open for Task Force members to discuss.
 - A point is made where the Task force will be recommending the renaming of the benefits efficiency formula.
 - A point is made where the framework is only considering residential structures with people.
 - A point is made that the smallest grain data possible be used.
 - A point is made that the formula should be as simple as possible and use minimal assumptions.
 - A question is asked on the difference between using census data versus HCAD property data?
 - Dr. Lorente – IRT provides clarification and answers.
 - A question is asked on the census data tract used.
 - Dr. Lorente – IRT provides an answer.
- **Task Force has built consensus on Option 2—Use a new formula to measure the number of people benefited.**
- Leah directs discussion to Topic 2: Committed Partnership Funding
- Floor is now open for Task Force members to discuss.
 - A point is made where the committee should not consider committed

partnership funding because it makes the County dependent on federal funds.

- A point is made where ignoring partnership funding can create and bring problems.
- A point is made where if no partnership funding is included it would affect a lot of the projects in the flood bond.
- A question is asked on what decision will be made based on the score, before and after the partner's money is factored in?
 - Alan – Harris County Flood Control District provides clarification and answer.
- **Task force was split on building consensus, but most leaned towards Option 2 - Don't include committed partnership funding.**

5. Questions 3 + 4: Framing – Vanessa Toro Barragan, Harris County Flood Control District, and Leah Chambers, CFRTF Facilitation Team

- Vanessa introduces the third topic, Assigned Values for Projects Without Structures.
- Vanessa provides two options for the third topic.
 - Option 1 - Prioritize reducing flood risk for people in the floodplain.
 - Option 2 - Prioritize improving resilience for the floodplain.
- Vanessa then introduces the fourth final topic, Level of Service.
- Vanessa provides two options for the fourth topic.
 - Option 1 - Use FEMA claims since 1977 to measure level of service.
 - Alan – Harris County Flood Control District provides clarification: the metric uses a combination of FEMA data plus wet carpet counts to determine level of service.
 - Request rewording to: Use FEMA claims + wet carpet counts since 1977 to measure level of service.
 - Option 2 - Request a new metric to measure level of service.
- Opens up the opportunity for clarifying questions.

6. Questions 3 + 4: Public Comment and Committee Discussion – Leah Chambers, CFRTF Facilitation Team

- Leah now opens up the floor for public comments giving 1 minute each.
 - No public comment at this time.
- Leah begins discussion with Topic 3: Assigned values for projects without structures.
- Floor is now open for Task Force members to discuss.
 - A question is asked on the frontier program—how does that factor in?
 - A point is made that it shouldn't be one goal or the other, but should balance both.
 - A point is made where there needs to be a way to measure projects that could prevent flooding.
 - A point is made where both options use the term "floodplain". Should consider rewording and clarify floodplain versus floodway.
 - A point is made of the wetland mitigation bank, and how it should have a lower score, or be removed completely, since they are included in other projects.

- A point is made to clarify Stabilization projects. If they are operations and maintenance, they should be scored low. If they are Natural Channel Design, they should be named that, and scored high—at a 6.
- **Task force has built consensus on an updated option - change a few of the scores: wetland mitigation should not be scored if part of the O&M work (built into the projects), and Stabilization should be clarified—if Natural Channel Design then should be scored at a 6.**
- Leah directs discussion to Topic 4: Level of Service.
- Floor is now open for Task Force members to discuss.
 - A point is made suggesting census data to be more current eg. 2000.
 - A point is made on FEMA Claims being problematic and loaded.
 - A point is made on the use of local and MUDS funds.
- **Task force has built consensus on an Updated Option - Make sure the metric takes into account vulnerable populations and is more current.**

7. Final Recommendations

- **Topic 1:** Task force has built consensus on Option 2- Use a new formula to measure the number of people benefited.
- **Topic 2:** Task force was split on building consensus, but most leaned towards Option 2 - Don't include committed partnership funding.
- **Topic 3:** Task force has built consensus on an updated option, to change a few of the scores: wetland mitigation should not be scored if part of the O&M work (built into the projects), or removed altogether. Stabilization should be clarified—if Natural Channel Design then should be scored at a 6.
- **Topic 4:** Task force has built consensus on an updated option - Make sure the metric takes into account vulnerable populations and is more current.

8. Meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE + PUBLIC COMMENT

Submitted in the Q&A or chat

Overall

- Comment 1: Lots of the public are confused as to what a revised prioritization framework would impact - future projects only, in other words, it would not impact the current bond projects. Also if the County Resilience Trust is a backstop for funds that did not materialize through partnership funding, then the new reprioritization would not change the current project list. So that means no change to the 2018 bond projects based on a new prioritization framework. Am I correct? If so, I think we really need to make the public aware of the limits on the prioritization framework because there is lots of confusion amount at least the constituents I deal with.
- Comment 2: From Facilitator - Leah (she/her)
What I believe is that this revised framework would score flood bond projects that currently have a partnership funding gap...and that ranking would determine the order that projects can access \$\$ from the Flood Resilience Trust

Structures OR People

- Comment 3: Wouldn't that formula weigh direct impact (dwelling flooded) and partial impact (maybe can't leave for the day) as equal in regards to impacts on people?
 - From Vanessa: Hi Alan, as presented, yes! But the recommendation could be to differentiate between direct and partial.
- Comment 4: What about hospitals, gas stations, schools, etc?
- Comment 5: While weighting toward number of structures benefited I think you should not exclude higher value structures
- Comment 6: Everything here comprehends residences. People benefit from housing but they also benefit from food stores and other businesses. The taxable value of structures without residents and structures with residents can be used to balance these two types of benefit. It would so reflect the benefit to government.
- Comment 5: Did y'all try to use census data and rule it out or why was that scenario not presented to us?
 - From Vanessa: We did not try to use census data in the way Michael suggested which would likely require a GIS analysis taking the project area and overlaying it with the census area - not all project benefit areas are the same. In our scenario we used census data for the average household size.
- Comment 6: If census data is recommended, how would the task force consider the undercounts and other insufficiencies in the last census?

Committed Partnership Funding

- Comment 7: Regarding "committed partner funds," I think we should not consider it at all. I think we should rely on our own funding (100% controlled by our elected officials) on what we do first and what we decide to do that is important to us. The more we consider these external sources of money, the more we will be impacted by the policies and procedures and evaluation criteria of others.
- Comment 7: To Iris's point, if we plan, design, and permit a project that is locally desired - and we apply for external funding - at what point in the project lifecycle does the partnership funding change the score and how would the score, before and after the project funding commitment is obtained, change and how would the score be used?
- Comment 8: What decisions will be made based on the score - before and after the partner's money is factored in?
- Comment 9: Michael's points and Alan's responses reinforce what I've been saying which is that we need a tool for project origination. For working "beyond the bond."
- Comment 10: Just to wrap up, if the framework is intended to pick the 10% of projects we can afford to accomplish (from the 1,000 projects we'd like to do) including the availability of partner funding will change which projects we pick. It will impact policy. It will cede control to Austin and Washington DC. Just future projects (not current bond)
- Comment 10: Including or excluding partnership funding doesn't need to be yes/no it can be 66% & 34% where these numbers are derived by experience and also the after the fact desirability on inclusion from experience .

- Comment 10: Can this be set up where you only consider partner funds in go/no go decision if the funds will cover at least a certain percentage of cost, 60%, 75%??

Assigned Values for Projects without Structures

- Comment 11: Does "PROJECTS WITHOUT STRUCTURES" mean a project that does not directly reduce flood risks for people or structures?
 - From Vanessa: Michael, it does mean that they don't directly reduce flood risk for structures.
- Comment 12: I think Mary Anne means by "prevent flooding" be preventing future homes from being built in risky areas. - Preserved land for example.
- Comment 13: Harris Thrives Resolution: Be it further resolved that Harris County Commissioners Court instructs the Harris County Flood Control District to emphasize an approach that respects, reclaims, and restores floodplains; preserves undeveloped prairies and forests that detain stormwater; and encourages the use of nature-based solutions, natural infrastructure, and cutting-edge technological methods where possible in public and private projects
- Comment 14: How will you calculate the ripple effect of flood mitigation projects? Mitigate in one region to prevent intense downstream flooding?
- Comment 16: Q3: Both options use the term "floodplain" - we should not use that term because people outside the floodplain have non-zero risk of flooding and should be helped.
- Comment 17: The 2018 bond projects are all likely to be completed. But the changes to the prioritization framework WILL alter the which future projects we select to do.
- Comment 18: Michael Bloom: I strongly prefer OPTION 1, if I have to pick.
- Comment 19: The American Soc. of Civil Engineers defines "resilience" as "the ability to plan, prepare for, mitigate, and adapt to changing conditions from hazards to enable rapid recovery of physical, social, economic, and ecological infrastructure."
- Comment 20: I also have a problem with wetland mitigation banks being scored in this way. Not all wetland mitigation banks are equal in terms of long term habitat quality. Also wetland mitigation banks can have very large services areas with impacts being mitigated outside of the watershed that was initially impacted.
- Comment 21: Is wetland preservation also a part of floodplain preservation projects?
- Comment 22: For framing, please also add that we need the county to establish resilience goals so we know how to strike a balance in this tool.

Level of Service for Subdivision Drainage

- Comment 14: I think the committee should consider that carpet counts nor FEMA data are accurate in areas like East Aldine as trash was burned (not piled on curbs bc many don't have heavy trash) and many did not submit FEMA claims. Consider a new metric
- Comment 15: What are the proposed input variables to Level of Service?