

JERSEY VILLAGE STAR

February 2002

Flood Control Director Draws Standing Room Only Crowd at January Council Meeting

Michael D. Talbott, Director of the Harris County Flood Control District, kicked off the January Council meeting with an updated presentation on the District's near-term flood damage reduction projects in the White Oak Bayou Watershed. He was accompanied by Harris County Pct. 4 Commissioner **Jerry Eversole** and **Art Storey**, Executive Director of the Harris County Public Infrastructure Department.

Mr. Talbott explained that the District (created by the State Legislature in 1937 as a special purpose taxing entity) had been working on implementing the White Oak Bayou Regional Plan over the last 16 years. He said that the District's purpose is to construct and maintain projects to reduce flooding in the county. It designs flood control improvements, carries out capital improvement projects, maintains drainage facilities, reviews subdivision and other land development drainage plans, and, in cooperation with the Harris County Office of Emergency Management, provides flood watch support. The District's boundaries are co-incident with Harris County's which encompasses almost 1800 square miles with 22 major watersheds.

Talbott mentioned the prospects for obtaining federal funding for District projects that qualified under the Water Resources Development Act. The Feds reimburse no less than 50 percent

Continued on page 2



Mike Talbott, P. E., Director of the Harris County Flood Control District (above left) and Pct. 4 Commissioner **Jerry Eversole** (left, below) talked with residents at the January Council Meeting.



Harris County
Flood Control District

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Flood Control Report...

Continued from page 1

on qualified projects, Talbott said, and added that he felt that the projects that will impact Jersey Village should qualify. This reimbursement of federal monies would allow the District to stretch local dollars already budgeted for the projects.

Even before Tropical Storm Allison wreaked her incredible havoc, Harris County Commissioners Court had approved the District's 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for projects all over the County. The District's 5-year CIP was \$48 million for White Oak Bayou regional projects. The District has a pay-as-you-go philosophy that seeks to avoid long-term debt.

Many people are confused about the meaning of a "Hundred Year Storm" because they think that it can only happen once in a hundred years. That's not true. There's a 1 percent chance that it (the storm) will be equal or exceeded in any given year, and it can happen more than once in a year, as well. Over the life of a 30 year mortgage, in fact, there is a 25 percent chance to encounter the 100 year storm. Harris County gets an average of 48 inches of rain a year, he said. The area is extremely flat -- very near sea level -- and a tropical storm or hurricane can make a dramatic impact.

Talbott said that originally there were 800 miles of natural channels in Harris County. Over time, the amount of drainage channels has increased to 2500 miles of channels today.

Talbott described the four different types of Flood Plains and pointed out that some flooding can occur when water tries to get to a

channel. He said that nationally, about 25 percent of the flood insurance claims are outside the designated flood plain.

During the last 12 hours of Tropical Storm Allison (June 8-9), some areas of the County only received 2 inches of rain while in the Greens Bayou area, 28 inches of rain fell in 12 hours, and some areas of Harris County experienced what amounted to rainfall expected in a 500 year storm.

Twenty two deaths are attributed to the flooding in Texas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency estimated that flooding damaged about 73,000 totally or partially destroyed residences. Damages are in the range of 5 billion dollars in the Houston area.

In Jersey Village, during the

June 8-9, 2001 return of Allison, some areas flooded because of excess local rain, some was caused by the overflow of one basin to another. Based on actual count, over 445 JV homes experienced some level of water, and City rescue personnel assisted over 100 persons to temporary shelters.

After President Bush made the disaster declaration, residents who experienced flooding -- some for the second time in as many years -- began the process of obtaining relieve from insurance coverage, from FEMA, and some potentially from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

Talbott explained that the District had been successful in working with FEMA on a "fast track" basis to release some of the
Continued on page 4

NEAR-TERM FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION PROJECTS WHITE OAK BAYOU WATERSHED - JANUARY 2002



TIMING	PROJECT OR ELEMENT	COST	DURATION
Ongoing/Recently Completed Projects			
	Channel Rehabilitation	\$750,000	
	Detention Excavation	\$2,000,000	
	Detention Excavation	\$2,300,000	
	Detention Excavation	\$2,200,000	
	Detention Land	\$2,600,000	
	Detention Land	\$4,100,000	
SUMMER 2002			
	Detention Excavation	\$1,900,000	12 months
	Detention Excavation	\$5,200,000	12 months
	Upstream Detention Land	\$2,000,000	
WINTER 2002			
	Detention Excavation	\$1,900,000	4 months
	White Oak Bayou Channel Construction	\$5,400,000 \$7,300,000	15 months
SPRING 2003			
	Bypass Re-grading	\$300,000	1 month
SUMMER 2004			
	Bypass Construction	\$3,300,000	8 months
TOTAL	Ongoing/Recently Completed	\$13,950,000	
	Near-Term Projects or Elements	<u>\$23,100,000</u>	About 3 years
GRAND TOTAL		\$37,050,000	

HCFC D Re-Prioritizes Jersey Village Projects

An important piece of news in Michael Talbott's presentation was a dramatic shift in emphasis by the Flood Control District in its proposed projects for the next three years. Previously, projects with a direct benefit to JV were proposed for 2004-2005. In response to sustained urging by City Council, HCFC D has authorized an engineering analysis to establish timetables for projects, and to determine if projects desired by Jersey Village could be completed earlier than originally contemplated. Fortunately, the study proved Jersey Village right.

As a result, HCFC D has accelerated its construction in our City. During summer 2002, the 43 acre detention pond at Rio Grande will be excavated. In spring 2003, the JV by-pass will be re-graded to direct the water flow eastward, away from Jersey Village, instead of westward to empty into White Oak Bayou at Wyndham Village. During summer 2004, the JV bypass will be fully constructed and opened for operation. In between these projects, HCFC D will be competing major channel improvements downstream of Jersey Village.

According to Talbott, these improvements alone will result in an average reduction in flood levels in

Jersey Village between 1 and 3 or 4 feet, based on a 10 year storm.

The revised scheduling is the result of three years of effort between the City of Jersey Village and HCFC D. With the near-term projects on the drawing board, the City Council is focusing on other Flood Control projects that will benefit the City over the next five to eight years.

Council will be reviewing an overall goal for reducing flooding and related projects at the February 18, 2002 Meeting. When adopted as a resolution of Council, it will be presented to County Commissioners Court and will become the foundation for future efforts of the City to prevent flooding. ■

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Proposition 3: Street and Sewer Projects

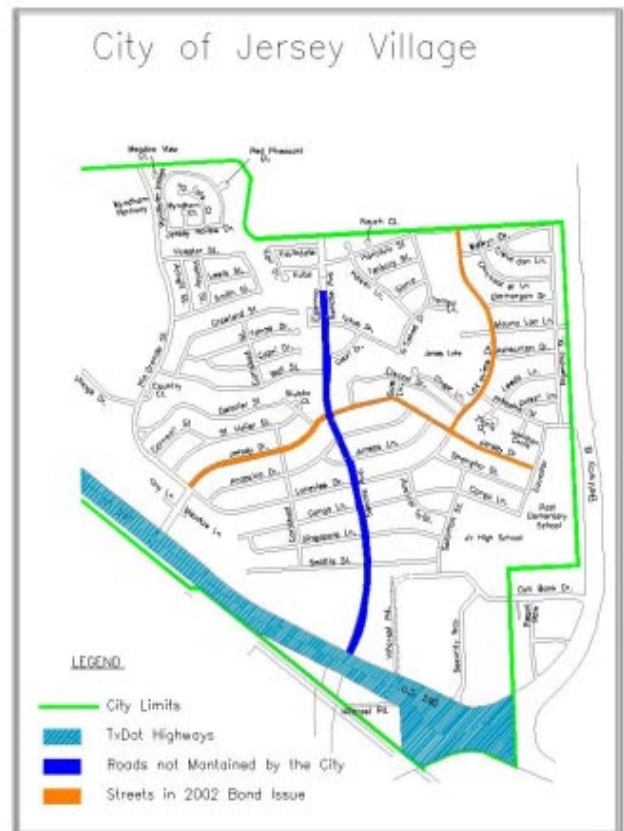
Q. Why are you including streets and sewer projects in the Bond Election? Aren't such projects ongoing most of the time? Is there anything special about these particular projects?

A. The bond issues under consideration are for major projects that cannot be funded through the traditional "pay as you go" method. There will, of course, be ongoing street improvements and repairs that will be accomplished coincidentally, as part of the long-term capital improvement plan. The bonds allow us greater flexibility to take advantage of slow construction periods and low interest rates.

The Proposition 3 bonds for the street and sewer projects will not be sold until 2005-07. Unlike the cases of the fire station and City Hall bonds -- which will only be issued in the amount of debt necessary for project completion -- if excess funds are available in the street bonds, more streets will be rehabilitated or replaced, which will free up monies in the annual capital improvement budget for other uses.



Proposition 3's \$5 million bond will fund the City's five year plan to reconstruct Jersey Drive from Rio Grande to Equador and Lakeview Drive from Acapulco Drive to Honolulu Drive. The scope of work not only includes the replacement of the visible road surface, but also all utilities under the road -- the water lines, sewer lines, and storm sewer.



Flood Control District...

Continued from page 2

dollars and urged them to make more available as soon as possible. He said the grant program, which was not intended to be a relief program, was designed to reduce flooding impact in the future. In the Allison fast track effort, agencies have already closed on about 100 homes of the 1400 homes requesting what could total a \$90 million buy out. This level is amazing, Talbott pointed out, when you consider that in the last 12 years, only 400 homes had been bought out.

“Thousands of applications are flooding the system,” the Director said, “and it takes time to review and process them. There is more money available, but the applications must go through regular channels. We have made a lot of progress in expediting assistance, but -- as hard as it is to hear this -- I urge you to get on with your lives because this could take awhile.”

Talbott reminded the audience to purchase flood insurance as soon as possible if they do not currently have it, expressing his opinion that *everyone* needs flood insurance in Houston. Due to the disaster area designation, federal dollars will fund a comprehensive study is underway by FEMA and the HCFCD that will produce new flood insurance study information.

Talbott reviewed the HCFCD’s accelerated damage reduction projects for the White Oak Bayou Watershed through the summer of 2004 (see page 2). He

said that at the urging of JV City Council, they have determined that it may be feasible to work “both ends toward the middle” and to take more aggressive measures than outlined in their original damage reduction plan.

After Mr. Talbott responded to a series of residents’ questions, Mayor Ed Heathcott thanked the Director, Commissioner Eversole and Art Storey for their efforts to aid the Jersey Village residents who experienced flooding in their homes, and who were still waiting for relief. ■

HCFCD Director Michael Talbott (left) and Jersey Village Mayor Ed Heathcott.



Ongoing/Recently completed

SUMMER 2002

WINTER 2002

SPRING 2003

SUMMER 2004