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BUFFALO BAYOU & LOWER WHITE OAK BAYOU FEDERAL FLOOD
DAMAGE REDUCTION AND ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION STUDY
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
held at
UNITED WAY COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER
50 WAUGH DRIVE
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77005
held on
NOVEMBER 7, 2007
7:03 PM TILL 7:50 PM

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MS. DYKE: Good evening. I think we're
3 about ready to start. I'll let a couple more people sit
4 down. Thank you for coming tonight.

5 Welcome to this Public Scoping Meeting for
6 the Buffalo Bayou and Lower White Oak Bayou Federal
7 Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Study.

8 My name is Jennifer Dyke, and I'm the
9 Harris County Flood Control District Study Manager for
10 this study.

11 We are recording this meeting to insure
12 accurate documentation for permanent record. The time
13 is 7:03. Thank you for attending.

14 The purpose of tonight's meeting is to
15 introduce you to the study for the Buffalo and lower
16 White Oak Bayou. The study is being undertaken by the
17 Harris County Flood Control District in partnership with
18 the US Army Corps of Engineers and is expected to last
19 through 2012.

20 We would like to involve you in the study
21 and to hear your thoughts on flooding and the
22 environment within the study area. Public participation
23 in the study is also important for compliance with the
24 National Environmental Policy Act.

25 Because of the large geographic area of the

1 study, we are hosting two identical public meetings.
2 This is the first meeting. The second meeting will be
3 held at Westchester Academy on November 13th.

4 I would like to start with an overview of
5 our agenda for the meeting which is as follows: I will
6 talk briefly about the Flood Control District and our
7 partnership with the Corps of Engineers; this will be
8 followed by an overview of the federal study and our
9 work efforts to date; lastly, we will begin the verbal
10 public comment period of the meeting.

11 Altogether, my presentation will run about
12 20 minutes followed by the verbal public comment period.

13 There are representatives of the district
14 in the foyer, along with several exhibits related to the
15 study. District staff will be available to speak with
16 you in the exhibit area once the verbal public comment
17 period begins. Bilingual assistance is also available
18 upon request.

19 A bit of housekeeping before we get
20 started: We want to thank the United Way for allowing
21 us to use their facility tonight.

22 I would also like to recognize a few of our
23 audience members. There are members here tonight of our
24 community who are here in their official capacities:
25 City of Houston Council Member Toni Lawrence, Michael

1 Halpin with the Office of Congresswoman Sheila Jackson
2 Lee, Wes Krueger with the Office of State Representative
3 Dwayne Bohac. Thank y'all for coming tonight.

4 I also want to recognize Captain David
5 Bryant from the US Army Corps of Engineers, our partner
6 with us on this study.

7 The district began it's public involvement
8 efforts by communicating with several organizations with
9 an interest in the study area. Representatives from
10 these organizations, some of who are listed here, meet
11 regularly with the district to review the progress of
12 the study and provide input.

13 We have also been coordinating with several
14 federal and state resource agencies. I ask for
15 community representatives and resource agency staff to
16 stand at this time.

17 Nobody? Wow. Well, I would like to thank
18 them all for their time, commitment, and continued
19 involvement with the study. Obviously, they're so well
20 involved that they don't need to be here.

21 I would like to talk briefly about the
22 Harris County Flood Control District. I know many of
23 you are familiar with the district, but I want to take a
24 moment to provide an overview and tell you about our
25 role in this study.

1 The district's mission is to provide flood
2 damage reduction projects that work, with appropriate
3 regard to the community and natural values. This is
4 accomplished by devising the flood damage reduction
5 plans, implementing the plans, and maintaining the
6 infrastructure.

7 The district is undertaking this study to
8 identify how we can reduce the damage due to flooding
9 within the study area and explore opportunities to
10 improve the natural environment along the bayous.

11 Established in 1937, one of the district's
12 purposes is to partner with the Corps of Engineers on
13 federal flood damage reduction projects in Harris
14 County. Over time, our responsibilities have grown to
15 include the planning, design, construction, operation,
16 and maintenance of more than 2,500 miles of channels in
17 Harris County, as illustrated on-screen. Today, we have
18 more than 170 studies and projects underway in the 22
19 watersheds in Harris County.

20 Federal legislation, referred to as Section
21 211(f) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996,
22 enables the district to take the lead in the planning,
23 design, and construction of specific flood damage
24 reduction projects in cooperation with the Corps of
25 Engineers. Throughout the study, the Galveston District

1 of the Corps of Engineers shares its experience,
2 participates in site investigations, and performs
3 technical reviews.

4 Working with the Corps of Engineers enables
5 the district to share in the cost of a federal study and
6 potential project. This partnership stretches district
7 funds which often allows the district to build projects
8 faster. Additionally, taking the lead in the study
9 allows the district more local control.

10 Working with the Corps of Engineers, we
11 comply with all the laws and regulations pertaining to a
12 federal study, including compliance with the National
13 Environmental Policy Act.

14 Some of the projects the district and Corps
15 of Engineers have partnered on include Addicks and
16 Barker reservoirs and projects on Brays, Sims, and White
17 Oak Bayous.

18 As a federal study, the district follows
19 the same process as the Corps of Engineers would follow
20 if they were leading the study. The graphic on-screen
21 displays this process.

22 We are currently at the beginning of the
23 study, as indicated by the red arrow. In this phase, we
24 are analyzing current conditions by collecting
25 engineering, economic, and environmental data and

1 determining the existing conditions for Buffalo and
2 lower White Oak Bayou.

3 These findings represent the study area
4 today, that is, what the conditions are without a flood
5 damage reduction or ecosystem restoration project.
6 Public comments in this phase are important to insure
7 accurate definition of existing conditions. These
8 existing conditions will be used to compare and contrast
9 components in the second phase.

10 Overall, we expect the study to last about
11 seven years.

12 This meeting tonight is part of the scoping
13 efforts for the study. Our goal tonight, and throughout
14 the study, is to share with you the progress of the
15 study and receive your input.

16 Let's talk about the study. The Buffalo
17 Bayou and lower White Oak Bayou watersheds are located
18 in west central Harris County and drain a 113
19 square-mile area. Most of the study area is within the
20 City of Houston with some of the area in the Villages of
21 Piney Point, Bunker Hill, Hunters Creek, Hilshire,
22 Hedwig, and Spring Valley.

23 To help orient you, I would like to point
24 out a few landmarks on this map. Starting down here on
25 the east side of town is a Houston Ship Channel Turning

1 Basin. And following Buffalo, here is downtown and
2 White Oak and then Buffalo. 610. I-10 crosses across
3 -- cuts across the study area. And then Beltway 8. And
4 then Highway 6 on the far western edge.

5 The area we are studying extends along
6 Buffalo Bayou from Barker Reservoir eastward through
7 downtown Houston to the Houston Ship Channel Turning
8 Basin, a distance of about 32 miles.

9 Additionally, the study area extends along
10 lower White Oak Bayou north and west from downtown
11 Houston to Loop 610, a distance of about seven miles.

12 The purpose of this study is to investigate
13 flood damage reduction and ecosystem system restoration
14 opportunities and to identify a plan that has public
15 support and is competitive for federal funding.

16 Let's take a closer look at flooding and
17 the importance of flood damage reduction within the
18 study area. Flooding is Harris County's primary natural
19 hazard. There have been major storm events in the last
20 50 years that have resulted in flood damages in Buffalo
21 Bayou and lower White Oak Bayou watersheds.

22 A recent event, and economically the most
23 costly in Houston's history, was Tropical Storm Allison
24 in June 2001. Tropical Storm Allison brought 60 percent
25 of the area's average annual rainfall to some areas of

1 Harris County in less than 12 hours. Within the study
2 area itself, portions of lower White Oak Bayou watershed
3 received 15 to 25 inches of rain over a five-day period.
4 The western portion of Buffalo Bayou watershed received
5 about five inches of rain while the eastern portion near
6 the Houston Ship Channel received about 30.

7 This storm directly affected more than 2
8 million people and caused an estimated \$5 billion in
9 damages across Harris County. In addition to the
10 devastating flooding caused by Tropical Storm Allison,
11 more frequent flood events have caused damages.

12 Repetitive loss data, developed by the
13 Federal Emergency Management Agency, indicates that
14 there are a number of structures reporting flood damages
15 more than once within the study area.

16 The causes of flooding in Harris County are
17 a combination of naturally intense rainfalls, flat
18 topography, and clay soils that absorb little water.

19 Flooding damages homes and businesses,
20 causes disruption to the lives of its victims, and
21 places demands on emergency services.

22 The district utilizes a number of
23 techniques or components throughout the county to reduce
24 damages due to flooding.

25 Components that will be considered include:

1 stormwater detention basins, channel modifications,
2 purchase and relocation of homes and businesses that
3 flood frequently, bypass channels, and improvements to
4 bridges.

5 Flood damage reduction components are
6 evaluated by comparing the cost to construct the
7 component versus the benefits resulting from the
8 component. Additionally, when considering flood damage
9 reduction components, the district must evaluate the
10 beneficial and adverse impacts to the environmental,
11 social, and economic resources. Some of these include
12 impacts to natural resources, construction costs, and
13 the economic value of homes and businesses.

14 In addition to flood damage reduction, the
15 district will investigate the potential for cost sharing
16 an ecosystem restoration project with the Corps of
17 Engineers. The purpose of an ecosystem restoration
18 project is to restore portions of the study area's
19 environment that have degraded along the channels. The
20 district can partner with the Corps of Engineers to
21 study ecosystem restoration; but if a plan is
22 identified, a sponsor must partner and cost share that
23 plan with the Corps of Engineers.

24 The growth of Houston and Harris County has
25 resulted in the dense urban land use along the bayous

1 for recreational, residential, commercial, industrial,
2 and transportation purposes.

3 The study area has been impacted compared
4 to the presettlement or natural conditions. Concerns
5 include degraded aquatic habitat, loss of riparian and
6 wetland vegetation, and a lack of the healthy ecological
7 systems.

8 Examples of ecosystem system restoration
9 components include plantings of riparian vegetation,
10 creation of tidal marshes, restoration of wetlands,
11 creation of wetlands within stormwater detention basins,
12 and reconnection of oxbows.

13 The success of an ecosystem restoration
14 component is calculated by the changes in quantity and
15 quality of habitat. Some opportunities will be more
16 feasible than others as specific sites along the bayous.

17 If an ecosystem restoration project to cost
18 share with the Corps of Engineers is not identified, the
19 district can develop flood damage reduction components
20 that incorporate environmental features into their
21 design. Examples of this could include the
22 incorporation of tree plantings, bank stabilization
23 efforts, and the creation of wetlands into flood damage
24 reduction components.

25 As mentioned earlier, our data collection

1 efforts during this initial study phase have focused on
2 engineering, economic, and environmental issues.

3 Engineering investigations included
4 performing hydrological and hydraulic studies in
5 compiling utility and infrastructure information. This
6 information is represented in the floodplain models
7 developed for the study. Here is an exhibit showing the
8 floodplain in downtown. It was determined that the
9 100-year floodplain covers around 5,000 acres along
10 Buffalo Bayou and lower White Oak Bayou.

11 When compiling information for engineering
12 studies, it was determined that there are 12 industrial
13 pipelines, 109 bridges -- and 109 bridges crossing study
14 area channels. Additionally, 360 storm sewer outfalls
15 empty into the Buffalo Bayou and lower White Oak Bayou
16 study area. This information and more will be used to
17 evaluate components for the plan.

18 During our economic analyses, we collected
19 several types of data: an inventory of about 14,000
20 existing structures in the 500-year floodplain, their
21 elevations, and estimated economic value. As part of
22 the study process, we calculated the estimated value of
23 all existing structures in the 500-year floodplain which
24 is around \$18 billion.

25 The exhibit on-screen illustrates the

1 expected annual damages for the study area. As you can
2 see, the collected data reveals the highest damages are
3 located around downtown. The next highest damage areas
4 are along White Oak Bayou and west of Loop 610 on
5 Buffalo Bayou.

6 Based on analysis of damage from historical
7 flood events, we estimate that over a long period of
8 time the average amount of monetary damage from flooding
9 in the study area would be about 40 million annually.

10 In comparison, the study area for the lower
11 Brays Bayou Federal Project, which includes the Texas
12 Medical Center, has 85 million in average annual
13 damages; and the study area for the White Oak Bayou
14 Federal Project has 54 million in average annual
15 damages.

16 This illustration is located in the exhibit
17 area where staff are available for further discussion.
18 I encourage you to stop by if you have questions.

19 The environmental data collection includes
20 documenting the existing and natural human environment
21 to serve as a basis for evaluating components and
22 determining future environmental conditions in the study
23 area. Data is collected on information such as air
24 quality, aquatic environment, vegetation, wildlife,
25 demographics, cultural, and recreational resources.

1 Although the study area watersheds are
2 around 80 percent developed, initial data collection has
3 identified over 600 acres of wetlands and 25 acres of
4 forests within the Buffalo Bayou and lower White Oak
5 Bayou watersheds. As part of the study process, we
6 discovered remnant oxbows and large mature trees exist
7 along areas of the channels. In addition to these
8 findings, 54 parks totaling 2,500 acres are located
9 within the study area watersheds. There are also
10 historical cemeteries, buildings, districts, and Native
11 American campgrounds along Buffalo Bayou and lower White
12 Oak Bayou.

13 Also in this phase, we have worked with
14 community representatives to identify preliminary goals
15 and objectives. These goals and objectives will be used
16 to evaluate flood damage reduction and ecosystem
17 restoration components and select a plan for the study
18 area.

19 The goals include conducting the necessary
20 studies to evaluate flood damage reduction, ecosystem
21 restoration, enhancements to the existing environment,
22 and recreation measures. Additionally, we would like to
23 identify a project that is acceptable to the public and
24 the Corps of Engineers and is competitive for federal
25 funding.

1 We have several objectives that support the
2 study goals. The complete text of the goals and
3 objectives is presented in a handout in the study area.

4 As we conclude the initial study phase
5 determining the existing conditions for the study area,
6 we will move into the next phase where we will begin to
7 formulate, evaluate, and select a plan. This phase will
8 last approximately two to four years, during which time
9 we will be identifying and evaluating components for
10 flood damage reduction and ecosystem system restoration.

11 If the study identifies a plan, a document
12 discussing the plan and potential impacts will be made
13 available for public review and comment. At the end of
14 this phase, if all goes well, we anticipate identifying
15 a plan that will be coordinated with the Corps of
16 Engineers and environmental agencies and verified for
17 technical, environmental, and policy compliance.

18 Throughout this study process, we will be
19 reaching out to communicate with you in several ways.
20 We want to hear comments from you. This public meeting
21 is one of our first large-scale outreaches in the
22 community.

23 Information about the study is also
24 available on the Flood Control District Web site. If
25 you are interested in learning more about this study or

1 would like to sign up to receive information, please
2 contact us.

3 District representatives will also be
4 available tonight in the exhibit area once the comment
5 period has begun.

6 The contact information on the screen is
7 included in the handout provided to you tonight.

8 We have now reached the verbal public
9 comment phase of the public scoping meeting. We ask
10 that you share with us information you think is relevant
11 to the study. For example, your concerns might be
12 related to: historical flooding problems or ideas that
13 will help reduce flooding; possible ecosystem
14 restoration opportunities; information on the
15 environment such as locations that have valuable natural
16 characteristics and should be avoided or sites in need
17 of restoration. Comments may also include social and
18 economic issues, aesthetics, and even recreation.

19 We want to receive your input on ideas for
20 what to do and what not to do and what your concerns are
21 for a successful project. You may comment on anything
22 you feel is important for the district to know that
23 might be relevant to the study.

24 You may present verbal comments in this
25 auditorium tonight.

1 When you came in tonight, you received a
2 blue speaker registration card. If you wish to make a
3 verbal comment, please turn in your blue speaker
4 registration card. If you did not receive a card,
5 please raise your hand and staff in the auditorium will
6 provide you with one.

7 Members of the study team will be assisting
8 me during the verbal comment period. Wayne Crull is the
9 senior study manager for Feasibility Studies at the
10 Harris County Flood Control District. He will be
11 assisting me tonight in receiving your verbal comments.
12 Additionally, my associate Claudia Morlan will call on
13 the names of those who filled out a speaker registration
14 card.

15 You may also submit comments on a written
16 comment form. Comment forms are available in the
17 exhibit area. You may leave your written comments with
18 us tonight in the comment box in the exhibit area, or
19 you may mail them back to the district. You may also
20 visit our Web site and fill out a comment form online.

21 Due to time considerations tonight, we will
22 be receiving your comments only. Questions will not be
23 answered during the receipt of comments. However,
24 district staff will be available to speak with you in
25 the exhibit area once the comment period begins.

1 The time period to receive written comments
2 by mail, e-mail, or from the Web site is from now
3 through December 20th, 2007.

4 All comments will be documented, reviewed,
5 and considered during this study.

6 In a moment, Claudia will call the names of
7 the first five individuals who registered to speak. We
8 ask that those individuals proceed to the microphone,
9 and we will receive your comments sequentially.

10 Please state your name clearly before you
11 begin to speak so we may document your name and comment
12 for the record. We ask that you please limit your
13 verbal comments to three minutes so everyone will have a
14 chance to speak.

15 If you have not turned in your speaker
16 registration card, please raise your right hand now and
17 we will collect them.

18 At this time we are ready to begin the
19 verbal public comment period. If you do not wish to
20 listen or comment verbally, please feel free to visit
21 the district staff in the exhibit area.

22 MS. MORLAN: Hi. I'm going to call the
23 first five individuals. But before I do, if you need
24 special assistance in making a verbal comment, just
25 raise your hand and we'll have a handheld mike for you.

1 The first five individuals are: Jeremy
2 Dilbeck, Brandt Mannchen, Margaret Hahn, Shohreh Hashemi
3 -- I hope I said that right -- and Nancy Wilcox.

4 MR. DILBECK: Hi. My name is Jeremy
5 Dilbeck. I'm going to read my notes because I'm not a
6 very good public speaker.

7 I live along little White Oak Bayou. I'm
8 also a member of the Floodway Coalition of Houston.

9 I would like to say congratulations on this
10 nice meeting. We just had 200 participants in a meeting
11 that we hosted on October 30th; so we understand all
12 that's involved in putting it together.

13 As I'm sure most of you know, the City of
14 Houston passed an ordinance a year ago that said you
15 couldn't build on vacant lots in the floodway or rebuild
16 if more than 50 percent of your structure was damaged.
17 They also made no provision for compensating the
18 property owners for this taking.

19 I'm very heartened to see that Harris
20 County Flood Control District is taking such a proactive
21 stance into seeking the community's input. And I hope
22 this will continue throughout the planning stage as
23 well.

24 We, the residents who live along the
25 bayous, are the most impacted by any changes in the

1 floodplain management. We are true stakeholders in this
2 process. We want to work together with all Houstonians
3 to address flooding, but we want to make sure the burden
4 is shared fairly by all as the benefit accrues to all.
5 Thank you.

6 MS. DYKE: Thank you for your comment.

7 MS. MANNCHEN: My name is Brandt Mannchen.
8 B-R-A-N-D-T. M-A-N-N-C-H-E-N.

9 I'd like to focus on the restoration part
10 this evening, and I'd like the Harris County Flood
11 Control District and the corps to focus on recreating
12 natural ecosystem processes within this study.

13 I support acquisition of both uplands and
14 riparian woodlands as mitigation for any vegetation
15 destruction or degradation that might occur due to the
16 proposal -- or due to disposal areas. And I would
17 request an eight to one compensation for loss of
18 riparian woodlands and a mitigation plan that the public
19 can review and comment on.

20 I don't support changes along Buffalo Bayou
21 from Addicks Barker to the turning basin. That is where
22 most of the natural vegetation exists today, and most of
23 it should be left alone. And I don't believe there
24 should be major changes there.

25 I do support removal of exotic vegetation

1 and planting of native vegetation.

2 I also support protecting and restoring the
3 natural ecosystem along lower White Oak Bayou and along
4 the some of the natural streams there. Some de-snagging
5 could be allowed, but any work must be done judiciously
6 and carefully along with the reestablish of riparian
7 forests and native vegetation.

8 I support high density tree planting and
9 the salvage of vegetation from places where you're going
10 to make modifications and then replanting in the
11 mitigation areas.

12 I support in-stream aquatic habitat
13 protection restoration enhancement in some locations and
14 some streams.

15 I support determining first where higher
16 quality fish and wildlife habitat is on Buffalo and
17 lower White Oak bayous and their tributaries and then
18 developing a mitigation plan to protect, restore, and
19 enhance these areas.

20 I support more use of non-structural flood
21 control techniques, in particular, stricter floodplain
22 regulations and public acquisition of floodplain lands,
23 including buyouts and easements of existing flood-prone
24 properties and using the land for parks and flood
25 purposes.

1 I support knowing what the flood frequency
2 protection goal is. I think that's really important.

3 I support knowing how water quality will be
4 affected by the proposal and how the downstream
5 ecosystems, like Buffalo Bayou, San Jacinto River, and
6 Galveston Bay, are going to be affected.

7 And also I support, if it comes down to
8 this, where the Flood Control District says it must do
9 something to a natural stream, clear only one side or
10 excavate only one side and leave one side natural.
11 Thank you.

12 MS. DYKE: Thank you for your comment.

13 MS. HAHN: Margaret Hahn. And I've been a
14 resident of Cottage Grove Section 3 on White Oak Bayou
15 since 1976. And I have to say, honestly, that I had
16 more comments before I came into the meeting, but one of
17 your knowledgeable associates clarified a lot of those
18 for me.

19 And it seems my issues should be with the
20 City of Houston rather than Harris County Flood Control
21 because his point was that your jurisdiction is really
22 restricted. Unless somebody is actually discharging
23 into the bayou, you have no jurisdiction over it.

24 And what I think -- a lot of us are in an
25 area that they're being redeveloped. But they're

1 discharging into the street and into our properties
2 because they're redeveloping behind us or next to us or
3 whatnot. But they're politically smart enough not to
4 discharge into the bayous; so we're being affected by
5 that.

6 So in closing, I'm just going to say my
7 issues are probably, you know, I need to take you up
8 with the City of Houston instead of Harris County Flood
9 Control. But I thank you for the opportunity. Thank
10 you.

11 MS. DYKE: We thank you for your comment.

12 MS. HASHEMI: My name is Shohreh Hashemi,
13 and I am going to focus my comments on a site that needs
14 restoration.

15 Off of Buffalo Bayou, junction of Briar
16 Forest and Gessner, there is -- where there is a major
17 erosion problem, the area has been kept absolutely with
18 no upkeep. It's an unkept area with major, major
19 rodent problem.

20 I have tried to resolve this first by going
21 to my home owner associations, to no avail. Gone to the
22 City of Houston, to no avail. Gone to the county,
23 Harris County Flood Control District. To US Army Corps
24 of Engineers. Everyone is pointing finger at the next
25 person. Everyone comes, takes a look, says, okay, there

1 is a major problem. It needs to be fixed. No one is
2 taking any action. It's been four years. Nothing has
3 gone better.

4 Telephone posts, light posts are a 45 to 50
5 degree angle. Light, electricity, to my knowledge, when
6 it breaks, it starts major problems.

7 I need for someone to tell me who is in
8 charge, who is going to take a look at that area, and
9 who is going to fix it. At this, I am not alone. I
10 have the entire neighborhood.

11 On one side of this, what they call ditch
12 or what they call opposite from the bayou, and also on
13 the other side, there are a number of people here from
14 that subdivision area. We need that area to be looked
15 at almost immediately. Many of the houses are two or
16 three inches, foundation-wise, lower on the back end
17 where it's facing that area than to the front, which is
18 sitting on the street.

19 There is a major problem with the area with
20 the rodents. Again, there is major erosion where the
21 dirt is just washing away. The flooding, the water gets
22 high and washes all of that away. And no one is paying
23 attention to any of that, and everyone is pointing
24 fingers at each other.

25 I'm here on behalf of myself and a number

1 of my neighbors to find out whose responsibilities to
2 that is.

3 MS. DYKE: We will look into it.

4 MS. HASHEMI: And I thank you and Claudia
5 for giving me the time.

6 MS. DYKE: Thank you for coming tonight.

7 MS. MORLAN: Before Nancy starts, I'll call
8 the next couple of people: Bruce Norcini, Tony Moore,
9 Mary Jane O'Fiel, Fred Lazare.

10 MS. WILCOX: Hi. My name is Nancy Wilcox,
11 and I wanted to say thank you very much for the meeting.
12 I also wanted to urge all that are here to contact their
13 elected officials. I think that Harris County Flood
14 Control and the corps are going to need everyone's
15 support in being sure that the funding is going to be
16 available for the projects that we hope result of this
17 study.

18 I would like to see the information
19 regarding the economic benefit analysis made pretty well
20 public. I think that will help us all support our
21 elected officials and allow us to make intelligent
22 requests and comments to them as they work to allocate
23 funds for the projects that hopefully will result from
24 the study. Thank you.

25 MS. DYKE: Thank you.

1 MR. NORCINI: Hello. My name is Bruce
2 Norcini. And thank you very much for hosting this
3 meeting.

4 I'm kind of new to flooding. I kind of got
5 thrown into when the city passed Chapter 19 late last
6 year; so I've been educated in the last eight or nine
7 months a lot on flooding.

8 My comment is very simple. I appreciate
9 the efforts and the time I spent with Harris County
10 Flood Control. They've been very good. They've been a
11 hero to us. We're all part of this Floodway Coalition
12 of Houston. And we look at you as a white knight and as
13 go-to folks that have really helped us out to get where
14 we are today. And thank you very much.

15 MS. DYKE: Thank you for your comment.

16 MR. MOORE: My name is Tony Moore, and I'd
17 like to thank everybody for taking the time to be here
18 this evening.

19 My comments concern this particular
20 neighborhood right here. This is one of the oldest
21 subdivisions in the city of Houston. And it's about the
22 highest point in the city of Houston. It's 60 feet now;
23 originally, it was 90. But the aquifer was pumped out,
24 and it's dropped.

25 We have basically three problems in this

1 neighborhood. One of them is the parking lot here
2 filled in the retention pond for the north end of the
3 neighborhood, the northeast of the neighborhood.
4 There's a big wall if you look behind the parking lot.
5 There's a huge wall that's been built with the units
6 built up on top of it. That was the drainage ditch for
7 the northeast.

8 The city engineers all know about this
9 field, but they can't do anything because City Planning
10 issued the permits to do it. And their hands are tied.
11 They can't do anything.

12 The next one is Fingers Apartments. That
13 was Lake Vicks. They backfilled that for years, for
14 three or four months before they even issued a permit
15 for it. And there's lots of pictures. You can get
16 Channel 11. They'll show you that fills in. They used
17 to fill in a minimum -- that and Spotts Park, takes the
18 retention pond from here, goes over the parking lot into
19 those areas, and into Spotts Park for this whole area
20 right here.

21 That used to fill three times a year.
22 Okay. We went into a drought system, which is another
23 climate problem. But we're starting to get our rains
24 back; so now we're going to see this area fill in over
25 here. But it's not going to fill in because it can't

1 get out of the north end of the neighborhood.

2 Okay. Our third problem is an EPA
3 Superfund site at 411 Jackson Hill here. There are more
4 than 18 tanks still in the ground that was owned by
5 Thermal Electron Waste Oil Storage Facility, was what it
6 was called. It has two "trank" cars in the ground that
7 are riveted that they purposely put there so the oil
8 would drain out, back in the fifties, into the soil.
9 Before that, they had open pits.

10 They built houses on top of that without --
11 with permits and all. And the mayor knows that this was
12 and EPA -- it's on -- I have all the documents, all
13 government documents.

14 On the other side, Loya Quinn [phonetic]
15 owns the rehab building. They're redoing all that. The
16 apartments were owned by Leona Helmsley. All of them
17 sued Thermal Electron and got settlements and
18 remediation money to redo it. They've pulled all the
19 dirt out of it. 411 Jackson Hill. White Oak -- I mean,
20 Water Hill Builders and another one, they never pulled
21 any of the dirt out. They took up the concrete cap.

22 And those are our three basics problems in
23 this neighborhood, which I need -- didn't get a chance
24 to talk to your people outside yet. But I'm going to
25 show them the information.

1 But I do appreciate y'all listening to me
2 and getting it on the record. Thank you very much.

3 MS. DYKE: Thank you for your comments
4 tonight.

5 MS. O'FIEL: Good evening. My name is Mary
6 Jane Conley O'Fiel. I'm also a member of the Floodway
7 Coalition of Houston. And I certainly would like to
8 thank you for having this meeting, as well as thanking
9 the Harris County Flood Control District for its support
10 and efforts when we have needed information regarding
11 our particular neighborhoods. There's not a person in
12 the Flood Control District Office that has not been
13 helpful, sympathetic, and -- as Bruce Norcini said -- a
14 white knight for us.

15 One of the comments that I have and would
16 be -- that I would like to see that Little White Oak
17 Bayou be included in this study.

18 Due to the amount of water that flows into
19 Little White Oak Bayou and goes into the lower White
20 Oak, there are areas that are in our area that could be
21 possible detention possibilities along Little White Oak
22 Bayou. It's also, I think, very important because in my
23 particular area of Little White Oak Bayou there is
24 dumping into Little White Oak and into some of the
25 tributaries along there.

1 And as much as you want to clean up and
2 take care of something in a lower area or closer towards
3 downtown, as long as it's coming from upstream, whatever
4 you do downstream is going to be affected by that.

5 And so my comment would be to include
6 Little White Oak Bayou and residents on the planning of
7 this study. Thank you.

8 MS. DYKE: Thank you for your comment.

9 MS. MORLAN: Before Fred starts. Norman
10 Adams. Kathleen Camper. Kenneth Weeden.

11 MR. LAZARE: Hi. My name is Fred Lazare.
12 I've lived in Timbergrove Manor and have for 18 years.
13 I'm an active user of parklands along the bayou, along
14 White Oak Bayou. And our house flooded. Our family's
15 house flooded in June 2001 as result of Tropical Storm
16 Allison.

17 I'm very concerned that many cost-benefit
18 calculation, increasing cost of inner loop land will
19 hamper the district's efforts to get anything done,
20 especially as time passes. And as such, I would like to
21 see the district aggressively using local funds as soon
22 as possible lest those of us who live within the
23 watersheds see little to no work completed.

24 I would also like to urge you all to do a
25 better job of involving the public in this project than

1 was done during the White Oak Study, and I believe you
2 need to convene regular and frequent meetings involving
3 all stakeholders. Thank you.

4 MS. DYKE: Thank you for your comment.

5 MS. MORLAN: Norman Adams? Kathleen
6 Camper?

7 MS. CAMPER: Hi. My name is Kathleen
8 Camper, and I wanted to thank you for having a public
9 meeting. I'm fairly new to the bayou issues, even
10 though I've lived here for awhile.

11 I know you're not taking questions. But
12 I'm hoping that in some capacity your organization has
13 meetings with the City of Houston -- we're kind of all
14 in the Floodway Coalition -- and possibly address the
15 upstream -- the massive paving that's going on upstream
16 which is causing the City of Houston to condemn
17 properties downstream.

18 A lot of people have lived here for many,
19 many years and have not had flooding until the last few
20 years when more and more of the Houston area west of
21 town was paved over. And the retention ponds for the
22 new subdivisions may or may not be doing an adequate job
23 of keeping all of that water from coming downstream.

24 Will -- the other thing is -- since you're
25 not answering questions -- will your organization be

1 talking to the City of Houston about, you know,
2 vis-a-vis basically penalizing all these lovely people
3 downstream because of all the development upstream?

4 And also, the aquifer draining. A lot of
5 these subdivisions were higher in past years. And is
6 that going to be, or I hope that will be, part of your
7 study as well? So maybe I find that answer out outside.
8 Thanks.

9 MS. DYKE: And you can talk to me
10 afterwards as well. Thank you for your comments.

11 MR. WEEDEN: I'm Kenneth Weeden. And I
12 hope this meeting here is for a real purpose for -- with
13 open view by y'all as well as by us. It's not just for
14 a show.

15 And anyway, I know the Corps of Engineers
16 have got these retention areas around the city. I hope
17 they're figured in. I do know that I-10 was built on a
18 bayou, and then later they said, well, 30 years later
19 they knew about it. They were just using it. I think
20 it was used to obstruct a great deal. I grew up in the
21 area. And I think the bayous could be designed by the
22 Corps of Engineers a little bit better.

23 Now, the regular channel there, as it is,
24 but widen out above that to serve as a reservoir during
25 heavy rains and then let it drain. I think the drainage

1 out to the Gulf of Mexico. I hadn't looked at that, but
2 I'm sure that that could be improved by the Corps of
3 Engineers.

4 And I think there needs to be compensation
5 for the people that are affected by putting things into
6 floodplain when there hadn't been any floodplains
7 before. And ought to be helping the other people.

8 I think the primary purpose of the bayous
9 in the first place is for drainage, not for parks and
10 all that. It's fine to have those things, but I think
11 the primary purpose of the bayous is for drainage so we
12 won't be flooding. And I just I think there could be a
13 lot more better design of the bayous to widen the area
14 above the channel.

15 And I'll be glad to talk to the Corps of
16 Engineers myself. Thank you.

17 MS. DYKE: Thank you for your comment.

18 Okay. I think that we reached the end of
19 the verbal formal public comment period.

20 The Harris County Flood Control District
21 and the US Army Corps of Engineers thank you for your
22 participation tonight. We will consider your comments
23 as we move forward with the Buffalo Bayou and Lower
24 White Oak Bayou Federal Study.

25 If you would like to make additional

1 comments, please pick up a comment form in the exhibit
2 area or fill one out online.

3 The mailing address, phone number, and Web
4 site are printed on the meeting handout and on the
5 comment form.

6 The time period for accepting public
7 comments as part of this meeting ends December 20th,
8 2007.

9 The United Way Resource Building will close
10 at 10:00 PM tonight.

11 District staff will be available to speak
12 with you until we begin to close down the exhibit area.

13 For the record, the time is 8:50. Thank
14 you and good night.

15 AUDIENCE MEMBER: 7:50.

16 MS. DYKE: 7:50? 7:50. Sorry.

17 (Meeting adjourned.)

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1 STATE OF TEXAS

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3 I, Kaetheryne B. Kyriell, a Certified
4 Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of Texas, do
5 hereby certify that the above and foregoing contains a
6 true and correct transcription of all portions of the
7 above-referenced public comments to be included in the
8 transcript of said public comment section, and were
9 reported by me.

10 Given under my hand and seal of office on
11 the 11th of November, 2007.

12

13

Kaetheryne B. Kyriell, Texas CSR 6083
Expiration: 12/31/09

14

15

Esquire Deposition Services
CRCB Firm Registration No. _____
3401 Louisiana Street
Houston, Texas 77002

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