

Harris County Flood Control District

OPEN SPACE PROGRAM





Community and Natural Values

The mission of the Harris County Flood Control District is to provide flood damage reduction projects that work, with appropriate regard for community and natural values. Through its Open Space Program, the Flood Control District is able to further its commitment to the Harris County community by partnering with residents to beautify our neighborhoods and public areas.

Open space is a valued commodity in our busy, thriving communities, and finding it has become more difficult as once rural parts of Harris County become urbanized.

Parks and recreation amenities are in demand in neighborhoods throughout the county, and the Harris County Flood Control District offers a unique opportunity to meet this need through its Open Space Program.



Open Space Program Properties

Open spaces are often created from the Flood Control District's Voluntary Home Buyout Program in which homes located in a floodplain that repeatedly flood are voluntarily purchased and demolished to ensure they will never flood again. The lots, which are owned and maintained by the Flood Control District, remain as open space and are mowed eight times a year during the growing season – the extent required for health and safety.

Typically located in residential neighborhoods, these lots have the potential to benefit area residents by serving as individual vegetable and flower gardens and sites for swing sets. Individuals or groups can enter into agreements with the Flood Control District to landscape and/or maintain these open spaces or to develop park-like areas.



Types of Agreements



An **Adopt-a-Lot Agreement** allows adjacent landowners to maintain open spaces specifically by mowing and picking up litter as a way to beautify their neighborhoods. No insurance is required and no fees are involved.



A **Landscaping Maintenance Agreement** allows individuals to plant shrubs, trees and vegetable and flower gardens on Flood Control District land. There is no fee for this use, but a general liability insurance policy is required.



A **Neighborhood Recreation Area Agreement** allows communities to develop park-like areas on individual lots. Larger tracts of land may be available for other approved open space uses including tree plantings, ball fields and bird sanctuaries. This agreement requires an official sponsor, such as a civic association, homeowners association or municipal utility district that is willing to develop, manage and maintain the neighborhood recreation area. There is no fee for this use, but a general liability insurance policy is required.



Applying for the Program

A simple signed letter from an adjacent landowner or sponsor that includes the following information will begin the agreement process:

- **Type of agreement sought**
- **Address of the property**
- **Address and phone number of the adjacent landowner or sponsor requesting an agreement**

The letter should be addressed to:

**Harris County Flood Control District
Property Management Department**
9900 Northwest Freeway
Houston, TX 77092

Once the letter is received, approval takes approximately 60 to 90 days and includes the following steps:

1. The Flood Control District's Property Management Department reviews the request to verify that the Flood Control District owns the property in fee and to determine if the type of agreement sought (Adopt-a-Lot, Landscaping Maintenance or Neighborhood Recreation Area) is an appropriate use for the property.
2. After the review is conducted, an agreement is drafted by the Flood Control District and provided to the adjacent landowner or sponsor for review and signature.
3. The adjacent landowner or sponsor returns the signed agreement to the Flood Control District.
4. The Flood Control District submits the signed agreement to Harris County Commissioners Court, which votes on the execution of the agreement.
5. The adjacent landowner or sponsor is notified of the approval or denial of the agreement. If approved, a copy of the executed agreement is provided.
6. Once the agreement is executed, the adjacent landowner or sponsor provides the Flood Control District with proof of general liability insurance on the property, if required.

For more information about the Open Space Program,
contact the Flood Control District's Property
Management Department at:

Harris County Flood Control District

Property Management Department
Community Services Section
9900 Northwest Freeway
Houston, TX 77092

713-684-4000

HCFCDD.org

