

Open Space Program

Opportunities in Your Neighborhood



Creating Opportunity

New strategies to reduce flood risk in response to major storm events have created unique opportunities for Harris County neighborhoods.

The Harris County Flood Control District works with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Texas Division of Emergency Management to purchase homes to reduce future flood damage. The program allows the District to provide flood damage reduction more quickly than ever before, by buying and removing severely damaged homes from flood-prone areas. Once the land has been purchased by the District, FEMA requires that these properties "MUST BE FOREVER DEDICATED AND MAINTAINED AS OPEN SPACE." The District hopes to see these lands used to accommodate community needs. Opportunities abound for their use.

Managing Acquired Property

The District prefers to allow acquired properties to revert to their natural state, mowing to the extent required for health and safety. When these properties are scattered in subdivisions with remaining homes, individual homeowners may want to extend their yard, establish a garden, or otherwise use the property. By entering into an agreement, residents can provide a higher standard of maintenance than can be directly justified by the District.

Agreement Types

Any of the described agreements begins with a request from an adjacent landowner. A simple signed letter providing the following information will start the process:

- Type of agreement sought
- Address of the property
- Address and phone number of the requestor.

The letter should be addressed to the Harris County Flood Control District Property Management Department, 9900 Northwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77092.

An **Adopt-a-Lot** agreement allows neighbors to enter a property for the purpose of mowing and picking up litter. No insurance is required and no fees are involved.

A **Landscaping Maintenance Agreement** allows neighbors to plant shrubs, trees, and plants, or to engage in other FEMA approved open space uses. There is no fee for use, but a general liability policy is required.

An **Encroachment Lease Agreement** allows adjoining property owners an exclusive right to District fee properties for personal use. The lessee may enclose the area with fences and may put up structures such as swing sets that are consistent with open space use. Insurance is required and there is an annual fee for use of the property.

In addition to individual lots, larger tracts of land may be available for park-like uses such as tree plantings, ball fields, and bird sanctuaries. Organizations interested in particular tracts should contact the Property Management Department at 713-684-4000 to explore the opportunities.

Contact Us

Have a question of your own? Call the District's Property Management Department at 713-684-4000. Staff will be happy to provide more information on the program, clarify eligible uses for a property or provide a speaker for your organization.

Please direct inquiries regarding maintenance of District owned buyout properties to the District's Citizen Service Center at 713-684-4197

AGREEMENT TYPES

- Adopt-a-Lot
- Landscaping Maintenance
- Encroachment Lease



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