

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO CHAPTER 19 OF THE HOUSTON CODE OF ORDINANCES; PROS & CONS

Revisions to Chapter 19	Notes	Pros	Cons
Prohibits net fill in the 500-year floodplain; allows fill if it does not impact or impede the 100-year overland sheet flow in the watershed	Currently, Chapter 19 and the Infrastructure Design Manual prohibit net fill in the 100-year floodplain, but allows fill in the 500-year; adding fill decreases the detention on any given property, and increases the risk of flooding to other properties.	Net fill within the floodplain reduces the amount of flood storage and has the potential to increase flows and base flood elevations along the bayou. Erosion to banks may result from increased flows, and more people downstream may flood.	Without bringing in fill, homeowners will be required to elevate the structure, for instance with pier and beam or crawlspace foundations, and this will add to the cost of constructing a home or improvement.
Proposed revisions would require all new construction after the effective date (anything that increases the footprint, and rebuilds) to be elevated to the 500-year flood elevation + 2 feet	Currently, Chapter 19 of the Houston Code of Ordinances only regulates the 100-year flood plain, and requires structures to be constructed to the 100-year flood level + 1 foot. The effect of these proposed revisions will be to require anyone living in the 100-year or 500-year floodplain to elevate new structures (or new improvements that expand the footprint) to the 500-year flood level + 2 feet. Those living in the 500-year could increase the footprint up to 1/3 without having to elevate the addition. Only the 100-year would have to elevate if there is substantial damage or substantial improvement to the structure (both measured in \$\$\$, ≥50%).	Minimize the risk of flooding; future reduction in flood insurance premiums under the National Flood Insurance Program (or maintain discounts received by Houston residents); creation of a safe space in case of future flooding (the elevated addition); aligns with FEMA's Higher Standards initiative and may result in the lowering of Houston's Community Rating Score, which might provide a greater discount on flood insurance premiums.	Cost of raising structure on pier and beam. For every \$1,000 increase in the cost of a home, 4,000 qualified buyers are priced out, so this may have an effect on affordable housing stock in the city of Houston and continue to drive development out into the suburbs.  Pier and beam foundations may result in less of the lot being capable of being built upon. Houston allows a home to have steps no more than 5 feet in front of the front building line. In some areas, deed restrictions could prohibit steps being constructed in front of the building line. With over 10

			<p>steps required for a finish floor height of 500-year plus 2 feet, a property owner would have to push their home back on the lot, resulting in a smaller home, less value, and lower ad valorem taxes.</p> <p>Additional permitting costs.</p> <p>Additional regulatory requirements add cost and time to any project.</p> <p>Aesthetics of having one home on the block raised up seven feet destroys the feeling of the neighborhood.</p> <p>Unmarketability or limitation of the market for an elevated home may result in the reduction of property values and thus tax revenues for the city.</p> <p>Raised homes may lead to ADA compliance issues, and may not be attractive to the disabled or elderly, taking a huge population out of the prospective buyers' market</p>
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<p>Proposed revisions would apply the floodplain management regulations contained in Chapter 19 to the 500-year floodplain (currently they only apply to the 100-year floodplain)</p>	<p>Currently the regulations in Chapter 19 of the Houston Code of Ordinances only apply to property contained within the 100-year floodplain. These will now be applied throughout the 500-year floodplain. Included in these regulations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prohibitions against the long-term placement of recreational vehicles in the 500-year floodplain (Sec. 19-3);</li> <li>• obtaining a floodplain development permit prior to beginning any construction (Sec. 19-11 &amp; 19-16 to 19-19);</li> <li>• obtaining floodproofing certificate (Sec. 19-12(1));</li> <li>• obtaining other licenses, approvals and permits (Sec. 19-12(3));</li> <li>• standards for new construction in the 500-year floodplain (Sec. 19-32) such as anchors to prevent flotation or lateral movement;</li> </ul>	<p>Reduces the financial impact of flooding; some health and safety issues, such as eliminating any infiltration of floodwaters into water supply or sanitary sewer.</p>	<p>Additional cost and delays associated with compliance and obtaining other licenses, approvals and permits.</p>

	<p>materials must be resistant to flood damage; electrical, heating, ventilation, plumbing and air conditions equipment must be elevated; water and sanitary sewer systems must be designed to prevent infiltration of floodwaters;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limitations on the use of the enclosed areas below the lowest floor;</li> <li>• submission of topographical map;</li> <li>• See Sec. 19-33(b) for additional requirements in the 500-year floodplain re: elevation of utilities for additional or new construction of any residential structure;</li> <li>• garages must follow Sec. 19-32(8); if not elevated, they must be designed to equalize hydrostatic flood forces on exterior walls by allowing for the entry and exit of floodwaters; designs must be certified by a registered architect or PE; garages have a minimum of two openings having a total net area of not less than one square inch for every square foot of enclosed area subject to flooding, with the top of all such openings no higher than one foot above grade or base flood elevation, whichever is lower</li> <li>• many regulations for manufactured homes</li> </ul>		
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