

**HARRIS COUNTY COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TASK FORCE REVISED BYLAWS  
(Bylaws)**

The Harris County Flood Control Task Force was created by an Order of the Harris County Commissioners Court (Commissioners Court) dated October 12, 1972 to advise and recommend to the Harris County government policies and programs to adequately protect homes and businesses from the hazards of flooding and facilitate economic development.

As of [date], 2020, the Harris County Flood Control Task Force is hereby renamed the Harris County Community Resilience Task Force (Community Resilience Task Force) and the Bylaws are hereby revised to promote more diverse, equitable community input and engagement and an increased scope of responsibility related to Harris County’s infrastructure resilience efforts.

The Bylaws are revised in conjunction with Commissioners Court’s approval on [date] to establish an Infrastructure Resilience Team (IRT), comprised of various Harris County departments, to develop and guide implementation of a 2050 Harris County Flood and Infrastructure Resilience Plan (Resilience Plan) consistent with the 2019 Harris Thrives Resolution. The Resilience Plan is proposed to enhance Harris County’s capacity for infrastructure resilience and establish a more comprehensive resilience-driven approach to infrastructure development for Harris County. The Resilience Plan is also proposed to specify goals and objectives for and address areas of infrastructure resilience, including flood resilience, localized drainage, energy and telecommunications, facilities maintenance, water efficiency, transportation, affordable housing, recreation and open space, future land use, and related intergovernmental coordination. Equity, health, safety, meaningful community engagement, and transparent and open communication will serve as the foundation of the plan and Harris County’s resilience efforts more broadly.

The Community Resilience Task Force and the IRT are designed to work together to promote multidisciplinary resilience across Harris County. Both entities will also aim to collaborate with relevant departments of the City of Houston, other municipalities, and surrounding counties, where applicable and possible. The IRT shall collaborate with the Community Resilience Task Force on the development and implementation of the Resilience Plan.

The previous bylaws of the Harris County Flood Control District Task Force are no longer in effect and are replaced in their entirety by the following:

**ARTICLE I**

**NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS**

1. The name of this organization shall be the Harris County Community Resilience Task Force (Community Resilience Task Force).
2. The mailing address of the Community Resilience Task Force shall be: Harris County Community Resilience Task Force, [address], Houston, Texas [zip code].

## **ARTICLE II**

### **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

3. **Overall Purpose:** To act as an advisory board to the IRT and, in turn and as appropriate, Commissioners Court on matters related to planning, projects, and other efforts concerning infrastructure resilience in Harris County that includes a wide range of stakeholders reflecting a diversity of experience and geographic, socioeconomic, and demographic attributes.
4. **Commissioners Court Items and Specific Project Approvals:** To review and provide feedback on any IRT department's resilience-related activities and projects, with a focus on upcoming activities and projects expected to be considered by Commissioners Court for potential approval of any stage of such activities and projects; and to facilitate transparency and accountability and provide oversight on timelines, progress, and outcomes related to projects approved by Commissioners Court.
5. **Resilience Plan and Overall Approach to Resilience:** To review and provide feedback on Harris County's overall approach to resilience by Harris County and the IRT departments, and to support those entities' efforts to take a comprehensive and holistic approach, including by evaluating and providing input to the IRT on the creation and future development of the Resilience Plan, as well as the design, planning, and implementation of related resilience projects by providing additional expertise and experience in a variety of relevant fields.
6. **Funding Strategies and Equity in Spending Priorities:** To review and provide feedback on the equitable and effective expenditure of flood mitigation and other resilience funds related to Harris County's future resilience planning efforts, the development of future local funding strategies, and the pursuit of partnership funds from local, state, and federal sources.
7. **Community Engagement:** To create and maintain robust pathways for community engagement—especially from impacted and underserved communities—to improve the overall effectiveness of resilience-related projects, programs, and regulations developed and implemented by Harris County.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **(A) Composition and Qualifications**

8. The Community Resilience Task Force shall consist of seventeen (17) members who shall serve in an advisory capacity to Commissioners Court and represent the geographic, racial, gender, age, and ethnic diversity of Harris County, are residents of Harris County, have a

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demonstrated interest in serving the community, and, where possible, meet one or more of the following qualifications:

- a. Be able to effectively represent one or more larger Harris County communities impacted by flood-related or infrastructure disruptions and resilience efforts.
  - b. Have a demonstrated knowledge of or interest in equitable and sustainable infrastructure resilience or flood mitigation.
  - c. Have a demonstrated knowledge of or interest in the socioeconomic and demographic factors that affect the resilience of communities.
9. At least three (3) Community Resilience Task Force members must represent the experiences and/or perspectives of low-income neighborhoods, historically underrepresented communities, and/or one or more socially vulnerable populations as defined by the Social Vulnerability Index developed by the Centers for Disease Control<sup>1</sup>.
  10. At least three (3) Community Resilience Task Force members must have technical expertise in areas related to equitable and/or environmentally sustainable infrastructure resilience and/or flood mitigation.
  11. The Community Resilience Task Force must include at least one member from each of the eight competency areas in Appendix A to the Bylaws. Any of these eight members can also satisfy the requirements in Section 9 and 10 above.

### **(B) Selection Process**

12. The five (5) members of Commissioners Court will each appoint one (1) Community Resilience Task Force member. These five (5) Community Resilience Task Force members will also lead the selection process for the remaining twelve (12) members. Initial appointments will be made at the first Commissioners Court of September 2020.
13. The five (5) members appointed by Commissioners Court will serve as the Selection Committee for and appoint the remaining twelve (12) members of the Community Resilience Task Force in accordance with the Composition and Membership criteria described above. Initial such appointments will be made by the Selection Committee by no later than [date], the date of the first Commissioners Court of November 2020.

### **(C) Membership Terms**

14. To provide continuity and stability, the Community Resilience Task Force membership terms will be staggered. The five (5) members appointed by Commissioners Court shall normally serve a two-year term but shall initially be appointed to places one through five,

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry/ Geospatial Research, Analysis, and Services Program. Social Vulnerability Index 2018 Database United States. [data-and-tools-download.html](#). Accessed on July 19, 2020.

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as follows, with odd numbered places serving for two years and even numbered places serving for one year:

- a. Place 1: County Judge (two-year for first term and two-year terms thereafter)
  - b. Place 2: Commissioner Precinct 1 (one-year for first term and two-year terms thereafter)
  - c. Place 3: Commissioner Precinct 2 (two-year for first term and two-year terms thereafter)
  - d. Place 4: Commissioner Precinct 3 (one-year for first term and two-year terms thereafter)
  - e. Place 5: Commissioner Precinct 4 (two-year for first term and two-year terms thereafter)
15. The remaining twelve (12) members shall also normally serve two-year terms except that initially six (6) shall be appointed for a one-year term and six (6) shall be appointed for a two-year term as follows. If, for any reason, there is a delay in a reappointment for expiring terms, the existing member shall continue to serve until a reappointment is made.
- a. Places 1 through 6 (two-year first term and two-year terms thereafter)
  - b. Places 7 through 12 (one-year first term and two-year terms thereafter)
16. Members are allowed to serve a total of three (3) terms consecutively, which will include one-year terms as outlined in Sections 14 and 15 above.
17. In the event a member of the Community Resilience Task Force is no longer able to serve, the organization or entity to which that member belongs will have an opportunity to nominate another member to fill that vacancy. Otherwise, interim vacancies will be recruited and appointed by the Selection Committee to fill the balance of the unexpired term.

### **(D) Deliberation Processes**

18. For the purposes of making recommendations or otherwise transmitting information to Commissioners Court, the Community Resilience Task Force will work by consensus, a method of making decisions through which a group strives to reach substantial, though not necessarily unanimous, agreement on matters of overall direction and policy.
19. If consensus is deemed not possible by the group, the Community Resilience Task Force will allow for a majority vote to provide the basis for a decision. When a vote is taken, each member's vote shall be recorded in writing even when votes are made by verbal assent. In the case of a majority vote, the Community Resilience Task Force will provide the opportunity for minority reports to be submitted and included in meeting notes.
20. The Community Resilience Task Force may establish its own rules and operating procedures (consistent with the Bylaws), such as for providing feedback, reports, or recommendations to the IRT and to Commissioners Court, as appropriate.

**(E) Roles and Responsibilities**

The Community Resilience Task Force shall, among other things:

21. Prepare and submit one or more reports annually to the IRT and to Commissioners Court summarizing the work and recommendations of the Community Resilience Task Force.
22. Review and provide input on, as well as make recommendations to the IRT and, in turn and as appropriate, Commissioners Court regarding future infrastructure resilience-related projects, activities, expenditures, funding strategies, and overall planning efforts that are consistent with the purposes of the Community Resilience Task Force; and facilitate transparency and accountability to ensure projects are being carried out as intended by Commissioners Court.
23. Serve as liaisons and ambassadors to communities across Harris County and recommend to Commissioners Court methods to increase public awareness regarding Harris County's infrastructure resilience efforts.
24. Create other such ad hoc or technical Work Groups or Subcommittees, which may contain individuals who are not members of the Community Resilience Task Force, as the Community Resilience Task Force deems appropriate for the furtherance of its function.
25. Prepare rules and procedures as necessary to carry out the business of the Community Resilience Task Force.
26. Attend all regularly scheduled meetings of the Community Resilience Task Force.

**ARTICLE IV**

**INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCE TEAM**

27. The IRT consists of one representative from each of the Harris County Engineering Department, the Harris County Flood Control District, the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Harris County Toll Road Authority, the Harris County Community Services Department, Harris County Public Health, and the Harris County Office of Economic Equity and Opportunity.
28. The Community Resilience Task Force and the IRT shall work together to promote multidisciplinary resilience across Harris County. All members of the IRT shall serve the Community Resilience Task Force in a supporting, coordinating, and non-voting capacity.
29. To support the work of the Community Resilience Task Force, the IRT shall furnish informational materials to the Community Resilience Task Force members consistent with Article V(B) below and respond to Community Resilience Task Force members' requests for public information intended to facilitate their research and preparation of reports and to

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otherwise further the purposes and responsibilities of the Community Resilience Task Force, as defined in Articles II and III(E) above.

30. The IRT will also develop an annual inventory of infrastructure resilience-related projects and activities being considered, developed, and/or implemented by Harris County, with support from and for consideration by the Community Resilience Task Force members.

### **ARTICLE V**

#### **MEETINGS**

##### **(A) Meeting Protocols**

31. Community Resilience Task Force meetings are not subject to the Open Meetings Act (Op. Tex. Att’y Gen. No. GA-0504 (2007)). Since an open and transparent government is the basis of an open and robust democracy, however, the meetings, records, and activities of the Community Resilience Task Force shall be open to the public to the fullest extent allowable under law.
32. The Community Resilience Task Force shall hold meetings once every other month for a total of at least six (6) times per year, and more frequently if circumstances dictate, and shall:
  - a. Give written notice of the date, hour, place, and subject of each of its meetings in accordance with Tex. Gov’t Code Ann. § 551.041;
  - b. Post changes to these regularly scheduled meetings shall be posted online at: [website];
  - c. Provide a set amount of time during each meeting for public comment, as determined by the Chair and Co-Chair.
33. The Community Resilience Task Force Secretary (as defined in Article VI below) shall maintain attendance records documenting member absences. If a member is unable to attend a scheduled meeting, notification must be provided to the Chair and Staff Coordinator at least two (2) days prior to the meeting. Any member of the Community Resilience Task Force may be removed by Commissioners Court with or without cause.
34. A quorum is required to conduct business and make decisions at meetings and is defined as 50% of appointed membership, plus one (e.g., the quorum would be nine (9) if there are seventeen (17) appointed members). Meetings may take place in person or virtually.

##### **(B) Meeting Agendas**

35. The Chair will conduct meetings and populate and distribute agendas in collaboration with the Secretary. Any Community Resilience Task Force member or IRT department director can submit items for inclusion on an agenda.

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36. Items to be included on a Community Resilience Task Force Meeting agenda are to be submitted to the Chair and Secretary, with a copy to each of the IRT department directors or their chosen representatives, at least eight (8) days prior to the upcoming Community Resilience Task Force meeting at which it will be discussed. Agenda items regarding individual projects should be explained in the context of overall resilience goals.
37. Any infrastructure resilience-related items that will go before Commissioners Court should be placed on the Community Resilience Task Force agenda in advance of being considered by Commissioners Court to permit Community Resilience Task Force members to review, provide feedback, and, if appropriate, make a recommendation to Commissioners Court regarding the item in question.
38. Any item placed on the agenda for discussion will require that any and all Harris County department heads involved with that item will attend that Community Resilience Task Force Meeting prepared to address the item, as appropriate.
39. The IRT shall furnish Community Resilience Task Force members with informational materials regarding upcoming infrastructure resilience-related activities or projects, consistent with Article II above, no less than thirty (30) days before the item will be considered by Commissioners Court.
40. The IRT shall furnish Community Resilience Task Force members with all informational materials regarding the Resilience Plan that will permit members to evaluate and provide guidance to the IRT and Commissioners Court in the creation, implementation, and future development of the Resilience Plan and other overall infrastructure planning efforts, consistent with Article II above.

### **ARTICLE VI**

#### **OFFICERS**

41. The Community Resilience Task Force will elect the Chair, the Vice-Chair, and the Secretary from among its seventeen (17) members at its first meeting. Each of these three officers will serve a one-year term.
42. The Chair, the Vice-Chair, and the Secretary are tasked with overseeing the development of meeting agendas and ensuring that operating procedures are followed at each meeting. The Chair will be the principal officer of the Community Resilience Task Force and will preside at all meetings. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will preside.
43. If the Chair and the Vice-Chair are both absent or unable to perform their duties, the Community Resilience Task Force may appoint a Chair *pro tem*.
44. It will be the Chair's responsibility to:
  - a. Preside at each of the meetings of the Community Resilience Task Force;

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- b. Provide notice of all Community Resilience Task Force meetings to the IRT and the Harris County Attorney.
  - c. Oversee the activities of any Work Groups or Subcommittees (as defined in Article III(G) above) established by the Community Resilience Task Force to complete tasks or prepare analysis required for effective decision making; and
  - d. Present Community Resilience Task Force recommendations to Commissioners Court.
45. It will be the Secretary's responsibility to:
- a. Maintain written minutes that record all actions taken by the Community Resilience Task Force and the reasons for taking such actions;
  - b. Keep and, when required, call roll at Community Resilience Task Force meetings;
  - c. Maintain an inventory of all Work Groups and Subcommittees, all standing and special rules, as well as copies of the Bylaws;
  - d. Process Community Resilience Task Force requests for information to facilitate Community Resilience Task Force research and preparation of reports to effectuate the purposes and responsibilities of the Community Resilience Task Force.
46. The Chair, the Vice Chair, or the Secretary may resign at any time by giving written notice thereof to the Chair or the Secretary. A vacancy shall be filled by a member of the Community Resilience Task Force for the unexpired portion of the elected term at the first regular meeting after the vacancy occurs.

### **ARTICLE VII**

#### **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

47. The Office of the Harris County Attorney shall be the attorney for the Community Resilience Task Force. The Office of the Harris County Attorney shall be notified seven (7) days in advance of all meetings and the Harris County Attorney or his designee may be present at meetings, at the office's discretion.

### **ARTICLE VIII**

#### **AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS**

48. Task Force Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the Community Resilience Task Force or by a majority vote of Commissioners Court. Any amendments to these bylaws should be reviewed by the Harris County Attorney and transmitted to Commissioners Court for any feedback prior to being ratified by the Community Resilience Task Force.

**APPENDIX A**

<b>Competency Area</b>	<b>Description of Particular Competency Needs</b>
Housing or Land Use	Expert or experience in the Fair Housing Act, housing justice, housing equity, homelessness, public housing, and/or affordable housing.
Health	Expert or experience in public health, health equity, mental and behavioral health, and/or a related field.
Engineering/Construction	Expert or experience in sustainable urban infrastructure systems, equitable infrastructure, flood resilience and mitigation, and/or hazard mitigation for socially vulnerable populations.
Urban Design/Planning	Expert or experience in equitable planning for multi-modal transportation, land use, and green infrastructure networks.
Environment	Expert or experience in environmental justice, environmental equity, renewable energy, integrated climate adaptation, conservation, and/or pollution mitigation.
Community Leadership or Membership Organization	Represents a membership or grassroots organization with deep, authentic connections to local communities or populations with lived experience.
Social Justice	Represents an organization or interest group dedicated to ameliorating social and/or demographic inequalities and differentiated access to power, knowledge, and resources.
Other Regional Infrastructure	Expert or experience in water supply, future land use, localized drainage, energy and telecommunications, recreation and open space, or other regional infrastructure areas that are essential for advancing infrastructure resilience in Harris County.