

# Flood Control District Projects and Plans

Michael D. Talbott, P.E., Director

Harris County Flood Control District  
9900 Northwest Freeway  
Houston, Texas 77092  
Email: [hcfcd@hcfcd.org](mailto:hcfcd@hcfcd.org)

The Harris County Flood Control District (District) is a special purpose district created by the Texas legislature nearly 70 years ago. Its mission is to devise flood damage reduction plans, implement those plans, and maintain the infrastructure. The District strives to provide flood damage reduction projects that work, with appropriate regard for community and natural values.

The District derives its income primarily from a separate ad valorem tax on property in Harris County. It also secures income for projects from partnerships, grants, impact fees, and rents and royalties. That funding is used to pay for operations and maintenance of District facilities, debt service, and capital projects.

The District's 2006 tax rate is 3.241 cents per \$100 valuation. That tax rate is one of four rates set by the District's governing body – Harris County's Commissioners Court. The other rates are for Harris County (40.239 cents), Port of Houston (1.302 cents), and the Harris County Hospital District (19.216 cents). The combined tax rate for these four entities is 63.998 cents per \$100 valuation.

The District's ad valorem tax income pays for the operation and maintenance of the District and its facilities, and to cover debt service on bond sales. The District's Operations & Maintenance budget is about \$102 million and pays for the general operation and maintenance of the District and its facilities (salaries, maintenance, channel repairs, buildings, vehicles, etc).

The District's debt service relates to bonds that are sold for capital improvement projects. Prior to the early 1990s, the District's capital improvement projects were funded from voter approved bonds and some of that debt still remains. The District was on a pay-as-you-go basis for its capital improvement program from the early 1990s until 2001. In 2001, the District entered into a "Flood Control Projects Agreement with Harris County" under which the District builds flood damage reduction projects on behalf of the County, and the County agrees to pledge a portion of its tax rate to repay any debt created.

Capital projects spending since Fiscal Year 2001 (March 1, 2000 through February 2001) through February 2007 totals about \$600 million. In FY 2007 the District worked on about 160 projects or project elements and spent about \$100 million on capital projects. In addition to the District's spending since March 2000, the Corps of Engineers has spent about \$200 million in projects within Harris County, bringing the total to about \$800 million.

Examples of major capital projects underway during FY 2007 include major storm water detention basin construction in the Armand, Halls, White Oak, Brays, and Greens watersheds. Major channel construction was also conducted on Brays, Sims, and White Oak bayous, and Vogel Creek.

The District recently received an additional \$195 million in funding capabilities from a combination of about \$100 million from the Flood Control Projects Agreement and the sale of \$95 million in HCFCD bonds. The new funding will be programmed against a near-term candidate project list that totals \$482 million. The candidate project list is part of a larger list of identified needs that totals about \$1.5 billion (with more projects currently being identified).

The outlook for future funding is good for the operations and maintenance activities of the District. Capital project spending in this decade has been and phenomenal and unprecedented levels. Significant progress has been made at reducing the risk of flooding within many areas of the county. Recommended spending levels for flood damage reduction are \$200 million per year. Currently, there is not an identified source of reliable and predictable annual funding to support this level of spending.