



FEMA'S PRELIMINARY FLOODPLAIN MAPS FOR TRAVIS COUNTY DUE FOR RELEASE IN MARCH

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AUSTIN — The Federal Emergency Management Agency has rescheduled the release of preliminary new maps of the floodplain in Travis County to March 2006.

In preparation, the Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition is hosting an open house from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 14, 2005, at the Westside Service Center, 4501 N. FM 620. Contractors from FEMA and representatives from other organizations will provide a status report on the mapping project, discuss flood insurance options and answer questions.

FEMA is making floodplain maps for about 20,000 communities nationwide to help predict where floods are likely to occur. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have delayed the release of FEMA's preliminary maps of Travis County floodplains. The maps initially had been planned for release this fall.

The Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition, for which LCRA provides administrative support, is holding the status and informational open house as a service to the community. The floodplain coalition is a group of more than 50 communities that include Austin and Travis County, Jonestown, Lago Vista, Lakeway, Mustang Ridge, Point Venture, San Leanna, Volente and Westlake Hills.

FEMA ranks Travis County in the top 10 percent of counties in the nation at risk for flood damage. The topography of the Hill Country contributes to flooding and the area's large and growing population increases the number of homes that are subject to repeated damage by floods.

The maps will include data from a lower Colorado River basin study that was sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and LCRA. The new maps are expected to place the base flood elevation for Lake Travis at 722 feet above mean sea level, which is six feet higher than elevations reflected by current maps.

Floodplain coalition officials urge property owners to get adequate flood insurance for their properties. The federally subsidized National Flood Insurance Program uses the maps to provide and rate flood insurance coverage to property owners within participating communities.

A 90-day appeal period will follow the release of preliminary maps. After the appeal period, FEMA will consider the appeals, finalize the maps and release a letter of final determination. Communities have six months from the date of a final determination letter to adopt maps by city ordinance or county court order.

For more information, property owners may contact their floodplain administrator, whose contact information can be found on the floodplain coalition Web site, www.TCRFC.org.