



Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition

FEMA's TRAVIS COUNTY FLOODPLAIN PRELIMINARY MAPS DUE FOR RELEASE IN FEBRUARY

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AUSTIN — The Federal Emergency Management Agency is expected to release new maps of the Travis County floodplain in February 2006.

FEMA is making new maps of the Lower Colorado River floodplain and about 20,000 communities nationwide to help predict where floods will likely occur.

“It’s a reality that flooding is occurring more frequently than when the previous studies took place in the 1970s,” said James Oakley, Chairman of the Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition. “We need the new maps to reduce flood-related damages and prevent loss of life.”

The maps are based on a preliminary study of the lower Colorado River Basin that was sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and LCRA. Support for the effort has come from the Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition, a group of more than 50 communities that include Travis County, and the cities of Austin, Wharton and Sunset Valley.

FEMA ranks Travis County in the top 10 percent of counties in the nation at risk for flood damages. The topography of the Hill Country contributes to flooding and the area’s high population and rapid growth increases the number of homes repeatedly damaged by floods.

The base flood elevation in Travis County is predicted to be 722 feet above mean sea level, which is six feet higher than older estimates. Property owners are being urged to get adequate flood insurance for the new elevation. The federally subsidized National Flood Insurance Program uses the maps to provide flood insurance coverage to communities.

Once FEMA releases the preliminary maps, a 90-day appeal period follows, during which property owners may appeal the findings of the map. 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 the letter to adopt the 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 TCRFC’s Web site, www.TCRFC.org.