



Department of Public Works and Engineering
Planning & Development Services Division

Floodplain Management Office

Frequently Asked Questions about: Mitigation

Are there different kinds of mitigation required by the City?

Yes.

Storm Water Detention Mitigation is required to offset the amount of additional storm runoff from a site due to the increase in the amount of impervious cover (concrete, for example) on the ground. Chapter 9 of the Infrastructure Design Manual addresses this.

Fill Mitigation is required under Chapter 19 (Floodplain Ordinance) to offset the amount of fill material brought on to a site in the floodplain. The fill material that is placed between the elevation of natural ground and the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) is what is regulated.

Floodway Conveyance Offset Volume is required under Chapter 19 (Floodplain Ordinance) to offset the potential loss of conveyance in the floodway due to new construction on vacant land.

Why is Fill Mitigation important?

The Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) serves dual purposes which include the storage of floodwaters and movement of flows downstream. Unregulated fill within the floodplain reduces the amount of flood storage and has the potential to increase flows and BFE's along the stream. The fill mitigation serves to maintain no net overall loss of floodplain storage.

Do I have to dig a hole on my property to provide fill mitigation?

No. Construction of a basin area or "hole" is the traditional option. Creating landscape low areas or ponds are also options that must be demonstrated with topographic surveys and engineered designs. However, standing water area in a permanent pond cannot be counted for mitigation but area between the water surface and natural ground can be.

Are there any other considerations on my site?

The purpose of the fill mitigation area is to provide storage for floodwaters. This requires the mitigation area be connected to the drainage system so floodwaters can enter and leave the area. Annual certifications and/or inspections of mitigation areas are required.

Can I provide more mitigation capacity than I need for my site and sell the rest?

Yes. Excess mitigation capacity can be reserved by the applicant for their future use on their own site or could be sold/transferred for mitigation on another property. Approval of a transfer of this excess capacity is required from the City Engineer's Office; the sites must be within the same sub-watershed and within a ¼ mile of each other.

For fees and more information, contact the City of Houston Floodplain Management Office (FMO) at (832) 394-8854, come by the FMO at 1002 Washington Avenue or check out the Floodplain Information on the web at http://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/notices/flood_plain_guidelines.html