

Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Designated Floodplain

To: All interested Agencies (FEMA, U.S. EPA Region 6, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Harris County Flood Control District) and the Public at Large, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that **The City of Houston Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), as Responsible Entity under 24 CFR Part 58**, has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection. The activity is funded under **HOME Multifamily New Construction Program, HUD Grant No. M-21-MC-48-0206**.

The proposed project is located at the **Northeast Side of Bissonnet St. and W Sam Houston Parkway S, Houston, Harris County, Texas 77036**. HCAD numbers **1279820010003, 1279820010002, 1279820010006 and 1279820010004**. Property is in the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain, as described in HUD's Final Rule effective May 23, 2024. The extent of the FFRMS floodplain was determined using the 0.2 percent floodplain approach after determining Climate Informed Science Approach (CISA) data was not available at this location. The proposed activity entails the acquisition of approximately 5.112 acres of vacant land and the new construction of a 121- unit affordable multifamily apartment complex known as Bissonnet Living (see Project Description).

Project Description: Bissonnet Living will consist of 121 new construction units in affordable multifamily development. The apartments will be comprised of two (2) four-story buildings and include one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom units with a full kitchen and private entrances from the interior hallway. Amenities include 216 parking spaces, a clubhouse with management/leasing and maintenance offices, swimming pool, dog park, playground, and an outdoor area with a cabana. The project will provide rent based on incomes ranging from 30% to 80% AML for 98 units and market rate for the remaining 23 units.

The floodplain type located on the project site is entirely 0.2 percent (500-year) floodplain without floodway, 1 percent (100-year) floodplain, or wetlands present on the property. The entirety of the 5.112 acres of the site is within the 0.2 percent (500-year) floodplain. Existing natural and beneficial functions (e.g. floodwater storage and conveyance, groundwater discharge or recharge, erosion control, water quality maintenance, and habitat for flora and fauna) are relatively limited due to previous disturbance and existing site elevations. Furthermore, since the site is in a designated urbanized area, intrinsic values (e.g. recreational, educational, scientific, historic, and cultural) of the floodplain potentially adversely affected by the activity is limited.

HCD has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial functions and intrinsic values of the existing floodplain: This particular site was initially selected over other sites

considered based on the availability for purchase, price of land, zoning status, area of opportunity and preference low-income housing tax credit, financing eligibility, local affordability, and the characteristics of floodplain size and type on the lot. Alternatives to building on the site considered include: **(1) Selecting a lot of similar size and development status outside of the floodplain.** Alternative sites were not chosen based on lack of low-income housing credit within the City of Houston. The Bissonnet site was selected through the Notice of Funding Availability and was awarded low-income housing tax credits by Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) in 2024. **(2) Designing the project with modifications to minimize floodplain impacts.** Considering the property is entirely within the FFRMS floodplain, complete avoidance of the floodplain is not an option. The current elevation of the property is already at or above the 0.2% flood elevation, so there is no need for additional fill to raise the new improvements above the flood risk. **(3) No action alternative.** The No Action Alternative, which entails building no project at all, is contrary to the mission and spirit of HUD to provide quality affordable housing to those who need it. It would fail to offer the attempted efforts to ensure floodplain avoidance (a 100% floodplain-free building footprint), and it would fail to offer affordable housing.

With all alternatives considered, the option was chosen to continue the project as designed with the following mitigation measures to be taken to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial functions and intrinsic values of the existing floodplain: **(1) Elevation.** The existing ground elevation of the property is approximately at the 500-year base flood elevation (BFE) of 68 feet. The new buildings will have finished floor elevations in exceedance of 4 feet above the closest 100-year BFE of 66.5 feet, which exceeds both HUD and the City of Houston's floodplain requirements. **(2) Floodplain mitigation design and preservation.** Impact to the floodplain will be minimized by capturing and managing stormwater for a 500-year flood in a new onsite stormwater detention system. In addition, all plants are specific to this planting zone and used throughout the City of Houston. They should meet or exceed the HUD's request for native plantings and meet the city of Houston's minimum requirements. **(3) Protecting lives and property.** In addition to the above, storm inlets are strategically placed in affected drive aisles to ensure effective storm drainage and protect ingress and egress. Emergency plans have been implemented to protect life during emergencies, including flooding. **(4) Adherence to federal and local floodplain guidelines.** All design plans will adhere to all HUD and City of Houston floodplain guidelines (Chapter 19), defaulting to the most conservative option when appropriate. This includes one above ground detention pond, three (3) below ground detention tanks, and a stormwater pump which discharges detained stormwater into the city storm water sewer.

HCD has reevaluated alternatives to building in the floodplain and has determined that it has no practicable alternative to floodplain development. Environmental files documenting compliance with Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, are available for public inspection, review, and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplain and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide

information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplain can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplain, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by HCD at the following address on or before **March 10, 2025: City of Houston Housing & Community Development Dept., 2100 Travis St., Houston, TX 77004. Attention: HCD Environmental Team.** A full description of the project may also be reviewed from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM at the address listed above or upon request to hcdenvironmental@houstontx.gov. Comments or questions may also be submitted via email at the same email address or (832) 394-6319.

Date: **March 3, 2025.**