

LOOK UPSTREAM

AUGUST 2006

What are your views on where our focus and resources in Harris County should be concentrated *if we are to achieve and maintain neighborhood prosperity in the years ahead?* Long neglected quality of life issues are critical determinates of a community's success according to Stephen L. Klineberg, Professor of Sociology, Rice University.

A local survey by Richard Murray, Professor of Political Science at the University of Houston was conducted in the spring of 2003 in conjunction with a gathering of 900 area residents who spent almost a full day discussing 30 different goals for the future of the Houston area. **An 89 percent majority called on the Mayor and City Council of Houston "to initiate a process to develop a coordinated plan for the city's future."** When asked to rate 12 aspects of life in the Houston area, the respondents gave their lowest ratings to:

- "air quality" (87% = fair or poor)
- "drainage or flood control" (83% = negative ratings)
- "mobility or ability to get around the city" (22% = negative)

More than 62 percent of the voters surveyed said they were greatly

concerned that **"there is not enough vision or planning dealing with local problems."**

(Source: Environmental Exchange, July 2003. a newsletter published by the Citizens' Environmental Council).

Located within Harris County's largest watershed, neighboring subdivision home owner associations and municipal utility districts formed a grass roots, proactive alliance for the very reasons highlighted 4 years later in this survey. Known as the Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition, they have undertaken to provide stewardship and promote community participation throughout the watershed in guiding our Harris County officials in local flood protection and environmental / floodplain corridor preservation. The 9-member Board of Directors and 5 standing committees are your neighbors who meet monthly in the evening on the 3rd Wednesday where visions are created and planning is initiated. Their quality-of-life projects include:

- Computer modeling research to:
 - (1) Determine where flood waters will spread and how deep beyond the flood hazard risk areas presently shown on the soon-to-be- published, new FEMA flood insurance rate maps. (These become outdated as urban development occurs).
 - (2) Determine the effectiveness of Harris County flood land development regulations.
- Construction of regional floodwater detention basins in the upper watershed area as additional scope during ROW procurement and roadway construction of the U.S. 290 Northwest Corridor expansion.
- Development of the 37-mile "Cypress Creek Greenway" floodplain corridor of parks and trails.
- Analysis of financial budgeting and capital improvement planning (CIP) funding by Harris County.

Look Upstream articles are provided by the Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition, a 501(c) (3) organization as a public service. Visit their website, www.ccfcc.org for more information on flood insurance, flood protection planning, environmental preservation and membership. If your MUD is not a member, please ask them to join.

