

# FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT

City of North Richland Hills  
Public Works Department

North Richland Hills  
Public Works Department  
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NRH, TX 76180  
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# Floodplain Development

Structures within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) in a community participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) are subject to floodplain management regulations that impact building standards and are designed to minimize flood risk. In addition to federal standards, the City of North Richland Hills has ordinances in place which further govern development within the SFHA. These standards apply to new structures and to substantial improvements of existing structures. The City defines a substantial improvement as any reconstruction, rehabilitation, or addition to an existing structure, the cost of which exceeds 50 percent of the structure's appraised or market value (whichever the builder chooses to use).

## Key components of Floodplain Development:

- A Floodplain Development Permit is required for all work in the floodplain.
- A post construction finished floor Elevation Certificate is required for structures within the SFHA. This certification must be made by a Texas Registered Professional Surveyor, Engineer or Architect. The Elevation Certificate form and instructions can be downloaded by clicking the link above to FEMA's website, or a copy can be picked up at the Public Works Department.
- The Finished Floor elevation of structures within the SFHA must be a minimum of 18" above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE). A Base Flood Elevation can typically be provided by Public Works. In some cases, a BFE cannot be determined due to lack of hydraulic data.

## Floodplain Development Permit

Any activity performed in the floodplain must have a Floodplain Development Permit. This includes grading, filling, residential construction and commercial construction.

To obtain a permit you must complete a Floodplain Development Permit application. Applications can be picked up at the Planning and Inspections Department. Complete and return the form to the Planning and Inspections Department along with 3 sets of plans for the project. The plans must clearly show existing and proposed contours at the site with all elevations submitted in NAVD 1988 datum.



# Floodplain Development

## Residents/Homeowners

If your property lies within the SFHA, a Floodplain Development Permit is required for any work, including:

- Grading
- Filling
- Construction of new structures, including pools, gazebos, retaining walls, fences, additions to the home, etc.
- Paving

You may be required to bring your home into compliance with current floodplain development standards if:

1. Your home has been significantly damaged due to flooding, resulting in the need for substantial improvements, OR
2. You are proposing substantial improvements to your home such as an addition or renovation.

The City defines a substantial improvement as any reconstruction, rehabilitation, or addition to an existing structure, the cost of which exceeds 50 percent of the structure's appraised or market value (whichever the builder chooses to use).

City staff is available to make site visits, if requested, to review flooding and drainage issues. Contact the City Public Works Department at (817)427-6400 for further information and prior to undertaking any activity within the floodplain.



# Floodplain Development

## Developers

The City of North Richland Hills will issue building permits for property located in the FEMA designated floodplain if all of the City's and FEMA's regulation are met. There are two basic ways to get a building permit for property located in the floodplain. One method is to place fill dirt on the property to raise the Finish Floor (FF) of the structure higher than the Base Flood Elevation (BFE). The property can also be removed from the floodplain through the CLOMR/LOMR process.

If any portion of the proposed development or its offsite improvements (including pipes or ditches) fall within the limits of the FEMA floodplain, backwater calculations may be required. In addition:

- Proper hydraulic studies must be conducted to show that the rise in the 100-year Base Flood Elevation due the proposed development will be less than 12 inches.
- The proposed grading plan must be approved by the Public Works Department.
- All fill must be compacted per FEMA's requirements with compaction results furnished to the City. It is important to note that the placement of "fill" does not automatically remove the property from the floodplain. Therefore, flood insurance may still be required by the "lender". Only the CLOMR/LOMR process will revise the floodplain limits and remove the property from the floodplain.

Additional calculations in the form of a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) will be required if:

- Any portion of the proposed development is determined to be located within a FEMA Zone "A" floodplain, OR
- Any portion of the proposed development is determined to be located within a FEMA Zone "AE" floodplain and the overall development (including all phases) is 5 acres or larger, OR
- Any portion of the proposed improvements from a development include dredging or filling within a FEMA designated floodway.

Following approval of the CLOMR by FEMA, the improvements can be constructed. A LOMR will be required prior to issuing building permits for any lots within the current SFHA.

# Floodplain Development

## Building Permits:

Two options are available to builders to obtain a building permit for a structure currently located within a SFHA.

The first option is that the builder can wait until the LOMR is approved prior to getting a building permit for those lots located in the existing floodplain. (Building permits can be obtained on lots not in the designated floodplain.) The approval of the LOMR by FEMA "officially" removes the property from the 100-year floodplain and therefore does not place additional requirements on the builder in order for the permit to be issued. The City does not have any control over the FEMA review process and therefore cannot predict the length of the FEMA review process.

The second option for the builder is to submit a revised grading plan to the City indicating how the lots can be raised with "fill" so that the Finished Floor elevation is at least 18-inches higher than the existing Base Flood Elevation (the flood elevation prior to approval of the LOMR.) The builder will be allowed to get a building permit for those lots that are raised and comply with FEMA's criteria for building within a designated floodplain. If the lots are already 18-inches higher than the Base Flood Elevation, then no fill dirt will be required. The builders may be required to pay flood insurance until the LOMR is approved by FEMA.

If the structure is currently located in or adjacent to a FEMA designated SFHA the applicant must submit two Elevation Certificates:

1. With the form board survey before the slab is poured, AND
2. A post construction Finished Floor elevation certification prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy

These certifications must be made by a Texas Registered Professional Surveyor, Engineer or Architect. This must confirm that the Finished Floor of the actual construction is at least 18-inches above the BFE. Copies of previously submitted elevation certificates are available in the Public Works Department.



For more information please contact the  
Public Works Department at 817-427-6400.