

Development Services Department

BELLAIRE CITIZENS ACADEMY PRESENTATION

Our Mission

The Development Services Department is charged with the following:

- Providing for the community's health, safety, and welfare through the enforcement of building and health-related codes, as well as zoning regulations and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan
- Provide excellent customer service and expertise on questions relating to the above

What the Department Does

Development Services

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graph TD; A[Development Services] --- B[Permits & Inspections]; A --- C[Planning & Zoning]; A --- D[Code Compliance & Enforcement]; A --- E[Floodplain Administration];
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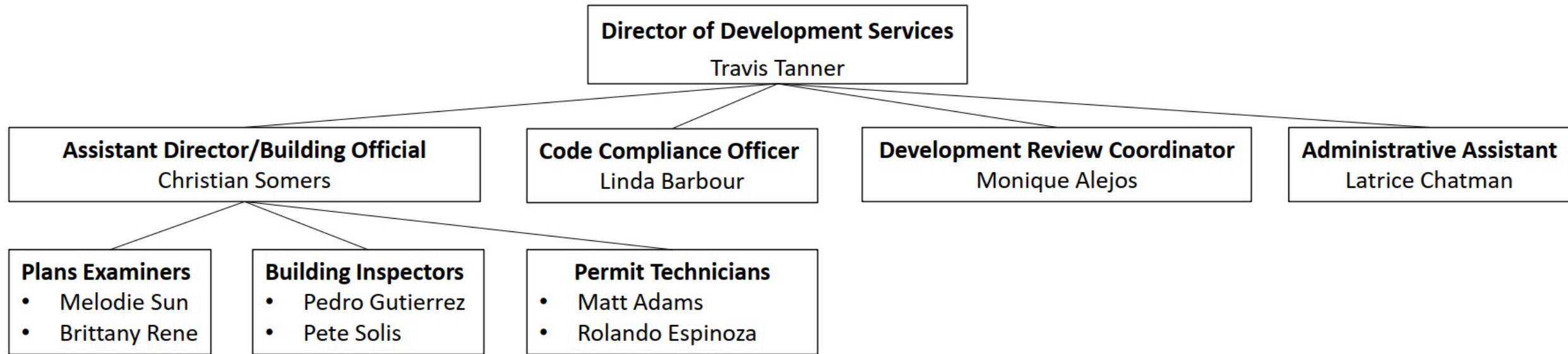
Permits & Inspections

Planning & Zoning

Code Compliance & Enforcement

Floodplain Administration

Development Services Organizational Chart



Development Services Overview

The department oversees the following for the City:

- Day-to-day operations (permits, inspections, etc.)
- Zoning and subdivision review
 - Plats
 - Plan reviews
 - Process zoning changes, variances, etc.
- Liaison to three (3) City Boards and Commissions
 - Planning and Zoning Commission
 - Building and Standards Commission
 - Board of Adjustment
- Enforcement of floodplain rules and regulations is a significant portion of the department's workload.

Zoning

What is Zoning?

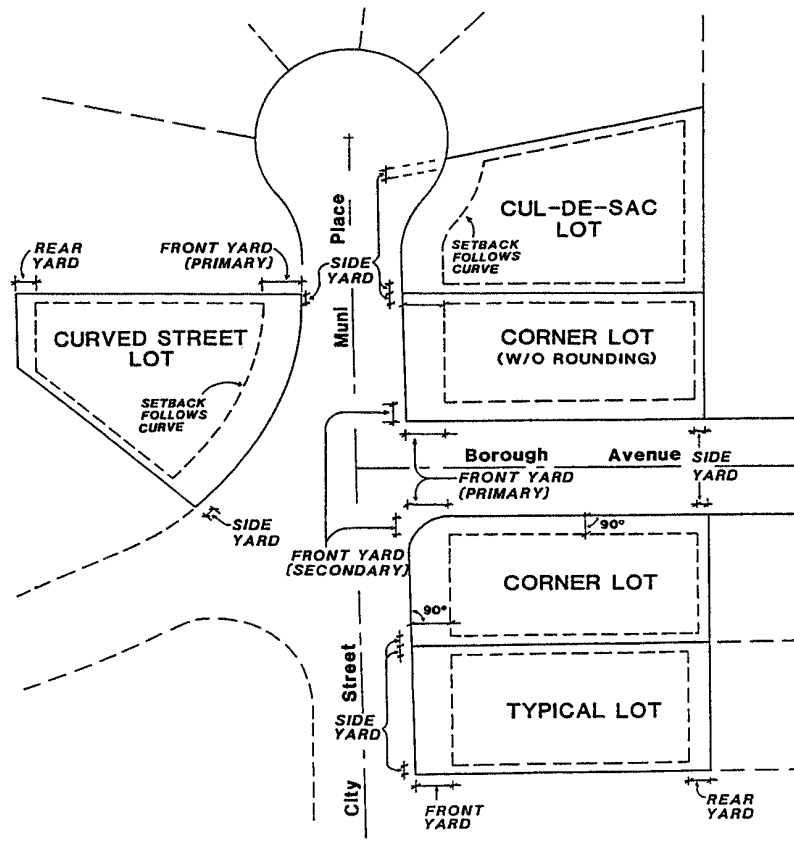
- The primary method by which local governments control the physical development of land and types of uses for which each individual property may be used. Zoning laws typically specify the areas in which residential, industrial, recreational, or commercial activities take place.

Zoning Regulation Basics

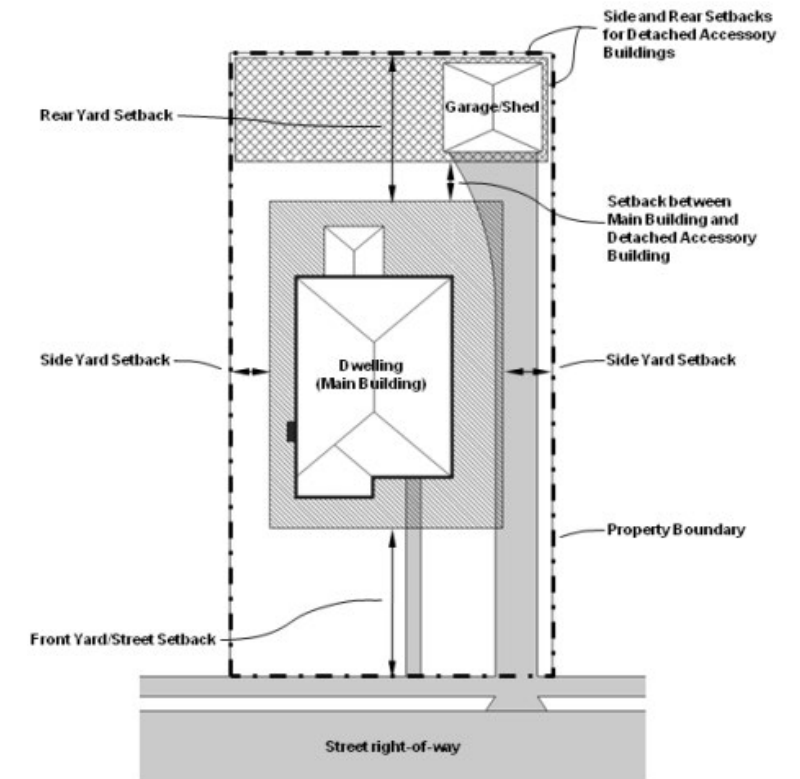
What makes for conforming development? Verifying:

- Front Setbacks
- Interior / Side Setbacks
- Rear Setbacks
- Lot Coverages (impervious vs. pervious area)
- Height
- Signage height, area & location

How Setbacks Work



Setback and Yard Requirements



Planning Tasks

- Office personnel consists of the Director, Development Review Coordinator, and Administrative Assistant
- Plans Examiners and Building Official/Assistant Director also critical to pre-development consultation and meetings
- Meets with developers and other interested parties to determine allowable and best uses for properties within the City, based on the City of Bellaire's Code of Ordinances and Comprehensive Plan
- Recommends updates to the Code of Ordinances, as necessary
- Receives and processes development applications, such as:
 - Amending plats/replats
 - Variance/Special Exception requests
 - Rezoning requests
 - Specific Use Permits
 - Planned Developments

Comprehensive Plan

- Guides future development of the City and its development-related codes and ordinances
- Updated in 2024 following extensive public engagement
- More detailed information available on City/Development Services website:
<https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/bellaire-tx/page/bellaire-tx-next-stop-2040?>
- The City is now undergoing zoning amendments resulting from the updated Comprehensive Plan

Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z)

- Advisory body to the City Council regarding zoning and subdivision regulations, as well as the physical development of the City
- Consists of (7) members who serve staggered two-year terms with a maximum of three consecutive terms
- Considers applications for the following:
 - Replats
 - Rezoning Requests
 - Planned Developments
 - Specific Use Permits

Board of Adjustment (BoA)

- Responsible for considering applications for variances or special exceptions to the Zoning Code (Chapter 24 of the Code of Ordinances).
- The BoA determines the outcome of the applications, which may only be appealed to a Harris County District Court.
- Consists of (7) members who serve staggered two-year terms, with a maximum of three consecutive terms.
- Considers applications for the following (6 of 7 must vote in the affirmative):
 - Zoning Appeals
 - Special Exceptions
 - Variances

Building and Standards Commission (BSC)

- Responsibilities:
 - Bears a quasi-judicial responsibility for appeals of administrative building / fire code interpretations of the City Building Official &/or Fire Official, appeals for approval to meet the codes via a performance pathway (which is not a right to "waive" the code), and Floodplain variances
 - Issuance of advisory opinions pertaining to building codes and amendments
- Consists of (7) members who serve staggered terms, with a maximum of three consecutive terms
- The Building Official serves as the staff liaison for the Building and Standards Commission

Development Review Process

- Zoning and Development Review
- Building Code Review
- Floodplain Management Review. The City's consulting engineer for plan review is ARKK Engineering, which assesses:
 - New and replacement commercial development projects against the City of Houston's Infrastructure Design Manual, Ch. 9, with local exceptions, and most importantly, to determine compensatory mitigation needs and ensure there's "no net fill"
 - New residential development and residential sitework the more restrictive of 1500 SF or 25% of a lot's overall size, and wherever there are alterations to an approved drainage plan thereafter (ex: additions, pools and spas, additional area drainage and other installations, pervious and impervious)

Building Inspections and Regulations

- Enforcement of City Development Ordinances, the International Code Council Codes, the National Electrical Code, Health Department (Harris County), and, for the Floodplain Regulations (Commercial floodproofing, Elevation of New Residential, including the original home wherever Additions and Remodels \geq 50% of the valuation of the "Improvement")
- Oversee plan review and inspections for building projects within the City, including Building, Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing / Fuel Gas, Medical-Gas & Energy Code for:
 - New Residential and Commercial Buildings and Structures
 - Building Additions and/or Remodeling projects
 - New and Replacement Equipment
 - Site Work such as Grading Projects & Landscaping Alterations, including for Artificial Turf and Paving Systems

Building in FY 2025 (To Date)

FY 2025 YEAR-TO-DATE TOTALS			
New Home Construction	27	\$	22,998,120
Home Remodeling	34	\$	1,688,105
New Commercial	0	\$	-
Commercial Remodel	6	\$	469,550
Demolition	20		

Permitting

Front office personnel consists of two (2) Permit Technicians who assist with processing applications & routing plans, including:

- For Permits
 - New Construction
 - Additions
 - Remodeling
 - Roofing & Fenstration
 - Fencing / Walls
 - Swimming Pools and/or Spas
 - Floodplain Development
(for *all* activities in the floodplain)
 - Signs (structural, electrical)
 - Mechanical
 - Electrical
 - Plumbing / Fuel Gas
 - Medical Gas Systems
 - Irrigation Systems
 - Fire Suppression Systems
 - Food Vendors

Floodplain Management

Why do we have a Floodplain Manager?

- To serve as the principal community administrator in the daily implementation of flood loss reduction activities, including enforcing the community's flood damage prevention ordinance, updating flood maps, plans, and policies of the Community

Daily tasks of the Floodplain Manager include:

- Issuing permits for **buildings and other** structures within the City's floodplain
- Explaining the requirements of the NFIP and the community's program to the public
- Maintaining records and documents that keep the community eligible to participate in the Community Rating System (CRS)

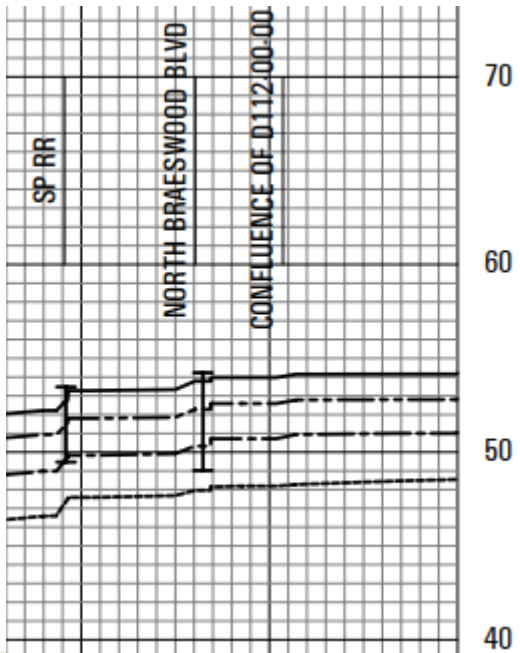
"Building" to the Design Flood Elevation – a.k.a. "Freeboard"

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- New construction and substantial improvement of any residential structure shall have the lowest floor (including basement) elevated as a minimum to 1' above the 500-year floodplain elevation, together with...
 - ...electrical, heating, ventilation, plumbing and air conditioning equipment and other service facilities designed and/or located so as to prevent flood damage, but for equipment such as generators and air-conditioning units, no higher than 6" above the DFE for noise-mitigation purposes
 - Compensating floodplain mitigation will be required for any fill placed below 1' above the DFE elevation for any new non-residential development activity, construction or substantial improvement
 - Residential fill below the DFE is strictly controlled, allowing topographical modifications, within limits to ensure "no net fill," to mitigate localized flooding

Determining the Design Flood Elevation (DFE), a.k.a. “freeboard” height

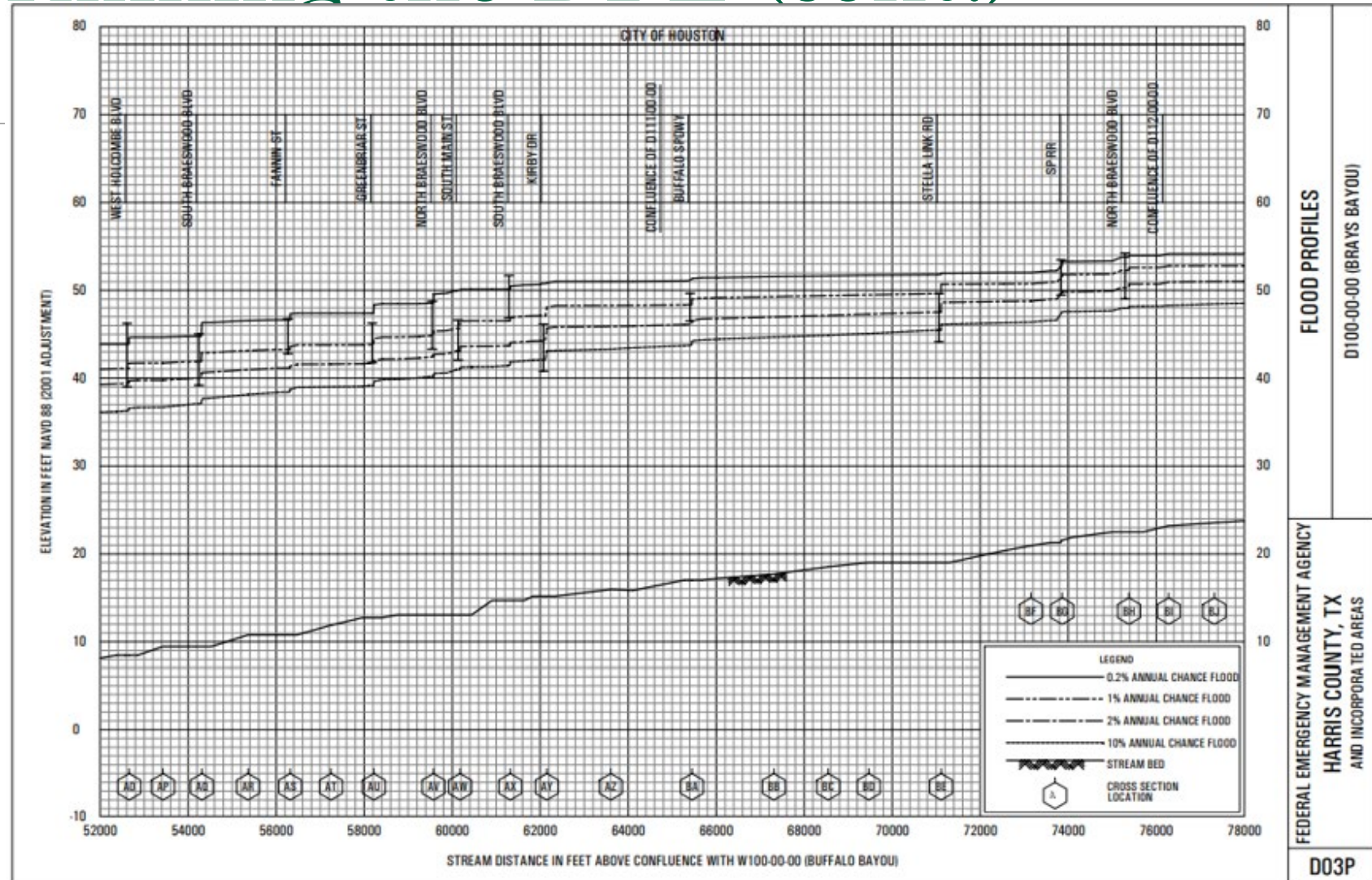
- Elevation Certificate (E.C.)
- Absent an E.C.:
 - Utilize two Flood Insurance Studies (FIS) applicable to Bellaire. Determine the FIS profile for the Base Flood Elevation and the Design Flood Elevation

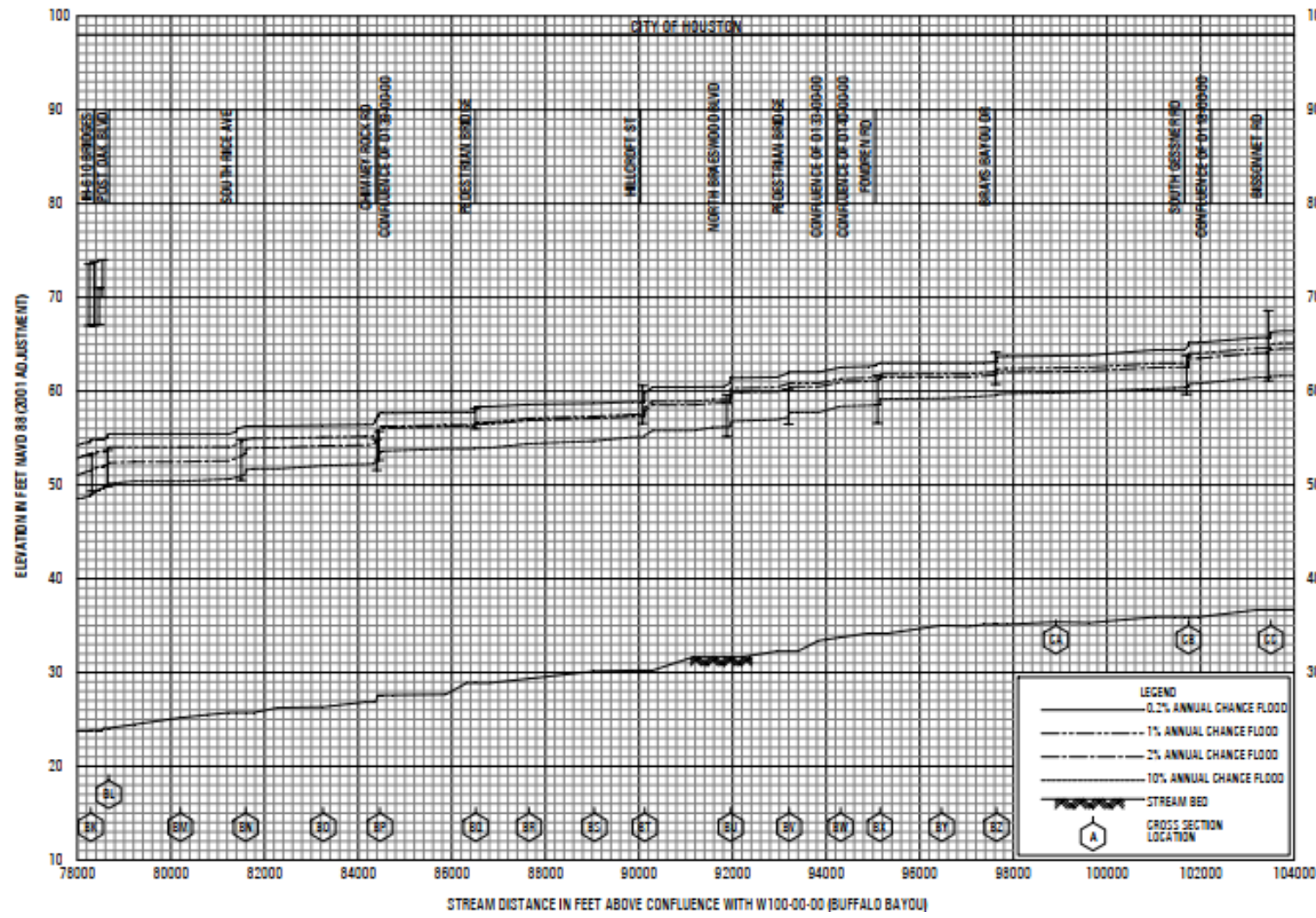
Ex:



Via the FIS profile, staff plotted the DFE as 55' (you can see the BFE below that at 52.7') – but the actual grade is difficult to determine at any given site, without a topographical survey and / or a E.C.; hence, staff will utilize other current Elevation Certificates from the vicinity, even Google Street view, this to approximate the topographical elevations, with an E.C. required for submittal of development plans (except for replacement of some mechanical appurtenances)

Determining the DFE (cont.)





FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

HARRIS COUNTY, TX

AND UNFLOODED AREAS

FLOOD PROFILES

0100-00-00 (BRAYS BAYOU)

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Code Compliance

The Code Compliance Officer monitors:

- High grass/weeds
- Junk/debris/trash and other nuisances (e.g., junked vehicles)
- Zoning violations
- Tree ordinances violations
- Signage and related violations
- Substandard Structures
- Jobsite maintenance
- Work without permit

Health Inspections

- The City was previously using a third-party health inspector but has recently reached an interlocal agreement with Harris County for their Health Department to be responsible for ensuring compliance with sanitation codes, in an effort to protect public health.
- This has streamlined the process for the most part. Where it has not, we are working through issues with the County as a continued improvement.
- Establishments are routinely inspected twice a year which consist of:
 - Restaurants
 - Hospitals
 - Schools
 - Churches
 - Convenient Stores
 - Grocery Stores

Questions?