

Stormwater Management Drainage Runoff Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is meant by the phrases, “private drainage” or “lot-to-lot drainage”?

Private drainage, sometimes referred to as lot-to-lot drainage, is a term for the stormwater runoff that drains from one private lot or property, into an adjacent private lot or property, without City owned or maintained property involved.

2. Who is responsible for the maintenance of private drainage?

Private drainage is the responsibility of each individual property owner. The City of Fort Worth has no responsibility for issues created by private drainage.

3. What types of drainage maintenance is the City of Fort Worth responsible for?

The City of Fort Worth can only perform maintenance activity in areas where there is a dedicated easement, or the activity is on public property which the City owns (e.g. streets, rights-of-way, or alleys). Stormwater Management crews maintain all public drainage infrastructure (e.g. inlets, storm drains, pipe culverts, drainage channels and drainage detention basins) that are owned by the City, or are within a City easement.

4. How does the City review drainage plans for new developments?

Applicants for new single-family or duplex building permits indicate one of three U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grading patterns that they will use. The applicant is required to affirm that the selected grading pattern conforms to the subdivision grading plan, if such exists. If the development is 1 acre or more, the Stormwater Development Services section of the Development Services Department reviews drainage plans to ensure compliance with City drainage standards. Criteria are based on standards recommended by the North Central Texas Council of Governments. In addition, there is a State requirement for the builder or developer to put in to place specific stormwater controls and measures during construction, to prevent both construction materials and natural materials (dirt and silt, grass, leaves, rocks, etc.) from entering the City's drainage system.

5. What can I do if I have flooding concerns from a new development that is currently under construction?

Contact our Stormwater Customer Service representative either at (817) 392-6261 or StormwaterCS@FortworthTexas.gov. Our Development Services Department can reach out to the developer to share your concerns and talk to you about their development plans.

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6. What if I have concerns with an existing property (not a development that is currently in progress) that is flooding my property?

Many times, private drainage problems can be handled by a property owner politely discussing their concerns with their neighbor.

The City can provide assistance if you need help talking with or getting into contact with your neighbor and/or if you have concerns regarding drainage affecting your home or business. The Stormwater Program can perform an on-site consultation visit, attempt to arrange a discussion between you and your neighbor, and/or provide information on opportunities that might exist to reduce flood risks to your property. Contact Stormwater Customer Service at StormwaterCS@FortworthTexas.gov or (817) 392-6261.

7. What if I discuss my drainage concerns with my neighbor...but my neighbor either refuses to discuss my concerns, or refuses to do anything about my concerns after our discussion?

Contact our Stormwater Customer Service representative either at (817) 392-6261 or StormwaterCS@FortWorthTexas.gov to share your concerns. Our staff can provide suggestions on how to address your concerns with your neighbor or attempt to help you discuss your concerns with your neighbor. Ultimately, the City cannot require private property owners to fix private drainage issues and can only help facilitate discussions between neighbors.

8. What can I do if the builder or developer that is building next to my private property, is allowing materials to enter the City's drainage system during construction, and the materials are causing the storm drain or other drainage infrastructure near my property to be blocked or drain slowly?

There are state requirements governing this. The City agency that enforces these state requirements is the Environmental Division of the Code Compliance Department. You can report violations either on the MyFW app, or by calling the City Call Center at (817) 392-1234.

9. What can I as a property owner personally do to slow or prevent additional stormwater runoff from my neighbor's lot?

We encourage property owners to install measures to control runoff on their own property, as long as they don't negatively impact their neighbors. Several effective and affordable solutions are available to private property owners, such as grading, and landscaping which utilizes a mix of grasses and plants as well as rocks and stone, and possibly wood or concrete retaining walls.

Contact our Stormwater Customer Service representative either at (817) 392-6261 or StormwaterCS@FortworthTexas.gov to request a site review. Our staff can direct you to resources and recommendations for reducing the impact of stormwater runoff onto your property.

Non-FEMA Flood Risk Initiative FAQs

17. How will non-FEMA flood risk mapping and regulations impact property values? *(continued)*

If there is any immediate impact in an area or on specific properties, research suggests that it will probably fade out over time unless there are repeated well-known flood events. Communicating the risk information will help ensure that future property acquisition and improvement decisions are fully informed leading to a safer, sustainable community that is more resilient to flood risks. The City feels that there are more benefits than potential negative impacts to readily sharing non-FEMA flood risk information with the community.

18. Why were there initial areas investigated and identified as CFRAs?

The initial study areas were identified based on suspected or reported flooding as part of the City's capital improvement prioritization efforts. The areas were evaluated to understand the existing flood risk and determine if potential capital improvements were feasible to reduce the flood risk identified in each area.

19. Are there other areas across the City that will be evaluated in more detail and mapped as CFRAs?

Currently only about 3% of the City has been studied with sufficient detail to be mapped as CFRAs. At this time, no additional drainage basins are planned to be evaluated. However, we anticipate that over time, more areas will be evaluated and the non-FEMA flood risk mapped as CFRAs based on citywide needs, priorities, and resources.

20. What is the city's future plan for flood mitigation in CFRAs?

Potential flood mitigation options were identified and evaluated as part of each basin study used to create the CFRAs. Mitigation options were prioritized and some have been implemented considering priority and resources. Many of the mitigation options identified are beyond the scale of the Stormwater Program. A prioritized list of potential mitigation options is maintained by the Stormwater Program and options are considered for implementation based on citywide needs, priorities, and resources. Potential improvement options and funding are prioritized focused on risk with our Program's highest priority being life safety improvements.

Mitigation hazardous road overtopping and rehabilitation of aging storm drain pipes that can collapse and create dangerous sinkholes and increase flooding can have the largest impact on life safety. Other high priority improvements, which typically have lower life safety risks, consist of mitigating flooding to homes & businesses and restoring channels that are significantly eroded and impacting property and infrastructure such as roads, utilities, and structures.

21. Can we incentivize development around these areas to capture and detain more water?

The City cannot require developers to mitigate existing flood risk, only mitigate increased flood risk associated with their development/redevelopment based on existing city regulations. Regional mitigation solutions such as detention facilities large enough to effectively reduce flood risks require significant amounts of land to store runoff water until well after a storm ends. The Stormwater Management Division does partner with developers where appropriate, and when benefits extend to multiple properties.