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#HarrisThrives Resolution passes in Harris County Commissioners Court on the strength of families and organizations countywide

HOUSTON, Texas — Two years after Hurricane Harvey hit the Gulf Coast, and one year after the voters in Houston exercised their power to help fund repairs with a \$2.5 billion bond, the Harris County Commissioners Court cast a historic vote today that these funds will be disbursed in a way that lifts up all residents, and especially those the county has historically left behind.

Community members from Northeast to Southwest Houston made the trip downtown to speak about their neighborhoods and what they need to be prepared for the next storm. They want to ensure places like Kashmere Gardens, East Aldine, South Park, Sheldon, Kingwood, Pasadena and 5th Ward are properly served by flood mitigation projects. More importantly, they want the bond to triage communities with the greatest need and incidence of flooding first. Twenty speakers out of the 36 were able to approach the podium in support of #HarrisThrives, including Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas).

The 3-2 vote guarantees that the policies and practices to leverage this money reflect values of safety and fairness, and provide a holistic approach to rebuilding Harris County. Flood mitigation projects are important for a County that has been hit by storms and knows it will be hit again. Two coalitions: the HOME Coalition and CEER led this effort to emphasize the need to make sure no communities are neglected and we have a roadmap for one safe, just, and fair Harris County. “Harris County can be a national model of equitable flood protection. But this won’t happen by accident or on its own – we must be intentional and develop a strategic vision,” HOME Director Chrishelle Palay and CEER Director Iris Gonzalez said in a joint letter. Yesterday’s historic decision is a step towards that vision and reflects a choice of people and science over politics.

“Water does not discriminate...recovery discriminates,” said Zoe Middleton, Texas Housers Southeast Co-Director, “we need a just recovery.” This is the spirit that fueled #HarrisThrives. Disaster recovery and flooding touch many other issues including economic opportunity, housing, immigration, environmental justice, and disability rights. The #HarrisThrives resolution addresses these issues from the start, and instructs Harris County to coordinate its resources through a holistic approach that solves multiple problems at once.

We also applaud Harris County’s efforts for providing simultaneous interpretation of the meeting so non-English speakers could participate, not letting language be a barrier to justice.

The acceptance of #HarrisThrives is the beginning of a new day for all in Harris County, and not simply the privileged few.

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