

## **“6.5 KEEPS OUR SPRINGS ALIVE” SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT REGS**

**Water availability is one of the most critical issues facing future growth and development in Hays County.** The proposed Hays County Development Regulations represent a three year stakeholder driven public process to deal with this critical issue two important ways. First, these regs provide protection for the people who will be coming as unparalleled growth continues. Second, they also protect the citizens and voters who are here and already invested in the County.

**Unprecedented growth and development in the Hays County portion of the Austin-San Antonio corridor served as the catalyst for the Commissioners Court taking another look at existing regulations beginning in August 2006.** A stakeholder driven public process led by Naismith Engineering in conjunction with Hart & Hart, P.C. was begun. The goal was straightforward. Prepare an update of the County’s subdivision regulations. Stakeholder representatives from the following groups met from August 2006 through October 2007 to provide public input during the updating of regulations:

<b>Real estate development community</b>	<b>Concerned citizens</b>
<b>Environmental/public interest groups</b>	<b>Municipalities</b>
<b>Economic interests</b>	<b>Other governmental entities</b>
<b>Agricultural interests</b>	<b>Neighborhood interests</b>
<b>Property owners</b>	<b>Utility providers</b>

Other activities including Commissioners Court briefings, workshops, public hearings, public notice of proposed regulations, County-hosted public meetings and a Takings Impact Assessment were conducted during review and revision of the proposed development regulations.

**Hays County is located on the edge of the Great Southwestern Desert of North America.** Concern about water supply sources and availability arose at the first stakeholders meetings in 2006 and has continued throughout the process. **SCIENCE + POLICY = WATER AVAILABILITY was the process agreed to in addressing water concerns.** An aquifer, like a bank account, experiencing over withdrawals needs recharging, i.e. deposits, to keep it viable and healthy. Where rural subdivisions are planned that depend on drilling individual lot water wells in the Priority Ground Water Area (PGMA) of the northern half of Hays County, a sustainable minimum lot size of 6.5 acres is proposed to support recharge of the aquifer in this area for the people living on the lot and nearby. **The HTGCD recommended a 9 acre lot size for sustainable groundwater development on individual water wells.** Following public hearing input by water experts, public comment, and further technical review **the sustainable lot size was further reduced by Naismith Engineering to 6.5 acres which is proposed in Table 705.05.01-Minimum Lot Sizes (in Acres).** Citizens Alliance for Responsible Development (CARD) applauds this sustainability approach and believes that when the science of the aquifer isn’t perfectly understood that we should err on the side of caution. **Therefore CARD supports and recommends the proposed 6.5 acre sustainable lot size to keep our springs flowing and wells pumping!**