

# LOWER ONION CREEK FLOOD HAZARD MITIGATION BUYOUT PROJECT

Flood Mitigation Task Force  
December 15, 2015



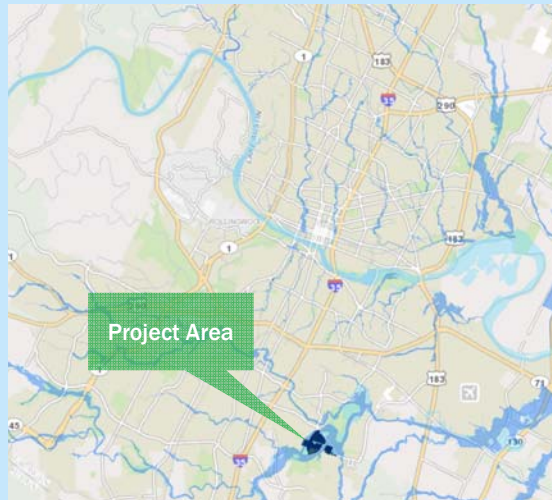
## TOPICS

- Project History
- Flood Mitigation Buyout Process
- Buyout Project Implementation
- Current Status
- Next Steps

2

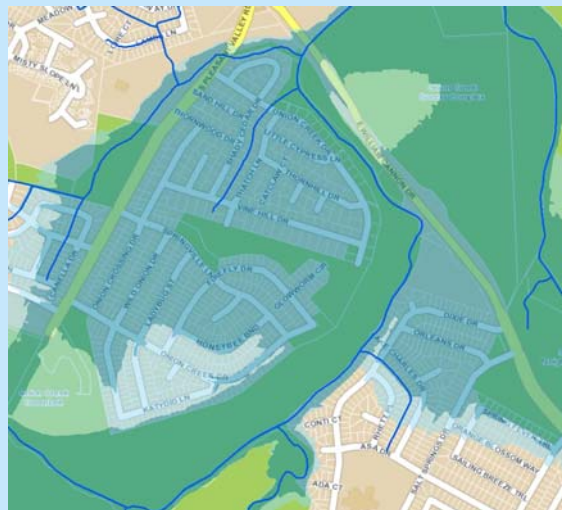


## LOWER ONION CREEK PROJECT AREA



3

## LOWER ONION CREEK PROJECT AREA



4



## PROJECT HISTORY

- 855 properties at risk of flooding, limited access
- 1998 – request to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct flood control study
- Austin voters approved \$2.4 million in bonds to buy flood-prone homes near Onion Creek in 1998, buyouts began in 1999
- Corps study evaluated structural & non-structural solutions
- Structural solutions evaluated:
  - Detention
  - Channel modifications
  - Diversions
  - Levees/Floodwalls

7



## PROJECT HISTORY

- Preliminary structural alternative included:
  - Levees - >11,000ft long and 10ft high
  - Diversion channels - >5,000ft long and 250ft wide
  - Floodwall – 3,500ft long, 15ft high
  - Flood gates
  - Would require acquisition of many properties for construction
- Varying levels of protection
- 2006 - Feasibility Study recommended acquisition of 483 properties in 25-year floodplain, highest risk area

8



## USACE PROJECT AREA



9



## BUYOUT PROCESS

- Individual meetings with property owners
- Appraisals, appraisal reviews
- Acquisition offer & relocation eligibility
- Tenant relocation eligibility, if applicable
- Replacement housing
- Asbestos testing/abatement, demolition
- Long-term land maintenance, compatible uses

10



## BUYOUT IMPLEMENTATION

- Prior to 2006: 109 acquisitions, City funded
- 2006 – 2008: 114 acquisitions, FEMA grant
- 2008 – 2013: 100 acquisitions, City funded
- Cost: \$36.5M, including \$7.8M from FEMA grant
- (No federal funding from Army Corps until 2014)

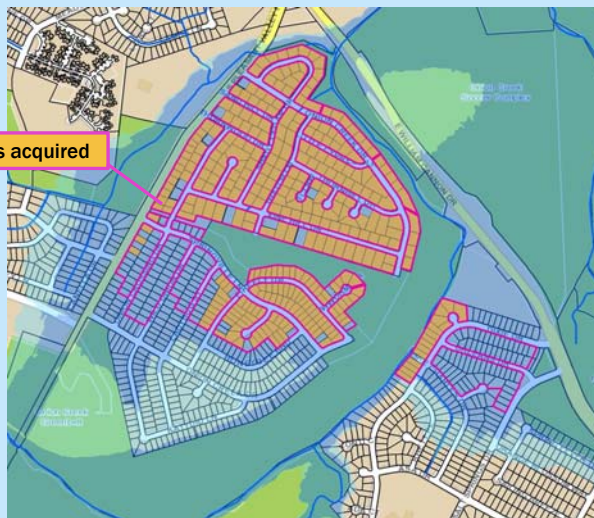
As of October 2013: 323 acquisitions complete

11



## STATUS ON 10/30/2013

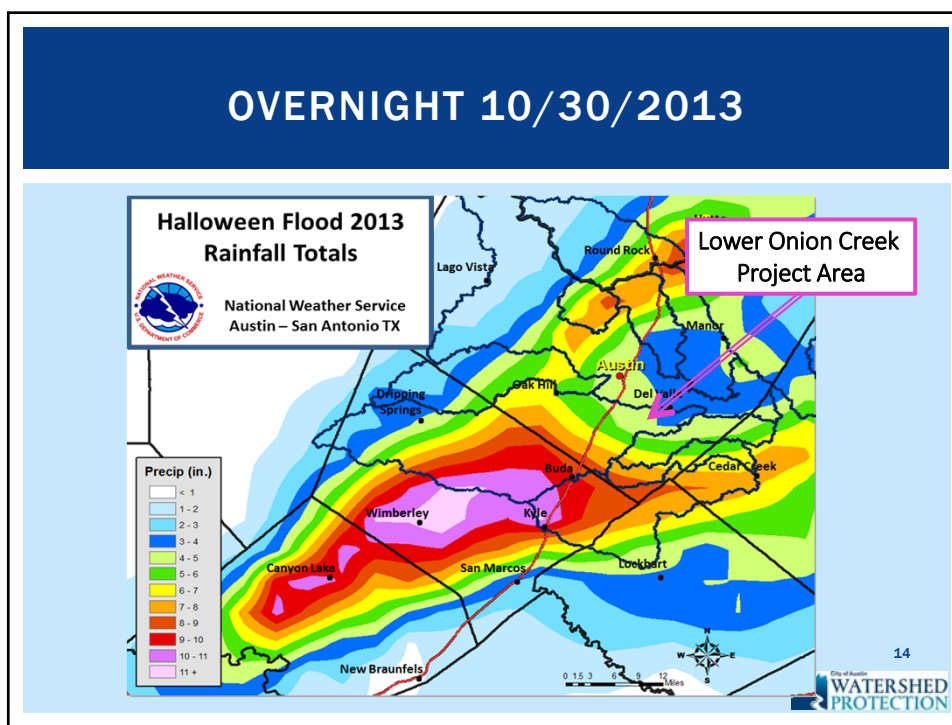
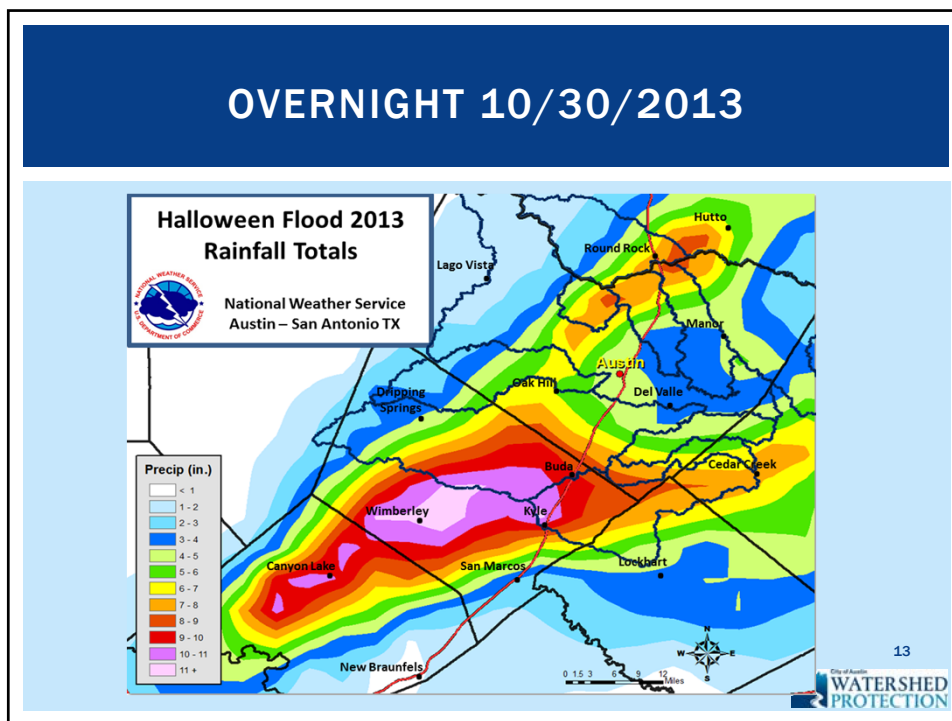
323 properties acquired



12







## 2013 HALLOWEEN FLOOD



15



## 2013 HALLOWEEN FLOOD



16





## 2013 HALLOWEEN FLOOD



17



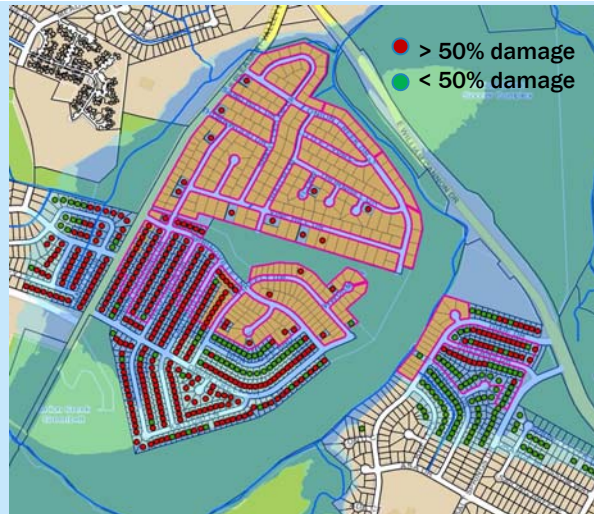
## 2013 HALLOWEEN FLOOD



18



## 2013 HALLOWEEN FLOOD



19



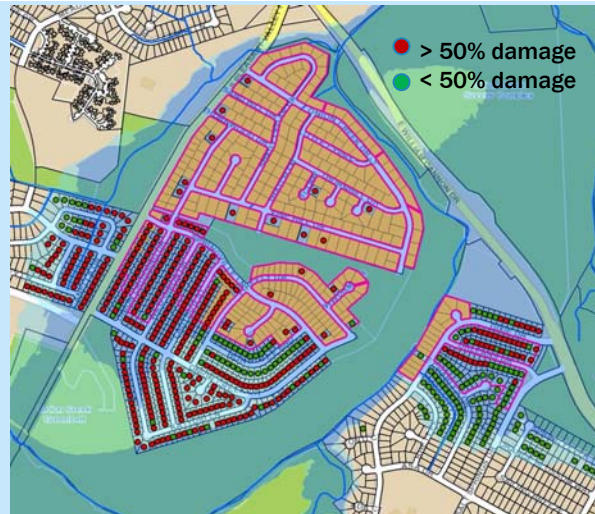
## BUYOUT IMPLEMENTATION

- November 2013 - Recovery Buyout Program
  - \$19.6M to expedite purchase of most of remaining homes in the Corps buyout area
  - Funds identified through project savings and postponements
  - 104 properties acquired
- December 2014, May 2015, October 2015 - USACE appropriations for project
  - \$23.5M to continue with acquisition of remaining 56 properties
  - 30 properties acquired as of end of October 2015
  - 26 properties remaining

20



## 2013 HALLOWEEN FLOOD



21



## BUYOUT IMPLEMENTATION

- 372 properties outside Army Corps area at risk of flooding
  - 140 houses at risk in 25-year floodplain
  - 232 houses at risk in 100-year floodplain
- June 2014 – Austin City Council approved \$35.5M for the 140 properties in the “25-Year Buyout Area”
- Acquisition process began in August 2014
- As of end of October 2015:
  - 117 properties acquired
  - 23 properties remaining

22



## BUYOUT IMPLEMENTATION

- September 2014 – Austin City Council approved \$60M for the 232 properties in the “100-Year Buyout Area”
  - March 2015 Council authorized acquisitions
  - Buyouts began in June 2015
  - Phased approach, ~15-20 buyouts initiated per month
- March 2015 - \$1.5M HMGP grant awarded, 9 properties
- As of end of October 2015:
  - 11 properties acquired
  - 221 properties remaining

23



## BUYOUT PROJECT AREAS

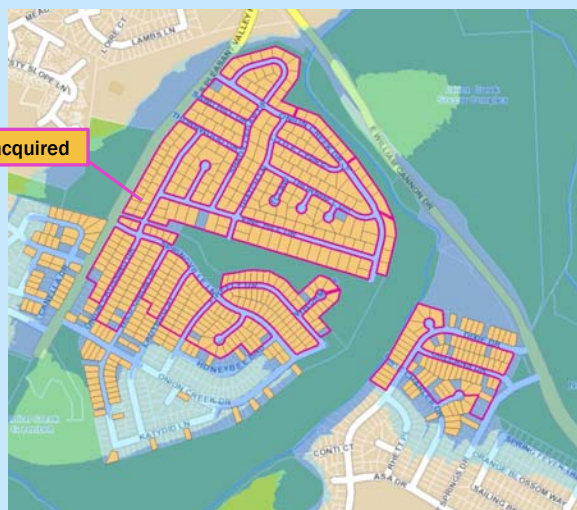


24



## STATUS ON 10/30/2015

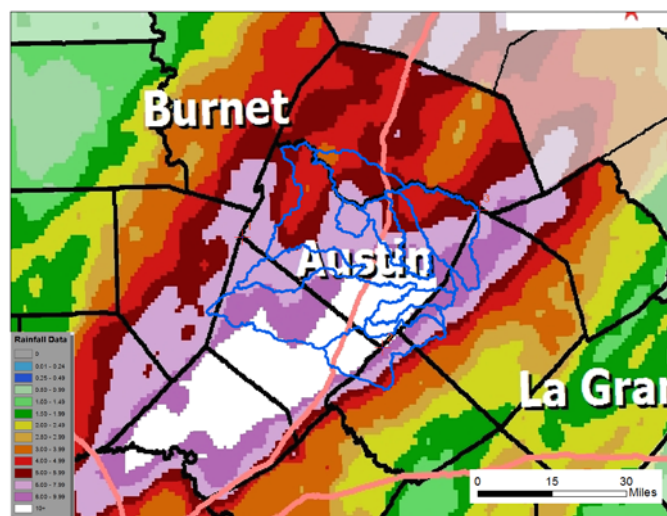
585 properties acquired



25



## MORNING OF 10/30/2015

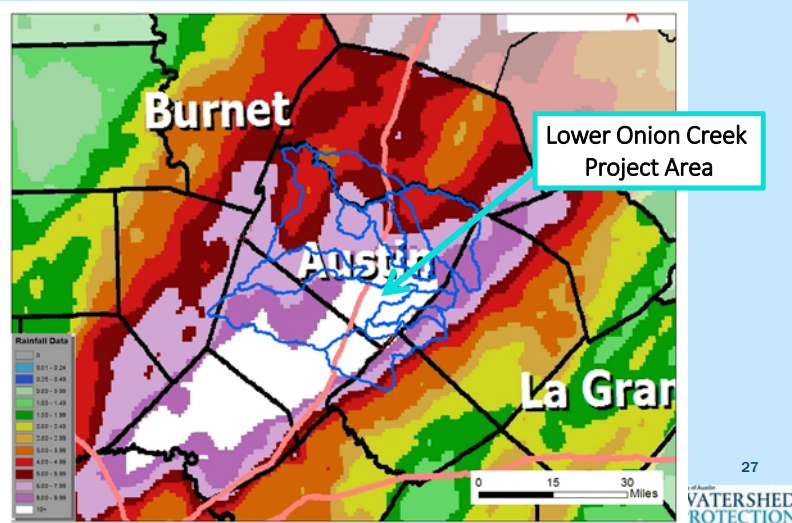


26

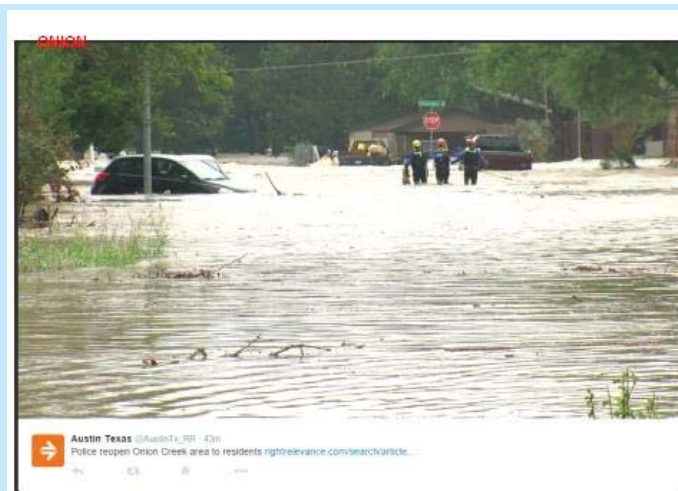




## MORNING OF 10/30/2015



## 2015 HALLOWEEN FLOOD



## 2015 HALLOWEEN FLOOD



29



## 2015 HALLOWEEN FLOOD



Lower Onion Creek  
Photo courtesy of  
Robert Klobe & Ana Aguilera

30



## STATUS ON 10/30/2015

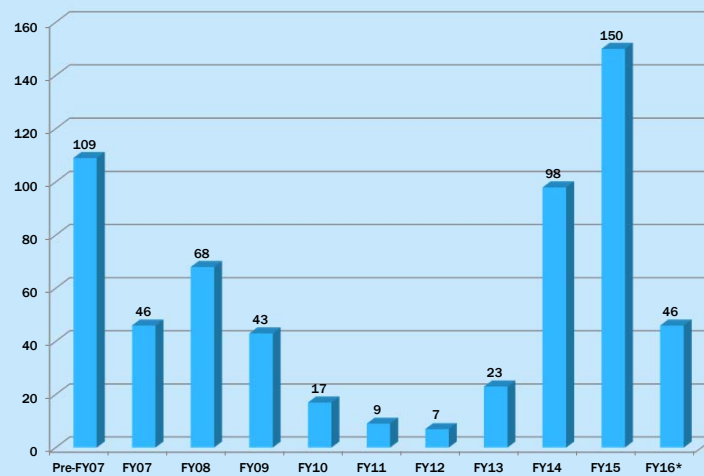
| Buyout Project Area | Total # of Properties | # Acquired as of 10/30/2015 | # Remaining to Acquire |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Army Corps Area     | 483                   | 457                         | 26                     |
| 25-Year Area        | 140                   | 117                         | 23                     |
| FEMA Grant Area     | 9                     | 5                           | 4                      |
| 100-Year Area       | 223                   | 6                           | 217                    |
|                     | <b>855</b>            | <b>585</b>                  | <b>270</b>             |

\* Project 68% complete on 10/30/2015

31



## LOWER ONION BUYOUTS BY YEAR



32

Project 72% complete on 12/10/2015

\* as of 12/10/2015



## BUYOUT IMPLEMENTATION

- 31 properties have been acquired since the Oct 2015 flood
- Amendments to policies for post-flood conditions
- Process will be initiated for all interested owners by mid-2016
- Expedited buyout challenges:
  - Budget constraints
  - Austin housing market constraints

33



ALEX GALE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF REAL ESTATE SERVICES

PAM KEARFOTT, P.E., CFM  
WATERSHED PROTECTION DEPARTMENT

MAPI VIGIL, P.E., CFM  
WATERSHED PROTECTION DEPARTMENT



34