

## Zamesnik, Katy

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**From:** Gagnon, Kelly  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 03, 2018 11:25 AM  
**To:** Zamesnik, Katy  
**Cc:** Steffen, Carla; Hollon, Matt; Shunk, Kevin; Personett, Mike; Hartley, Sara; MacCallum, Peggy; Kearfott, Pam; Zoun, Reem; Loucks, Eric; Renfro, Janna  
**Subject:** WPD Responses to Nov 16 BEATF Meeting Questions

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Hi Katy,

Please see below for the WPD responses to the Nov 16, 2017 Task Force member questions regarding the Stormwater (Flood Risk Reduction & Drainage Improvements) project list. Please let me know if we can provide this in another format or send along any other information. We will be available at Thursday's meeting in case any of the Task Force members have follow-up questions.

Thank you,  
Kelly

### 1. Please explain the prioritization methodology for projects included in the table.

#### a. *Bond Needs Assessment Prioritization*

Updated excerpt from WPD 2017-18 Bond Program Needs Assessment Director Transmittal Memo (February 2017):

WPD has identified 28 high priority drainage infrastructure projects for consideration in the 2017-18 bond development process. These projects have been selected based on watershed problem severity, implementation timing considerations, unfunded need, and potential partnerships to leverage funding with other departments or private developers. These projects have been ranked first by implementation timing, then by the current "problem score rank" as defined in the Watershed Protection Master Plan. A central principle of the Master Plan, as developed through an extensive public input process and adopted by the City Council, is that the most severe problems should be considered first for solutions identification. WPD conducts technical assessments to identify watershed problems and rank these areas by problem severity, resulting in a problem score rank that is updated yearly. For projects without an existing problem score rank but that have been identified based on strategic partnership opportunities, prioritization is based on implementation timing and confidence level in anticipated leveraged funding. These opportunities enable the upgrades of critical stormwater infrastructure in the Imagine Austin centers and corridors.

While our 2017-18 bond project prioritization methodology is largely driven by implementation considerations and watershed problem severity, staff also carefully considered the geographic distribution of projects throughout the City of Austin and coordination with Imagine Austin goals and neighborhood planning priorities. We think this list of projects and associated ranking represent the

greatest needs of our department that can be funded appropriately and successfully through a 2017-18 bond program.

Please see the WPD Master Plan “Problem Score” Viewer for more information about watershed problem areas: <http://austintexas.gov/department/master-plan-0>

#### **b. Bond Funding Scenarios Prioritization**

Projects included in the five potential bond funding scenarios (e.g., \$75M, \$100M, 0 cent tax increase, etc.) were selected from the original list of 28 projects using the most up-to-date timing and feasibility information, while considering available funding and geographic distribution (total project count). The number of potential projects ranges from 5 to 15, depending on the level of funding. While staff sought to include the highest-ranked projects based on problem severity, projects without confirmed feasibility within 5-7 years were excluded from the scenarios. Please note that project delivery priorities may shift at any time due to emergencies and other unforeseen circumstances.

#### **2. Alternative Funding Sources**

Updated excerpt from WPD 2017-18 Bond Program Needs Assessment Director Transmittal Memo (February 2017):

As the City of Austin’s drainage utility, WPD is able to fund many capital solutions via the Drainage Utility Fee. However, as the City of Austin continues to grow, and drainage infrastructure continues to age, WPD is unable to fund larger-scale projects in a timely manner to address the increasing needs of our community. The department has identified an unfunded need of \$2 billion to fund high priority capital solutions that address the highest-severity watershed problems.

The last drainage bond was approved by Austin voters in 2006, providing \$95 million (approximately \$132 million in 2017 dollars) in funding towards 28 high priority drainage infrastructure projects. Despite the successful implementation of these bond-funded projects, WPD has been unable to keep up with the pace of the City’s aging stormwater infrastructure and increasing frequency of flood events. The work of the Council-appointed Flood Mitigation Task Force supported the use of future voter-approved bonds as an appropriate and necessary funding source for WPD capital solutions. Without potential bond funding, it will take decades for the department to fund large-scale, high priority projects solely through the Drainage Utility Fund.

All projects included in the potential bond scenarios are included in the department’s 5-year plan to be funded as quickly as possible using a combination of Drainage Utility Fund (DUF) and other developer mitigation source funds (including the Regional Stormwater Management Program fund). The annual capital budget is approximately \$30M/year for all watershed projects, \$20M for flood and erosion. That is a total estimated budget of \$100M over 5 years for flood and erosion risk reduction projects.

#### **3. What happens to projects on the list if they are funded/not funded?**

Potential bond funding will be used to increase the number of projects, speed of delivery, and level of service of the WPD CIP program.

We estimate that an additional \$100M of bond funding in 2018 would accelerate the program by 5 years.

Therefore, additional high-priority problems could be resolved in a more timely manner, helping their respective communities by reducing risks to life and property in large storm events. Several of the projects proposed for bond funding are large and complex; funding these high priority projects using DUF monies alone reduces number of projects, the speed of delivery, and geographic reach of WPD's capital improvement program.

If bond funding were not proposed, projects would receive available DUF/mitigation funding as time allows. As stated above, without potential bond funding, it will take decades for the department to fund large-scale, high priority projects solely through the Drainage Utility Fund.