



# ATLAS 14 PROPOSED CODE AMENDMENTS

**National Weather Service study updates our understanding of flood risk.**



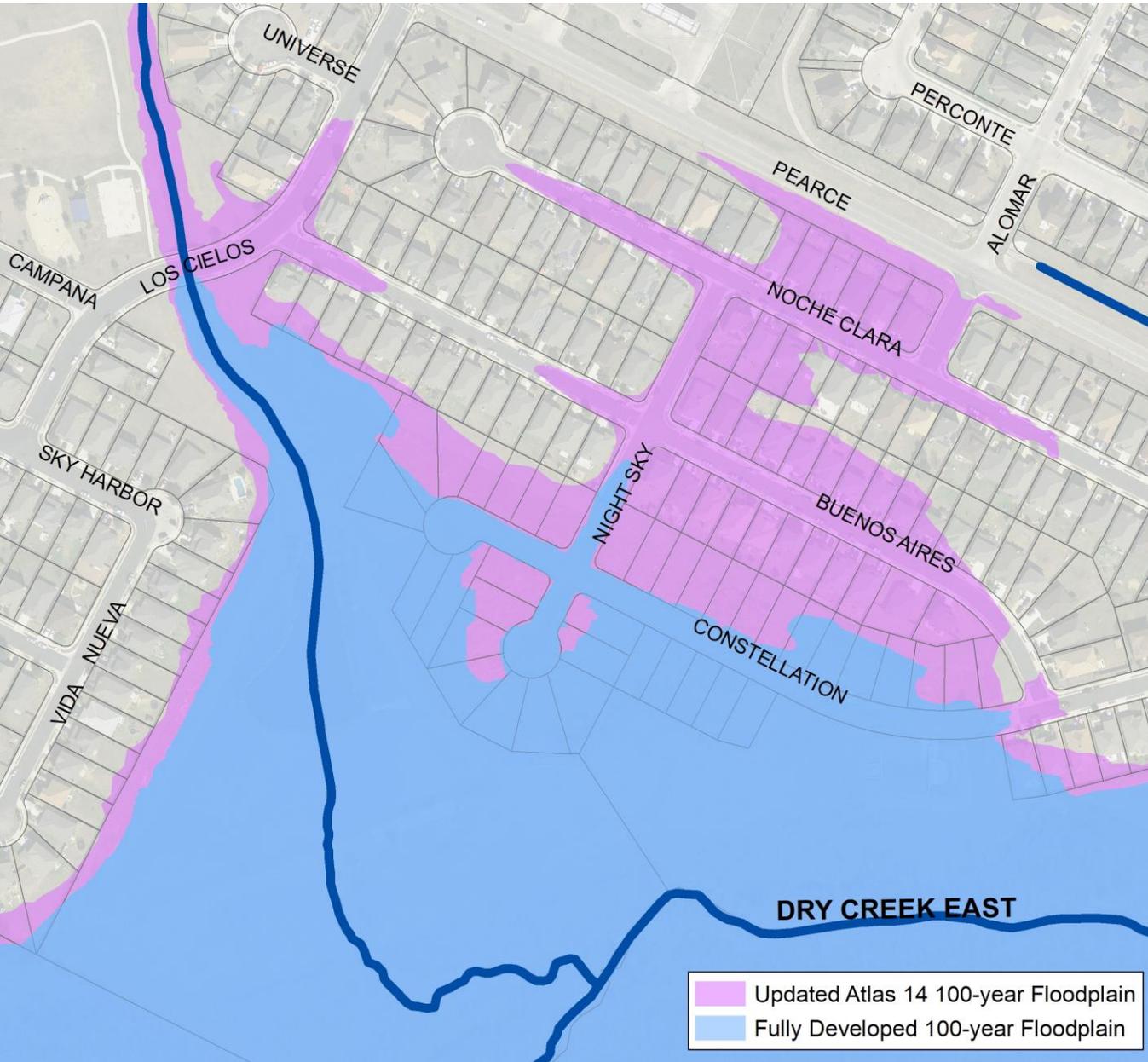
## Overview

- Study background
- Summary of key impacts
- Recommended response
- Stakeholder process and feedback
- Next steps

# Atlas 14 Rainfall Changes

- Nationwide examination of historic rainfall data
- Adds data from 1961 – 2017
- Colorado River watershed not significantly impacted

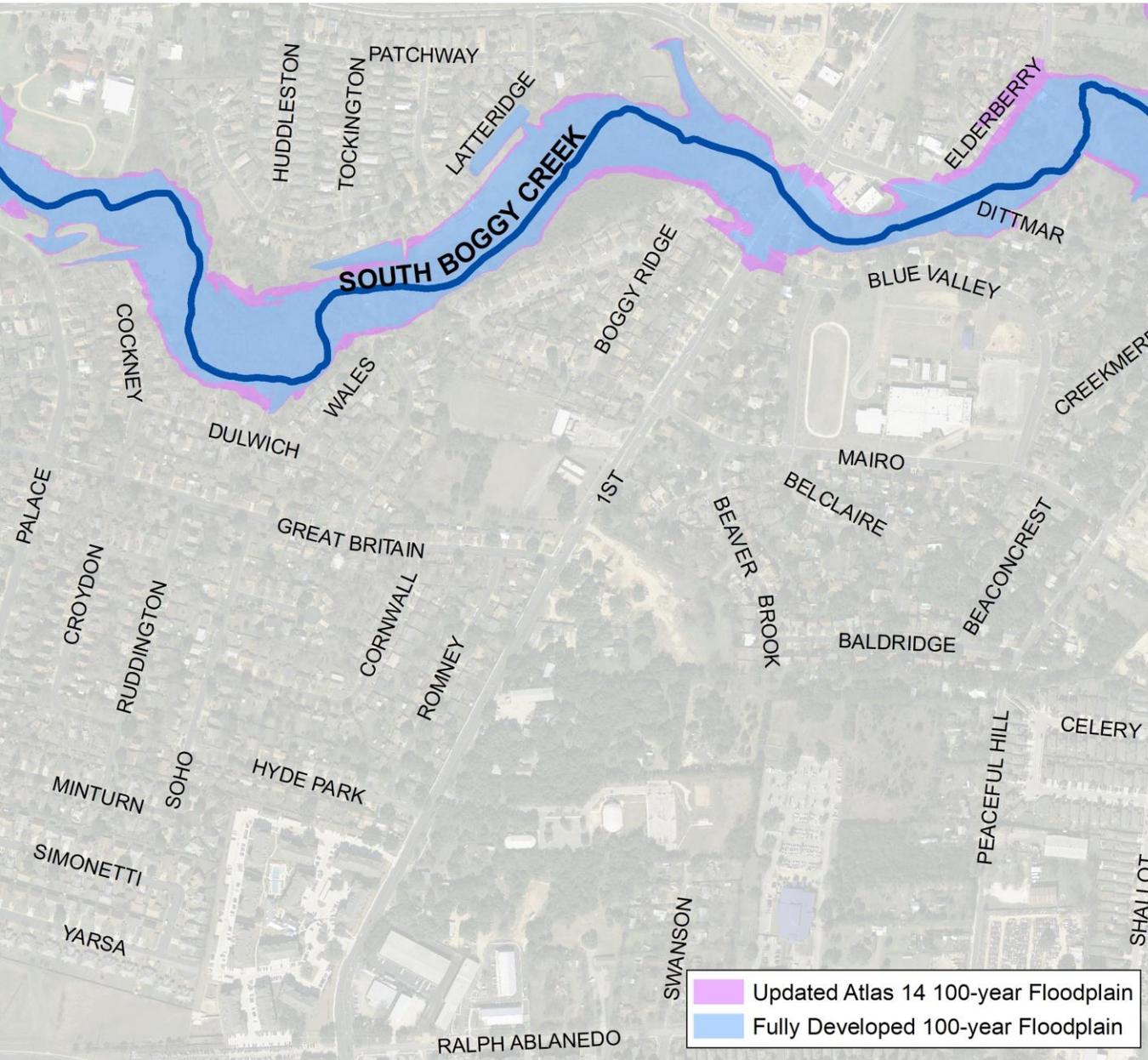




Austin's

# Floodplains Will Expand

- More homes and businesses are at risk of flooding than previously thought.
- Affects ability to develop, remodel, or redevelop property.
- Affects the need for and the cost of flood insurance.
- Floodplains will need to be re-studied.
- See impacts at [ATXfloodpro.com](http://ATXfloodpro.com)



## Austin's Floodplains Will Expand

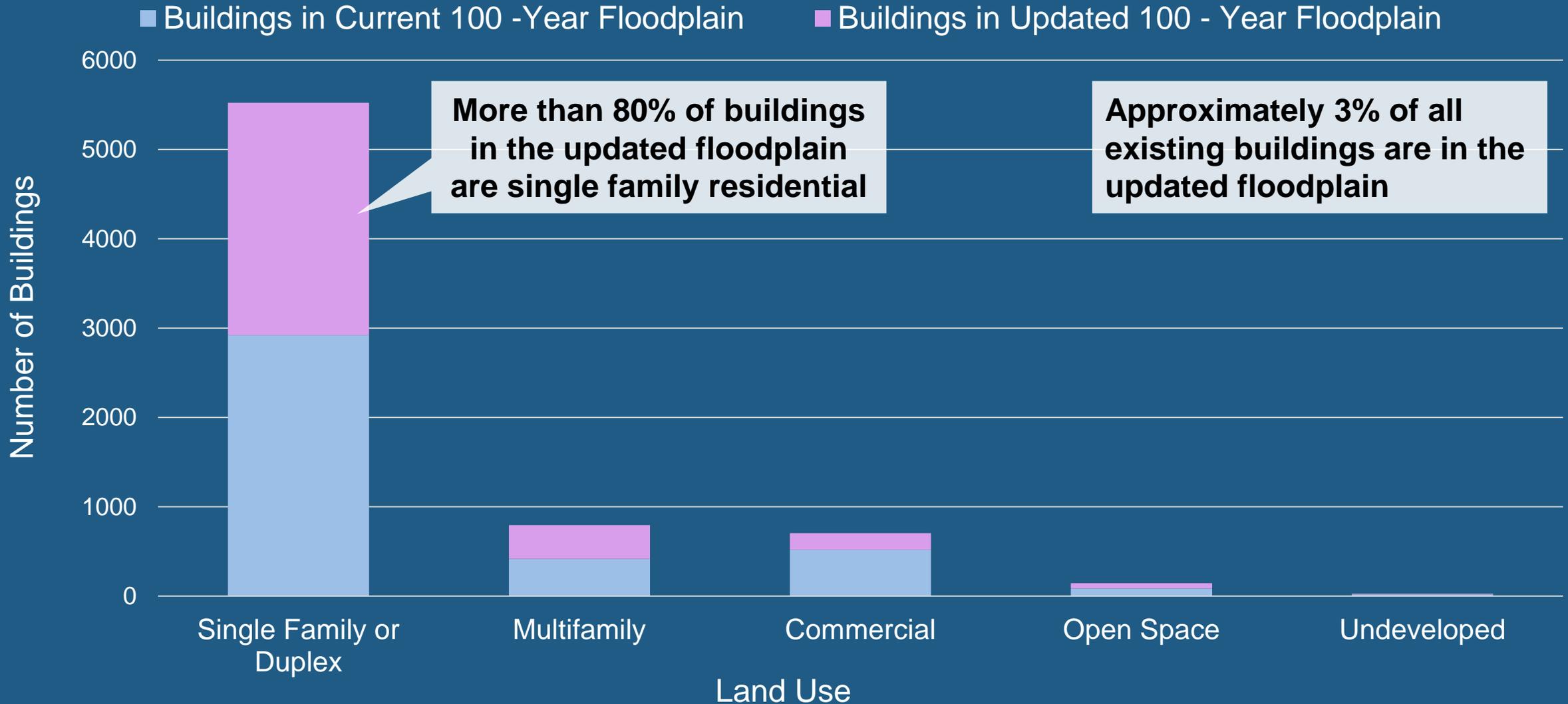
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## Key impacts of Atlas 14 updated rainfall data

Measure	Current	Updated	Percent Increase
100-year rainfall (24-hour)	10.2 inches	Up to 13+ inches	<b>30%</b>
Buildings in 100-year floodplain	4,000	7,200*	<b>80%</b>
Buildings in the 25-year floodplain	2,000	4,000	<b>100%</b>

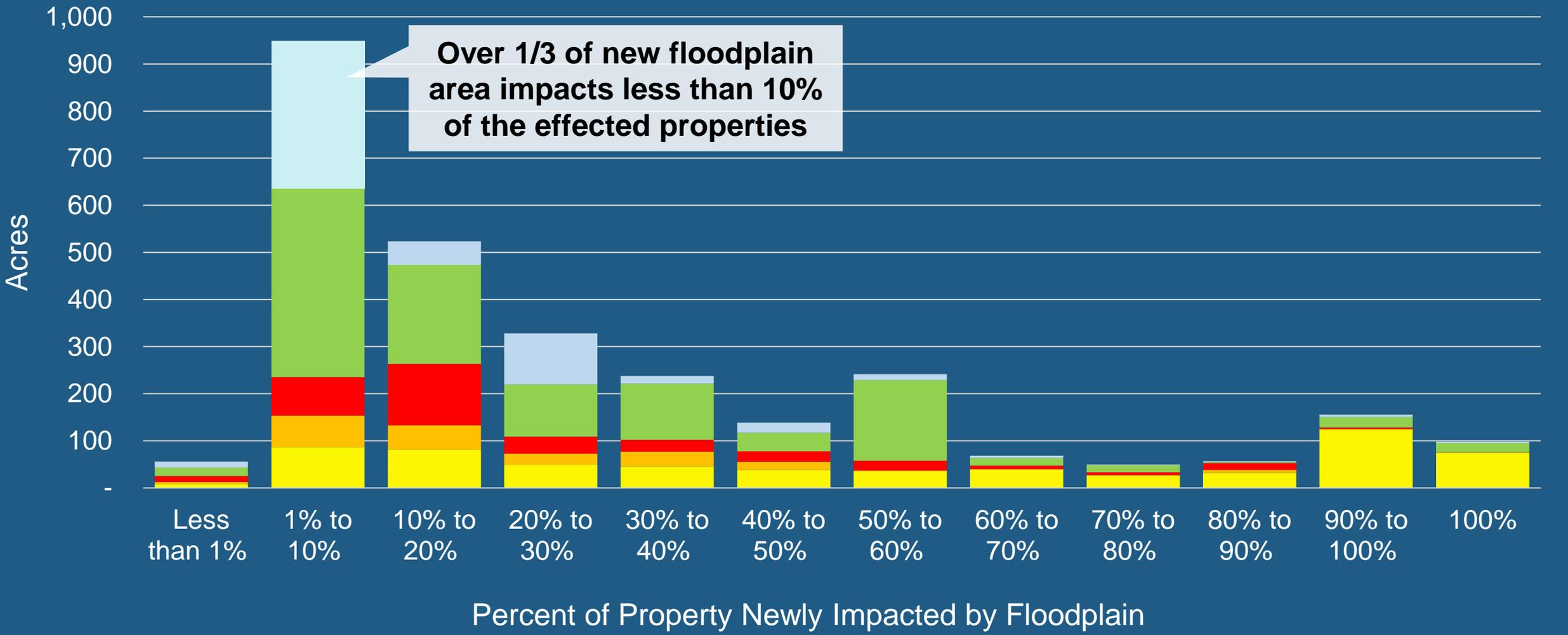
*\*Excludes Colorado River floodplain and associated lakes*

## Buildings in the Floodplain



## Acres Impacted by Updated Atlas 14 Floodplain by Percent of Property Impacted and Land Use

■ Single Family    
 ■ Multifamily    
 ■ Commercial    
 ■ Open Space    
 ■ Undeveloped



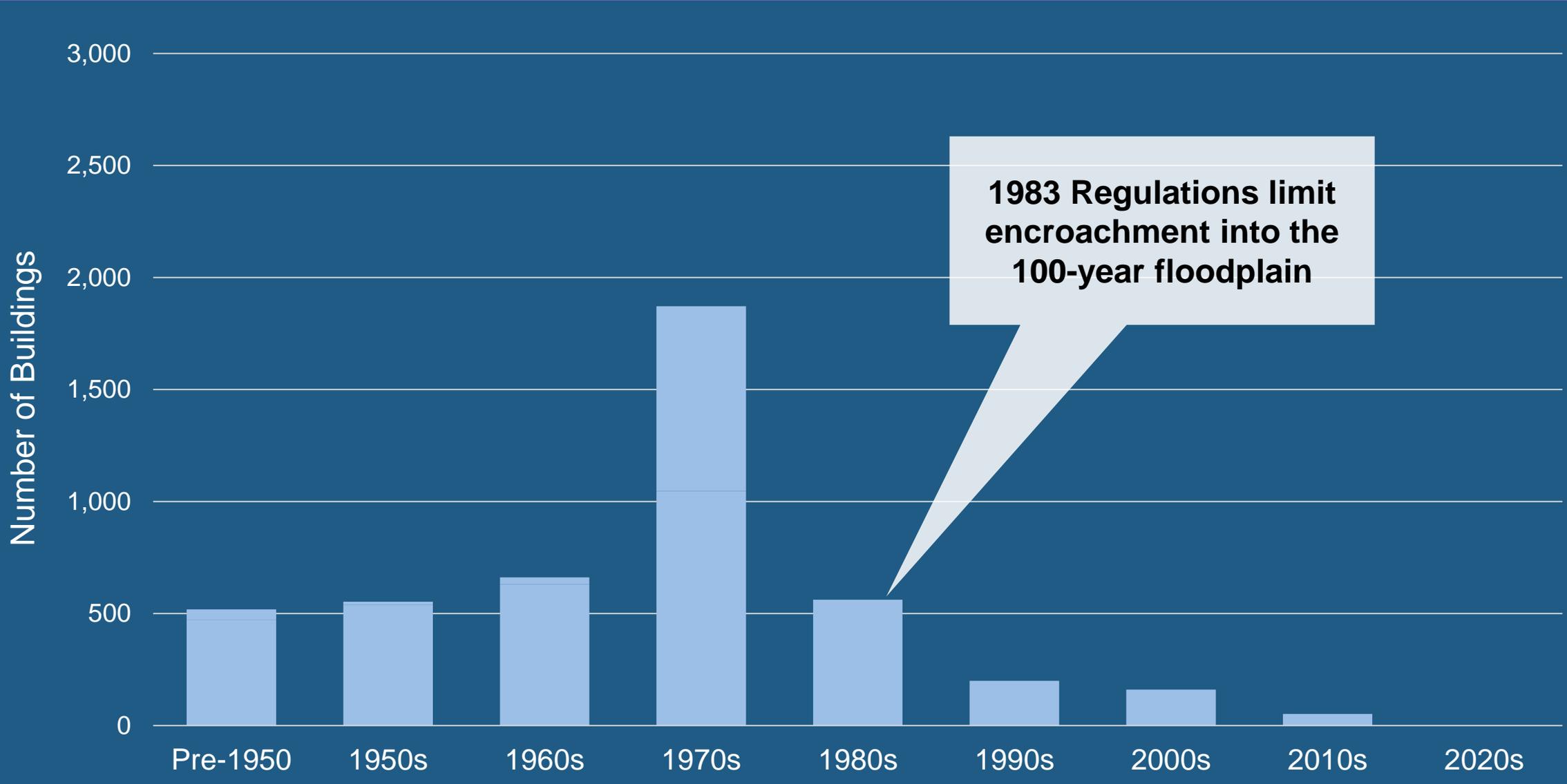
City of Austin

# Floodplain Regulation History

- 1975 – Entered FEMA emergency program; first floodplain maps and regulations
- 1983 – Entered full National Flood Insurance Program; updated maps and floodplain regulations
- 2003 – Amended regulations to include administrative variance process



**ATX FLOOD SAFETY**



*Number of buildings constructed in the current 100-year floodplain by decade*

# Recommended Response

## Step 1

Land Development Code amendments

## Step 2

Drainage Criteria Manual revisions

## Step 3

Floodplain Study and Mapping Updates





## Step 1

### Land Development Code amendments

- Revise floodplain definitions
- Create a redevelopment exception
- Expand the Colorado River exception
- Increase the freeboard requirement

## Revise floodplain definitions

New 100-yr floodplain ==>> Current 500-yr floodplain

New 25-yr floodplain ==>> Current 100-yr floodplain

- No change to Colorado River floodplain
- Interim definitions until floodplains are re-mapped in 2 - 3 years

Storm Level	Current Rainfall Depth (24 hour storm)	Updated Rainfall Depth (24 hour storm)
25-year (4% chance)	7.6 inches	Almost 10 inches
100-year (1% chance)	10.2 inches	Up to 13+ inches
500-year (0.2% chance)	13.5 inches	Up to 19.5 inches

## Revise floodplain definitions

New 100-yr  
floodplain  $\Rightarrow$  Current 500-yr  
floodplain

New 25-yr  
floodplain  $\Rightarrow$  Current 100-yr  
floodplain

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### Purpose

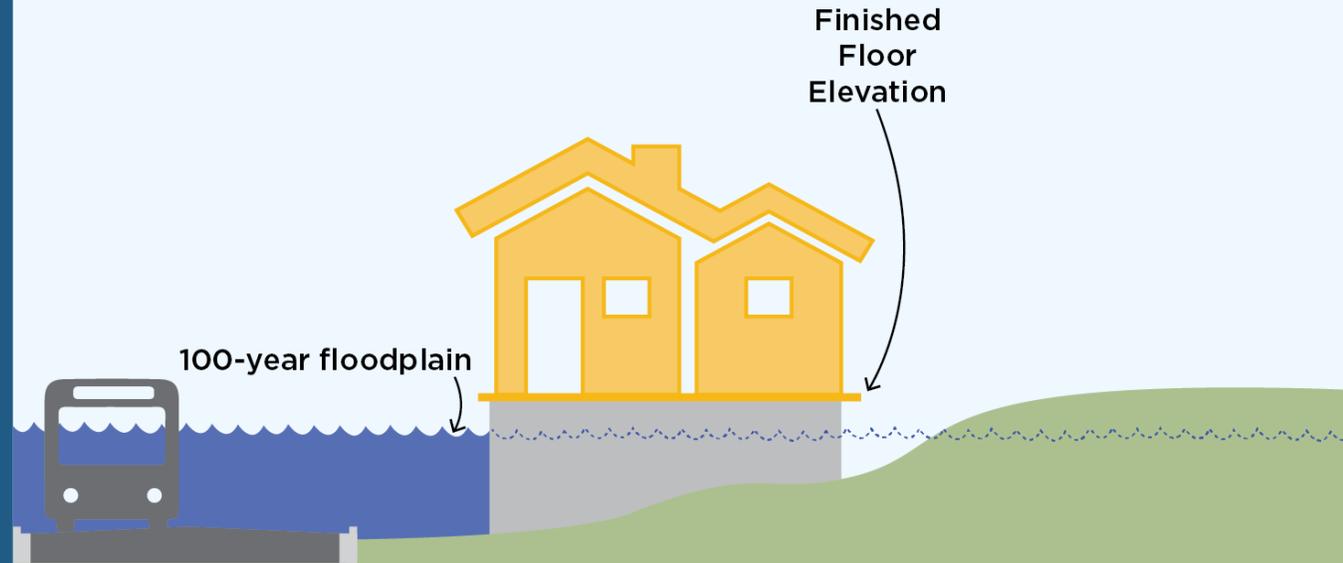
- Limit construction of new buildings in areas with known flood risk during re-mapping process

## Create a redevelopment exception

Administrative approval process for a residential building in the floodplain if:

1. Replaces an existing residential building
2. Finished floor elevation is at least 2 feet above the 100-year floodplain
3. Does not increase number of dwelling units

If these 3 conditions are met, the safe access requirement is waived



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## Purpose

- Incentivizes development that decreases flood risk
- 80% of buildings in the updated 100-year floodplain are residential
- Limits the number of dwelling units at risk

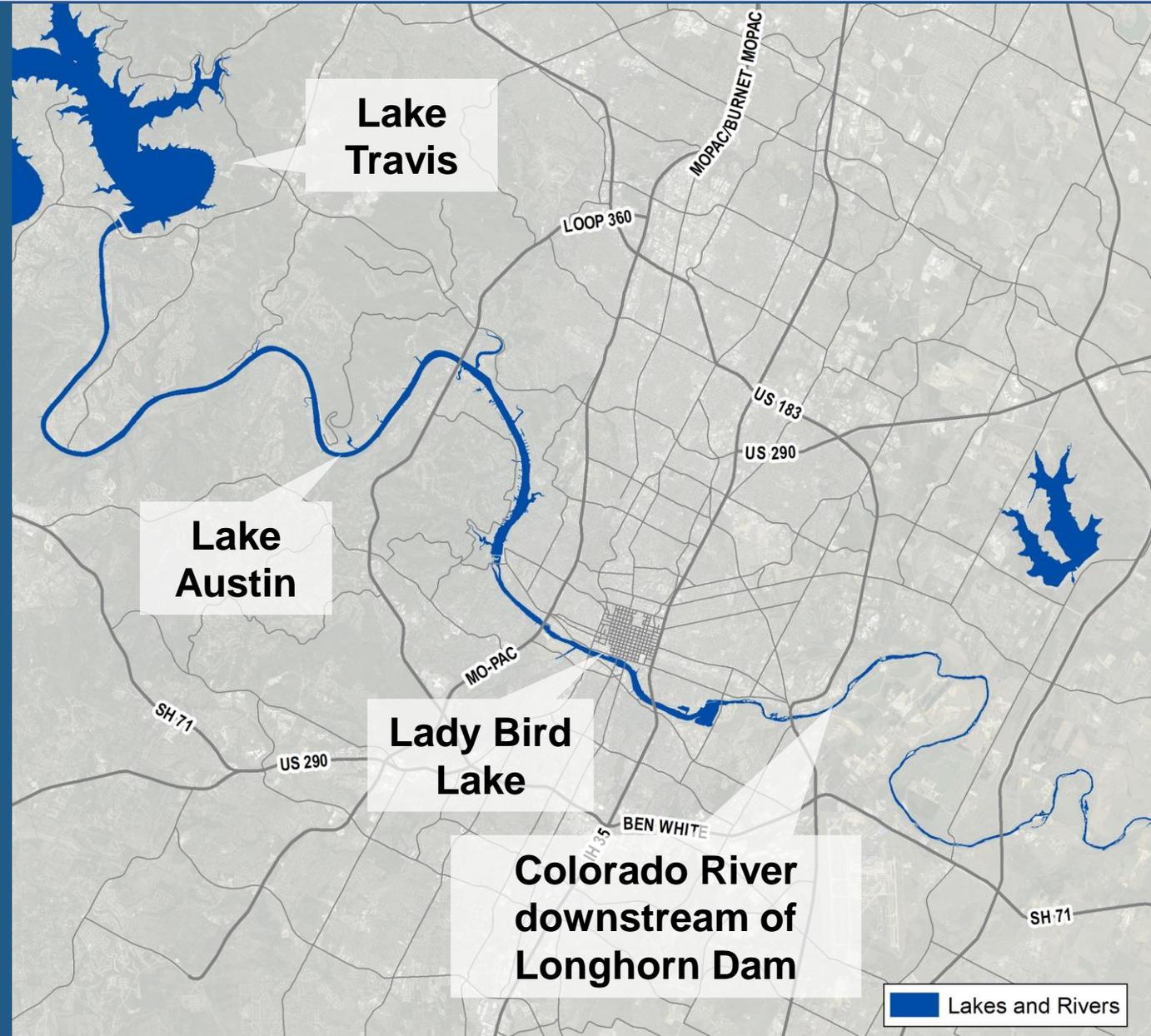
## Expand the Colorado River exception

The existing exception allows for a building to encroach on the 100-year floodplain without safe access if it is:

- Downstream of Longhorn Dam
- Along Lady Bird Lake

WPD recommends expanding this exception to include:

- Lake Austin
- Lake Travis



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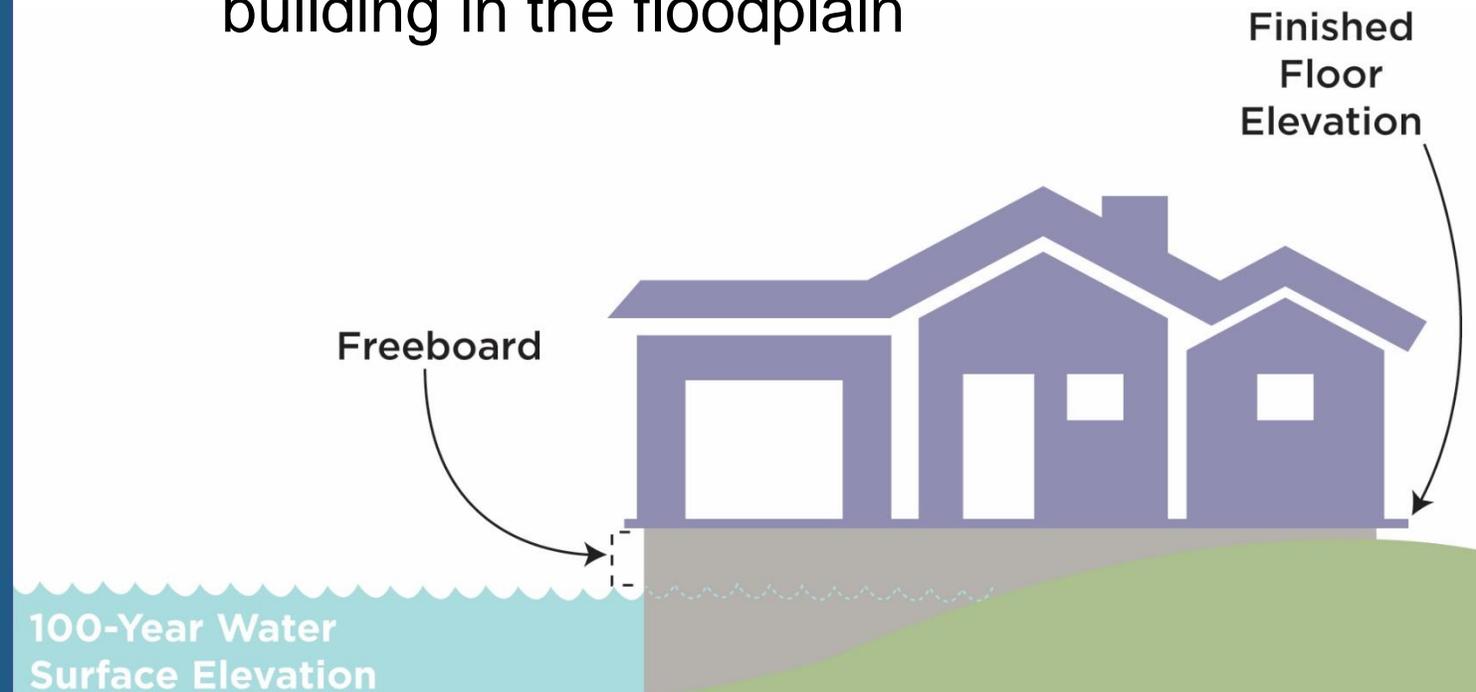
- Provide uniform regulations along Colorado River
- Colorado River flooding is not flash flooding like rest of City

## Increase the freeboard requirement

Increase the minimum height between a building's lowest floor and the 100-year floodplain from 1 ft to 2 ft

### Purpose

- Simplify regulations with uniformity
- Freeboard is the single-most effective means for reducing flood risk to a building in the floodplain



## Step 2 Drainage Criteria Manual revisions

- Atlas 14 updates rainfall rates that are used to determine:
  - Floodplain location
  - Size of storm drain pipes, inlets, and ditches
  - Detention pond size

## Step 3 Floodplain Study and Mapping Updates

- Utilize consultants from rotation list to complete studies
- Process to take 2 - 3 years
- Once complete, will provide data to FEMA to update flood insurance maps

# Stakeholder Outreach

Public Meetings	Professional Organizations	Other Organizations	Neighborhood Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 public meetings focusing on areas with largest floodplain impacts</li> <li>• 2 public meetings focusing on floodwalls</li> <li>• 24,000 postcards sent to residents and property owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Society of Civil Engineers</li> <li>• Austin Contractors and Engineer’s Association</li> <li>• American Institute of Architects</li> <li>• Austin Board of Realtors</li> <li>• National Association of Professional Mortgage Women</li> <li>• Texas Water Research Network</li> <li>• Society for Marketing Professional Services</li> <li>• Real Estate Council of Austin</li> <li>• Home Builders Association</li> <li>• Austin Infill Coalition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown Austin Alliance</li> <li>• Waller Creek Conservancy</li> <li>• Shoal Creek Conservancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Austin Neighborhoods Council</li> <li>• Onion Creek Homeowners Association</li> </ul>

# Stakeholder Outreach

City and County	Council & Commissions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Services</li> <li>• Parks and Recreation</li> <li>• Neighborhood Housing and Development</li> <li>• Capital Planning Office</li> <li>• Law Department</li> <li>• Public Works</li> <li>• Austin Transportation Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Austin Water</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Office of Real Estate</li> <li>• Department of Aviation</li> <li>• Travis County</li> <li>• Codes and Ordinances Joint Committee</li> <li>• Environmental Commission</li> <li>• Zoning and Platting Commission</li> <li>• Council Offices</li> </ul>

## Proposal Changes due to Stakeholder Input

- Extended outreach period to reach more stakeholders
- Removed limit on maximum floor area for the redevelopment exception
- Will revise criteria to remove the requirement for an Environmental Resource Inventory outside of a creek buffer

## Stakeholder Concerns

- Permitting uncertainty for development projects
- Impact of increased freeboard to visitability compliance
- Impact of increased freeboard to McMansion height restrictions
- Creek buffer impacts of floodplain expansion
- Parkland Dedication impacts of floodplain expansion
- Lack of commercial redevelopment exception
- No floodplain disclosure for tenants

# Anticipated Timeline

Dec 2018

Jan 2019

Feb 2019

May 2019

(Timeline to be decided pending input)

## Step 1 Code

**Boards and  
Commissions**

**City  
Council**

**New floodplain definitions effective**

(Staff recommends changes become effective immediately upon Council adoption)

## Step 2 Criteria

**Provide  
guidance to  
development  
community**

**Staff working on  
proposed rules**

**Stakeholder  
Meetings**

**Criteria  
effective**  
(TBD after  
stakeholder input)

**Administrative  
approval process**  
(depends on effective date)

## Step 3 Mapping

**Initiate studies  
with existing  
rotation list**

**Initiate process to create new  
rotation list (will need City Council  
approval)**

**Public  
meetings  
when studies  
near  
completion**  
(Estimated 2021)

**ATX**

**FLOOD SAFETY**

**FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS**

[AustinTexas.gov/atlas14](https://AustinTexas.gov/atlas14)

**CONTACT US**

[Atlas14@AustinTexas.gov](mailto:Atlas14@AustinTexas.gov)

Floodplain Hotline 512-974-2843

**VIEW FLOODPLAINS**

[ATXfloodpro.com](https://ATXfloodpro.com)