



## Recommendation for Action

**File #:** 19-2916, **Agenda Item #:** 64.

11/14/2019

### Posting Language

Conduct a public hearing and consider an ordinance to amending City Code Chapters 25-2, 25-7, 25-8, 25-12, 30-4, and 30-5 relating to regulation of development within the 25-year and 100-year floodplains.

### Lead Department

Watershed Protection Department

### Fiscal Note

There is no fiscal impact.

### Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

September 4, 2019 - Recommended by the Environmental Commission with a vote of 8 - 0 with Creel abstaining, and Gordon absent.

October 1, 2019 - Recommended by the Zoning & Platting Commission on a vote of 7 - 0 with Commissioners Barrera-Ramirez, Evans and Tatkov off the dais.

October 22, 2019 - Recommended by the Planning Commission on a vote of 12 - 0 with Commissioner Azhar absent.

October 2, 2019 - Recommended by the Building & Fire Code Boards of Appeals on a vote of 8 - 0.

### Additional Backup Information:

Our understanding of flood risk in the City of Austin has changed. Based on a federal rainfall intensity study by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration known as Atlas 14, portions of Texas, including the City of Austin, are more likely to receive severe rainfall events.

This has important implications to Austin residents, public and private infrastructure, and development citywide. More buildings, homes, and roadways in Austin are now known to be at risk of flooding. Flood insurance for some Austin residents may be required or be more expensive after federal floodplain maps are updated in three to four years. Certain City infrastructure such as roadways and wastewater treatment plants are now at more risk of flooding than previously thought.

In response to this new understanding of flood risk, the Watershed Protection Department proposes amendments to the Land Development Code. The intent of these code amendments is to reduce the impact of flooding on Austin residents. There are four main components of the proposed amendments:

- 1) **Revise the definitions** of the 100-year floodplain to the current 500-year floodplain and the 25-year floodplain to the current 100-year floodplain to more accurately reflect our new understanding of flood risk;
- 2) **Create a new exception** for residential redevelopment that will allow certain redevelopment that reduces flood risk to be approved administratively. Currently, this often requires approval by the Austin City Council;
- 3) **Expand an exception** that allows a building to encroach on the 100-year floodplain of the

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Colorado River downstream of Longhorn Dam and along Lady Bird Lake to also include Lake Austin and parts of Lake Travis in the City of Austin jurisdiction; and

- 4) **Increase the freeboard** or height that new or redeveloped buildings are required to be above the 100-year floodplain from 1 foot to 2 feet.

The City of Austin is coordinating with Travis County to incorporate these amendments within Title 30 of the Land Development Code.

Please see the Atlas 14 website for more information at: [www.austintexas.gov/Atlas14](http://www.austintexas.gov/Atlas14).