

RESOLUTION NO. 20210127-056

WHEREAS, Austin is one of the country's areas most prone to flooding due to its proximity to the Gulf coast, the terrain presented in the Hill Country, and increased rainfall in Central Texas; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to reduce the risk and costs associated with major flood events for individuals, especially those facing socio-economic challenges and disproportionate impacts from these natural disasters; and

WHEREAS, with a projected increase of extreme weather events with climate change, it remains crucial that the City of Austin continue to actively pursue flood risk mitigation as a step toward environmental, economic, and social resiliency, as described in the response to City Council Resolution No. 20131121-060; and

WHEREAS, benefits of a flood-resilient community include an improved quality of life with fewer disruptions from impacts such as closed roads, impaired public safety, and loss of essential services; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20200507-022 directed the City Manager to coordinate efforts to complete Resilient Austin: A Comprehensive Community Resilience Plan to create a new framework for a comprehensive community resilience strategy and action plan that centers on equity and holistically addresses economic, environmental, social and racial disparities for members of our community that also include but are not limited to people with disabilities, and older adults, and works toward community resilience to both acute and chronic shocks and stressors; and

WHEREAS, the City's Imagine Austin comprehensive plan supports revision of Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city while creating infrastructure that is resilient to flooding; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20190808-078 directed the City Manager to determine an accountability and regular reporting structure to City Council on overarching climate change goals and mobilization efforts and to promote inter-departmental coordination to ensure that existing emergency management plans offer an aligned approach to the threats of the climate crisis and natural hazards, including wildfire and flooding, and to identify where planning gaps may exist; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20150604-044 directed the Flood Mitigation Task Force to review existing flood mitigation and preparedness strategies, which resulted in the recommendation to implement City policies, programs, training opportunities and interdepartmental collaboration to enhance flood mitigation and preparedness; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to take the following steps to increase flood protection and flood resiliency:

1. Develop a concise summary of Austin's current flood management approach to reduce flood risks in Onion Creek, Walnut Creek, Shoal Creek, Williamson Creek, Bull Creek, and other City watersheds no later than April 30, 2021.

2. Develop near-term recommendations based on sound scientific data to further reduce flood risks in Onion Creek, Walnut Creek, Shoal Creek, Williamson Creek, Bull Creek, and other City areas where there is localized flooding no later than April 30, 2021, including whether the City Council should initiate amendments to the Land Development Code, including but not be limited to:
 - a. drainage management for redevelopment;
 - b. a redevelopment exception to reduce flood risk for commercial properties in the floodplain;
 - c. provisions to ensure that commercial and residential development comply with zoning impervious cover limits, including residential additions and accessory dwelling units; and
 - d. Analysis of projected impacts of any recommended land development code amendments related to flood mitigation on housing capacity and affordability and recommendations on how to address any of those impacts.
3. Develop a scope of work around the implementation of a resilient and equitable community plan to address the economic and social recovery of individuals experiencing devastating impacts from flood events in Onion Creek, Walnut Creek, Shoal Creek, Williamson Creek, Bull Creek, and other City watersheds no later than April 30, 2021. This should include potential funding strategies while considering engagement with local businesses, community organizations, schools, hospitals/medical facilities, agricultural landowners, and others who could be affected by floods within Onion Creek, Walnut Creek, Shoal Creek, Williamson Creek, Bull Creek, and other City watersheds.

4. Refine and expand existing strategies to manage flood risk for safety, resilience, and equity as part of the planning process to revise the Watershed Protection Strategic Plan to be started in spring 2021. This should include funding strategies, potential partnerships with stakeholders affected by floods, and potential acquisition of open space.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to report to Council with an update on the status of Resilient Austin: A Comprehensive Community Resilience Plan, Resolution No. 20200507-022, no later than February 26, 2021.

ADOPTED: January 27, 2021

ATTEST:



Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk