



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager

DATE: July 30, 2021

SUBJECT: Winter Storm Review Task Force Final Report (Resolution No. 20210325-067)

The purpose of this to provide you the final report from the Winter Storm Review Task Force (see Attachment A).

Council Resolution No. [20210325-067](#), which directed the City Manager to conduct focused conversations with briefings from staff and community partners, covered an array of critical topics including energy, water, sheltering, communications, emergency operations, intergovernmental coordination, coordination with community organizations, and other related topics. The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is lead in coordinating the response to this aspect of the resolution and will provide an update once complete.

The Resolution also called for the City Auditor to undertake an audit of the city's response to the winter emergency, which is currently underway. The City Auditor will provide an update to Mayor and Council separately from this update.

Finally, the Resolution created the Winter Storm Review Task Force the purpose of holding open public listening sessions during which individuals and organizational representatives can share information, experiences, and recommendations related to the winter storm and resulting crises. The Task Force will summarize the input received and develop a final report due to City Council by July 30, 2021. In addition, staff would create a SpeakUp Austin! public portal where members of the public can submit written testimony, video, images, and other information, which will be submitted to the Austin History Center.

Winter Storm Review Task Force

The Task Force is comprised of one member from the following commissions. Below are the Commissions along with their representative.

| Commission | Representative |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| African American Resource Advisory Commission | Miriam Conner |
| Asian American Quality of Life Advisor Commission | Molly Wang |
| College Student Commission | Jeffrey Clemmons |
| Commission for Women | Rebecca Austen, Vice Chair |
| Commission on Seniors | Sally Van Sickle |
| Commission on Veterans Affairs | Manuel Jimenez |
| Early Childhood Council | Aletha Huston |
| Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission | Ricardo Garay |
| Human Rights Commission | Sareta Davis, Chair |
| LGBTQ Quality of Life Advisory Commission | Kathryn Gonzales |
| Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities | Jonathan Franks |

The Task Force (TF) held their first meeting on April 16, 2021, which served as an administrative meeting for the TF to establish a meeting schedule and nominate a Chair (Sareta Davis) and Vice Chair (Rebecca Austen).

The TF decided to hold five (5) listening sessions to hear public testimony and 5 corresponding debrief sessions for the TF to discuss the public input received and hold two (2) report planning meetings. The TF heard from a total of 27 speakers during their meetings. In addition, the TF received a total of 20 written testimonies to review and read into the meeting record.

Five Council Members provided insight to the Task Force during their meeting and Council Member Greg Casar provide written input on District 4's learnings during the winter storm which outlined key topics and observations. The Task Force received reports from various groups to review: Austin Apartment Association Input, Central Health Equity Policy Council Recommendations, CRT Post-Storm Report, and ezNG White Paper.

Below is an outline of the Task Force's meeting schedule along with the Council Members that shared with the TF, along with the testimony heard and read during the listening sessions:

| Meeting | Date | Additional Information |
|---------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Administrative | April 16 | Council Member Kathie Tovo welcomed and provided the purpose of the Task Force. The TF developed their schedule. |
| Listening Session 1 of 5 | April 29 | Council Member Paige Ellis shared the impacts of the weather storm in District 8. The TF heard from 4 speakers. The TF read aloud written testimony from 2 individuals. |
| Debrief | May 7 | The Task Force discussed the input received on May 7 th and heard from 1 speaker during Citizen’s Communication. |
| Listening Session 2 of 5 | May 14 | The TF heard from 8 speakers. The TF read aloud written testimony from 1 individual. |
| Debrief | May 21 | The TF discussed the input received on May 14 th . |
| Listening Session 3 of 5 | June 2 | Council Member Alison Alter shared the impacts of the weather storm in District 10. The TF heard from 2 speakers. The TF read aloud written testimony from 7 individuals. |
| Debrief | June 4 | The TF discussed the input received on June 2 nd . |
| Listening Session 4 of 5 | June 11 | Council Member Ann Kitchen shared the impacts of the weather storm in District 5. The TF heard from 4 speakers. |
| Debrief | June 18 | This meeting was cancelled. |
| Listening Session 5 of 5 | June 23 | Council Member Vanessa Fuentes shared the impacts of the winter storm in District 2. The TF heard from 7 speakers. The TF read aloud written testimony from 10 individuals |
| Debrief | June 25 | The Task Force discussed the input received on June 11 th and June 23 rd and heard from 1 speaker during Citizen’s Communication. |
| Report Planning Meeting 1 | July 9 | The Task Force discussed the framework for final report and next steps. |
| Report Planning Meeting 2 | July 23 | |

The City Clerk’s Office created a dedicated [Task Force website](#) that displaying meeting dates, agendas the included the process in signing up to speak before the Task Force, and meeting minutes. The City Manager’s Office (CMO) provided staff support to the Task Force through the duration of their project. The Equity Office also dedicated time to assist the Task Force during their meetings. CMO staff coordinated with the Homeland Security and Emergency Management’s Public Information team to develop a [web page](#), [press releases](#) for circulation and social media content to promote the listening session and Task Force’s work. The listening sessions were promoted on the City’s Facebook page and Twitter account, Equity Office’s Facebook page and Equity Action Network email distribution list and shared with the City’s Boards and Commission network. In addition, the Task Force promoted the meetings through their connections.

Promotion of the listening sessions and the Task Force’s work was far reaching and included the following media outlets:

April 26 – [KXAN](#)

April 29 – [CBS Austin](#)

April 26 – [KVUE](#)

May 11 – [Austin-American Statesman](#)

May 14 – [Austin Monitor](#)

June 8 – [KXAN](#)

June 11 – [Fox7Austin](#)

June 23 – [CBS Austin](#)

The Communications and Public Information Office (CPIO) developed a [SpeakUp Austin!](#) webpage dedicated to capture the public’s unique stories submitted through written testimony, video footage, and pictures. The SpeakUp Austin! webpage was translated and published in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese-Simplified, Chinese-Traditional, Korean, Burmese, and Arabic. A link the Task Force’s webpage is featured on the SpeakUp Austin! webpage along with the helpful information. CPIO also developed graphics submitted for a Task Force representative to revise and use to further the reach on social media for the June 11 and 23 listening session. Translations for the graphics were provided in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese-Simplified, Chinese-Traditional, Korean, and Burmese.



Staff also created a designated email address, WinterStormTaskForce@austintexas.gov for the public to use to provide written testimony, sign-up to speak at listening sessions, respond to general questions about resources and connect agencies to the City’s consultant, Hagerty Consulting, who is facilitating the City’s After-Action Report.

Next Steps

The Winter Storm Review Task Force is scheduled to brief Council during the August 27th Council Work Session meeting. Staff will coordinate with the Austin History Center to archive the Task Force's final report along with the testimony captured on the SpeakUp Austin! webpage.

For additional information, about the report and Task Force's work, please do not hesitate to contact Patricia Bourenane (Patricia.Bourenane@austintexas.gov) or the Task Force's Chair Sareta Davis (BC-Sareta.Davis@austintexas.gov) and Vice Chair Rebecca Austen (BC-Rebecca.Austen@austintexas.gov).

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
CMO Executive Team
City Auditor Corrie Stokes, Auditor's Office
Juan Ortiz, Office of Homeland Security Director
Jessica King, Communications Public Information Office Interim Director
Brion Oaks, Equity Office Director
Roosevelt Weeks, Austin Public Library Director

Attachment:

- A. Winter Storm Review Task Force's Final Report

AUSTIN WINTER STORM REVIEW TASK FORCE



REPORT

July 30, 2021

Executive Summary

City Council approved Resolution number [Resolution No. 20210325-067](#) to create the Winter Storm Review Task Force under section 2-1-2(E) of the City Code for the purpose of holding open public listening sessions during which individuals and organizational representatives can share information, experiences, and recommendations related to the winter storm and resulting crises. The task force's role is to create a structured public space for these comments and to summarize these into a final report for the City Council.

Each of the following commissions appointed one member to the task force: African American Resource Advisory Commission, Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission, College Student Commission, Commission for Women, Commission on Seniors, Commission on Veterans Affairs, Early Childhood Council, Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission, Human Rights Commission, LGBTQ Quality of Life Advisory Commission, and the Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities. The following Commissioners served on the Winter Storm Task Force:

- Sareta Davis, Chair, Winter Storm Review Task Force and Chair, City of Austin Human Rights Commission
- Rebecca Austen, Vice Chair Winter Storm Review Task for and Chair, Commission for Women
- Miriam Conner, African American Resource Advisory Commission
- Jeffrey Clemmons, College Student Commission
- Sally Van Sickle, Commission on Seniors
- Manuel Jimenez, Commission on Veterans Affairs
- Aletha Huston, Early Childhood Council
- Kathryn Gonzales, LGBTQ Quality of Life Commission
- Jonathan Franks, Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities
- Molly Wang, Asian American Quality of Life Commission
- Ricardo Garay, Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission

The task force concluded its hearings by June 30, 2021, and now submits this final report to the City Council for review and implementation of recommended actions. This report will be presented to Austin City Council by this Task Force on August 24, 2021.

Feedback and recommendations were received from community members, representatives of organizations, council members and others. The findings are summarized in the following categories:

- Communications
- Transparency of Information
- Loss of Community Trust
- Failure and Breakdown of the Electric Grid
- Water, Food and Essential Supplies
- Lack of Accountability and Services

- Infrastructure Breakdown and Failures
- Access to Shelter/Lodging
- Role of Nonprofits, Community Organizations and Neighborhood Groups
- Need for Mental Health Resources

The report is a summary of the feedback received as synthesized by the Task Force. It is not an endorsement by any of the Task Force members or participating commissions of specific recommendations shared by those who gave feedback or made recommendations. In addition, provided as an attachment to the Task Force's report is the Community Resilience Trust's overview of Winter Storm Uri and their recommendations.

Communications

Summary of feedback:

While social media is an effective form of communication, the use of social media during the storm to provide sporadic updates was problematic. Most people had no ability to charge devices or connect to the internet in order to connect on social media. Facebook meetings held by city departments were not helpful, as participants could not ask or hear questions. Televised reports were problematic for the same reason.

Text and radio options that the city has available for communications (e.g., Amber Alert, city trash/ARR text services) appeared to be under-utilized. It was unclear whether or when citizens should use 211, 311 or 911 for assistance, and hold times were long.

Some neighborhoods established **phone trees**, used existing school-based phone trees and/or visited with neighbors to connect and offer assistance.

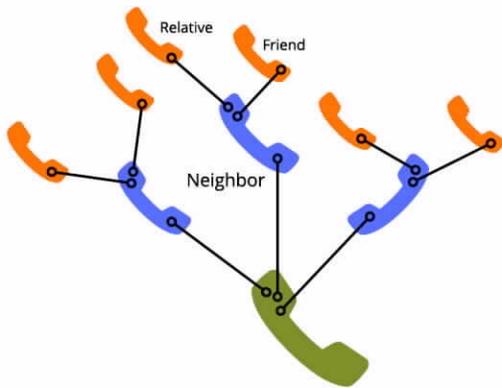


Figure 1: A large green phone labeled "Tree Leader" anchors three blue phones above it, which are labeled "Neighbor." The blue phones are connected on another level to a system of red phones which are labeled "Relative" and "Friend."

Not enough information was translated into languages other than English. Warming centers were not equipped to connect with individuals who were visually impaired. Other shortcomings affected communications for people with disabilities and the elderly. Some citizens reported that due to their disabilities, they were unable to reach out for help, nor were they able to read or hear any communications with instructions and/or up to date information about the crisis.

Summary of recommendations:

Relying on social media as a primary means of communication is ineffective for citizens who do not have devices or use applications to access it. All forms of media and emergency response systems should be used to reach the community. The city should contact citizens rather than relying on citizens to contact the city.

Feedback indicated that communication via radio, and the provision of emergency portable radios, would be most efficient in the future in similar circumstances.

Communication with the elderly, individuals with disabilities and non-English language speakers needs to be coordinated and improved. The ability to disseminate updates and communicate in languages other than English is essential, as is the ability to communicate emergency information to those who are visually and hearing impaired. For example, shelters

should have in-person interpreters for ASL and a variety of languages. In an emergency, the city could call on QOL commissions and community organizations to assist with translating materials.

The City of Austin needs a standing plan and standing orders to reach out to and protect vulnerable populations including the elderly, people with disabilities, people with medical issues or equipment requirements, students in apartments on their own for the first time or without disaster information and resources, families with babies and young children, and unsheltered people. The plan should include feedback loops with all citizens. Access to information can be the difference between life or death in a catastrophic situation.

The city should leverage and coordinate with community organizations and leaders who are equipped to reach their own communities with appropriate language and cultural competence. Communications could be enhanced by using broader channels such as community organizers, faith-based leaders, and others with direct and trusted access to their communities.

There should be an early warning system using a large range of communication modes, including those that don't require electric power, in several languages. Citizens need ongoing accurate and timely communication even when there is uncertainty. Communications and emergency response should be coordinated among city, state and federal entities (e.g., National Guard).

The community should be educated about emergency preparedness ahead of time – e.g., insulate pipes, keep emergency supplies, how to shut off water, who to contact or where to go in an emergency.



Figure 2: A contemporaneous tweet from Austin Energy which reads, "We are now dealing with an ice storm event. It's impeding operations of some of our equipment. This ice storm is impacting our customers, some who had power and now don't." It received 2 retweets and 12 likes on February 17th, 2021, at 1:35pm.

Transparency of Information

Summary of feedback:

Transparency was a major issue. Information about the storm was known well in advance, and should have been communicated sooner and with a greater sense of urgency for citizens to prepare and take action.

It was not clear how decisions were being made about access to and locations of warming centers, distribution of resources, and other measures. Information about power, water and other resources was either lacking or inconsistent. For example, “rolling or intermittent black-outs” turned into days without power for many, and there was no consistency as to when power would/would not be rolling for others. Without warning, water services were shut-off. This occurred within two days of certain media outlets reporting that the City of Austin assured citizens there was no issue with regard to the availability of electricity to water treatment plants.

There seemed to be a lack of knowledge on the part of city officials as to how to direct citizens to protect their plumbing. Contradictory messages were received to let faucets drip, turn faucets off, cover outdoor spouts, and leave outdoor spouts uncovered.

Summary of recommendations:

Information should be disseminated quickly and accurately. Anticipating future emergencies, the city could prepare materials and communicate guidelines before we are in another crisis situation.

Loss of Community Trust



Figure 3: A photo of Mayor Adler and City Manager Cronk are spliced together, where Adler is depicted in a well-lit home in a button down and the City Manager is shown in a short sleeved shirt.

*“We were all being told to work together to conserve energy so power could start to be restored safely, while [Mayor Adler] was on camera flagrantly doing the opposite. **I remember this viscerally, because at the time I was under three blankets, except for the hand holding the phone.** To my knowledge, he never apologized or commented on his action in that moment of **severe crisis.**” –*

Lawrence Williams

Summary of feedback:

Inconsistent and incorrect information led people to distrust authorities, a problem that has long-term consequences even outside of an emergency event. A present-day example is the current inconsistent communications from ERCOT about the possibility of blackouts during hot weather.

It was jarring for citizens to see broadcasts from city leaders in well-lit, heated environments when they were without power and water in their homes, or to see unoccupied downtown offices and parking garages lit up when residential neighborhoods were dark and cold. This contributed to a loss of community solidarity and trust.

Summary of recommendations:

Individuals who have a distrust of city authority or other officials may have more trust with leaders of faith-based and community organizations, schools and other entities. The city should use those avenues alongside city communications to disseminate information, engage and support community members, and build trust.

Failure and Breakdown of the Electric Grid

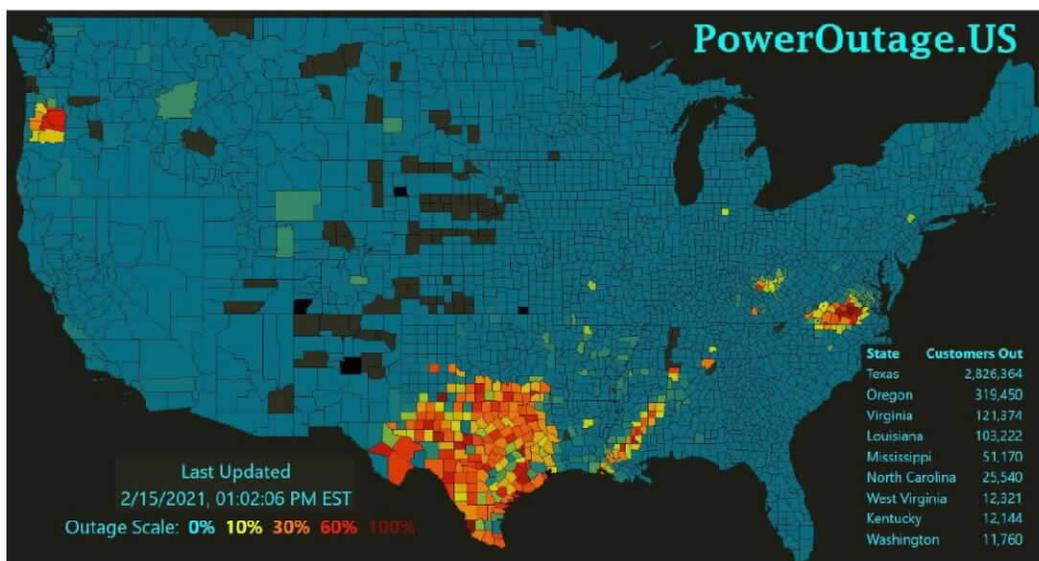


Figure 4: An image showing outages on the National Electric Grid, where the majority of Texas counties are shown in varying shades of red, indicating outages in those counties. These counties are a standout in a sea of blue, powered counties across the nation.

Summary of feedback:

There were clear racial, ethnic, and socio-economic inequities with regard to those that lost power – some lost for days were glaring and pervasive and another indicator of the lack of racial equity in Austin.

We received testimony from a professional in the electrical field that assured us Austin Energy has access to affordable technology that would have allowed for the cycling down of power in a manner that would have helped mitigate and perhaps avoid the black out altogether. Another citizen provided detailed testimony on past feedback and proposed actions regarding Austin Energy and its governance.

There was a lack of conservation of electricity, e.g., downtown buildings fully lit when no one was there.

Summary of recommendations:

The City should install charging stations capable of being connected to and using alternate sources of power so people can in the future charge phones or computers in disaster situations.

Issues with the power grid and outages are likely to occur during extreme heat as well as extreme cold. The city should be preparing and communicating how to respond to outages year-round.

Water, Food and Essential Supplies

Summary of feedback:

There was a lack of potable water supplies and no organized means of distribution of water, food, or other supplies once available. The road conditions made it difficult for most people to get food (including for babies and pets), water, diapers, sanitary supplies, and other resources. If they could get to stores, there were long lines and bare shelves.

Sanitation was an issue; citizens used melted snow and water from pools and hot tubs to flush toilets, babies or adults who depend on diapers couldn't get them. Those without power could not boil water to make it safe to drink, and could not prepare food. These issues were more problematic for the elderly, people with babies and young children, and those with medical conditions.

Food provided at some shelters was inadequate, unhealthy or not culturally appropriate, and non-perishable ready-to-eat meals (MRE's) had instructions only in English. Water was provided in plastic bottles, which is not a sustainable, environmentally friendly solution.



Figure 5: This photo shows someone sleeping in a shopping cart in the foreground of a snowy parking lot, where a line of people in heavy winter clothes stretches off into the distance.

For communities already experiencing food insecurity and lack of access to healthy foods, these issues were exacerbated by the conditions of the storm. Populations that rely on prepared food and food banks (e.g., students in dorms, low-income families, people experiencing homelessness) were further exposed.

Restaurants, bars and other business owners rose to the challenge and provided food, water and essential supplies to neighborhoods. Many neighborhood associations and nonprofits organized distribution efforts and created a make-shift dispatch center for

communication and resources. The Community Resilience Trust led this effort. This was the job of the City.

Many individual community members donated from their personal accounts to help others. Some non-profits raised significant funds (e.g., Austin Mutual Aid) and have not received reimbursements.

There were issues with fire hydrants freezing and being locked, inhibiting access to an emergency water source that could have supported neighborhoods.

Summary of recommendations:

The City needs an emergency dispatch operation that can function in times of catastrophe to aid non-profits and individual citizens who have the capability and means to provide aid. For example, fire hydrants should not have been blocked by fire departments, but should have been available to supply water.

Access to cash should be considered, especially if ATMs are not accessible, as many people (e.g., students) don't carry cash, and stores may not be able to process credit cards in an emergency.

The city needs to maintain emergency supplies of water, food and essential supplies, with a plan for quick distribution across the city. Distribution of food and water should be done in a way that is healthy, environmentally sound, and culturally competent.

Lack of Accountability and Services

Summary of feedback:

We heard testimony from renters living in places with absentee property managers; there was no one available or responsive to deal with emergencies, and a lack of supply (water/dry foods) stockpiles within complexes that caused residents to rely solely on their existing stockpiles or to call on neighbors, who were also lacking supplies.

Calls to 311 were not answered and there were no points of contact for emergencies – all lines were busy for hours and/or shut down. We received testimony from residents of an Austin apartment complex who reported that the Austin Fire Department came to put out a fire, then left without helping stranded occupants or even providing them with basic information as to how they could try to access other emergency services (food, water, shelter, etc.).

There was confusion about who should be making decisions and providing services, since this was a statewide disaster. Was the lack of energy a city or state failure? Where should state or federal authorities provide resources and support?



Figure 6: A paramedic leans against an EMS Vehicle trapped in the snow.

We did hear testimony from citizens (including city staff) who had positive feedback about ways the city and community rose to the challenge and supported one another. Those on the upside should be recognized for their efforts, just as those on the downside should be held accountable.

Summary of recommendations:

The City needs to define emergency or catastrophe services, and have a plan for what will happen when those services don't work. When the people who operate the services cannot do so, who is in charge? How often are drills and training happening that are preparing those who need to execute plans that are in place?

There needs to be a clearly documented and communicated plan for coordination among city, county, state and federal authorities for disaster preparedness and response, with a clarity of roles, authority, decision making and access to resources. This plan should be further coordinated with nonprofit and neighborhood groups, and volunteer citizen groups.

Refer to the summary of the CRT report at the end of this document for additional details.

Infrastructure Breakdown and Failures

Summary of feedback:

The lack of equipment to clear roads, and the lack of skill of emergency services personnel to use the equipment in inclement weather, was unacceptable. People could not drive to places with power, but citizens rationally expected trained emergency services to be able to do so. Some emergency vehicles were stranded, including those trying to transport others or provide medical response.

Many people with disabilities rely on public transit and ride shares for transportation. The storm presented significant impacts to people with disabilities. Without transportation option, they lost access to caregivers, groceries, medical supplies, etc. There was a lack of dissemination about emergency transportation options for people with disabilities.

The extent of the damage was so extensive and enduring that the City resources were exhausted, and it took much longer to clear roads, repair downed power lines, collect debris from fallen trees, etc.

Residences and businesses were not built for extreme cold, and some building codes do not require adequate insulation. Apartments and condos had outside water tanks and exposed pipes. Many citizens experienced frozen and burst pipes, causing extensive and costly damage.

Summary of recommendations:

The city needs to address emergency services training and procedures to be able to operate continually and act in emergency weather situations.

The city needs access to snow and ice removal equipment, generators, chains and tools to install them on tires, and more 4-wheel drive vehicles. There should be a supply of environmentally sound materials for icy roads (salt may pollute ground water).

There needs to be a plan to coordinate transportation between the city and TXDOT to connect outlying regions. A transit system is needed for people with disabilities, seniors, and others with restricted access to provide water, food, supplies and emergency equipment.

Policies or codes should be updated to encourage on-site generating capacity for apartment buildings, and rebates for fire sprinkler insulation (much of damage was from sprinklers). The city should explore video inspection procedures for minor repairs to speed up the repair process, and institute city permit and fee waivers for repairs for limited periods. Building codes should require insulation or other means of protecting water pipes and heating systems against cold.

Assistance is needed for those dealing with water damage to their homes and businesses. Funds should help to cover upgrades to insulate and protect against future weather events that are not covered by insurance. Citizens need help getting claims for insurance submitted and paid.

Apartment buildings should be required to have on-site property managers and/or increased accountability and responsiveness for remote owners.

The city should provide record keeping of medically vulnerable people in the city and county, to provide adequate emergency response.



Figure 7: An apartment is completely destroyed by a large hole in the ceiling where ice and water spill out onto a dining room table.

Access to Shelter/Lodging

Summary of feedback:

Hotels were full and were charging hundreds of dollars over normal rates. Individuals with bookings were turned away or charged higher amounts. Unhoused individuals who lacked IDs couldn't get into hotels. Supplies were available at some shelters and not others, or were stored where they could not readily be brought to shelters where they were needed.

Testimony from a representative of the Austin Hotel and Lodging Association indicated that they dealt immediately with reports of price gouging, and that people can report unreasonable charges to them for investigation.

Certain warming shelters were only available during the day, leaving individuals stranded to find a warm place to spend the night. Some overnight shelters were advertised as being designated for people experiencing homelessness, not for people whose homes were uninhabitable due to lack of power and water. Central or downtown shelter locations were not practical for people in other parts of the city.

Some people did not feel safe going to a shelter even if their homes were uninhabitable, because of the pandemic, road conditions, medical needs, having young children, pets, or other concerns. Some people were unsafe being trapped in their homes, such as those vulnerable to abuse and domestic violence. Elderly residents were isolated and unable to get to shelters or access other resources, and some were without their regular caregivers or access to essential medical equipment.

Calls were made to emergency services pleading with them to assist over 68 individuals living under overpasses that asked for help to get to shelter so they would not freeze to death overnight. Some unsheltered people did not want to leave behind their belongings or pets.

Animal shelters were closed, and animals left unattended perished.

Summary of recommendations:

The city needs a plan for emergency shelters that is more accessible, including transportation to shelters. The city should coordinate with organizations like Survive to Thrive to provide safe emergency shelter for vulnerable people.

The City's Legal Department and Civil Rights Office must review validated reports of price gouging and punish withing the full extent of criminal and civil law.

Role of Nonprofits, Community Organizations and Neighborhood Groups



Figure 8: A depiction of the logos for a handful of organizations that lent their support to the community during the storm, including Austin Justice Coalition; Homes Not Handcuffs; Texas Appleseed; DAWA Fund; Central Texas Food Bank; Indivisible Austin; Earth Day Austin, P. Terry's Burger Stand; SAFE Alliance; HEB; LULAC; Austin Mutual Aid; ECHO; Austin Area Urban League; 10,000 Fearless Emergency Response Team; UFCU; CAP Metro; Huston-Tillotson University; St. Edward's University; and The University of Texas at Austin.

Summary of feedback:

Many nonprofit, community and faith-based organizations stepped up quickly, organizing groups to deliver and distribute bottled water, food, and sanitary supplies in different parts of the city. Breweries produced bottled water quickly.

Organizations that provide housing, food, and services to vulnerable or marginalized communities were already impacted by the pandemic – cash and resource strapped, restricting programs and services. They were stretched even further by the storm, without financial relief.

Summary of recommendations:

The city needs an organized dispatch center and procedures equipped to operate in emergency situations. It should coordinate with organizations such as the American Red Cross, local nonprofits and other organizations that helped or coordinated a response on the ground during and after the storm.

The city needs to strengthen relationships and funding with nonprofits that can provide timely services in a disaster. Funding and/or reimbursement needs to be provided to organizations that supplement city services during an emergency.

The city should involve the Joint Inclusion Committee and community organizations in disaster planning and preparedness, particularly those representing the eastern crescent and other vulnerable neighborhoods and residents.

In a disaster where services fail, we are going to have to rely on other institutions and each other to survive. There must be a better understanding of our interconnected responsibilities as a community, and built-in redundancy in terms of services the community provides internally. The city, businesses (commercial and residential), nonprofits, schools, community organizations, and individuals within communities must all have a baseline preparedness that allows them to act immediately and work together in a crisis to mitigate worse consequences.

Need for Mental Health Resources

Summary of feedback:

Through the combination of the above issues, a general sense of uncertainty created great anxiety for Austinites. Many individuals were already impacted by the pandemic (with associated isolation, job loss, financial insecurity, childcare and schooling challenges, etc), and they experienced added pressure due to the storm and its after-effects.

Summary of recommendations:

As we continue to weather extreme events where power and other resources will be tenuous, people may feel increased distress. The city needs to provide trained mental health workers that are accessible to Austinites during catastrophes, to help them manage the trauma and anxiety produced by a crisis. Ongoing resources are also needed to address the stress associated with damage and repair to homes and businesses, and to individuals and families displaced from their homes. Feelings of uncertainty and anxiety may be mitigated if citizens gain a sense of control through better preparedness training and access to supplies.

There needs to be a regular system of community checks for individuals who are vulnerable and/or isolated (e.g., elderly, students, people with disabilities, people at risk of abuse and domestic violence), with capacity to increase such services during an emergency. This should be done by social workers or other service professionals, not police, in collaboration with nonprofits who routinely provide these types of services. There also needs to be consideration of animal welfare, rescue, and service animals.

Community Resilience Trust Synopsis and Recommendations

The following is an excerpt from a draft of a report soon to be published by Community Resilience Trust (CRT). Please note that the full report will be much more comprehensive, and, given that it is currently in the final review process, may have changed from what is excerpted here. CRT also emphasizes that the contents expressed here do not represent the entire community effort, nor does it represent the entirety of the community perspective, and should not be viewed as such.

Winter Storm Uri: Timeline at a Glance

November 5 - According to the [Feb 24 Board of Director Slides](#), ERCOT meteorologist warns [Market Participants](#) winter is likely to bring [record lows](#).

February 3 - ERCOT meteorologist warns Market Participants of coldest weather of the year.

February 8 - At the ERCOT board meeting, the ERCOT director spends [less than a minute](#) talking about the issue. (ERCOT Board Member and General Manager of Austin Energy later shares her [frustration](#) that the director did not do more to prepare.)

February 11 - The National Weather Service indicates a growing cold weather system and issues a [warning that includes Williamson County](#). The City of Austin announces closing Monday for President's Day. Austin Energy posts a notice that [outages](#) might occur during the storm. ERCOT releases a [statement](#) predicting record electricity usage. Austin Area Urban League raises concern on a Community Resilience Trust (CRT) call.

February 12 - County delays opening until noon due to weather. The National Weather Service mentions the possibility of [record lows in Texas](#). CRT has an internal emergency meeting and decides to act.

February 13 - (Low of 28) The National Weather Service issues a [winter storm warning](#) for Travis County. CRT hosts a public emergency meeting & opens its virtual collaborative space. ([See Appendix 1](#))

February 14 - (Low of 14) Judge Andy Brown declares a disaster and addresses price gouging. CRT begins working on dispatch & hotel booking coordination of unhoused neighbors in collaborative effort with several groups.

Feb 15 - (Low of 10) CRT continues supporting unhoused neighbors, and begins hot meal delivery twice a day. Statewide blackouts begin in the very early morning, Feb 15. In Austin, they are not rolling in most locations, but stay off. We would later find out that at 1:55 AM, Texas was [4 minutes and 37 seconds](#) away from a total system failure.

Feb 16 - (Low of 6) CRT continues supporting unhoused neighbors. At 4 PM, Samsung and other semiconductor companies (Austin Energy's biggest energy users) are ordered to shut down to help prevent a statewide outage.

February 17 - (Low of 23) At 10:30 AM, hearing that a boil water notice was imminent, CRT arranges a call with EOC manager Juan Ortiz connecting him to WaterMonster, a company that could fill tanks and deploy large water dispensers. Janis Bookout urges EOC to act now to fill tanks before water mains break or boil water notice issued. City of Austin issues a boil water notice due to a power outage at the power plant. It is later discovered that a backup generator switch was overlooked. Restaurant Depot management drives through ice to open its doors to CRT and Scotty Love's team for a purchase of food, making hot meal delivery possible throughout the week. At 8:30 PM, the boil water notice was issued. [EOC activates alert system](#).

February 18 - (Low of 0) The City of Austin releases its first Severe Weather update. Sponsored by the Austin Area Urban League (AAUL), CRT publishes the Austin Cold website. CRT and AAUL begin responding to calls for help through Austin Cold.

February 19 - (Low of 20) The Millennium Youth Complex is opened by MPT Harper-Madison as a water and food distribution center. The first emergency water delivery [arrives in Austin](#), with a promise to be available at distribution sites "[ASAP](#)." ([Appendix 1](#))

February 20 - (Low of 22. Last day of freezing temperatures.) CRT calls the EOC at 9PM asking why water has not been delivered to Austin's Colony. They have been 6 days without water, and are located in a grocery desert.

February 21 - Water is delivered to Austin's Colony. Mayor Pro Tem Harper Madison, along with Council Members Fuentes, Casar and Renteria send a [letter](#) to City Manager Spencer Cronk ([Appendix 3](#)) demanding action on a city-wide coordination of water and food distribution. The letter starts like this: "On both Friday, Feb 19 and Saturday, Feb 20, our offices contacted you via phone and email urging that the City establish a significant food distribution for Austinites in need because of this disaster." By the end of the day, 10 distribution centers are set up throughout town, one in each district. None are east of 183.

February 22 - The Millennium Youth Complex is opened as a water and food distribution center.

February 23 - CRT team members open a second distribution center on North Lamar, serving the Rundberg area. Boil water notice is lifted for all customers, but many have broken lines.

| | Feb 11-12 | Feb 13-18 | Feb 19 - 25 | Feb 26 - March 1 |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | PREPARATION | RESCUE | RECOVERY - Part 1 | RECOVERY - Part 2 |
| | High of 47. Low of 32. Temperatures began to drop. | High of 32. Low of 0. Extreme lows began Sunday the 14th & continued. | Low of 20. High of 83. Temperatures varied. | Low of 49. High of 79. |
| What Happened | Roads clear. No new infrastructure issues. Existing conditions in the Eastern Crescent are will make the storm outcomes disproportionately severe. Weather advisories are clear, and some meteorologists warn that we are not prepared. In general, the community and city move as though this is a normal storm. On February 12, a power failure at a North Austin wastewater treatment plant resulted in an overflow of 100K gallons of untreated water. | Freezing ice and snow storm combined with widespread power outages throughout the city starting as early as Sunday night. Power outages included planned outages according to proximity of "critical infrastructure." Photos of downtown showed the majority of office buildings were lit. Some infrastructure failures also caused additional, unintentional outages. COA issues boil water notice. Outages continued in many areas, leaving some communities with no way to boil water. Water main breakage, leaves some entire neighborhoods without water to boil. | As temperatures rose, water pipes on houses broke, leading to flooding and additional need for fresh water. As roads began to clear, many communities were still left with no water due to local stores being emptied of supplies and gas shortages leading to transportation issues. Demands for fresh water deliveries rose. The boil water notice was finally lifted on February 23. | As roads cleared, Austin Water organized water and food distribution to areas identified as high-risk. EOC water distribution continued. Austin Needs Water ran water distribution out of the Palmer Event Center. Residents in multifamily dwellings throughout the city report problems with flooding and water access due to broken pipes. Property managers tell different stories, confusing relief operations. City attention shifts to repairs. Plumbers Without Borders begin assistance. |
| COA & County | Feb 11 - County delays opening on Feb 12 until noon. Feb 11 -- COA announces closure Monday for President's day. | Feb 14 - Judge Brown declares a disaster. Feb 16 - County declaration re: price gouging Feb 17 - COA Issues a boil water re: power outage at the water plant. Feb 18 - COA releases first Severe Weather update. | Feb 20 - County order suspending car washing. Feb 20 - County announces legal resources - price gouging. Feb 21 - COA establishes 10 water distribution sites None are east of 183. Feb 24 -COA storm repair website | Februray newsletter from the County Sherriff |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CRT Activities | <p>CRT Thursday morning call includes a share-out from AAUL about their efforts to connect to unhoused folks on Cameron Rd. Conversation ensues about the need to address the needs of the unhoused. An internal emergency planning meeting is planned for Friday morning. CRT mobilizes to understand greatest areas of community need and provide a collaborative rapid response plan to support unhoused communities. On Friday, CRT decides to start with an all-city zoom meeting Saturday.</p> <p>15 organizations 12 hotels with over 125 rooms 300-400 housed in hotels 700 meals delivered daily 30-50 volunteers</p> | <p>CRT hosts an all-city zoom meeting of orgs, leaders and city and county staff. We hear from an unhoused community member, who shares that shelters and warming centers are not sufficient. A plan forms to assist local groups on the ground in finding hotels, paying for rooms and transporting people to them. From the 13th forward, the zoom room remains open from 8 AM until the wee hours of the morning. Breakout groups form, including hotel procurement, transport, dispatch & wellness. Food and water distribution is added soon after that.</p> <p>10 HACA Properties 15 Additional properties 100 families COVID testing conducted at hotels Mayor Pro-Tem Maddison contacts CRT about Millennium Youth Complex (MYC) CRT negotiated additional shelters through AISD</p> | <p>EOC worked with CRT and HACA to identify areas in high need of water, and made its first water delivery to Austin's Colony on February 21. The community had been without water for 6 days. As the impacts of the storm grew, CRT expanded our scope of service operation to mitigate limited city/county resources. Activates 3 point plan with partners for Supply Drive Thru Distribution, Residential Distribution, and Wellness Checks</p> <p>15 Additional properties Helped EOC identify priority properties (Clayton Lane, Harris, Oltorf Mobile, North Lamar, Woodland Oaks) Extended occupancy at hotels MYC Activated World Central Kitchen Crown Distro Center on on 2/23 - 9,603 - Hot Meals - 10,344 - MRE Meals - 41,160+ Bottles of Water - 60+ Locations Austin Cold is Launched</p> | <p>CRT integrates learnings to date with partner networks to meet the growing needs as organizations stand up their operations. CRT moves away from the role of tactical support and shifts to strategic advisory. Project summaries and reporting. CRT continued work from the North Lamar distribution center, providing hot meals and water to families.</p> <p>CRT extended support to Crown Event distribution - last food distro day 2/26 2414 tickets are served through Austin Cold - 2,500 - Hot Meals - 6,000 MRE Meals - 1,525 Bottles of Water</p> |
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Searching For Equity in Travis County's Emergency Management

Travis County's Basic Disaster Plan does not reflect recent government guidance on equity.

Austin and Travis County's response to disaster is guided by the county's [Emergency Management Basic Plan](#), The Travis County [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), and in Austin's case, the [Austin's Emergency Operations Basic Plan](#) and the City of Austin [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#). Further guidance is given by the [Annexes](#) and standard operating procedures within the departments responsible. Templates for the Annexes can be found on the Texas Department of Emergency Management Website.

Reviewing these documents from an equity lens illuminates a clear lack of inclusion of the Eastern Crescent in emergency plans. In contrast to the guidance offered by FEMA and CDC on addressing vulnerable communities during disaster response, neither the Travis County's Emergency Operations Plan, nor the Travis County 2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan, nor the Austin Basic Plan make significant mention of strategies to address at-risk populations, nor do they include any of the community-led organizations in the Eastern Crescent, including those that participated with CRT. To evaluate this, we counted the number of mentions of each of the twelve priority populations suggested by FEMA, as well as several other populations known to

be at risk in Travis County. A detailed chart can be found below in [Appendix 5](#) (it's worth reviewing visually), but here is a summary of what we found:

- None of the three documents made any mention of people experiencing low socioeconomic status, people of color, LGBTQ, service workers, migrant laborers, undocumented communities, renters, or people identifying as Black or Hispanic/Latinx.
- People with limited cognitive or physical abilities were referenced three times in the Austin Plan and once in the mitigation plan.
- The Austin Basic Plan did make one mention of tribal and first nation communities and one mention of limited English speaking communities.
- Mention of institutionalized communities was limited to schools, hospitals, nursing homes and military institutions, but left out prisons.
- People experiencing homelessness were only mentioned in the context of extreme heat.
- Mobile home communities were mentioned in the Hazard Mitigation Plan, but only in the context of tornados.
- Unincorporated communities were mentioned, in the context of heat vulnerability, fuel reduction and flood mitigation, but not in the context of being in food, health and transportation deserts or having poor to no infrastructure.
- The elderly and infants were mentioned several times in reference to vulnerable populations.
- Mention of "vulnerable communities" was made 70 times in the Hazard Mitigation document. However, the mentions referred to numbers of elderly and low-income in broad areas, and in general terms such as structural, geographic and climate vulnerability, rather than in the context of populations and pre-existing vulnerabilities. When populations are mentioned, it is with no specificity of impact. Very few actions are mentioned to address anything related to vulnerable populations.
- In the Populations and Demographics section of the County Hazard Mitigation Plan, demographics listed include income and elderly, but show no disaggregation by race. (See [Appendix 6](#))

Also notable in the Hazard Mitigation Plan was the inclusion of specific cities within Travis County, combined with the apparent exclusion of others. 17 municipalities participated in the development of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Missing from the list were Barton Creek, Wells Branch, Manchaca, Hudson Bend, Hornby Bend, Windermere, and Garfield. Austin was also missing, but is covered separately with it's own mitigation plan.

Who Writes The Mitigation Plan Matters

It's worth noting here that both the Travis County's Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Austin Hazard Mitigation plan were written (or at least updated) by [H2O Partners](#). Located off Bee Cave Road near the One World Theatre, H2O Partners is a West Austin-based consulting firm specializing in flood insurance, hazard mitigation, response and recovery, and training. Their website reads: "We have created mitigation plans for more than 950 jurisdictions, and we were the first to create a multi-jurisdictional plan update approved by the State of Texas" and boast a 100% success rate for FEMA approval. They also play a role in helping municipalities and counties navigate the FEMA system to gain access to funds. Despite obvious expertise in many areas of disaster response, searches through their website, linkedin and facebook presence

shows a clear lack of relationships with the communities of East Austin and a lack of participation in conversations related to equity.

Additionally, the planning process described in the Travis County mitigation plan was not inclusive nor equitable. Both the Executive Planning Team, Advisory Planning Team, and the Stakeholder Working Group were entirely (white) institutional, with no (BiPOC) community representation. As stated in the document:

“The public was involved in the development of Travis County’s 2017 Plan Update at different stages prior to official Plan Update approval and adoption. Public input was sought using three methods: (1) open public meetings; (2) survey instruments; and (3) making the draft Plan Update available for public review at Travis County’s website.” - page 24

The Executive Planning Team for the Travis County mitigation plan included representatives from Travis County, Lakeway, Manor, Pflugerville, Sunset Valley and Village of the Hills. This representation was reflected in the content and focus of the material. For example, the section entitled “Mitigation Actions” includes specific sections for these same municipalities, with no other municipalities having their own section. Also of the 42 cities, villages, unincorporated areas and census designated places in Travis County, only 17 were mentioned in the report. Austin, Pflugerville, Sunset Valley, Village of the Hills, Manor, and Lakeway were each mentioned over 100 times. By contrast, Dove Springs was mentioned 0 times, Onion Creek was mentioned 10 times, and others less. (See [Appendix 7](#))

Public input for the county plan included 9 public meetings between January and April of 2017 in Lakeway, Pflugerville, Manor, and Sunset Valley. One of these was held at Elroy Library in Del Valle. Total attendance at all these meetings was 47: 12 from Sunset Valley, 15 from Lakeway, 6 from Pflugerville, 9 from Manor and 5 from Del Valle.

The COA hazard mitigation is very similar in nature. Like the county, the Executive Planning team was institutional and did not include community representation. The document indicates there was a stakeholder process, but does not share who the stakeholders were. Public input involved 5 meetings between March 10 and July 16 of 2015. Two were at Pleasant Hill Branch Library in West Austin, two were at Spicewood Springs Branch Library, two at Howson Branch Library, and one at Carver Branch Library. Interestingly, the COA hazard mitigation plan does not show meeting attendance. Instead, it has this statement:

Again, this lack of inclusion was reflected in the content of the COA mitigation plan. For example, the only mention of the Black or Hispanic population was in the following context regarding the community profile, in a section entitled “Ethnicity” on page 33:

The City of Austin is transforming into an urban place that hosts various racial groups including Caucasian, Hispanic, African American, and Asian. The Hispanic share of the City of Austin’s total population decreased from 35.9 percent in 2008 to 34 percent in 2013, and the Asian share of the total population increased from almost 5.5 percent in 2008 to 6.1 percent in 2013.

The City of Austin has become a Majority-Minority city, meaning no ethnic or demographic group exists as a majority of the City of Austin's population. The City of Austin's Caucasian share of total population has dropped below 50 percent, and is predicted to remain below 50 percent for the foreseeable due to the growth of other ethnic groups outpacing the growth of Caucasian households.

These two paragraphs alone indicate a need for an equity audit of the entire document. While a full explanation of how these statements are problematic could fill several pages, but to highlight just a few:

- First, to say that Austin is “transforming into an urban place that hosts various racial groups...” mischaracterizes Austin’s history and it’s growth. Austin’s history has included diverse populations since it’s origins, with gentrification and displacement making it less so over time.
- The first paragraph does not mention the Black community, nor address the impact of displacement over the last 20 years.
- The term “majority-minority city” (language well established as both [divisive](#) and [misleading](#)) points to an us/them perspective that belies the viewpoint of the author and presumed audience as Caucasian, let alone the questionable relevance of the topic itself.

To serve Austin during a disaster is to serve its most vulnerable, which absolutely requires prioritizing their needs and the disproportionately higher harm they are exposed to before, during and after any disaster. This short excerpt exemplifies a lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity and an active (if unintentional) perpetuation of systemic racism.

Travis County’s Disaster Response Hierarchy Does Not Include Representation from Communities Most Impacted

In addressing community engagement during disasters, it’s vital to understand the relationship between the county/city and the VOAD network. VOAD (standing for Volunteer Organizations Operating in Disasters) is referenced in Travis County’s Disaster Management Plan in the following way:

“Travis County has an extensive VOAD network consisting of numerous NGOs who are vetted with the County to assist the community during times of disasters. The following are some of many with whom Travis County coordinates disaster relief services with.”

The document goes on to list these vetted organizations as Central Texas Chapter of the American Red Cross, The Salvation Army, Austin Disaster Relief Network, and RACES. Here we will address each one, including their county-approved role, community relationships, and activities during Storm Uri.

It’s also worth noting that three of these organizations are Christian-based, and the boards and leadership of at least three of the four organizations are predominantly white. While these groups’ efforts demonstrate significant capacity and longstanding trusted relationships with government entities (increasing their effectiveness in seeking resources and taking coordinated action), generally, their relationships with East Austin organizations need work. ADRN and

VOAD coordinators have expressed interest in facilitating this process, which is great news. As we move forward, process and cultural sensitivity will be vitally important.

Texas Disaster Plan Templates Do Not Operationalize Equity

It's also important to understand that this structure stems from state policy regarding the Emergency Management Council (See [Appendix 11](#)), which is then reflected locally in every city. The council includes 36 state agencies, several universities, and a select few organizations. The select universities include: University of Houston System, University of North Texas System and the University of Texas System. The organizations listed are The American Red Cross, Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, and The Salvation Army.

The Travis County Emergency Operations Plan references several Annex documents (see a list in [Appendix 12](#)) meant to describe operations in more detail. While I was unable to find these ancillary documents on the Travis County website, I was able to find their templates on the [TDEM website](#). Several raised questions.

Annex T: Donation Management. In this document is a description of the Donations Steering Group, consisting of "...local government officials, community leaders and designated members of the community-based volunteer organization (CBOs) and the volunteer agencies (VOLAGs) who would have an interest in setting policy for and being a part of the donations management program if conditions warrant that it be operated by the government." It goes on to list as examples of CBOs to include "faith based organizations, local ministerial alliances, and clubs and organizations having a charitable mission as part of their activities." The list of CBOs mostly includes historically white organizations, such as Scouts, Lions Clubs, Kiwanis, Shriners, Masons, Knights of Columbus. Additionally, the list of VOLAGs has a strong religious and Christian focus. ([Appendix 13](#))

Annex B: Communications. The development of this plan is assigned to the Police Chief and County Sheriff. This document includes a list of communication strategies and their use by specific facilities. Their communications list includes Cable TV, Phone, TLETS, RACES, Radio, Rad to HF, Cell Phones, Satellite Phones, Local computer network, Internet or email. While these SOPs are helpful, what is missing from the document are other potential communications easements, such as school robo-call systems, mass text messaging, and networked communications through organizations. ([Appendix 14](#))

Annex I: Public Information. The City/County PIO is accountable for developing this plan to ensure that relevant information is collected and distributed. The template from TDEM does address "special populations." These include ensuring that tools are used to include the visually impaired, hearing impaired and non-English speakers. It does not, however, give guidance on cultural sensitivity, addressing the digital divide, or providing situationally relevant information based on existing socio-economic vulnerabilities such as food deserts, health access deserts and transportation access. ([Appendix 15](#))

While we can speculate about the outcomes produced by this system, what would make a real difference in assessing the situation is to review data from ADRN's efforts and compare that

with data from other community efforts. It also might make a real difference to do conduct an equity assessment of the Travis County EOC standard operating procedures in more specificity. However, several key outcomes point to the need for change.

The City of Austin Basic Plan Also Lacks Equity and Inclusion

This plan identifies a “Community Services Group”, whose purpose is to: “provide for the food, potable water, clothing, shelter, animal welfare, disaster mental health, and other basic necessities of persons impacted by a disaster.” The group is to be staffed by:

- Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Austin Police Victim Services Unit
- City of Austin Human Resources Department
- City of Austin Transportation Department
- City of Austin Animal Services

In multiple meetings offered by the EOC consultant, CRT members observed only HHS and Parks participating in the process. Parks in particular noted in one meeting that their participation began on February 20th, when they started conducting well checks.

The document goes on to identify the following additional “critical non-governmental organizations that routinely staff the Community Services Group:

- Central Texas Chapter of the ARC
- Capital Metro
- Austin Independent School District
- Salvation Army

The specific responsibilities of care and shelter operations are:

- Determine the number of evacuees with functional needs, such as medically-fragile persons, people with disabilities, elderly persons, non-English speaking persons, and unaccompanied minors. To the extent possible, coordinate with the ARC to provide services to support the special needs of disaster victims.
- Provide and coordinate the use of transportation equipment for evacuations or other emergency situations where mass transportation is needed.
- Coordinate the delivery of all disaster mental health assistance required by victims and responders.
- Coordinate all activities related to animals in disasters.
- Inventory the operational status of all facilities listed as shelters, including the following information:
 - Structural soundness
 - Utility services
 - Adequate sanitation facilities, including showers;
 - Capacity for cooking, serving and dining areas and equipment
 - Shelter capacity

What stands out here in the brief analysis of this one section in this 160 page document is the lack of inclusion necessary to fully implement these objectives. Not only did the City of Austin fail to fulfill these responsibilities, the decision making bodies and processes that led to the planning for such responsibilities did not include the Eastern Crescent to begin with. From a community perspective, the impacts of such oversights are obvious and extreme, but a full equity audit would be needed to call out what is missing.

It is also worth emphasizing that every city staff member and public official that we witnessed deeply engaged with CRT's efforts and effectively coordinated with community efforts had received equity training. We know this because we reviewed the Equity Office's dashboard for each department, and saw that for each city staff member on our list of reliable supporting characters, this was true for 100% of them.

The Humans and Groups Behind The Effort

**** PLEASE NOTE: This document lists 100 participating organizations; but, is a draft list. We are working to ensure the list is accurate and doesn't leave anyone out for the final report. The plan; the organization; and the community expectation is broken at all viewpoints. Remember the blame is not personal but institutional.***

CRT efforts included a core group of collaborating organizations and volunteers, with many more groups and individuals donating and/or volunteering.

Community Resiliency Trust
Austin Area Urban League
Survive2Thrive Foundation
Mobile Loaves and Fishes
Maximizing Hope
DAWA Fund
Earth Day Austin
Austin Mutual Aid
Community Advocacy & Healing
Homes Not Handcuffs
Brave Communities
Donovan Division

Central Texas Allied Health
Brave Communities
LULAC
Huston Tillotson University

Kitchens
Lighthouse Kitchen
Little Herds
World Central Kitchen

Collaborators & Supporters
10K fearless
Austin Hotel & Lodging Association
Aging is Cool
AISD
American Youth Works
Antonelli'
Any Baby Can
Asian Pacific American Public Works, Austin Texas Chapter
Atlassian
Apple
Assistant City Manager
Austin Front Steps

Austin Justice Coalition
Austin Public Health
Baylor Scott and White Hospital
Baylor Scott and White Foundation
Beck Reit and Sons Construction - Financial Aid and Staffing assistance with the Lighthouse Kitchen
Big Wheelbarrow
Black Women in Business
Cap Metro
Communities of Color United
Central Texas Allied Health Institute
Central Texas Foodbank
CM D9
Communities In Schools
Cook's Nook
Corporate Engagement Council
ECHO
Excellence & Advancement Foundation
FingerPulse Media, Inc.
Go Austin Vamos Austin
Gladiator Consulting
H-E-B
Hearts 2 Heal
HOPE Presbyterian
Indivisible Austin
Keep Families Giving Foundation
Kendra Scott
Lighter Loads
Lucian Morehead, Asterra Properties -
Warehouse Space
MEASURE
Memnosyne Institute
Millennium Youth Entertainment Center
Mosaic
NOVA Impact
One Pulse Media
Ptery's
Portfolio Resident Services
Resilience Office
Restaurant Depot
Russ Hartman
SAFE Alliance
Sister Christina - Church Networks
St. David's Foundation
St. Edward's University
Street Forum
Trimbuilt Construction - Fleet of Trucks
Texas Appleseed
Texas Children's Hospital
Texas Criminal Justice Coalition
Texas Firewalkers
Texas Grants Resource Center
Texas State University
The Austin Common
The Other Ones Foundation
The Sustainability Office
Trimbuilt Construction
Uber
UFCU
United Way Central Texas
United Nations SDSN Youth
University of Texas
UT MSSW Class of 2022
Various Commissioners
We Can Now