



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Lucia Athens, Chief Sustainability Officer
Zach Baumer, Climate Program Manager

THROUGH: Jason Alexander, Chief of Staff

DATE: February 10, 2022

SUBJECT: Staff Response to FY22 Tovo Budget Rider 1 – Update on Resilience Hubs

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on Council Member Tovo's Budget Rider 1, directing the City Manager to provide monthly updates to the City Council and Public Health Committee on staff efforts to achieve the deliverables called for in City Council [Resolution No. 20210408-028](#). For background, this resolution directs the City Manager to engage with the Office of Sustainability and other relevant City departments, school districts, and external partners on Resilience Hubs to 1) create a plan, budget recommendations, funding strategies, and a timeline for designing and equipping an initial six pilot hubs for disasters, including the necessary power and water redundancies, and 2) budget recommendations, funding strategies, and a timeline for creating a community-wide resilience hub plan sufficient to serve all Austinites during emergencies.

In the past decade, Austin has experienced climate change in the form of record-breaking heat, droughts, historic floods, and devastating wildfires that have taken lives, displaced community members, and stressed infrastructure. The extreme winter weather experienced during Winter Storm Uri can now be added to this list of devastating weather events.

Resilience Hubs are networks of community-focused physical facilities that usually provide day-to-day services that help build community resilience but can also be activated to provide community support during disaster events. Resilience Hubs are not a replacement for traditional emergency planning and disaster responses or a substitute for sheltering plans. Resilience Hubs should work with, be a part of, and support the City, County, and Public Health Emergency Response plans. Resilience Hubs are not a cure-all for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery in Austin, but they can serve as an important piece in the puzzle.

City of Austin Staff has been collaborating with Austin Independent School District (AISD) and Travis County staff since fall 2021 and recently added Austin Community College to the Resilience Hubs initiative core working group. [The City of Austin, Travis County, and Austin ISD Joint Subcommittee](#) (Joint Subcommittee) received a report on this initiative at their meeting on November 29, 2021, and again at their most recent meeting on January 28, 2022. Below is a summary of recent activities provided by staff at the January meeting. This initiative represents a robust collaborative amongst key Central Texas agencies, which we

believe will yield a strong long-term program aimed at better preparing our community to respond to and bounce back from extreme events. Pursuant to Tovo Budget Rider 1, staff will remain available to provide updates on these efforts at requisite Council Committees and the Joint Subcommittee.

Topic Area	Progress Update
Leadership and Team Structure	<p>Staff continues to meet regularly across agencies and partners to advance the Resilience Hub initiative. Four working groups have been created as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Team: Management from AISD, Travis County, City of Austin meet monthly to strategize timelines, progress, resources, and communications. • Facility Planning: Staff from all participating agencies are undertaking a robust planning process in preparation to select sites for an initial proposal. This process includes reviewing existing facilities, mapping assets, and assessing potential sites to develop baseline conditions. The forthcoming proposal will include six Resilience hub proposed sites as well as needed building upgrades. • Hub Activation: Emergency management staff from all agencies are planning to create protocols for emergency communication and activation during events. The protocol will include resource acquisition, staff training needs, and guidelines for activating Hubs during times of need. • Community Involvement: Staff is preparing for community discussions related to the 6 pilot sites with events, focus groups, and individual engagement. The group will need to determine resource needs and what the community wants to see at the Hub in their neighborhood. It is important to remember that Hubs can support increased community resilience at all times, not only during disasters.
Resilience Hub Service-level Definitions and Site Assessments	<p>Staff is now analyzing, mapping, and prioritizing facilities based on social vulnerability, population density, and 15-minute walk sheds.</p> <p>Prerequisites for a facility to be designated as a Resilience Hub:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility can fulfill some or all of the Service-level Criteria delineated for one of the 3 levels as defined below • Structure not exposed to identified natural hazards • Public access (designated hours open to the public) <p>Resilience Hub Service-level Definitions Based on facility capacity, detailed requirements have been developed for 3 service levels of Hubs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1: Gathering Hub • Level 2 (Level 1+) Relief Hub • Level 3 (Level 2+) Grid Independent Hub <p>Potential Sites Across agencies, the team has identified over a hundred facilities that are public-facing and could be used as Resilience Hubs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 57 City of Austin facilities • 131 potential AISD facilities (60 preferred) • 5 Travis County facilities <p>Community Owned Facilities Once gaps are confirmed, non-government locations may be needed to fill gaps in a City-wide network. Staff is researching best practices and models to create guidelines and processes to allow non-governmental entities to create their own Resilience Hubs, which some may refer to as “Hub in a box.” This work is in progress.</p>

Community Advisory Committee	<p>The team has received many inquiries from the Austin community on the concept of Resilience Hubs. Throughout these conversations, we learned that the community had many innovative ideas for what Hubs should and shouldn't be. There is a lot of energy and interest in supporting this initiative from the landscape of existing community-based organizations. A Community Advisory Committee has been launched to provide support and guidance to the project team. The group will meet every other month throughout 2022. Representatives from the following organizations were invited to the first meeting on January 21, 2022.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. American Heart Association 2. American Red Cross 3. Ascension Seton 4. Austin Achieve Public Schools 5. Austin Area Urban League 6. Austin Asian Community Health Initiative (AACHI) 7. Austin Disaster Relief Network (ADRN) 8. Austin Justice Coalition 9. Austin Revitalization Authority 10. Community Advancement Network 11. Community Coalition for Health 12. Community Powered Workshop 13. Community Resilience Trust 14. Go Austin Vamos Austin (GAVA) 15. Guadalupe Neighborhood Dev. Corp 16. Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) 17. Huston-Tillotson University (HT) 18. Refugee Services of Texas 19. Texas Association of Community Health Centers 20. University of Texas (UT)
2022 Goals & Benchmarks	<p>The following goals have been set for 2022. We plan to continue reporting progress on these goals to the City of Austin, Travis County, and Austin ISD Joint Subcommittee throughout the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Advisory Committee underway composed of representatives from nonprofit/community organizations • 6 initial Resilience Hub proposed locations identified • Community engagement underway to refine 6 initial Resilience Hub concepts/strategies • End of 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 initial Resilience Hubs ready to be activated with supplies, training, public communications • Planning for four more Resilience Hub locations underway

If you have any questions, please contact Climate Program Manager Zach Baumer at zach.baumer@austintexas.gov.

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