



Austin City Council Policy Workshop on Watershed Protection, Environment & Endangered Species

February 17, 2015

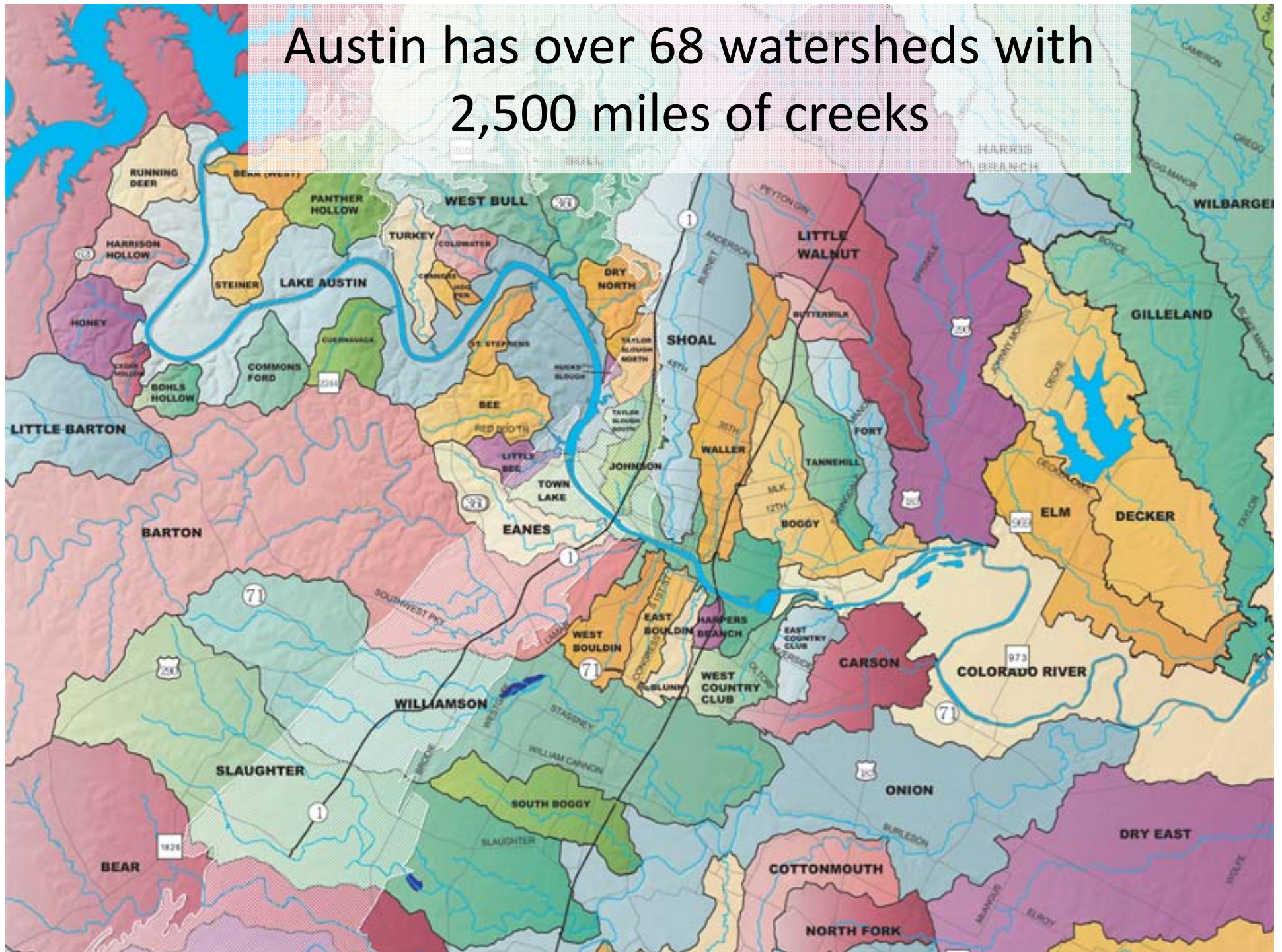
What is a watershed?

A watershed is the area of land that drains to a particular creek, lake, or aquifer. Water travels from the highest points to the lowest area, where it forms a water body.



austintexas.gov/departments/watershed-protection-council-district-profiles

Austin has over 68 watersheds with
2,500 miles of creeks



Watershed Protection Department Missions

Flooding



Public Safety

Erosion



Property Protection

Water Quality Degradation



Environmental Protection

“Protect the lives, property, and environment of our community by reducing the impact of flooding, erosion, and water pollution.”

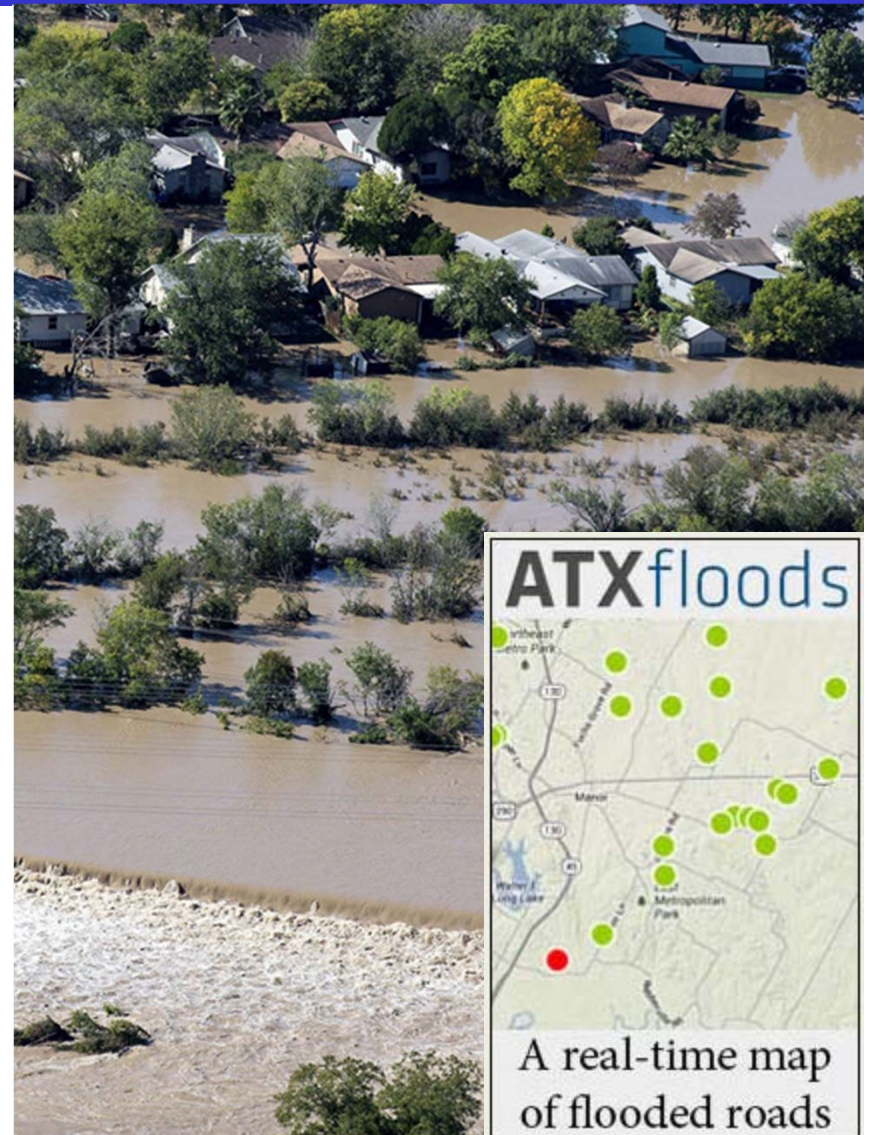
Watershed Protection Challenges: Flood Mitigation

Creek Flooding

- 5,777 structures are located in the 100-year floodplain
 - 3,021 would be inundated by 100-year flood
- 430 roadway crossings inundated by 100-year flood

Localized Flooding

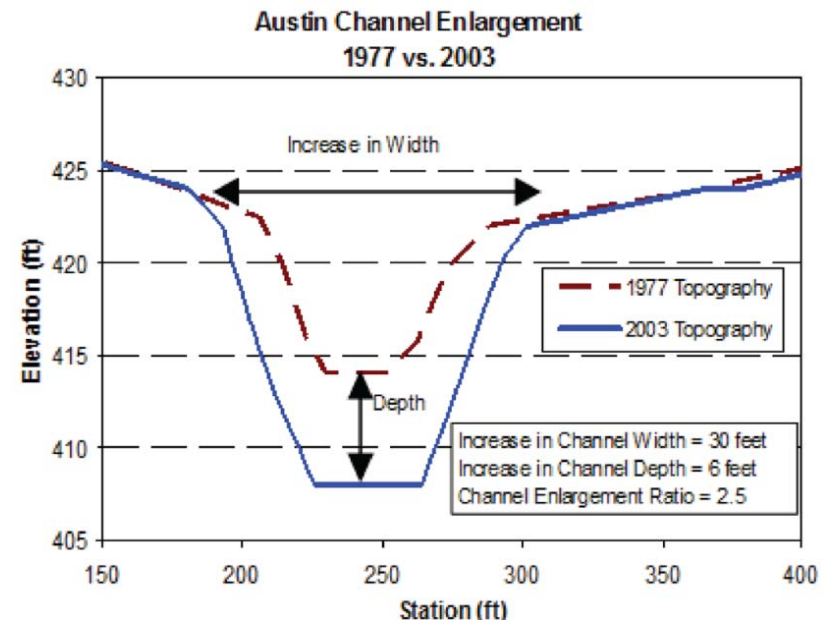
- Approx. 1,000 miles of storm drain pipes
- Half of the storm drain system is undersized and/or over 60 years old



Watershed Protection Challenges: Erosion Control



- 995 active erosion sites
- 102,000 linear feet of streams with erosion problems



Watershed Protection Challenges: Water Quality



- Routine monitoring is used to identify and prioritize problems in creeks, lakes and aquifers.
- 121 reaches in 49 watersheds are sampled
- 13 stream reaches with “very high” problem scores
- 121 tons of trash removed from Lady Bird Lake last year

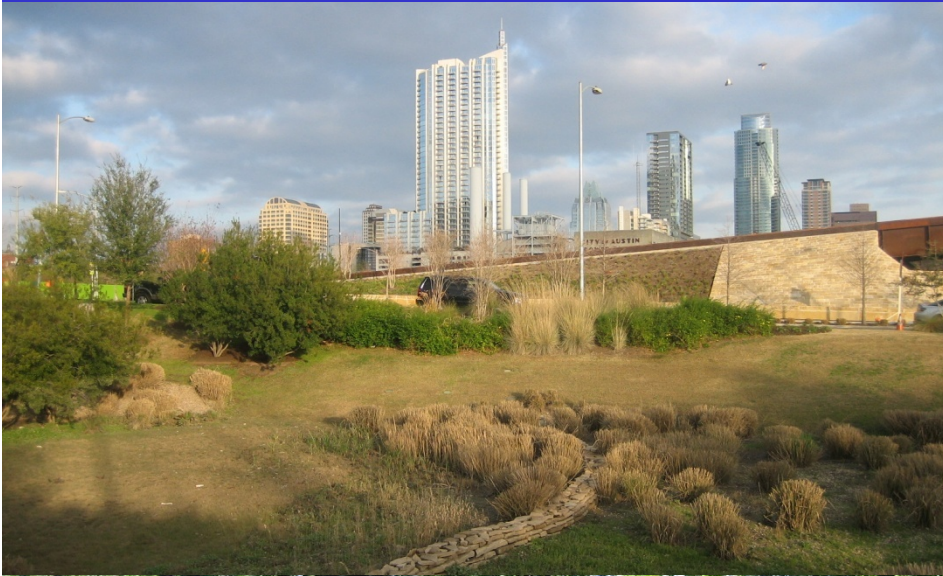


Endangered & Threatened Species



- City has legal obligations under the Endangered Species Act to protect:
 - Endangered and Threatened aquatic species (Watershed Protection Department)
 - Endangered songbirds & karst invertebrates (Austin Water Utility)
- Barton Springs Habitat Conservation Plan (Watershed Protection Department)
- Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (Austin Water Utility & Travis County)

Solutions: Capital Projects



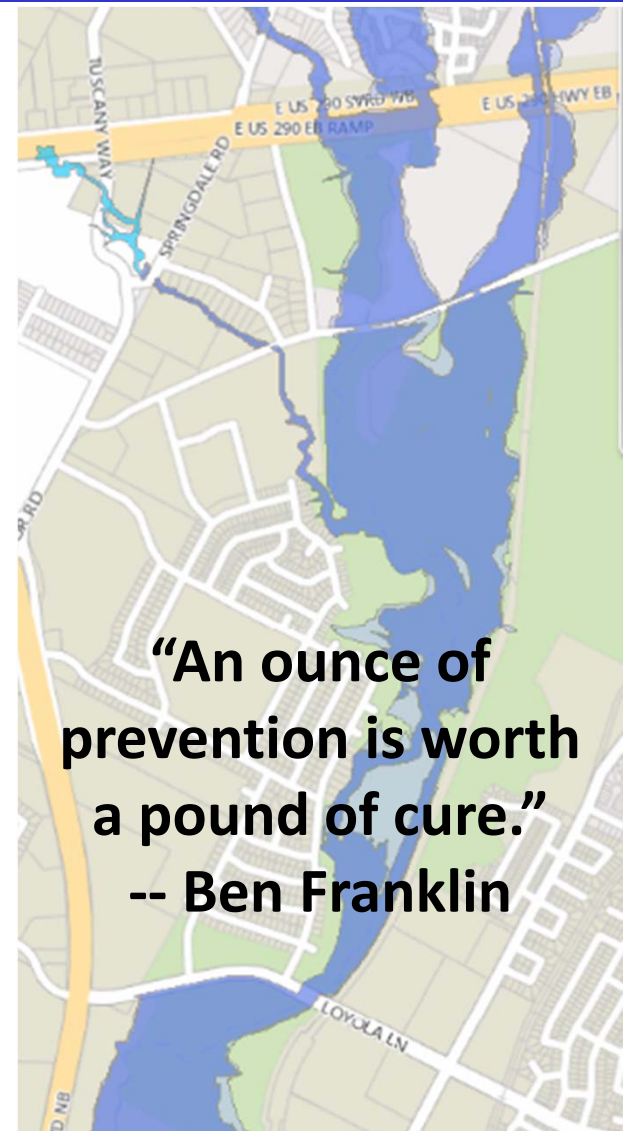
Needs-based approach prioritizes solutions for most severe problems

Solutions: Programs



Solutions: Regulations

- Floodplain restrictions
- Flood detention requirements
- Erosion Hazard Zones
- Water quality controls
- Impervious cover limits
- Stream buffers
- Sensitive feature setbacks
- Control of illegal discharges



Issues Coming to Council

- Onion Creek Buyouts
 - Partnerships with FEMA and Corps of Engineers
 - 470 properties purchased at cost of \$67 M to date
- Drainage Charge Revision
- CodeNEXT Green Infrastructure & urban infill impacts to drainage

