

**RESOLUTION NO. 20150604-044**

**WHEREAS**, Central Texas has been identified as the most flash-flood prone area in the United States by the National Weather Service and flash flooding is the number one natural disaster threat in our community; and

**WHEREAS**, Texas holds 6 of 12 world record rainfall rates in 24 hours or less as described by the United States Geological Survey, indicating half the world record rainfalls happen here; and

**WHEREAS**, Texas leads the nation in flood-related deaths most every year, averaging twice the next nearest state, that being California; and

**WHEREAS**, there are 65 watersheds that are either wholly or partially within the city limits of Austin and all are susceptible to recurring flash flooding; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin's commitment to addressing watershed conditions dates back to 1974 with the adoption of the Waterway Development Ordinance that limited development in the 25-year floodplain and required new developments to identify appropriate erosion controls; and

**WHEREAS**, following the 1981 Memorial Day flood which resulted in 13 deaths and significant property damage, the City of Austin implemented a new drainage charge to provide funding for an expanded storm water management program; and

**WHEREAS**, there has been strong public support for flood and erosion proposals as demonstrated by City of Austin voters approving bond packages totaling \$75 million for capital improvement projects between 1981 and 1984; and

**WHEREAS**, a Watershed Master Plan was approved in June 2001 and serves as a means of developing options for capital infrastructure projects, operational program enhancements and regulatory modifications; and

**WHEREAS**, the Watershed Master Plan inventoried existing watershed problems and gauged the impact of future urbanization in 17 watersheds but did not include the Onion Creek watershed which was intended for future phases of study; and

**WHEREAS**, the Onion Creek Watershed has experienced severe flooding in 1998, 2001 and most recently in October 2013, causing a disaster that included the deaths of 5 individuals, displacement of hundreds of families, and the damage or destruction of millions of dollars in property; and

**WHEREAS**, Resolutions 20140501-042 and 20141120-102 and Emergency Ordinance 20141211-200 recognized and provided direction to formulate strategies in response to the challenges resulting from infill development in areas with inadequate infrastructure and to protect the public safety and property from increasingly frequent flooding events in the South Lamar Neighborhood through development of a mitigation plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the creation of the South Lamar Neighborhood mitigation plan is serving as a “case study” for development of enhanced tools to measure and better manage cumulative impacts of growth, and further providing the potential for improved management practices to be translated to other neighborhood areas experiencing similar flooding issues; and

**WHEREAS**, recent flood events associated with the Onion, Williamson, Shoal, Walnut, and Barton Creek areas along with flooding citywide and along the Colorado River system and its associated dam infrastructure served to remind our

community of the importance of storm water management and the risks to residents and threat to public health, safety and property if not properly managed; and

**WHEREAS**, the combined flood issues of many citywide properties with aging infrastructure, along with general creek and river flooding problems have very high infrastructure costs associated with them, estimations being in the \$100s of millions and associated flood damage to property and subsequent buyouts posing additional millions in costs; and

**WHEREAS**, annually Austin hosts a significant number of visitors and expects 750,000 new residents by 2040, many lacking knowledge of the flashflood risks in Central Texas and its potential impacts to life and property; and

**WHEREAS**, a balance is needed between providing for compact, dense, and affordable development, open pervious green space, and assurance of adequate infrastructure to manage our number one potential threat to life and property;  
**NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

A. The Flood Mitigation Task Force (FMTF) is created to gather information and develop recommendations related to citywide and area flooding and its impacts to property, public safety, and City finances, with an emphasis on flood mitigation solutions and funding options.

B. The FMTF scope of work shall include:

1) Review and recommendations regarding:

a. Flood mitigation and preparedness strategies;

- b. Flood plain variances and flood buyout policy;
  - c. Structure and use of the adopted drainage utility charge; and
  - d. Storm water management system operation and maintenance costs (O&M), capital costs, city fees, flood insurance, and other identified factors that have impacts to affordability and equity in anticipation of the 2016-2017 Council budget conversation.
  - e. Methods and means to provide more public education and outreach to new residents and visitors to raise awareness of flash flooding potential, as well as actions and strategies for the public to take to remain safe; and
  - f. Standard and Green Infrastructure utilization; impacts, regulations, and management of impervious cover; master planning and studies underway.
- 2) Identifying available funds, including federal, state, and local sources as well as prioritizing future capital investment for flood mitigation and management.
  - 3) Evaluating best practices in peer cities with similar climate and flood issues.
  - 4) Receiving staff briefings concerning progress and recommended action for the Upper Onion Creek study and providing comment.
  - 5) Collaborating with the City's Environmental Commission as appropriate.

- 6) Collaborating as appropriate with other jurisdictions and agencies that have interest, expertise, and investment authority regarding flood mitigation potentially impacting areas inside and outside of the City of Austin as well as with work groups or other regional initiatives focused on flood issues and storm water management.
- 7) Assisting in public outreach to share information and engage the community for feedback.

C. Membership of the FMTF shall be as follows:

- 1) Up to 22 members appointed with up to two by each member of the Austin City Council from their respective districts and up to two by the Mayor, subject to approval by the City Council.
- 2) Members shall be appointed based upon the appointee's experience in storm water management, hydrological study, social services, emergency services, real estate, financial management, engineering expertise, and/or flood impacts to neighborhoods and commercial property.
- 3) Appointments shall be made not later than September 1, 2015.
- 4) If a member of the advisory group subsequently resigns or fails to serve, the vacancy shall be reappointed by the original appointer subject to approval by the City Council. A member fails to serve if he or she misses 3 consecutive meetings or one-third of the meetings held in a twelve-month period. Membership may not exceed 22.
- 5) A person who is registered or required to register as a lobbyist under City Code Chapter 4-8 or who is employed by a person registered or required to register under Chapter 4-8 is prohibited from serving as a member of the FMTF.

**D. The FMTF shall:**

1) meet monthly;

2) coordinate with the City Manager and staff from appropriate City departments involved in flood mitigation efforts or flood recovery activities, such as:

- a. Watershed Protection Department;
- b. Austin Water Utility;
- c. Austin Energy;
- d. Office of Real Estate Services;
- e. Office of Emergency Management;
- f. Austin Police Department;
- g. Austin Fire Department;
- h. Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services;
- i. Health and Human Services Department;
- j. Animal Services Office;
- k. Parks and Recreation Department; and
- l. Financial Services;

3) present a final report including recommendations and potential items for budget consideration to the Public Utilities Committee not later than March 2016 and for final consideration by City Council not later than April 7, 2016; and

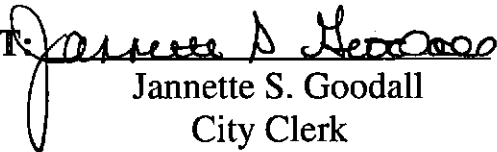
4) expire upon the completion of its assigned tasks or April 30, 2016, whichever is sooner.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager shall provide reasonably necessary resources, staff, and technical assistance to the FMTF, including a comprehensive report of all existing City services and efforts around flood mitigation and flood recovery efforts at the first meeting of the FMTF in September 2015.

**ADOPTED:** June 4, 2015

**ATTEST:**

  
Jannette S. Goodall  
City Clerk