



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Flood Mitigation Task Force

Recommendation Number 20151215-4a: LOWER ONION CREEK BUYOUTS

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 – in whole or in part – within the city limits of Austin and all are susceptible to recurring flash flooding; 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, 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, the Onion Creek Watershed has experienced severe flooding in 1998, 2001, October of 2013, and most recently in October of 2015, causing a disaster that included death, displacement of hundreds of families, and the damage or destruction of millions of dollars in property; and

WHEREAS, the Lower Onion Creek Watershed area homeowners have experienced continued and ongoing policy and programmatic hindrances as well as difficulties in securing property acquisition, or in the pursuit thereof, including the availability of fungible, commensurately valued homes for resident relocation; and

WHEREAS, the Lower Onion Creek Watershed area homes, henceforth, are increasingly susceptible and prone to flood-related disasters because of their location, coupled with evolving climate conditions, thereby posing a significant threat of future family displacement, property damage, serious bodily injury, or death;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

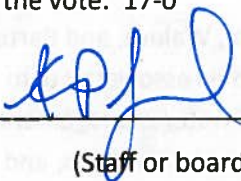
That the Flood Mitigation Task Force strongly supports and encourages the Austin City Council to dispense with any delay in allocating funds and identifying all available means, as swiftly and expeditiously as practicable, in order to prioritize and acquire homes in the Lower Onion Creek Watershed area impacted by the October 2013 and October 2015 floods;

That the Flood Mitigation Task Force affirms our resolve and ongoing commitment to support the Austin City Council, flood victims, and the community at large through our work and the fulfillment of our charter; and

That Council should consider expansion of the radius for comparable housing as one potential means to expedite the Lower Onion Creek Buyout Project.

Date of Approval: December 15, 2015

Record of the vote: 17-0

Attest:  _____
(Staff or board member can sign)