

2. Identify available funds, including federal, state, and local sources as well as prioritizing future capital investment for flood mitigation and management.¹

Recommendations:

1. Investigate opportunities for grants or cost sharing with US Geological Survey to install additional rainfall and stage gages through the City.
2. Evaluate and identify opportunities to share costs with private development to upgrade outdated drainage systems.
3. Examine budgetary requests of other City Departments to identify projects less critical to public safety than flood mitigation and reallocate these resources to increase staff and resources of WPD.
4. Evaluate opportunities to leverage volunteer activities to encourage greater citizen participation in keeping waterways clear. Examples include Keep Austin Beautiful and the Colorado River Alliance. Understanding that the structure may be overly complex, Council should also explore simple straightforward financial incentives to spur citizen engagement, which could occur in the form of a tax credit or similar.
5. Council should prioritize capital spending in future budgets to focus spending on mitigating the most critical flood mitigation projects and to fund necessary maintenance operations over spending money on non-critical projects that do not impact public health and safety to reduce the fiscal impact to citizens.
6. Leverage local funding with state and federal programs and funding options where practicable; however, take into considerations potential project delays or additional project needs/spending that may be part of the matching funds.
7. Develop a schedule and dedicate resources to perform routine maintenance, inspections, and repairs to all stormwater infrastructure (such as pond, pipes, inlets).
8. Seek additional sources of funds for acquiring properties such as the Stafford Act's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), the HUD's Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMAP), Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice) funding (where applicable), and private partnerships.

¹ The Drainage Master Plan and on-going planning activities being conducted by the Watershed Department have and continue to identify and define where the creek and local flooding problems are, the root cause of the flooding, and feasible mitigation alternatives to be considered. While the residents of Austin have expressed a strong desire to move faster to implement flood mitigation projects, there remains a need to continue planning and studies necessary to bring future projects to fruition. However, the biggest challenge has always been and will continue to be funding to implement the full scope of the Drainage Master Plan.

Watershed staff provided a summary of Drainage and Watershed Bonds 1975-2015 and reported that the citizens of Austin voted to approve all nine of the bond packages for drainage improvements in this time period with the last being ten years ago in 2006. (See addendum for summary).