



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Victoria J. Li, P.E., Director
Watershed Protection Department

DATE: August 21, 2015

SUBJECT: Update on Williamson Creek Buyouts

During the June 4, 2015 City Council meeting, Council considered approval of an ordinance to authorize the acquisition of 63 properties at risk of flooding in the 25-year floodplain of Williamson Creek. (A 25-year floodplain is one that has a 4% chance of occurrence in any given year.) These properties are part of a project area referred to as “Middle Williamson Creek” which is comprised of more than 200 properties and roadways at risk of flooding. In recent history, this area of the Williamson Creek watershed experienced severe flooding in 1998 and again in October 2013. Both the 1998 and 2013 flood events in this area of Williamson Creek were approximately equivalent to a 10-year flood (one that has a 10% chance of occurrence in any given year).

At the conclusion of the June 4th discussion, Council approved an ordinance directing staff to move forward with a voluntary acquisition process for those properties that either: 1) flooded during the October 2013 storm event or 2) were impacted by the flood waters in such a way that put inhabitants or first responders at risk. In addition, staff was directed to only include those properties that currently have the same ownership/occupancy as they did in October 2013. Thirty eight of the original 63 properties meet the criteria established by Council.

Of the original 63 properties, 40 either experienced building flooding or were at-risk during the October 2013 flood event. These properties were identified through multiple sources of information including field assessments and analysis of the high water marks and flow data. A spatial analysis was conducted of all 63 properties using a computer modeled floodplain to represent the water surface elevations during the peak of the October 2013 flood. The extent and depth of the flood waters on each property were evaluated, with special attention given to the proximity of the flood waters to the house, the presence of water immediately outside the front or back doors or on the driveway, and the depth of water on the roadway adjacent to the property. The presence of water surrounding a house or water at the front or back door was considered to put occupants at risk. In addition, the presence of 6 inches or more of water on a driveway or adjacent roadway was considered to put anyone trying to evacuate the neighborhood or first responders trying to enter the neighborhood or house at risk.

A review of deed dates, deed transfers, and utility information indicates that 2 of these 40 properties have changed ownership since October 2013. As a result, 38 of the original 63 properties meet the criteria established by Council. The Office of Real Estate Services and the Watershed Protection Department have initiated the buyout process for these 38 properties and have begun meeting with owners of properties that experienced building flooding in October 2013. A map depicting the original 63 properties and the 38 that meet Council's criteria is attached for reference.

The Middle Williamson Creek project area has been defined based on the risk of flooding in small, frequent storm events and larger, less frequent storm events. Property buyouts have been determined to be the best flood mitigation solution for the 63 properties in this project area with houses at risk of flooding during a 25-year or larger flood event. Of these 63, there are 25 properties that either did not experience building or significant property flooding in October 2013 or which have new owners/occupants. These houses were originally included among those that staff sought acquisition authorization for because they are subject to a significant risk of flooding.

Should you have any questions or require additional information regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact Mapi Vigil, WPD at 512-974-3384 or me.

Attachment

CC: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Sue Edwards, Assistant City Manager
Mapi Vigil, P.E., Watershed Protection