



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, Deputy City Manager *YPR*

DATE: May 7, 2021

SUBJECT: Update on Resolution 20200507-022 – Community Resilience Planning

This memo comprises a third update on progress to fulfill [Resolution No. 20200507-022](#). Since the last communication, our core Resilience team has:

- Activated and provided initial orientation and training to a team of staff from across the enterprise to serve as staff Resilience Catalysts assisting with the effort.
- Completed two resilience focused events with community: one pilot event with residents and one event with City of Austin boards and commissions members.
- Activated an Agile Resilience Track with four distinct project areas centered around Austin’s current and/or “around the corner” resilience challenges. Project areas include:
 - Community healing through transformation
 - Racial profiling and policing (Responsive to [Resolution No. 20200611-050](#))
 - Project Connect equity and resilience tool for anti-displacement, and
 - Equity tool resilience upskill (at the request of our Chief Equity Officer, this will include adding content to the already existent equity tool such that a resilience lens can be applied by departments during the normal process of employing the equity assessment tool)
- Secured grant funding for and completed an Agile Resilience Track project on racial profiling and policing in collaboration with more than five City offices and departments.
- Launched and completed recruitment and selection of an initial cadre of residents to participate in three ongoing resilience building opportunities as Resilience Catalysts:
 - Equity and Resilience Learning Series (and eventual future phases of the planning process)
 - The preparation of collaterals that will support the planning process
 - The creation of the equity and resilience tool for Project Connect
- Begun facilitation of the equity and resilience level-set learning series to prepare staff and residents for the comprehensive resilience planning process. The series is being offered to staff and residents throughout Spring 2021.
- Populated an initial data library that identifies data sets pertinent to shocks, stressors, vulnerabilities, and hazards, and negotiated a data collaboration with the University of Texas-RGK Center’s [Austin Sustainability Indicators](#) team to inform Austin’s synthesis of resilience challenges.

The recent winter storm event highlighted even further the breadth and scope of the need to continue to embed resiliency throughout our City operations as well as through and within community. During the event, the Equity Office and our Resilience lead were activated for response and recovery efforts with Winter Storm Uri as follows:

- Staffed and provided strategic guidance to an equity needs unit of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activated by the Chief Equity Officer during the winter weather event.
- Identified and liaised with organizations and individuals who were known to be or might be working on the ground with most affected and vulnerable residents - these organizations were proactively assisting with food and water resources for distribution to residents.
- Established equity and resilience prioritization criteria to guide prioritization of touch points to assess and respond to water outages at more than 500 multifamily properties in Austin.
- Consulted on the protocol and process for needs assessment for the Austin Water intake center; the intake center was able to assess and route food and other needs of residents and helped match them with resources through the EOC.
- In collaboration with the EOC, conducted an initial assessment of remaining unmet needs to inform further efforts of the EOC, appropriate City departments, the Central Texas Voluntary Organizations in Disaster ([Central Texas VOAD](#)), other resource holding institutions, and other counterpart institutions of the City of Austin. This initial assessment was conducted with organizations that were active and continue to be active in serving residents as a result of Winter Storm Uri.
- In collaboration with the EOC, prepared and disseminated a survey to vulnerable residents to continue to assist the EOC and relevant resource holders in assessing and meeting unmet needs related recovery from Winter Storm Uri.

Next steps for our enterprise resiliency efforts include:

- Continuing to execute projects under the Agile Resilience Track (ongoing - timelines vary per project).
- Continuing to facilitate the Equity & Resilience Level-Set Learning Series (ongoing Spring 2021).
- Scoping and activation of an unmet needs committee of the Central Texas VOAD (ongoing). Providing consulting to the Housing and Planning Department to design and reach deployment of direct financial assistance for residents as it pertains to Uri (ongoing).
- Providing advisory and alignment support to the EOC's Food Policy unit on efforts to continue to meet food and nutritional needs of residents exacerbated by Winter Storm Uri (ongoing).
- Providing consulting to the Economic Development Department to incorporate a resilience assessment for use by Economic Recovery Interdepartmental Teams (ongoing).
- Collaborating with staff from various departments, including Watershed Protection Department, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Economic Development Department, Center for Excellence and Innovation, and the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps program, among others, to scope options for completing a resilient and equitable community plan to address the economic and social recovery of individuals experiencing impacts from flood events responsive to [Resolution No. 20210127-056](#); the scoping effort takes into consideration consulting resources that can be procured to serve the planning, discovery of available matching resources through existing city contracts to support the planning, and an initial discovery of the funding landscape for post-disaster recovery support that may be available to residents (ongoing and on track for required response date of April 30, 2021).
- Fulfilling activities as assigned for [Resolution No. 20210127-056](#) released to Council on March 3, 2021 through the City's [Initial Emergency Response Memorandum](#) (ongoing; timelines as noted within the referenced response).
- Discovery around possible bandwidth resources from [Lead for America](#) (ongoing).
- Creating a leadership committee to support funding identification relevant to the Comprehensive Resilience Planning Process and resilience building strategies that will be

identified by the plan (to be established and active within next 30 days).

- Identifying budget requirements and aligning communications and engagement support for City of Austin Resilience Activities (ongoing and will be completed in the next 30 days).
- Finalizing a survey of existing plans that touch upon resiliency, gathering input as to exact status and providing a comprehensive holistic report on existing plans both within the enterprise and in community where applicable (such as Dove Springs and others) (mapping has already begun and will be part of an update to City Council later in the year).
- Work to complete the Resilience is Community (RIC) effort - RIC is the initial engagement effort of the comprehensive resilience planning process. It will provide an understanding of the comprehensive resilience planning mandate and effort and gather necessary data and information from stakeholders inside and outside of the City. The effort is planned to include the following (activities will take place within the next 12 months):
 - 6 further “most directly affected” population gatherings
 - 2 organizational stakeholder gatherings
 - 2 citywide gatherings
 - Community-led gatherings (number depends on community bandwidth)
 - A supplementary survey for populations with challenges to participation in gatherings
 - Synthesis of data obtained from all of the above
- Build the Synthesis of Austin’s Resilience Context (data tool) - As informed by staff and community requests, the synthesis will be an interactive decision support-making data tool that can be used during and after the comprehensive planning process to support resilience building (activities will take place within the next 12 months).

Multiple departments, including the Office of Sustainability, Watershed Protection, Austin Energy, Austin Water, and Austin Public Health, among others, have been working on separate resilience projects, predominantly around climate resiliency efforts. With the new approach brought forward by City Council through Resolution No. 20200507-022, staff has broadened the definition to not just encompass our existing climate resiliency efforts, but to also include areas such as economic resiliency, housing resiliency, and the agile track-focused work around social cohesion or resiliency in the face of civil unrest or unforeseen collective stressors.

The City was able to create a new position of Chief Resiliency Officer (CRO), reporting under and through the Equity Office, with funding stemming from the City Council’s reinvestment of public safety dollars at the end of December 2020. As you are aware from previous updates, we had asked Ms. Alba Sereno to lead this work, and she has been hard at work since the May 2020 Resolution developing a more comprehensive framework and networking directly with potential founders such as the Global Resilient Cities Network. Ms. Sereno is pursuing a different opportunity within the City, and as such we will be posting the position of Chief Resilience Officer later this month. In the meantime, we have asked Jason Alexander in the City Manager’s Office to lead the citywide coordination efforts in partnership with our newly formed Center of Excellence and Innovation, comprised of the Office of Performance Management and Innovation Office, who will be stepping in immediately to finalize some of the next steps noted above, particularly the task of finalizing the survey of existing resilience plans across the City and helping management assess resilience budgetary needs for this year’s budget cycle to continue to uplift the City’s resilience efforts moving forward. We have also asked them to work with the Communications and Public Information Office to continue the work Ms. Sereno had started to create a website that includes the above activities as well as future timelines and milestones for ongoing work.

We want to thank Ms. Sereno for her leadership in moving this work forward, and in particular highlight the efforts over the past months to build capacity across the enterprise in a way that centers equity and

vulnerable communities at the core of the work. Resources are being assessed to support and expand activities under this portfolio as well as address any gaps departments may have in moving forward existing resilient initiatives. We remain committed to bringing forward to City Council requests to continue funding existing efforts as well as new activities in the future and will continue to provide periodic updates to City Council on a quarterly basis.