

What is Needed for Future

Disaster preparedness

Communication

Early warning system using a large range of communication modes, including those that don't require electric power, in several languages

Ongoing accurate and timely communication even when there is uncertainty

Be ready to call National Guard if needed

Energy

Power companies need better preparedness plans for power loss, distribution. Require power companies to be better prepared.

Have charging stations

One available system organizes grid to share. Such a system would have enabled Austin Energy to pinpoint power where it was needed. Can integrate consumer-owned power at the edge of the grid. The technology exists, but the market is not receptive [*see additional information from Mike Bates. Kathryn volunteered to contact him.*]

Establish a professional and independent board of trustees - independent of Council but working in conjunction with Council to review and consider options for improving the city's infrastructure [*see testimony from Julie Koiden, Texas Energy Accountability Movement*].

Water, Food, Critical Supplies

Supplies of potable water; contingency plan for quick distribution

Emergency supplies of food, sanitary supplies with distribution plan

Shelters where people can stay overnight if needed

Organization and Education

Emergency Operations Center – someone in charge. City and county officials designated as disaster coordinators

Educate community about preparations ahead of time– e.g. insulate your pipes, have emergency supplies, information about where to go in emergency

Coordinate city and county with nonprofits and neighborhood groups. Organize volunteer citizen groups.

Strengthen relationships and funding for with nonprofits that can provide timely services in a disaster.

Create Austin-specific video library re preparation for emergencies (e.g., how to turn off water)

Transportation

Have a plan to coordinate city and TXDOT to connect outlying regions.

Equipment and supplies to clear ice from roads

Investments need to be made in vehicles

Store enough salt to clear roads in one storm, but someone else noted problems with salt polluting ground water

Special transit system for people with disabilities to bring water and food or emergency equipment.

Policy

Policy to encourage on-site generating capacity for apartment buildings

Rebates for fire sprinkler insulation (much of damage was from sprinklers)

Explore video inspection procedures for minor repairs to speed up repair process

Institute city permit and fee waivers for repairs for limited period.

Require apartment buildings to have on-site property managers

Change building codes to require insulation or other means of protecting water pipes and heating against cold

Record keeping of medically vulnerable people in the city and county

Disaster planning needs to address inequities in community

[fill in from the Central Health Equity Policy Council]

Involve organizations and individuals from the eastern crescent in planning

Mitigation

Water damage to many properties; people need assistance

Funds to cover upgrades to insulate and protect against future cold spells that are not covered by insurance.

People need help getting claims for insurance submitted and paid

Mental Health

Feelings of uncertain anxiety may be mitigated if citizens gain a sense of control through better preparedness training and access to supplies, proactively

Direct calls, whether through opt-in or impromptu services, could create a sense of comfort and better allow the city to respond to emergencies since they will not have to wait for others to call in.

Recognition of Community Responsibilities/Need for Built-in Redundancy

In a disaster where services fail, we are going to have to rely on other institutions and each other to survive. There must be a better understanding our interconnected responsibilities as a community, to the point of built-in redundancy in terms of services the community provides internally. This is to say that between the city, businesses (commercial and residential), and individuals within communities must have a baseline preparedness that allows them to act immediately in a crisis to mitigate worse consequences because of a lack of knowledge on how to respond.

Interactive Digital Report

City might consider videos and art, along with audio quotes or music once written report is submitted.