

RESOLUTION NO. 20211014-048

WHEREAS, Onion Creek crested just over 40 feet at US 183 on the morning of October 31, 2013, for a new record height for this location, which produced approximately 135,000 cubic feet per second; and

WHEREAS, across Travis County and the City of Austin, more than 700 homes were damaged by flooding, and hundreds were destroyed; and

WHEREAS, many of the affected homes were not protected by flood insurance and were within the 100-year floodplain of Onion Creek; and

WHEREAS, in response to the 2013 Halloween Flood in Onion Creek, the City Council passed Resolution No. 20140515-028 directing the City Manager to provide a report to Council regarding the needs associated with a study of feasible flood mitigation options within the Onion Creek floodplain outside of the William Cannon Drive and Pleasant Valley Road area; and

WHEREAS, in response to the 2015 Halloween Flood in Onion Creek, the City Council passed a resolution directing the City Manager to provide an accelerated conceptual evaluation of potential flood mitigation alternatives; and

WHEREAS, with a projected increase of extreme weather events with climate change, it remains crucial that the City of Austin continue to actively pursue flood risk mitigation as a step toward environmental, economic, and social resiliency, as described in the response to Resolution No. 20131121-060; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin recognizes that there is still much work to be done, especially to address the challenges of climate change and racial inequity; and

WHEREAS, City Council’s adoption of the Austin Community Climate Plan in June of 2015 reconfirmed Austin’s climate leadership by recognizing the importance of adaptation to increase resilience in the face of extreme weather and climate change impacts; and

WHEREAS, per the City of Austin’s Federal Legislative Agenda for the 117th Congress, the City of Austin supports continued funding of federal programs to mitigate damages from flooding incurred by the increasing number of extreme weather events, including but not limited to additional funding to improve floodplain maps based on the best available information and the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Texas, in Section 16.315, Texas Water Code, delegates the responsibility to local government units to adopt regulations designed to minimize flood losses; and

WHEREAS, it is the purpose of the City of Austin to continue to promote the public health, safety and general welfare by minimizing public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas; and

WHEREAS, the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan states, “The challenges of a growing population, finite natural and fiscal resources, and a changing climate will require Austinites and their local government to become ever more resilient. Resilience — the ability to adapt to challenges and change — will be a hallmark of successful communities in the 21st century”; and

WHEREAS, according to Austin Public Health’s Community Health Assessment, access to healthcare, healthy food, transportation, and affordability were identified by community members as major barriers to health and wellbeing

and these inequities also restrict the ability to adapt to changing climate conditions;
and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin's Hazard Mitigation Action Plan describes methods for achieving future hazard mitigation measures by expanding existing capabilities, including reviewing current floodplain ordinances for opportunities to increase resiliency, and providing access to resources; and

WHEREAS, many low-income homeowners may not have access to the resources needed to resolve code compliance issues or make adequate repairs and upgrades to their homes to become resilient during a natural disaster; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, voters approved the issuance of \$184,000,000 in general obligation bonds for flood mitigation, open space and water quality and quantity for planning, designing, acquiring, constructing, and installing improvements and facilities for flood control, erosion control, water quality, water quantity, and storm-water drainage, and acquiring land, open spaces, and interests in land and property necessary to do so; and

WHEREAS, the Climate Resilience Action Plan, adopted in April of 2018, provides an overview of climate projections for the City of Austin, an assessment of potential extreme weather impacts to City-owned assets and operations, and strategies to mitigate those impacts; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20150604-044 directed the Flood Mitigation Task Force to review existing flood mitigation and preparedness strategies, which resulted in the recommendation to implement City policies, programs, training opportunities and interdepartmental collaboration to enhance flood mitigation and preparedness; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City hereby affirms its commitment to building a flood resilient community by addressing current risks, supporting safer regulations, encouraging robust community engagement efforts and emergency preparedness in collaboration with the 5-county regional partners;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to work with the Onion Creek Metropolitan Park District to identify a prominent location within Onion Creek Metropolitan Park and to work with Austin Art in Public Places to explore placing a mural, for a memorial in honor of the Halloween Floods of 2013 and 2015, including funding recommendations;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to address the financial assistance needs associated with resolving code compliance issues, eliminating damage caused by flooding, and making adequate repairs and upgrades to homes, including but not limited to floodproofing, installing gutters, and constructing drainage swales by:

1. Identifying and summarizing state and federal funding opportunities that could be used for flood mitigation and risk reduction; and
2. Providing a summary of existing funding accessible to homeowners and property owners, including tenants, for local flood mitigation and risk reduction in the Austin area; and
3. Providing a summary of existing City programs and/or initiatives aimed at educating residents about available funding opportunities in addition to the various application processes and periods;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to initiate community outreach to identify and contact eligible residents that qualify for the identified funding opportunities during the 2021-2022 funding periods, and report on the outcome of the outreach;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to provide recommendations for existing contracts with vendors to deliver training and education to the community for emergency preparedness and response. The contract(s) should focus on extreme weather preparedness and disaster/evacuation planning, education on climate-related health risks, and introducing available resilience tools and resources;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:


The City Manager is directed to amend the Federal Legislative agenda to seek additional support for funding programs to assist individuals with reducing and eliminating the risk of flood damage, and making flood insurance more affordable to low-income residents, and advocate for it at the federal level;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to report back to Council no later than 90 days with the report in response to this Resolution.

ADOPTED: October 14, 2021

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk