



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: June 10, 2014

Prepared By: Stacey Scheffel **Phone #:** (512) 854-7565

Division Director/Manager: Anna Bowljn Director of Development Services and Long Range Planning

Department Head: Steven M. Manilla, P.E., County Executive-TNR

Sponsoring Court Member: County Judge Samuel T. Biscoe

AGENDA LANGUAGE: Consider and take appropriate action on the Travis Austin Recovery Group's (TARG) flood recovery action plan in response to the 2013 Onion Creek Holloween Flood.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

ATTACHMENTS/EXHIBITS:

Travis County Response Revised 4-25-14

Draft Plan

Final Plan

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

Cynthia McDonald	Financial Manager	TNR	(512) 854-4239
Steven M. Manilla	County Executive	TNR	(512) 854-9429

CC:

Stacey Scheffel	Program Manager	TNR	512-854-7565
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Melinda Mallia	Environmental Project Manager	TNR	512-854-4460
Sherri Flemming	County Executive	HHS	512-854-4100

SM:AB:ss

1101 - Development Services Long Range Planning - 1105

A/29/14 VS
Item 19

April 25, 2014

Travis County Response REVISED 4-25-14



To Whom It May Concern:

Travis County has received your request for input on the DRAFT-Recovery Plan prepared by the Travis Austin Recovery Group. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the actions you expect the County to take to help the community recover fully from the 2013 Halloween flood event.

Regarding Action Item #1, Implement and promote an enhanced early warning system: As a member of the Emergency Services network, Travis County will promote and assist with the implementation of efforts to improve the quality and timelines of emergency communications. We will work with other emergency service providers to address this issue.

Regional Notification System

Travis County participates in the Regional Notification System (RNS) through the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG), which covers a 10-county area. RNS uses the public safety database (land lines) and registered cell phones to send out public safety warnings by phone, text and email.

We encourage all residents to register to receive RNS alerts regarding large-scale emergencies and major incidents that occur near them and their loved ones. Anyone living in the CAPCOG area can register their cell phone at no cost. They can also register to receive alerts via email, pager, voice call or text at wireless.capcog.org. (Contact information, including phone numbers, is only used for emergency and major incident notification.) If the resident does not have Internet access, they can still register to receive alerts by phone. They should call, toll free, 866-484-3264 to register. To learn more about the RNS, residents can download the frequently asked questions document that is available in English and Spanish, at capcog.org/divisions/homeland-security/rns/.

These links and information about RNS registration are available on the Travis County website. CAPCOG recently spear-headed a public service effort to urge people to register for RNS alerts, and the Travis County Emergency Services Public Information Office participated through a joint press release, postings on the County website and on Facebook and Twitter. The Emergency Services PIO continues to urge registration for RNS alerts through social media and a planned press release for further public distribution.

Flood Early Warning System

In regard to the request for expanding the Flood Early Warning System (FEWS), the Travis County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Travis County Transportation and Natural Resources, Flood Early Warning System engineers and representatives from the U.S. Geological Survey met for a preliminary discussion regarding expanding the current number of FEWS sensors within Travis County and the hardening of existing sensors. OEM and FEWS engineers have also had preliminary discussions with the

Amateur Radio Emergency Service group about utilizing their members to provide real-time observations of certain watersheds during flooding events.

Evacuation

We also agree that the community should have a clear evacuation plan that includes removing victims completely out of harm's way. The development of such a plan should involve everyone in the community, and we stand ready to participate.

Regarding Action Item #2, Allocate at least \$105 million in the 2014-2015 City Budget to offer a buy out to any residents in the 100 year flood plain: Although this was directed to the City, Travis County has already allocated several million dollars to buy-outs and other recovery activities (see item 4, below) and will consider increasing that amount during our 2015 budget process. The bullet points included under this item in your plan also appear to be directed to the City of Austin Buy-Out Program but could apply in some cases to the County's program as well. For clarification, the County's process is as follows:

The County offers fair market value based upon appraised value of the property, as determined by an independent appraiser retained by the County. If sellers choose to obtain their own appraisal, the County's appraiser will consider any information provided and revise his or her opinion of value according to his or her independent, professional judgment. Any counter offer that is higher than appraised value, as determined by the County's appraiser, is taken to the Commissioner's Court for consideration on a case by case basis.

The County buyout program follows FEMA grant requirements for duplication of benefits. Any insurance claims that are paid as result of the Halloween Flood are deducted from the purchase price. However, any documented repairs that have been made using those funds are credited back to the owner, based upon timely submittal of valid receipts. Transaction documents are routinely shared with the seller at each stage of the process. Any documents that have not been received may be obtained through the County's buyout consultant or the title company that closes the sale.

The closing timeframe for buy-out offers is typically adjusted to meet the sellers' needs. Property owners may continue to occupy their residences until they're ready to close. However, closing cannot occur until a County inspector verifies that the property is vacant. The County does not lease properties back to sellers after closing.

Any funds due the property owner will be provided at closing. Deadlines for responses to buy-out offers may be extended if the owner requests more time. However, when there are more applicants on the waiting list for buyout, the County may place a deadline for acceptance and move on to purchase another property if the offer hasn't been accepted by the established date.

Regarding Action Item #3, All residents: The County is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program and believes that entirely removing homes from floodplain is a best management practice for protecting the health and safety of its residents and those emergency personnel that respond to flood events. Failure to enforce its regulations, or granting variances, jeopardizes the ability of all Travis County property owners to obtain

flood insurance if required by lending institutions, or to get federally backed loans. Travis County residents who live in unincorporated areas, decline buy-out offers and choose to rebuild in floodplains must comply with Travis County floodplain regulations. For some residential structures this could require removing them from floodplain or elevating them. For some commercial structures this could include removing, elevating, or flood proofing. The Travis County Basic Development Permit will determine if a commercial structure can be built in the flood plain. The fire code will address how the structure is built but only if the Basic Development Permit allows it to be built in the proposed location. To date, no property owner has been forced to accept a buy-out offer however they are required to obtain permits for reconstruction at which time they are advised of the need to elevate.

Regarding Action Item #4, City/County commits funding or assists in securing funding: As mentioned in Action Item #2, the County has already allocated \$5.59 million for buyouts of properties damaged in the Halloween Flood and will consider increasing that amount during its 2015 budget process. Current funds are expected to cover the purchase of approximately 95% of the residential properties who had major damage in the flood. Major damage is defined by the Flood Plain Administrator as having at least 5 ft. of flood-water in the house. The County has purchased 5 properties since the flood and is in the closing stage on 17 additional properties.

Funds for elevating homes are not being considered. The County does not encourage rebuilding in the flood plain. While elevating homes is an acceptable means of compliance it doesn't entirely eliminate health and safety risks primarily because the floodwaters of creeks and rivers are typically high velocity and debris-laden, which can damage or destroy an elevated structure.

Regarding Action Item #5, Build Affordable Housing: The County's Health and Human Services Department, along with a variety of local partners including the City of Austin, agree there is a tremendous need for affordable housing. Affordability is affected by a variety of issues, including, but not limited to, transportation, utility costs, taxes, etc. Many community partners are working on this issue, but it will require time and attention to complete the supply of affordable housing needed for the community.

Regarding Action Item #6, Engineering protections: In November 2000, Travis County and the City of Austin began working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to study flood damage reduction in the Onion Creek watershed. USACE identified floodplain buy out as a potential solution to the flooding problem in both Timber Creek and the Onion Creek Forest/ Yarrabee Bend areas. Structural projects were evaluated, but not found to be economically feasible. In 2005, anticipating a cost shared project with the Federal Government (35% local- 65% federal for flood damage reduction and 50%/-50% for recreational components), County voters approved \$3,900,000 in bond funds towards a \$10 million Federal project in Timber Creek. City voters also approved funds for the City's share of a \$70 million federal project in Onion Creek forest and Yarrabee Bend areas. The study was completed in December 2007 at a cost of approximately \$4 million, nearly \$2 million of which was funded by the City and County. A floodplain buy out/ recreational project in the Timber Creek and Onion Creek Forest/ Yarrabee Bend subdivisions was subsequently authorized by Congress in the 2007 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). In 2011 County voters approved

additional funding toward the Timber Creek buy out project. Early in 2014 USACE announced that it would fund nearly \$12 million for the floodplain buy out project. The remaining issues under this Action Item appear to be directed solely to the City.

[The following section includes main bullet points taken directly from TARG's "Targeting Recovery after the 2013 Onion Creek Halloween Flood". Each main bullet point is followed by the Travis County response in blue text. Our response is limited to concerns that could involve the County.]

The Austin Neighborhoods Council Executive Committee requests that City Council appropriate sufficient resources to:

- Expand the Flood Early Warning System (FEWS) and work with other Central Texas counties and agencies to include stream level gauges outside of the Austin City limits.
 - Please see Item #1 above.
- Direct the Watershed Protection Department to determine whether its flood modeling system is best in class and has the capability to adequately and timely manner predict downstream flood conditions given rainfall gauge and stream level gauge information.
- Direct the Austin Travis County Emergency Operations Center to be activated by a weather forecast that predicts or is indicative of potential extreme rainfall flood conditions.
 - The City and County are in discussion regarding the activation protocols of the Austin/Travis County Emergency Operations Center (A/TC EOC) to make certain that it is appropriately staffed for forecasted events.
- Requirements by the City and County that all flood-plain property leases contain a flood warning.
- Direct the public safety departments to develop a Blue Flag protocol for potential flood conditions. That would include the following items:
 - Reallocation of resources to cover neighborhoods with potential flooding threat,
 - See *STAR Flight's* response below.
 - Accommodation for handicapped (including deaf) and the elderly,
 - The RNS detects TTY enabled phones and will process the notification accordingly, so that hearing-impaired individuals receive notification. See Item #1 above.
 - Cell phone reverse 9-1-1 calls (including at-risk neighborhoods, in English and Spanish),
 - See Item #1 above.
 - At-risk neighborhood training on flood and disaster awareness in English and Spanish,
 - We can work with the community on awareness, along with our planning of evacuations procedures. See Item #1 above.
 - Siren warnings,
 - In regard to sirens, we plan to have discussions with the City, but typically, these systems are expensive to install and incur an ongoing maintenance cost. They must be tested on a regular basis and must be part of a continuous education effort for new residents or for citizens traveling through the area.

- Weather radio warning,
 - In regard to weather radio warnings, these are the responsibility of the National Weather Service, but it is the responsibility of citizens to have a NOAA Weather Radio in order to receive the information. The radios vary in price range from \$10 to more than \$100.
- Include in the protocol requirements for getting early official* assistance to impacted areas to assist residents with evacuations and searches. (*National Guard, police, fire department and other professionals trained in assisting in disasters and evacuations)
 - Protocol is in place.
- Direct the public safety departments to develop ongoing training schedules for flood rescue.
 - See **STAR Flight's** response below.
- Purchase more water rescue equipment for the Public Safety Departments.
 - See **STAR Flight's** response below.
- Store the water rescue equipment close to the neighborhoods with the most potential for floods.
 - See **STAR Flight's** response below.

Travis County STAR Flight Response

During the October 30-31 floods, **STAR Flight** crews rescued 32 people and four dogs in a 16-hour period.

STAR Flight conducts regular and ongoing training for flood rescues. The crews perform hoist rescue training on a monthly basis. In addition, some of our personnel are members of Texas Task Force One and the Texas National Guard program that partners civilian rescue personnel with National Guard aircraft and crews. They train monthly and frequently respond to disasters that strike Texas, including tropical storms, hurricanes and evolving flood events. This better prepares our staff to respond to and manage local disasters.

We have included a request for a spare rescue hoist in the FY15 budget. This one-time capitol expense will assist us with maintaining the rescue hoist capability on three search and rescue helicopters, in case one rescue hoist requires scheduled or unscheduled maintenance. We have internally funded some modifications to our rescue harnesses that will offer some advantageous for victims in the most dire positions.

Travis County has made considerable investments in the aircraft we use to provide Search and Rescue (SAR) services. That includes twin engine, Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) capable, Night Vision Goggles (NVG), color weather radar, storm scope, Helicopter Terrain Awareness and Warning Systems (HTAWS), rescue hoist and personnel protective equipment for the crew. This does not ensure that a mission could be undertaken in any weather, but it does provide robust capability as demonstrated by the rescues that were performed between 10:00 p.m. on October 30 and 4:00 p.m. on October 31. Several of those were at night, in marginal weather with active thunderstorms moving through Central Texas.

Helicopters offer significant advantages in flooding conditions because they are not restricted by floodwaters and can cover distances quickly and limit the time the rescuers are close to, or in, the hazardous environment. They are not the panacea for swift water/flood problems but do offer lifesaving capability for some victims. The **STAR Flight** Hangar is centrally located allowing minimal delay in reaching most areas of Travis County.

There are several things (9-1-1 call taking, 9-1-1 call triage) that we depend on other agencies to perform but are working with them to make changes identified as part of our review. The request for rescue hoist will be determined during the FY15 budget process. We are configuring the **STAR Flight** Hangar conference room to facilitate its use as an Air Operations Center (AOC). The AOC would be staffed by aviation agencies with aircraft engaged in a response and coordinate mission tasking, priorities, aircraft availability and support functions. Several other AOC locations have been determined. The AOC location will be determined as events develop. We have been meeting with other aviation partners including Austin Police Department, Texas Department of Public Safety Aircraft Division and Texas National Guard with the goal of improving response, communications and how to integrate local and state aviation assets into a seamless response. There are always lessons to be learned and improvements to be made after any significant event. I believe that we have implemented any lessons learned at the Department level.

STAR Flight Cost for the Oct. 30-31, 2013, Flood

Missions

Rescue Dispatches	32*
Number rescued	32* (32 people, 4 dogs)
Actual flights	22

Flight Time

EC-145's (13.7 hours @ \$1,100 / hour)	\$15,070.00
UH-1 (1.5 hours @ \$645 / hour)	\$969.00

Additional Personnel (Does not include normally scheduled personnel)

Nurses	\$849.76
Paramedics	\$1000.53
Pilot	\$700.07
Mechanic	\$258.36

Total \$18,848.02

*Cost of the Oct. 31, 2013, late afternoon rescue in Caldwell County is not included in these numbers. An additional one flight and rescue of one person are included.

An overview of continuing County support activities is as follows:

The County's Emergency Services Department is engaged in improving early warning and evacuation plans.

The County's Health and Human Services Department currently has case management services available through the seven County community centers. A listing of those

centers and their addresses is available on the Travis County website. Many residents registered with both the City and the County immediately following the flood event.

The County's Transportation and Natural Resources Department will continue buy-out efforts; assist with community debris removal efforts; and, assist property owners with obtaining permits for properties within unincorporated Travis County. TNR estimates it will spend \$1,707,000 for the flood-related costs it has incurred.

The County Attorney's Office will be requested to look into the issue of abandoned houses in unincorporated areas to see what can be done with, or on, private property. If there is a list of these properties already prepared by the Recovery Group, it would be helpful.

Helpful Numbers:

Buy-Out questions: Mickey Roberts or Melinda Mallia 854-6613 or 854-4460

Permit Questions: Stacey Scheffel 854-7565

Community Debris and Household Hazardous Waste removal: Jon White 854-7212

Emergency Management: Pete Baldwin 512-974-0472

Date: Tue, Apr 22, 2014 at 2:12 PM

Subject: FW: Input needed on Recovery Plan

To: targboard@googlegroups.com

Cc: mariaeshield@yahoo.com, Edward Reyes <area78744@gmail.com>, reynalma@sbcglobal.net, pvwblack@aol.com, Pamela Beattie <ppbeattie@att.net>

This went to the resident emails we have. Can you all please forward this to your neighborhood email list, thanks!

Your Voice Matters! Tu Voz Importa.

[View this email in your browser](#)



**PLEASE FORWARD OR SHARE WITH OTHERS / POR FAVOR hacia adelante o
compartir con otros**

Dear Flood Affected Residents,

Please review and give input on this draft plan that TARG will present to

elected officials on May 3 at a Press Conference at 2:00. All addition, deletions, changes welcome. Send feedback by April 26 to: info@targetingrecovery.org

Sorry in advance for mistakes in Spanish/ Lo sentimos por adelantado por errores en Español

Querido Flood residentes afectados,

Por favor revise y dar su opinión sobre este proyecto de plan que TARG presentará a los funcionarios electos, el 3 de mayo en una Conferencia de prensa a las 2:00. Todas Además, supresiones, cambios bienvenidos. Envía comentarios antes del 26 de abril a: info@targetingrecovery.org

DRAFT - Recovery PLAN

To All City and County Officials,

The Travis Austin Recovery Group presents to you our plan for a full recovery. This plan is not cheap, but morally and ethically it is the right this to do. It will provide some relief to what has already been a disaster within a disaster. We urge you to take immediate action on the following items, recognizing that much of this must be budgeted for in the 2015-2016 budget or resolved through Council or Commissioner actions.

Flood Recovery in Action means:

1. **Implement and promote an enhanced early warning system** including text alert, phone, email, air sirens and clear evacuation plan to Perez Elementary, Church on William Cannon or a designated neighbor's 2-story house. (See ANC

resolution below)

2. Allocate at least \$105 million in the 2014-2015 City Budget to offer a buy out to any residents in the 100 year flood plain.

Other Buy-out issues

- Insure fair buy-out offer, with additional low-cost financing or grants for those with flood insurance, that will allow the purchase of a comparable home in the greater Austin area
- Insure homeowners have independent certified Real Estate agents in buy-out transactions.
- Immediate stoppage of requiring insurance payments be deducted from the final buy-out offer, and reimburse the insurance already deducted from completed buy-outs
- All and all transactions concerning buy-out options on any property, including any changes made by the city, are to be submitted to the property owner in written form.
- Resident is to immediately receive copies of any and all official communication, offers &/or contracts with the city concerning their property.
- Extend buy-out offers from a 30 day 'take it or leave it' mandate to a 12 month time period to allow owners to locate alternative housing.
- Residents who do accept a buy-out proposal from the city to have at least 180 days to obtain alternative housing and make proper moving arrangements.
- All transactions to be completed with the property owner having all monies in their possession before the city require the property to be turned over to them.

3. All residents who choose **NOT** to accept the buy-out offer will have **the Right to Rebuild** and stay in their home under the condition that, in the event the owners decide to sell their property in the future, the city will receive the first option to purchase the property under the same rules, regulations and requirements as agreed upon above. In the event that the city does not wish to obtain the property at that time, the owner may sale the property to an outside buyer.

Rebuild issues include:

- COA must inform residents immediately if they are expected to elevate their homes due to the substantially damaged FEMA requirements
- Granting Permits must not be contingent on people accepting a buy-out if it is offered.
- COA is urged to grant variances on safe access and advocate for variances on the elevation of homes.
- Insurance and income requirements should not become an obstacle to accessing the resources needed.

4. City/County **commits funding** for or assists in securing funding for:

- Early Warning System and viable Evacuation Plan(s)
- Additional case managers to work with all those affected on unmet needs including trauma support & any health issues due to the flood.
- Independent (non-COA connected) Real Estate agents to represent residents.
- Ongoing Clean Up for the health and safety of those who continue to live there, including, but not limited to, scheduled upkeep on all individual lots that COA has purchased (frequent mowing, removal of trash, downed trees & abandoned cars)
- Elevating homes should that be necessary to supplement the \$32,000 FEMA will provide.
- Locating owners of any abandoned house. Assist each owner to create a plan for each property to either be cleaned up or bought by the COA within 90 days

5. **Build Affordable housing** within the surrounding area to make re-locations viable. Assist in obtaining financing for those that do not meet requirements from private financial institutions, provide swop housing options, or create a city financial program to finance the alternative housing.

6. **Engineering protections** in the neighborhood and park:

- What can be done to mitigate damage from development upstream in Hays County?
- What can be done to mitigate flooding in the future?
- What security measures are being considered for those homeowners staying in the neighborhood and for the Park itself, such as increased police presence in the both areas?
- What can be done to remove unneeded roads within the park? Blockage of roads between the park and the residential area? Permanent signs explaining the Park Rules, Regulations & times open?

DRAFT: The **Austin Neighborhoods Council Executive Committee** requests that City Council appropriate sufficient resources to:

Expand the Flood Early Warning System (FEWS) and work with other central Texas counties and agencies to include stream level gauges outside of the Austin City limits.

Direct the Watershed Protection Department to determine whether its flood

modeling system is best in class and has the capability to adequately and timely manner predict downstream flood conditions given rainfall gauge and stream level gauge information.

Direct the Austin Travis County Emergency Operations Center to be activated by a weather forecast that predicts or is indicative of potential extreme rainfall flood conditions.

Requirements by the City and County that all flood-plain property leases contain a flood warning

Direct the public safety departments to develop a Blue Flag protocol for potential flood conditions. That would include the following items:

- Reallocation of resources to cover neighborhoods with potential flooding threat,
- Accommodation for handicapped (including deaf) and the elderly
- Cell phone reverse 911 calls (including at-risk neighborhoods, in English and Spanish
- At-risk neighborhood training on flood and disaster awareness, in English and Spanish
- Siren warnings
- Weather radio warning
- Include in the protocol requirements for getting early official* assistance to impacted areas to assist residents with evacuations and searches.
(*National Guard, police, Fire Department and other professionals trained in assisting in disasters and evacuations).

Direct the Public Safety Departments to develop ongoing training schedules for flood rescue.

Purchase more water rescue equipment for the Public Safety Departments.

Store the water rescue equipment close to the neighborhoods with the most potential for floods.

Presented to ANC Membership: [date]

Membership Approved: [date]

PROYECTO - Plan de Recuperación

Para todos los Funcionarios de la Ciudad y el Condado,

El Grupo de Recuperación Travis Austin, presenta nuestro plan para una recuperación total.

Este plan no es barato, pero moral y éticamente es la cosa correcta que debemos hacer. El plan Proporcionará algo de alivio a lo que ya ha sido un desastre dentro de un desastre. Le instamos a tomar medidas inmediatas en los puntos siguientes, reconociendo que gran parte del plan debe ser presupuestado en el presupuesto de los años 2015-2016 o ser resuelto a través de acciones del Consejo o del Comisionado.

Recuperación de Inundaciones en acción significa:

1. Implementar y promover un sistema mejorado de alerta temprana incluyendo alerta de texto, teléfono, correo electrónico, las sirenas de aire y plan de evacuación a la escuela primaria Pérez, Iglesia de William Cannon o a una casa de dos pisos en el vecindario designada previamente. (Véase ANC resolución en la parte de abajo)

2. Reservar al menos \$105 millones en el presupuesto del 2014-2015 de la ciudad de para ofrecer la compra a cualquier residente que este en el área de inundación de 100 años.

Otros puntos relativos a la compra:

- Asegurar una oferta de compra justa que permitirá la compra de una vivienda comparable en el área metropolitana de Austin.

- Asegurar que los propietarios tienen agentes de bienes raíces certificados e independientes disponibles en las transacciones de compra.

- Cesar el requerimiento de deducir el pago de seguro de la oferta final de

compra.

- Todas las transacciones relativas a opciones de compra de cualquier propiedad, incluyendo los cambios realizados por la ciudad, deben ser presentados a los propietarios en forma escrita.
 - Los residentes deberán recibir copias de cada una de las comunicaciones oficiales, ofertas y/o contratos con la ciudad concernientes a su propiedad.
 - Extender ofertas de compra que van desde un mandato de “tomarlo o dejarlo” en 30 días hasta un periodo de 12 meses para permitir que el propietario localice una propiedad alternativa.
 - Los residentes que no acepten la propuesta de compra de la ciudad tendrán ?? días/meses para obtener vivienda alternativa o hacer arreglos para moverse a otro lugar.
 - Todas las transacciones serán completadas cuando el dueño de la propiedad tiene posesión de dinero antes de que la Ciudad requiera que la propiedad se le entregue.
3. Todos los residentes que optan por NO aceptar la oferta de compra tendrá el derecho a reconstruir y permanecer en su hogar bajo la condición de que, en caso de que los dueños decidieran vender la propiedad en el futuro, la ciudad recibirá la primera opción para adquirir la propiedad bajo las mismas reglas, normas y requisitos acordados anteriormente. En caso de que la ciudad ya no desee obtener la propiedad en ese momento, el propietario puede vender la propiedad a otros compradores.

Otros asuntos relacionados con la reconstrucción:

- COA debe inmediatamente emitir una carta sobre viviendas dañadas substancialmente.

- Conceder permisos no debe depender de que las personas acepten la oferta de compra si se ofrece
- Se exhorta a COA a conceder variaciones sobre el acceso seguro y abogar por las variaciones en la elevación de las viviendas.
- Los requisitos de ingresos y seguro no deben convertirse en un obstáculo para acceder a los recursos necesarios.

4. La Ciudad o el Condado compromete fondos para asegurar o ayudar en la obtención de lo que se necesita para:

- Sistema de alerta temprana y Plan de evacuación
- Administradores de casos adicionales para trabajar con todos los afectados en necesidades insatisfechas, incluyendo soporte de trauma
- Agentes de bienes raíces para representar a los residentes
- Continuar la limpieza para proteger la salud y seguridad de aquellos que continúan viviendo allí
- Elevación de las viviendas si fuese necesario

5. Construir viviendas con precios accesibles en el área circundante para que relocalizar a las personas sea más viable. Asistencia en la obtención de financiamiento para aquellos que no cumplen con las exigencias de las instituciones financieras privadas, proporcionar la opción de un intercambio de vivienda o crear un programa financiero de la ciudad para financiar la vivienda alternativa.

6. Protecciones de Ingeniería en el parque, asuntos concernientes al desarrollo en áreas altas en el Condado de Hays, etc. ¿Qué puede hacerse para mitigar las inundaciones en el futuro?

BORRADOR:

El Comité Ejecutivo del Consejo de los Vecindarios de Austin solicita que la Ciudad apropie suficiente recursos para:

Ampliar el sistema de alerta temprana de inundaciones (FEWS) y trabajar con otros Condados y agencias para incluir indicadores de nivel de corriente fuera de los límites de la ciudad de Austin y condados de Texas centrales.

Solicitar al Departamento de protección de cuencas que determine si su Sistema para medir las inundaciones es uno de los mejores en su clase y que tiene la capacidad de manera adecuada y oportuna predecir inundaciones río abajo utilizando los instrumentos instalados para medir el indicador de nivel de corriente.

Dirigir el Centro de Operaciones de Emergencia del Condado de Austin Travis Austin ha ser activado por un reporte meteorológico que predice o es indicativo de posibles inundaciones lluvias extremas.

Dirigir los departamentos de seguridad pública para desarrollar un protocolo de la bandera azul de posibles inundaciones. Eso incluye los siguientes elementos:

- Reasignación de recursos para cubrir vecindarios con amenaza potencial de inundaciones
- Habitaciones para minusválidos (incluyendo a sordos) y los ancianos,
- Llamadas de emergencia reversada (911) que incluye entrenamiento en español e inglés para los vecindarios en riesgo.
- Sirenas o Alarmas para alertar a la población
- Alertas de tiempo en el radio
- Requisitos de la ciudad y el condado que toda propiedad en el área de inundación contenga una advertencia de inundación en el contrato de arrendamiento.
- Incluir en los requisitos de protocolo para obtener asistencia oficial* a las zonas afectadas para ayudar a los residentes con evacuaciones y búsquedas. (* Guardia nacional, policía, bomberos y otros profesionales capacitados en la asistencia en desastres y evacuaciones).

Dirigir los departamentos de seguridad pública para desarrollar programas de formación continua para rescate en inundaciones.

Adquirir más equipos de rescate de agua para los departamentos de seguridad pública.

Almacenar el equipo de rescate de agua en áreas cercanas a los vecindarios con más potencial para inundaciones.

Presentado a ANC Membership: [fecha]

Aprobado: [fecha]

Patrocinador: Malcolm Yeatts, ANC Sector 9 Representative,
myeatts@austin.rr.com

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You are on this list because you attended a TARG meeting or you signed up with a neighborhood group.

Join our Text Announcement List by texting : @Recovery to 23559

Únase a nuestra Lista de Anuncios de texto por mensajes de texto: @Recovery to 23559

www.targetingrecovery.org

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FLOOD RECOVERY IN ACTION: MOVING TOWARD A SAFE AND HEALTHY FUTURE

By:

TARG: Travis Austin Recovery Group

May 2014

The **Travis Austin Recovery Group (TARG)** exists to ensure effective and compassionate relief to families and communities impacted by the 2013 Halloween Floods and any future declared disasters.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Travis Austin Recovery Group (TARG) is a newly formed and incorporated long term recovery group addressing the current and future needs of the survivors of the Halloween Floods of October of 2013. This report and set of requests describes the history of the affected neighborhoods, the present situations and uncertainties for the homeowners, and the steps needed for these neighbors and their neighborhoods to recover normal lives.

While we focus on the neighborhoods hit hard by the floods, we also look at the history and future of the floodplains because with the explosive growth in Travis, Hayes and Williamson counties, floods will not disappear or be mitigated without planning. Long term planning means we need broad community leadership, commitment and involvement.

Specifically we ask for six issues to be considered carefully by all levels of government and the school districts:

1. IMPLEMENT A DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLAN
2. FULL FUNDING IN THE 2014-2015 CITY AND COUNTY BUDGETS FOR VOLUNTARY BUY OUTS
3. THE RIGHT TO REBUILD
4. BRING HUMANITY BACK INTO THE RECOVERY EFFORT
5. AFFORDABLE HOUSING
6. FUTURE PROTECTIONS FOR THE NEIGHBORHOODS AND PARKS

WHO IS TARG: THE TRAVIS AUSTIN RECOVERY GROUP?

TARG is a legally incorporated, non-profit long term recovery group. Our mission is to ensure effective and compassionate relief for families and communities impacted by the 2013 Halloween Floods; and protection from future declared disasters.

Six months have passed and few of the families have fully recovered. Painful emotions are still close to the surface; seemingly simple things are difficult. Residents and homeowners are still confused and concerned about buyouts, permits, insurance, elevating, rebuilding, and how the City of Austin, Travis County, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will respond when the next flood happens. Given the trauma of the experiences, and what is at stake for the future of so many families and neighborhoods, anyone would be.

TARG is committed to a systematic approach to determine who in our community continues to have unmet needs; and to make sure that resources are available to our community for a full recovery. We are committed to building the leadership and infrastructure necessary for a safe and healthy future for ourselves and our neighbors. We bring together representatives of affected neighborhoods and key community organizations and partners among other nonprofits, faith-based and voluntary groups like Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters, VOAD.

We have a robust resident led Coordinating Board and a well-respected fiscal sponsor in the Austin Community Foundation. We have worked out an agreement among diverse groups and the city to establish a centralized case management system. We have licensed and professional case managers working with us coordinating with the city, county and AISD. The city has committed to hiring at least two full-time case managers which we need now. We have strong rebuilding resources on the ground and a good and growing volunteer operation.

TARG, like other long term disaster groups, will work to achieve our mission and then leave the infrastructure in place in the event of future declared disasters for the purpose of a more coordinated, streamlined approach to future disaster response, relief and recovery.

THE HALLOWEEN FLOOD

Rain began in earnest about 10 pm on Wednesday night, October 30, 2013. In the midst of historic drought, October had been a wet month. Soils were saturated. Torrential rains quickly gathered into small streams and tributaries. Water in creeks all over Austin: Walnut, Shoal, William, and Bull, swelled to flow beyond their banks.

But the rain was pounding hardest southwest of Austin, over Wimberley, Kyle and Buda, over the vast newly-paved parking lots and buildings of South Park Meadows, over the watershed of Onion Creek. Flood flow in Onion Creek rose 11 feet in just 15 minutes. The stream gauge failed around 3:00 AM in the morning as the river continued to rise. It finally crested at 40 feet, a level more than two feet higher than the previous record of 38 feet during the September 9, 1921 storm.

Trees were flattened, fences torn out of the ground, cars pushed off the road as if they were just toys by the force of the moving water. In the early morning hours, as a wall of flood water surrounded homes and moved into the bedrooms of our neighborhoods, most of Austin was sleeping.

The early warning system for the neighborhoods didn't work. The City had no way to communicate directly with residents, in either English or Spanish. No way to tell them that, for their family's safety, they needed to move immediately to higher ground. By the time they realized their danger, all possible avenues of escape were hidden under the dark predawn sky, obliterated by many feet of swirling, muddy, debris-strewn water.

Six people died in the flood, including Rev Edward Jackson, Josephina Rodriguez and 8 month old Jay Rodriguez when their car was swept away on her way to work, Tracy Ward - 51 of Lockhart, Samuel Rosson, Jr.- 26 of Canyon Lake, Cynthia McKee of Caldwell County, and Brian Scott Carnahan - 51 of South Austin.

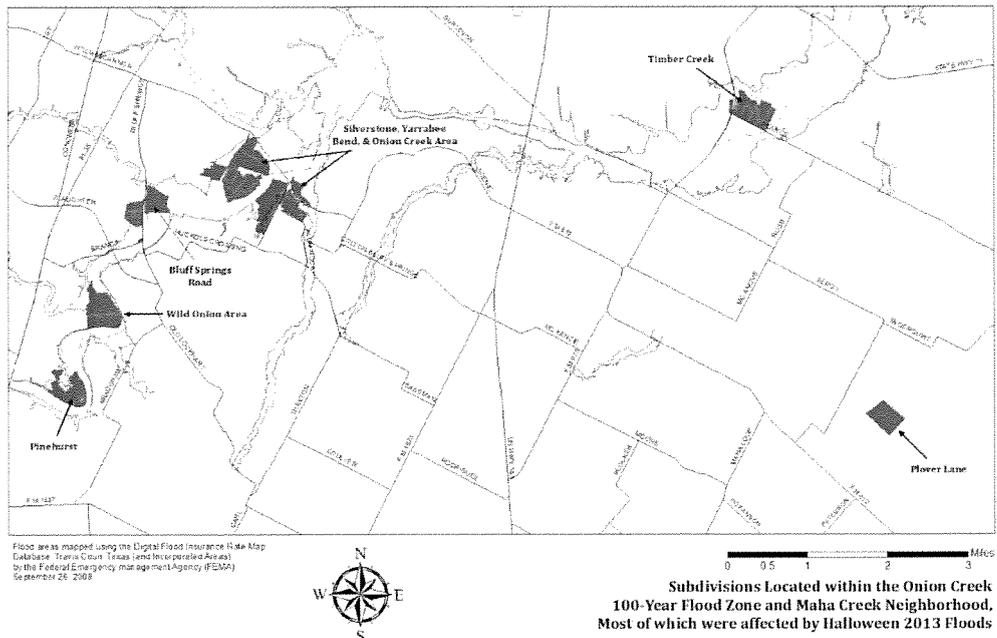
Hundreds of people were stranded, many airlifted out of the neighborhood or rescued by boat. Hundreds of animals were lost: chickens, dogs, goats, and over 50 horses were killed in the flood

Hundreds of homes and families were displaced. Roads were closed, bridges washed out, power was down, and schools were closed. Two long-standing churches along Bluff Springs Road, First Independent Baptist Church and Iglesia Buenas Nuevas, had major damage.

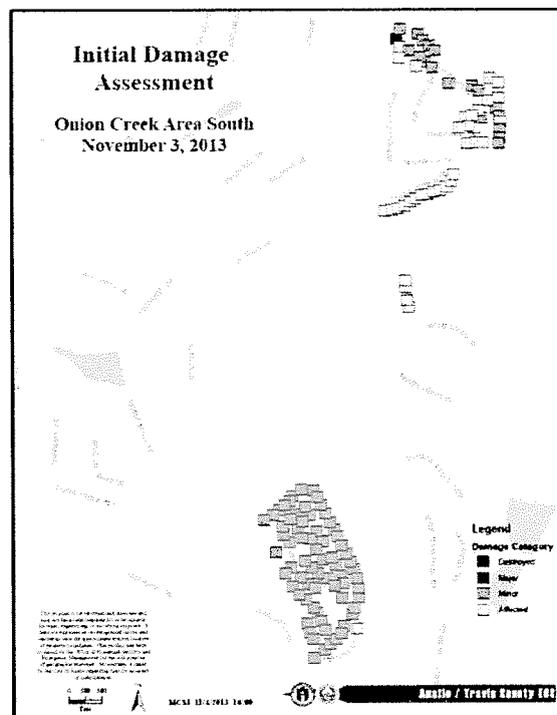
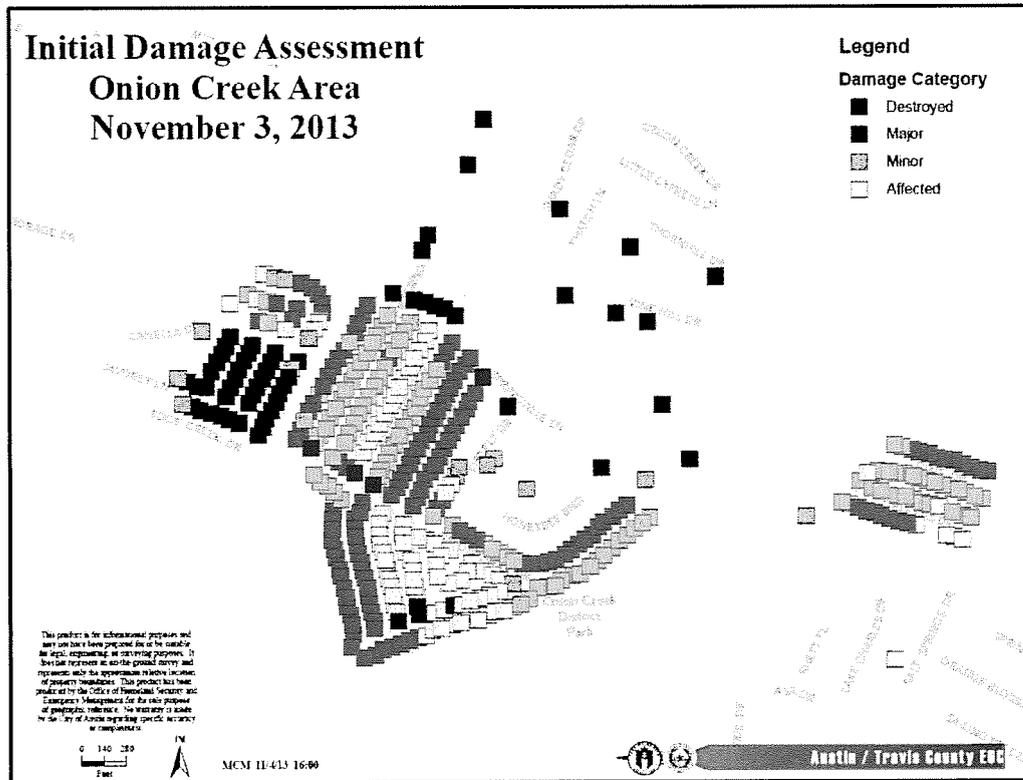
The rescue effort, while slow to start, was essential with shelter, food, community support, dumpsters and more. A few days and weeks of attention, however, are not enough to heal this devastation. While many have been working hard to get their homes sold or repaired, the uncertainty is creating more trauma. It is time for the problems of the past to be resolved through concrete action by all levels of government today.

Flood Affected Neighborhoods

The first two red areas from left to right include the Onion Creek/Pinehurst and Wild Dunes area south of Slaughter, then Bluff Springs Road, Silverstone, Yarrabee Bend, Onion Creek Park and Onion Creek Plantation. Just east of the Airport is the Timber Creek Area in Del Valle and the lower red box outside the flood plain is Plover Lane. The Pflugerville and Manchaca areas affected by the floods are not shown on this map.



The images below show some of the Initial Damage Assessments



REMEMBERING THE PAST

The neighborhood history below is based on information collected by residents recovering from the Halloween 2013 Onion Creek floods and their allies. We have listened through public presentations and attended meetings. We have poured over maps, time-lines, and the grainy fine print of final plats. Through this process we have pieced together a history of flood mapping and the impacted neighborhoods' development.

Since the Halloween floods, news media and political leaders have repeated the idea that some neighborhoods were built before the flood dangers were known. In fact this is not true. Flood maps showed that the land that many of the homes were built upon was known to lie within the 100-year floodplain before lots were platted, roads laid out, and houses built. Subdivision documents filed at the Travis County Court House required houses on certain lots to be built to elevations higher than the predicted 100-year flood. That was not done.

Later flood maps showed that even more houses lay within the 100-year floodplain than originally predicted; and that flood waters would be as much as five feet deeper. Still *nothing* was done to protect our homes and families.

Understanding the history of flood mapping and development in our neighborhoods shows that what happened was not just an act of nature. There were conscious decisions made by engineers and developers that put homes and families in harm's way and point to a failure of government to properly regulate those actions.

The past cannot be changed nor can lives lost be restored. Only time will heal the trauma of waking in beds surrounded by water; of wading through the dark with a child on one hip, holding a mother's elbow with a free hand; or of waiting on rooftops as water swirled through living rooms; listening to neighbors' cries for help and being unable to respond.

Knowing our history allows us to establish a solid basis for righting the past injustice that will benefit everyone who must face the choice between a home they can afford, a life and a community they have known and a safe and healthy future for themselves and their families.

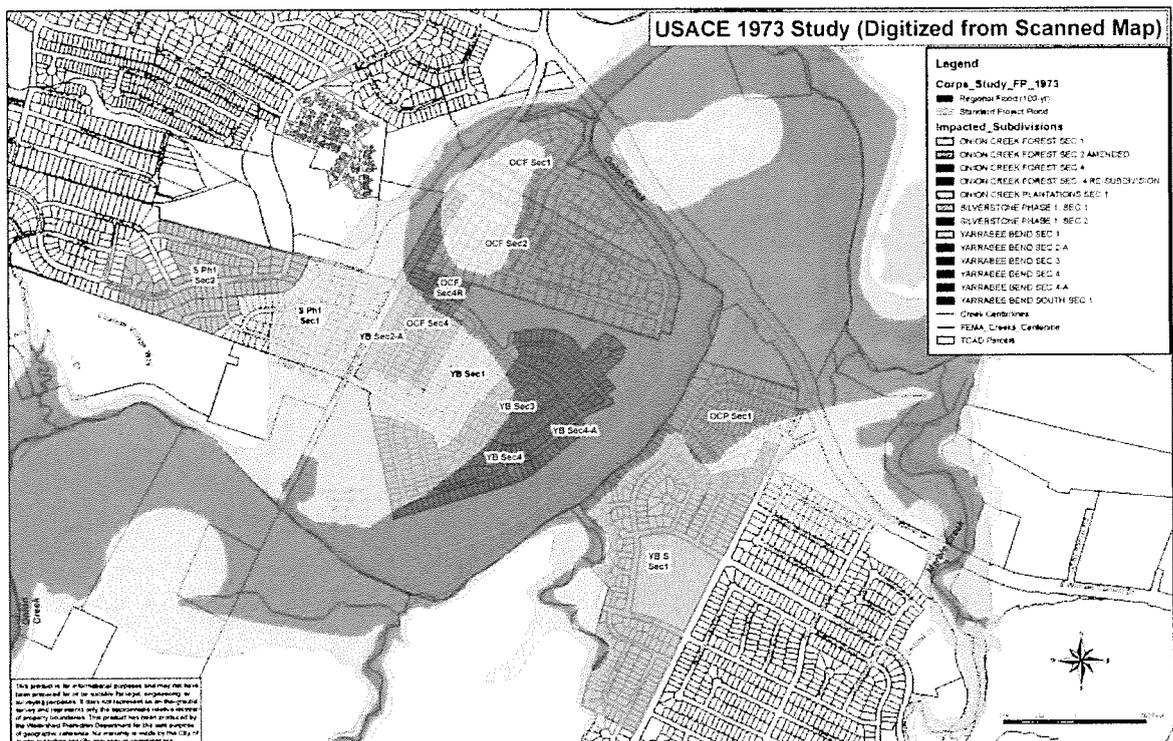
EARLY FLOOD MAPPING

In 1968 the Congress of the United States passed the National Flood Insurance Act to allow property owners to purchase insurance protection from the government against flood losses. In exchange for subsidizing insurance costs for existing

properties, communities were required to adopt new building standards to reduce future flood risks. This program established a national community safety standard to prohibit the construction of homes with a risk of flooding from a 100-year flood.

For this program to work, communities and insurance companies needed to be able to predict which areas of land would be inundated by the 100-year flood. The US Army Corps of Engineers took advantage of newly-available computers to develop flood models that could make those predictions. Although the models have gotten fancier, the underlying mathematics developed by the Corps of Engineers in the 1960s to predict flood depths and areas of inundation are still the most commonly used.

These models have been implemented repeatedly to predict flood flows in Onion Creek, and the extent of flooding in the very neighborhoods that were devastated in the early morning hours of Halloween 2013. The first such study was completed by the US Army Corps of Engineers in June 1973.



Several of the final plats show dashed lines roughly tracing the outlines of the 1973 US Army Corps of Engineers 100-year floodplain boundaries. See, for example, Figures 2 and 3 to this report.

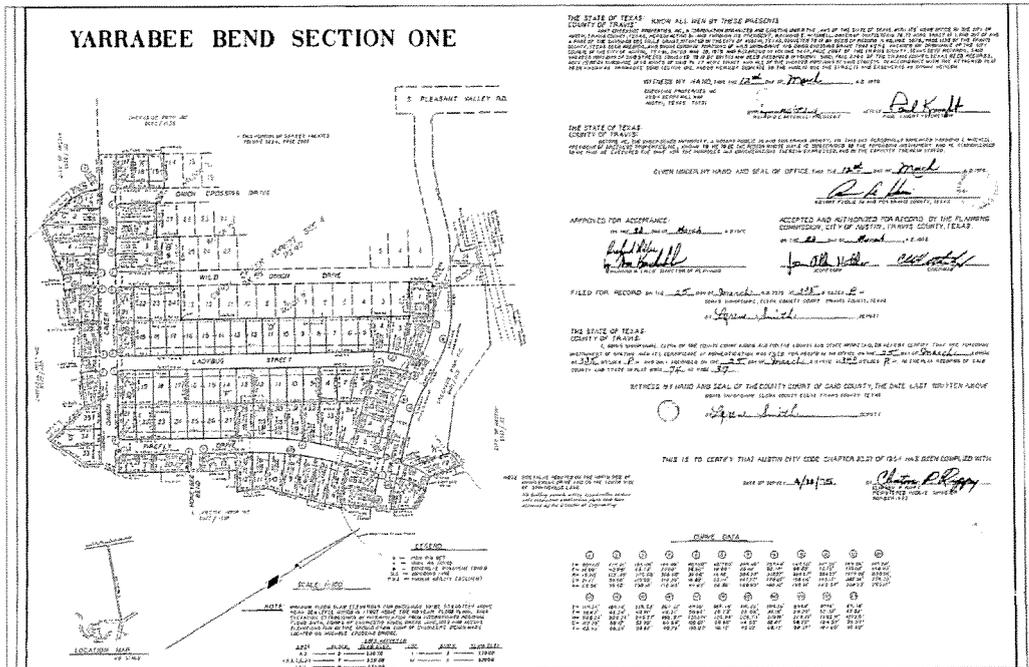


Figure 2

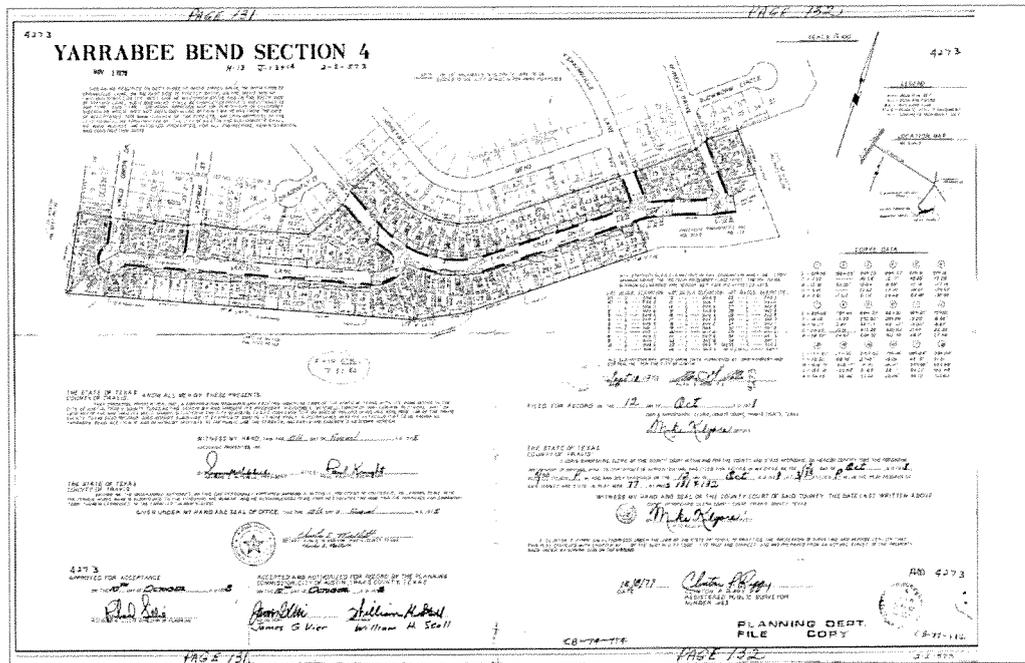


Figure 3

These plats include language like "Minimum floor slab elevations for dwellings to be 538 feet above mean sea level which is 1 foot above the 100-year floodplain¹." And

¹ Yarrabee Bend Section 1.

“All finish slab elevations in this subdivision shall be 1.0 foot minimum above the 100 year frequency flood levels. The following minimum elevations are hereby set for the affect lots. (42 lots listed.)²”

Figure 4 shows contour elevations for two subdivisions with these notes. A comparison of ground contour elevations to the 538 feet above mean sea level indicates that slabs must be two feet higher than the surrounding lawn to comply with this plat requirement. A visual comparison of the yard levels and slabs suggests that this requirement was never enforced.

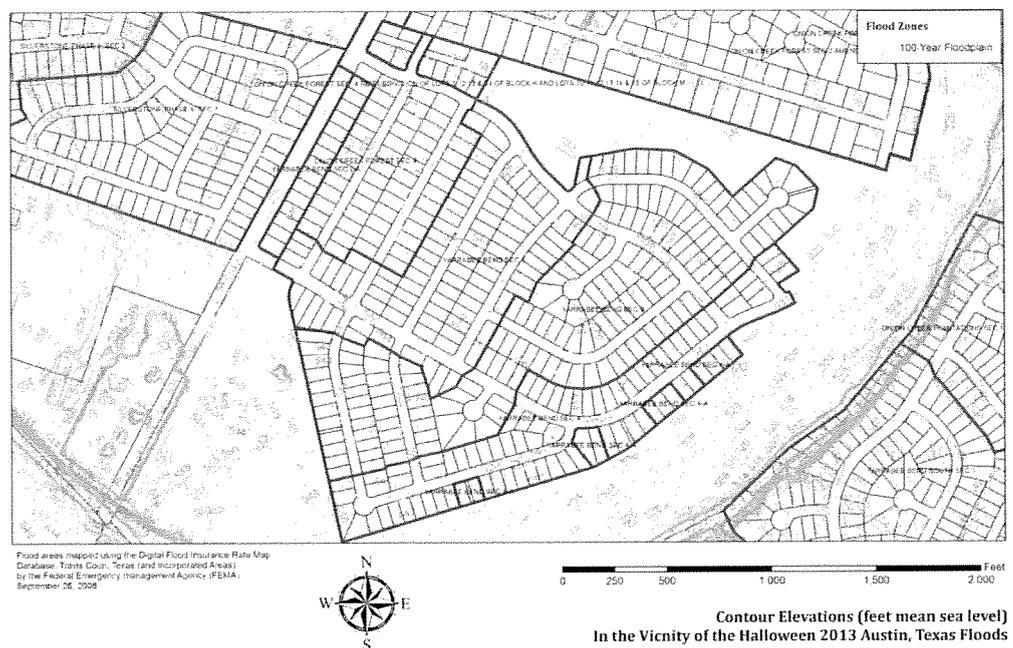


Figure 4

² Yarrabee Bend Section 4.

THIS CHART SHOWS THE RECORDED DATES FOR SUBDIVISIONS IN THE ONION CREEK FLOOD ZONE

SUBDIVISION	Date
TIMBER CREEK SEC 7	08/19/1974
ONION CREEK PLANTATIONS SEC 1	04/16/1973
TIMBER CREEK SEC 2	07/01/1971
YARRABEE BEND SEC 3	08/24/1977
ONION CREEK SEC 2	07/24/1974
ONION CREEK FOREST SEC. 4 RE-SUBDIVISION OF LOTS 1,12,13 & 14 OF BLOCK H AND LOTS 10,11,12,13,14 & 15 OF BLOCK M	06/18/1975
TIMBER CREEK SEC 3	01/01/1972
YARRABEE BEND SEC 4-A	12/10/1980
VALDES ACRES	08/25/1969
YARRABEE BEND SEC 1	03/25/1976
ONION CREEK FOREST SEC 4	03/11/1974
ONION CREEK FOREST SEC 2 AMENDED	03/13/1974
BOGGY CREEK ADDITION	03/16/1976
SILVERSTONE PHASE 1, SEC 1	12/04/1979
ONION CREEK, SEC 7	04/17/1986
YARRABEE BEND SEC 4	10/12/1978
ONION CREEK SEC 2-A	10/12/1976
PERKINS VALLEY SEC 6	11/08/1971
SUTHERLAND SUBDIVISION NO. 1	06/08/1964
PERKINS VALLEY	07/09/1964
SPRINGFIELD, SEC ONE	12/03/1985
SPRINGFIELD SECTION FOURTEEN	10/30/1987
ONION CREEK FOREST SEC 3	03/11/1974
SPRINGFIELD SECTION TWELVE	10/30/1987
TIMBER CREEK SEC 6	06/19/1972
YARRABEE BEND SEC 2-A	06/12/1980
YARRABEE BEND SOUTH SEC 1	05/01/1980
PERKINS VALLEY SEC 4	10/28/1968
PERKINS VALLEY SEC 2	01/16/1967
TIMBER CREEK SEC 5	04/10/1972
TIMBER CREEK SEC 4	04/10/1972
ONION CREEK FOREST SEC 1	02/07/1973
TIMBER CREEK SEC 1	04/12/1971
ONION CREEK SEC 6-A	05/17/1985
CYPRESS RIDGE SUBDIVISION	10/12/1995

FLOOD MAP CHANGES

In the intervening forty years between the original Onion Creek flood maps, published in June of 1973, and the 2013 Halloween flood, flood flows were re-estimated and the flood elevations along Onion Creek re-modeled several times. Figure 5 shows that remapping flood profiles along Onion Creek changed depths of flood inundation.

The number of homes at risk changed. Numerous documents reference houses with living space up to 10 feet below the 100-year floodplain elevation. See Figure 6. From the very first flood map through the latest, however, many homes in our neighborhoods were identified as threatened by floods and many lives have been at risk.

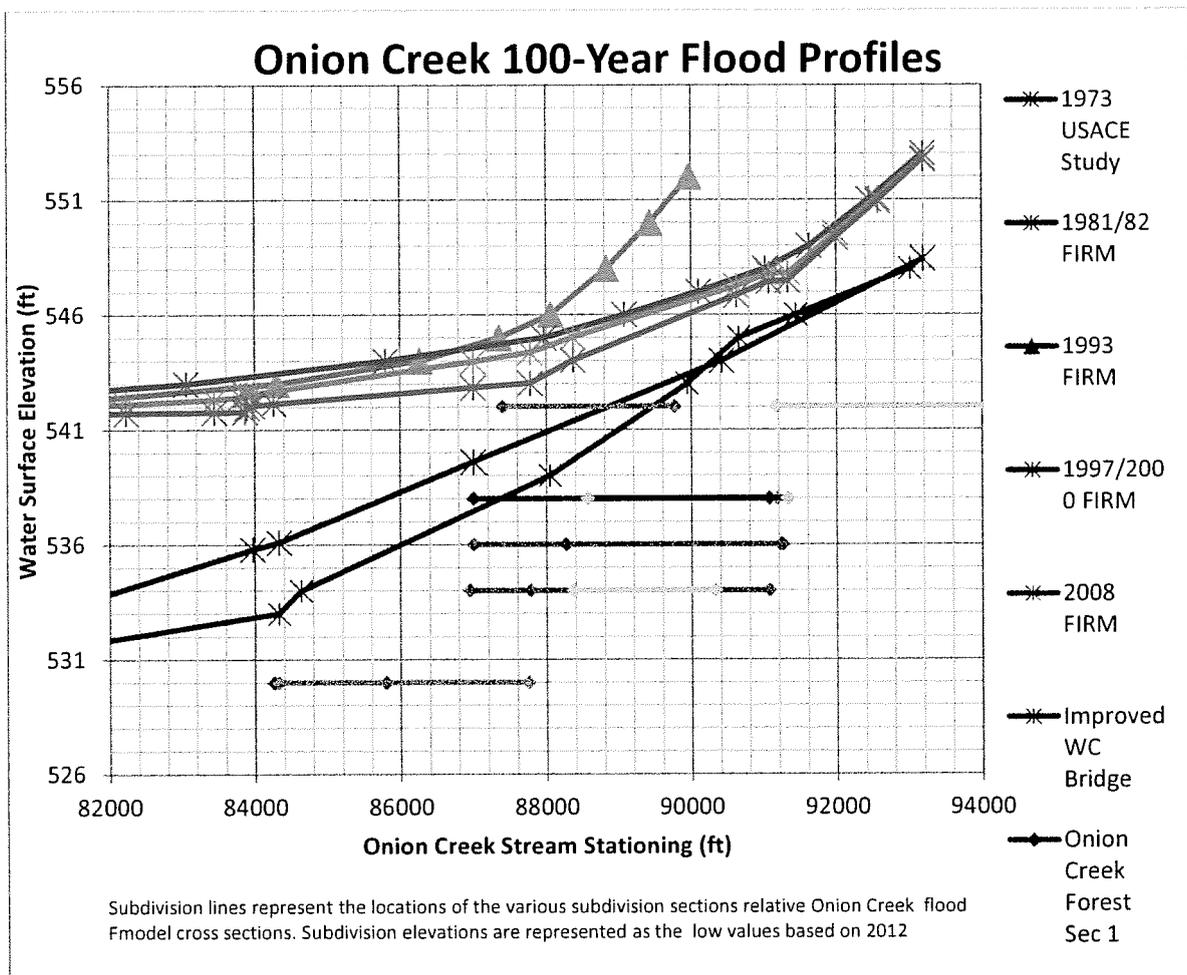


Figure 5³

³ Adapted from an Excel workbook obtained from City of Austin staff

AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA

Thursday, July 27, 2006

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**Watershed Protection and Development Review
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION**

ITEM No. 85

Subject: Approve an ordinance authorizing acceptance of \$6,255,823 in grant funds from the Division of Emergency Management, Office of the Governor, and amending the Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Watershed Protection and Development Review Department Operating Budget Special Revenue Fund of Ordinance No. 20050912-001, to appropriate \$6,255,823 for buyout and demolition of up to 118 single family houses in floodplain of Onion Creek.

Amount and Source of Funding: Funding in the amount up to \$6,255,823 is available in Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant Program grant funding administered by the Texas Department of Public Safety Division of Emergency Management. Local matching funds are required and \$2,085,274 in local matching funds is available in the Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Amended Capital Budget of the Watershed Protection and Development Review Department.

Fiscal Note: A fiscal note is attached.

Additional Backup Material
(click to open)

- [fiscal note](#)
- [Award letter](#)
- [map](#)
- [Ordinance](#)

For More Information: George Oswald, 974-3369; Joyce Puitch, 974-9789; Joan Esquivel, 974-3371

In response to the advertisement of a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) opportunity, the City submitted a grant application to the Division of Emergency Management, Office of the Governor, on January 27, 2006. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program provides cost-share funding for acquisition of flood damaged properties. The grant will support the buyout of up to 118 single-family residential structures. The buyout process is voluntary; the grant program does not allow the use of eminent domain acquisition. Interested property owners are offered appraised fair market value. The project targets buyout of homes adjacent to Onion Creek upstream of the East William Cannon Drive at the Onion Creek crossing. The living space of several houses is up to 10 feet below the 100 year floodplain elevation. This area was impacted significantly during the floods of October 17, 1998 and November 15, 2001. Owners and occupants will be provided with relocation assistance from the City to secure housing outside of flood hazard areas. Residual lands will be returned to the natural state. The City has been buying out properties in the project area since 1999 at 100 percent City cost. To date, 67 properties have been purchased at full City cost. The grant buyout area is part of the Corps of Engineers buyout proposal; Federal funding for the Corps project implementation will not be available any earlier than FY2008 and depends on affirmative Congressional action. Acceptance of the HMGP grant funding allows the City to increase the rate of buyout activity. Many property owners in the project area have requested that the City accelerate buyout activity.

The total estimated project cost is \$8,341,097 beginning in June 2006 and ending in June 2008. FEMA funds administered by the Division of Emergency Management, Office of the Governor, will provide up to \$6,255,823 and the City of Austin will provide the required 25% matching funds of \$2,085,274. In addition to the City's grant matching funds, the Department has included funding in the Fiscal Year 2007 Proposed Capital Improvement Program Budget to provide relocation assistance.

The living space of several houses is up to 10 feet below the 100 year floodplain as impacted significantly during the floods of October 17, 1998 and November 15

Figure 6

ONION CREEK NEIGHBORHOODS TIMELINE

June 1972	Timber Creek Sec 6 plat approved
February 1973	Onion Creek Forest Section 1 plat approved
April 1973	Onion Creek Plantations Section 1 plat approved
June 1973	US Army Corps of Engineers flood study published
March 1974	Onion Creek Forest Sections 2 Amended and 4 plat approved
June 1975	Onion Creek Forest Section 4 re-subdivided
March 1976	Yarrabee Bend Section 1 plat approved
August 1977	Yarrabee Bend Section 3 plat approved
June 1978	URS/Forrest and Cotton, Inc. release hydrologic and hydraulic analyses for the Flood Insurance Study. For Onion Creek the analyses appear to be based on the 1973 USACE study.
October 1978	Yarrabee Bend Section 4 plat approved
December 1979	Silverstone Phase 1 Sections 1 and 2 plats approved
May 1980	Yarrabee Bend South Section 1 plat approved
June 1980	Yarrabee Bend Section 2-a plat approved
December 1980	Yarrabee Bend Section 4-A plat approved
May 1981	Memorial Day Flood floods Onion Creek neighborhood homes. 13 people die in the floods.
1993	FIRM map produced by the City of Austin shows historic flood levels encompass all of the Yarrabee Bend, Onion Creek Forest, Onion Creek Plantations subdivisions and part of Silverstone Phase 1 Section 1
July 1997	Hydrologic and hydraulic analyses for a restudy completed for FEMA by the USACE, Fort Worth District

ONION CREEK NEIGHBORHOODS TIMELINE

September 1997	Loomis & Moore, Inc. Onion Creek Flood Control Study
October 1998	Neighborhoods flood
September 1999	US Army Corps of Engineers, Onion Creek/ Lower Colorado River basin, Texas, Reconnaissance study.
2000 to 2006	City of Austin purchases and demolishes 45 to 55 homes
November 2001	Neighborhoods flood
December 2002	Onion Creek Interim Feasibility study Phase I by the US Army Corps of Engineers included a new hydrologic and hydraulic model.
January 2003	Lower Colorado River Authority publishes the "Onion Creek Interim Feasibility Study, Phase 1 Information Paper" identifying 853 damageable structures in the Onion Creek Forest/Yarrabee Bend neighborhoods. Page 21 of the study says that the October 1998 and November 2001 floods exceeded the original 100-year base flood elevation.
2006	US Army Corps of Engineers recommends \$76 million to buy 483 homes near Onion Creek through a federal matching grant (including homes already purchased by the City). Congress never approves funding for the project, whose costs have risen to \$83.3 million
2006	Austin receives \$6.3 million from FEMA to purchase 118 homes near Onion Creek. The City matches an additional \$5.3 million, including \$3.2 million for relocation assistance.
November 2006	Austin voters approve \$28 million in bonds to fund the City's portion of the US Army Corps of Engineers buyout. The city buys and demolishes 114 homes near Onion Creek over the next 3 years.

ONION CREEK NEIGHBORHOODS TIMELINE

2008	Loomis Austin contracts with the City of Austin to determine flood control solutions for more than 800 homes located in the Onion Creek floodplain. A new flood frequency analysis and updated hydrologic model determine that the 100-year flow was substantially higher than originally determined. Detailed field and hydrologic/hydraulic reconnaissance was used to update the most recent US Army Corps of Engineers model.
2008 to present	City buys 100 more homes using local taxes.
October 2013	A record flood damages more than 500 homes, insured losses are estimated at \$30 million in Travis, Hays, and Caldwell Counties, not counting damaged vehicles.
2014	City approves nearly \$20 million to buyout 116 more homes
February 2014	Austin's Watershed Protection Department institutes a new flood warning notification system, ATXfloods Alerts! That will send a text, email, or voice message to those who have registered with the system.
April 2014	Council Members Morrison and Martinez propose \$103 million to buy out the remaining residents within the 100-year flood plain and relocate all occupants to safe homes.
May 15, 2014	Council resolution requesting full funding for buyouts
June 26, 2014	Council consideration of \$30 million for 142 homes in the 25-year floodplain
September 8-10	Council consideration of drainage charge increases to buyout either 229 homes in the 100-year floodplain for \$60 million and/or a city-wide buyout of an additional 72 homes in the Williamson Creek 25-year floodplain for \$78 million

COMMITTING TO RECOVERY

The history of these neighborhoods and the flood maps and documents attached to this report show that the floods that occurred had been predicted for decades. This information demands that we plan now to make sure that the lives, homes, and livelihoods of hundreds of families do not continue to be placed in danger from future floods. A 100-year flood can happen again at any time.

The sections below lay out some of what the families and neighborhoods need to fully recover and get on with life. As we move through this process, we request that all levels of government from the City of Austin and Travis County to the State and Federal Government cooperate in addressing and implementing the recommendations below.

1. IMPLEMENT A DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLAN

In the early morning hours, as stream gauges showed quickly rising water in Onion Creek, none of these neighborhoods: Onion Creek South, Bluff Springs, Yarrabee Bend, Springdale or Timber Creek in Del Valle received any warning of the imminent flooding. Weather reports indicated the potential of destructive floods, threatening life and property, well before flooding began.

We recognize that improvements are already in motion. The After Action Reports by different departments and agencies and then overall by the City of Austin identify areas to improve. We are glad to see this action. To make sure that lives are never in the same dangerous situation again, we request that the City of Austin and Travis County authorize and fund the following:

- Stream level gauges upstream of our neighborhoods with remote telemetry for continuous monitoring;
- Alarms and emergency response protocols in the event of a lost stream level gauge signal;
- Remotely-activated sirens to warn of impending flood conditions;
- Text alerts to cell phones and reverse 911 calls to landlines;
- Public safety staff and equipment dispatched to assist with evacuations PRIOR to flood events, particularly for elderly, children, disabled, or impaired residents;
- Adequate emergency equipment, including boats and rescue equipment, stored at a location where it can be quickly dispatched to our neighborhoods;
- Neighborhood training on flood and disaster readiness;

- Development of a viable evacuation plan through a collaboration of residents, school staff, and public safety staff for Travis County and the City of Austin; and
- Public safety staff and equipment drills on emergency and flood response procedures for our neighborhoods.

2. FULL FUNDING IN THE 2014-2015 CITY AND COUNTY BUDGETS FOR VOLUNTARY BUY OUTS

The City of Austin and Travis County must include enough money in their 2014-2015 budgets to offer every homeowner in the 100-year floodplain a fair buyout offer. We support pursuing all federal monies to help facilitate this process as quickly as possible. Buyouts should not be limited to homes that experienced major damage. The buyout process should be transparent and clear to every resident, whether or not they have yet received a buyout offer.

The funding must be adequate to offer fair buyouts, with additional low-cost financing as necessary so that homeowners can purchase a comparable house in the greater Austin area. All transactions related to any buyout should be submitted to the home owner in writing. Every homeowner should be represented by an independent, certified real estate agent in the buyout transaction.

Residents must have adequate time, at least three months, to consider any buyout offer. Once residents have accepted a buyout proposal, they must also have adequate time, at least one year, to locate alternative housing and move. Agreed upon closing dates should be met with minimal or no delays. Residents should receive all of the buyout funds before they are required to vacate the property. To mandate otherwise is to leave residents in limbo during the transition, without housing. Criteria to determine buy-out offers should consider the needs of the people involved not just the location of their home. For example, homeowners should be prioritized, in receiving funds, over those who own rental properties. Renters must receive relocation funding if they were living in an affected structure at the time of the event. Current renters in homes that are bought out must also be supported with relocation assistance.

3. THE RIGHT TO REBUILD

Residents who choose NOT to accept the buy-out offer must have a right to rebuild and stay in their home under the condition that, in the event the owners decide to

sell their property in the future, the city will receive the first option to purchase the property under the same rules, regulations and requirements as described above. In the event that the city does not wish to purchase the property at that time, the owner may sell the property to an outside buyer.

For residents who choose to rebuild, they must receive immediate information regarding any requirements to elevate their homes due to the “substantially damaged” FEMA requirements. Permits for rebuilding must be granted without any written or implied contingency regarding accepting any buyout offer. We request that the City and County work with residents and other appropriate state or federal agencies to determine the best course of action for those homes that were substantially damaged.

All residents without insurance or who are under-insured should be assisted in accessing rebuilding resources. Any residents with needs not covered by insurance must still get support whether through donated items to refurbish homes or voluntary skilled labor. One unmet need is to rebuild fences that were damaged or destroyed in the flood but are not covered by insurance. We urge the city to support a fence rebuilding program as part of the monies allocated to the Austin Home Repair Coalition. Fences provide security from those who intend harm and the growing wildlife coming back into the area.

4. BRING HUMANITY BACK INTO THE RECOVERY EFFORT

Children, parents, and individuals who experienced the Halloween floods continue to suffer from trauma, the stress of coping with disrupted housing and family life, and the health effects of molds and allergies from overgrown yards and un-gutted houses. People in the affected neighborhoods continue to live in homes without gas for cooking, heating, or working plumbing. Many adjacent houses have been abandoned and untouched for the last six months. Because of this devastation, residents of the flooded neighborhoods have needs beyond those of disaster preparedness, home buyouts and the right to rebuild. These needs include case managers for trauma and health support for injuries associated with the flood events and living in the post-flood neighborhood.

We urge the County Commissioners to direct the County Executive of Health and Human Services and Veterans Services, to commit the resources of the Family Support Services Division including their Social Workers. Travis County Social Workers would provide case management to flood affected survivors and work with

the TARG Case Management group. Family Support Services through their 7 community centers have programs and grants that could help with aspects of affordable housing like utility bill assistance, rent assistance and linkage to other community resources.

The City of Austin also has many programs and services that will be needed and we look forward to ongoing coordination with the Public Health and Human Services Department. We ask that the City take immediate action to hire the two case managers to support the flood survivors.

In addition, houses and lots that have been purchased by the City or County but not yet demolished need maintenance, regular mowing, and trash removal, including abandoned cars. The owners of houses that have been abandoned must be located to resolve disposition of the destroyed and un-gutted homes that still sit there. Until those owners can assume maintenance, those homes must also be maintained by the City. Compassionate recovery could include cutting lawns not issuing code violation tickets.

All of this has been made worse by the lack of regular and clear communication and coordination from the various government entities and agencies to the families and neighborhoods about what is going to happen.

5. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

House prices in Austin are rapidly rising and it will be difficult or impossible for residents of the flooded neighborhoods to find and afford comparable housing at a location in or near Austin. Public transportation is essential and a factor that must be taken into consideration. The City should assist with building and/or finding affordable housing to accommodate relocation, including assistance with financing like the SBA loans offered earlier in the disaster.

6. FUTURE PROTECTIONS FOR THE NEIGHBORHOODS AND PARKS

The Onion Creek watershed upstream of the flooded neighborhoods is rapidly converting from rural land to suburban residential and commercial development. These changes mean that future floods on Onion Creek will be even larger than those experienced in the past. With changes in the climate as well, we can expect continued extremes in weather patterns including increased drought and flooding! The City of Austin, Travis County, and Hays County must work together to make sure that every new development in the Onion Creek watershed is designed to fully contain increased storm water within the development.

The City and County must also examine engineering options to protect the neighborhoods until such time that the land is returned to open space or park land.

As homes are bought out and removed, additional management of the ever-growing parkland area is necessary. This management must include adequate police and security for park users, and blocking or removing no-longer-necessary roads and driveways. Signs are necessary to explain park rules, regulations, and hours of operation.

CONCLUSION

The road to recovery from the Halloween 2013 Floods is a long one.

We have inherited an injustice that has cost some people their lives and many more who have suffered as a result.

For a full recovery to happen, we must achieve an unprecedented collaboration that at its heart includes the residents, with support from all levels of government and the larger community. Together, we must garner resources as quickly as we can and act with the compassion that the hundreds of families both need and deserve.

Although there are many unresolved issues and concerns, we believe that your immediate action on those items identified in this plan will reduce the painful uncertainty that the community of flood survivors feels. Only then can we collectively make the clear choices we need to make to get us fully back on our feet.

We respectfully ask that you join with us on our journey TOWARD A SAFE AND HEALTHY FUTURE.

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USACE 1973 Study (Digitized from Scanned Map)

Legend

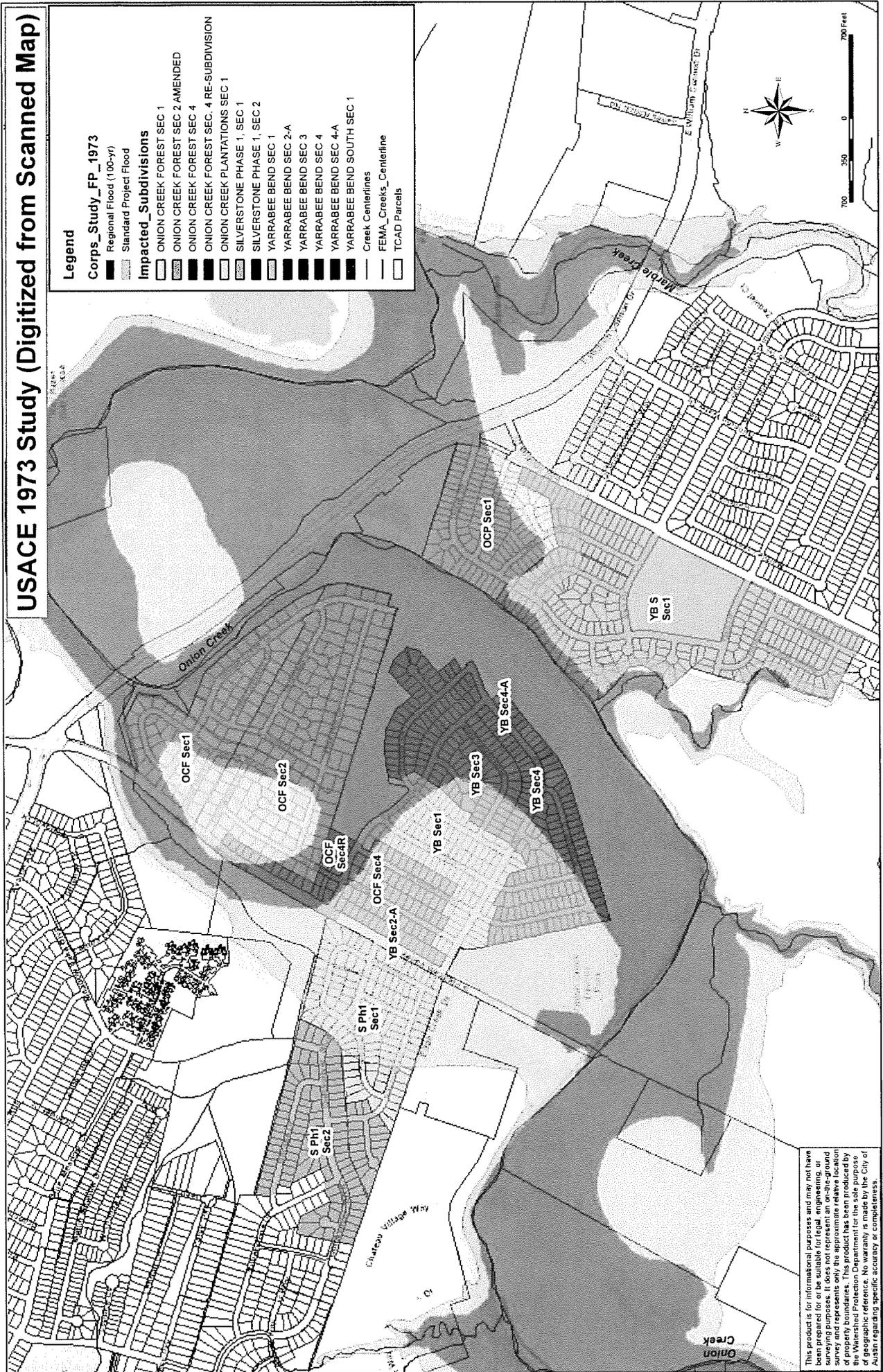
Corps_Study_FP_1973

- Regional Flood (100-yr)
- Standard Project Flood

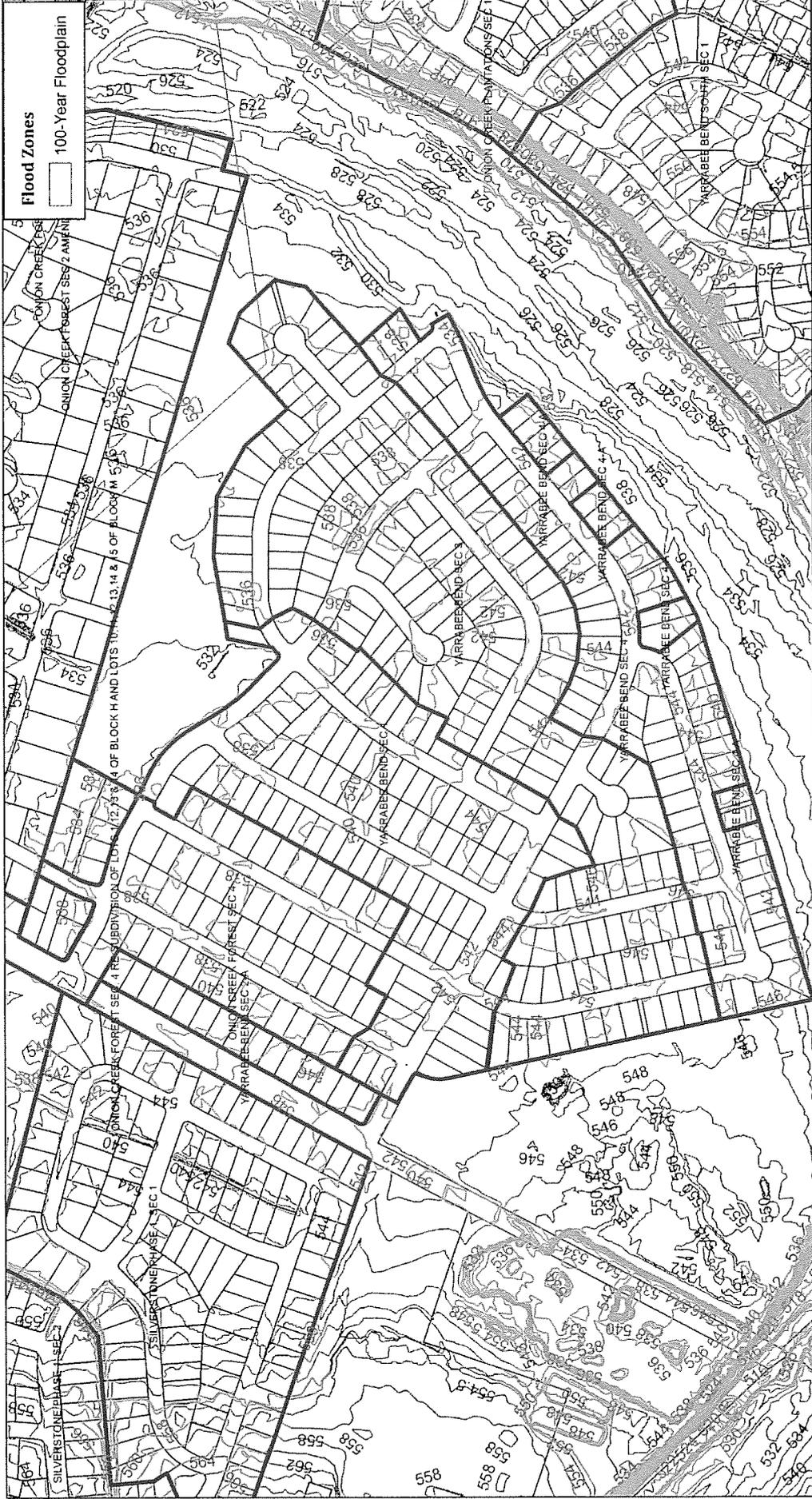
Impacted_Subdivisions

- ONION CREEK FOREST SEC 1
- ONION CREEK FOREST SEC 2 AMENDED
- ONION CREEK FOREST SEC 4
- ONION CREEK FOREST SEC. 4 RE-SUBDIVISION
- ONION CREEK PLANTATIONS SEC 1
- SILVERSTONE PHASE 1, SEC 1
- SILVERSTONE PHASE 1, SEC 2
- YARRABEE BEND SEC 1
- YARRABEE BEND SEC 2-A
- YARRABEE BEND SEC 3
- YARRABEE BEND SEC 4
- YARRABEE BEND SEC 4-A
- YARRABEE BEND SOUTH SEC 1

- Creek Centerlines
- FEMA_Creeks_Centline
- TCAD Parcels



This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, and survey, and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries. This product has been produced by the Watershed Protection Department for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.



Flood areas mapped using the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map Database, Travis Coun, Texas (and Incorporated Areas) by the Federal Emergency management Agency (FEMA) September 26, 2008.

Attachment 4.
Contour Elevations (feet mean sea level)
In the Vicinity of the Halloween 2013 Austin, Texas Floods

