



ATX FLOOD SAFETY

AUSTIN FLOOD READINESS

Presented by Director Jorge L. Morales, P.E. CFM | August 15, 2025
And Director, Jim Reddick, MPA, CEM



Overview

- Austin Flood History
- Austin Flood Challenges
- Flood Preparedness Strategy
- Investments to Date
- Rain to River
- HSEM Flood Response
- Questions

Austin Flood History

**JULY
1869**

**THE COLORADO
RIVER'S FLOOD
OF RECORD**

1915

**FLOODING DISASTER
ON SHOAL AND
WALLER CREEKS**

2013

**FLOOD OF
RECORD ON
ONION CREEK**

1900

**AUSTIN DAM
DESTROYED**

**MEMORIAL DAY
FLOOD**

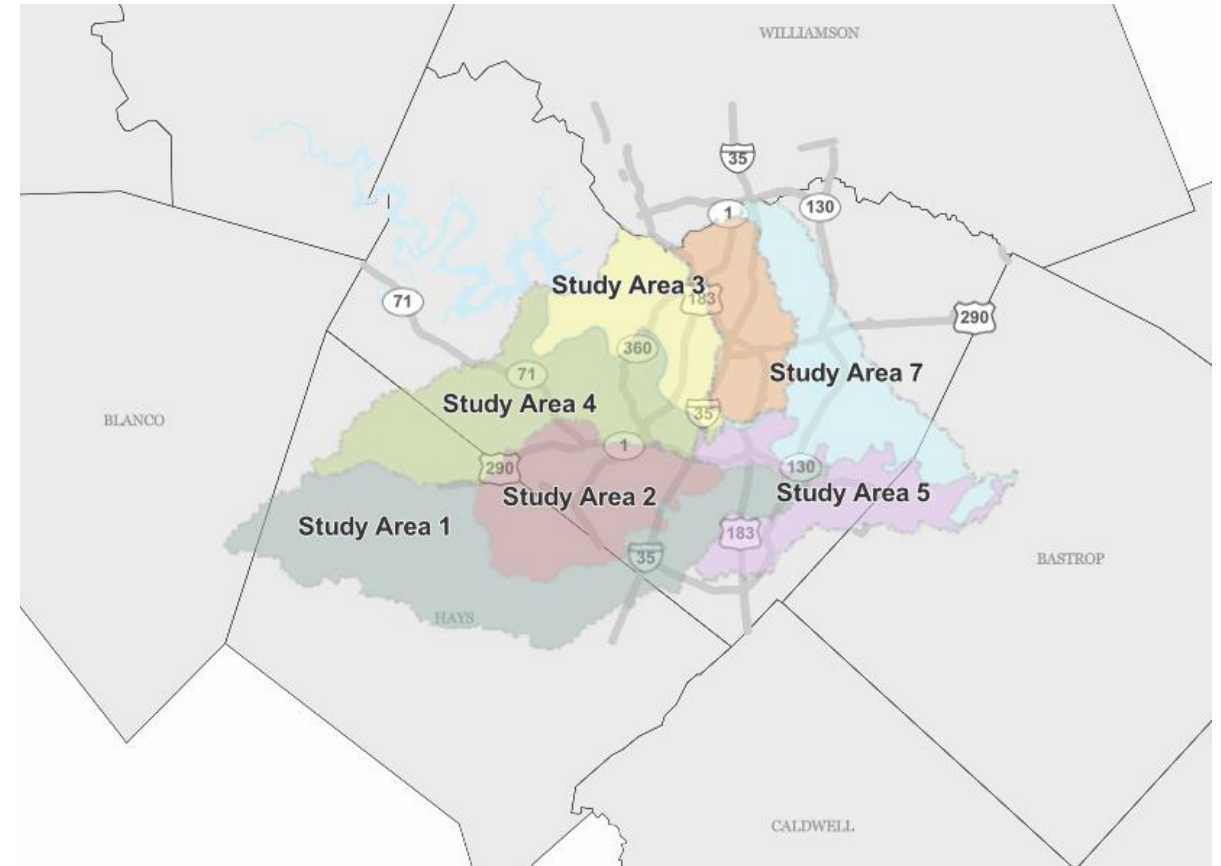
1981

2015

**FLOODING ON
ONION CREEK**

Austin Flood Challenges

- Atlas 14 data shows Austin is experiencing more frequent and heavier rainfall
- Austin has shallow soils and world record rainfall rates
- 10% of land in Austin is in the floodplain and subject to flash flooding
- More than 10,000 buildings and 400 roads are prone to flooding during a 100-year flood



Flood Preparedness Strategy

- Flood Mitigation
- Flood Preparedness
- Flood Response



Flood Mitigation

- Capital Improvement Projects
- Floodplain & Drainage Regulations
- Operations & Maintenance
- Vegetation & Land Management
- In-house Drainage System Upgrades



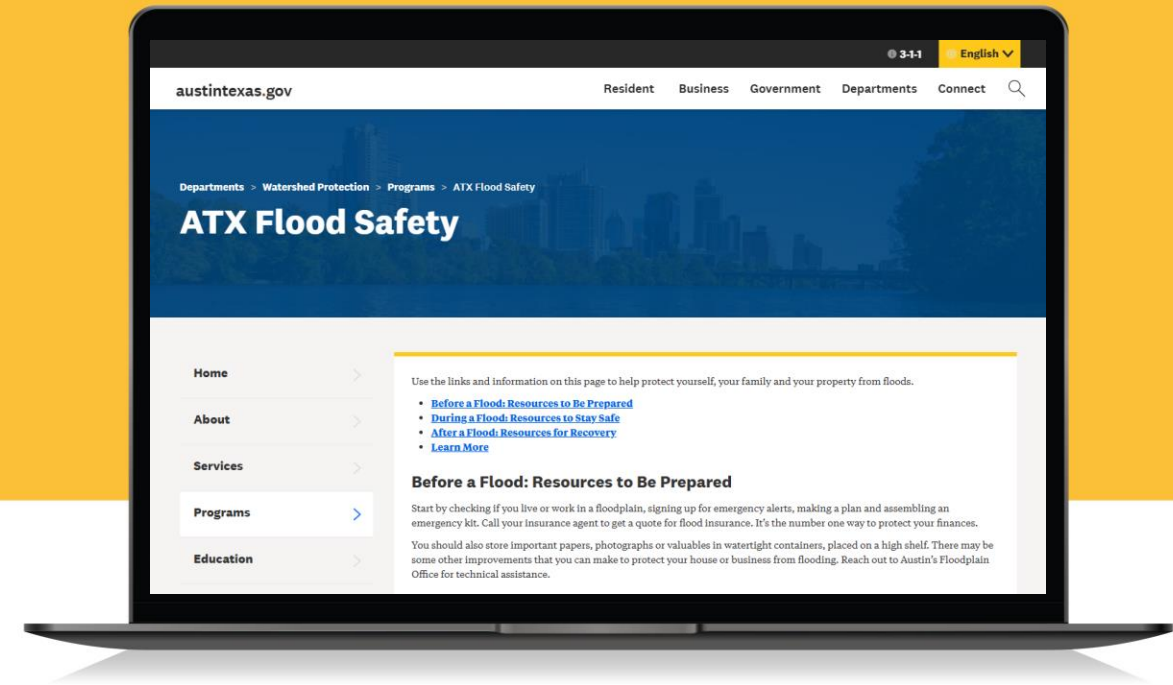
Flood Preparedness

- Preventative maintenance of drainage system
- Pre-storm checks on critical locations
- Monitor the weather for potential flooding
- Coordinate with partner departments, Austin-Travis County Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) and Stakeholders
- Communication & Engagement



Flood Response

- Flood Early Warning System (FEWS)
- Watershed Protection Department Emergency Management Team
- Department Operations Center
- Flood Reconnaissance and Debris Management



Flood Impacts & Response

May 28, 2025

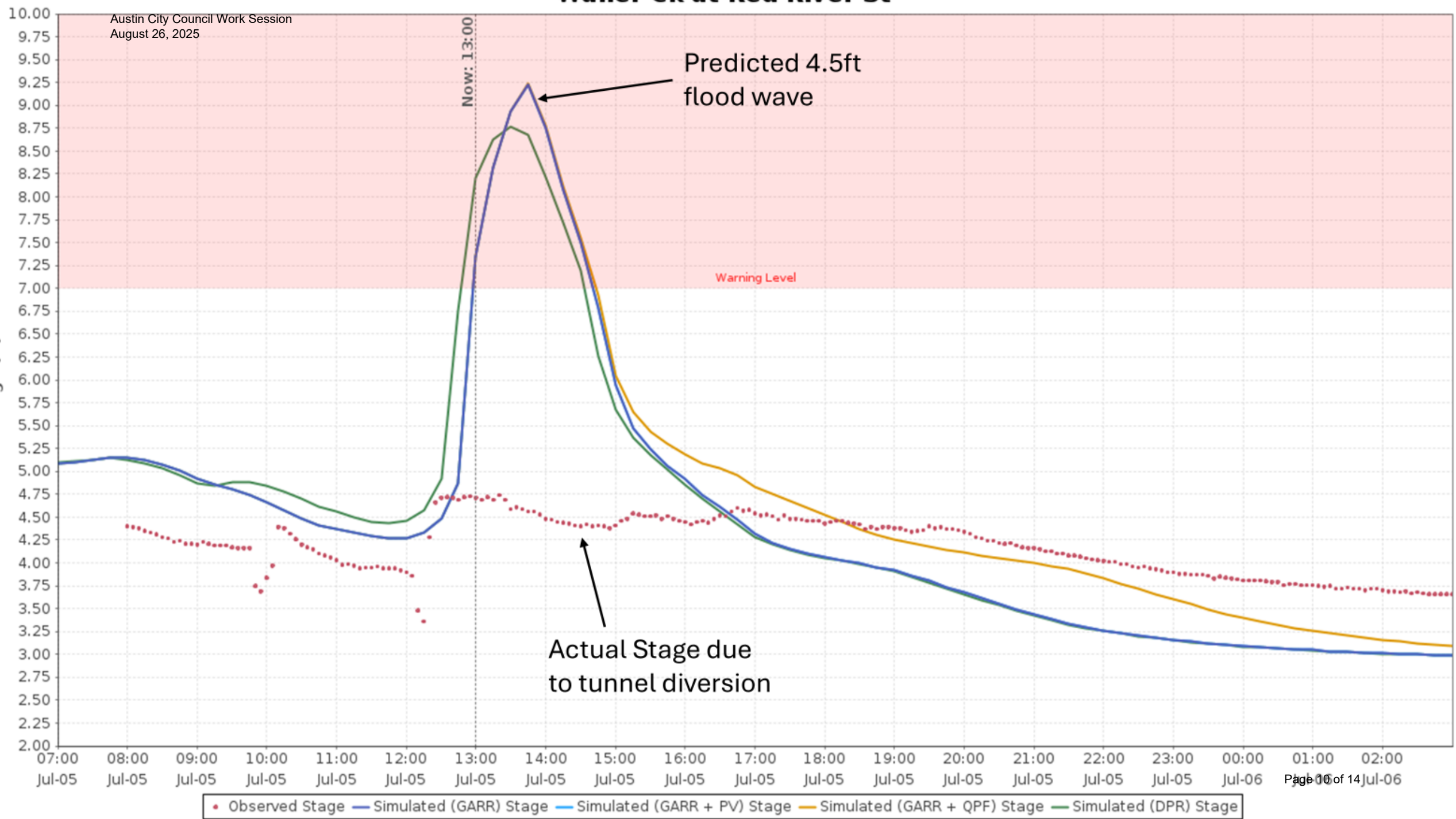
Department OPCON Level 2

- 8 low water crossing closures
- 35 flooded structures
- 2 WPD buildings impacted (back-up generation)
- 298 Service Requests
- 5 reconnaissance teams investigated areas with high intensity rainfall and met with impacted community members
- Collaborated with Development Services Department to create resource documents and handouts for affected residents
- 1,000 tons of debris removed from drainage system
- Coordinated with Austin Resource Recovery and Transportation & Public Works for debris management
- Participated in media requests to include city-wide press conference



Watershed Protection Department Operations Center (DOC)

First time activated on May 29-30 for
OPCON Level 2



Investments to Date

Historical Spending

- Bond funds used towards 50 stormwater projects since 2001
- Total 114 flood projects have completed phases, costing approximately \$567M
- Funding sources include GO bonds, cash transfer from drainage charge revenue, and grants
- Remaining 2018 Bond funds will be spent down by end of 2026

Challenges

- Price escalations for construction after the pandemic
- As Austin becomes more compact and connected there is little open space available for drainage detention, escalating project costs
- Lower number of grant funding opportunities

Current Needs

- See proposed budget needs and flood risk reduction projects included in the 2026 bond package
- We have over \$2B worth of need
- Many projects are ready for construction but need funding

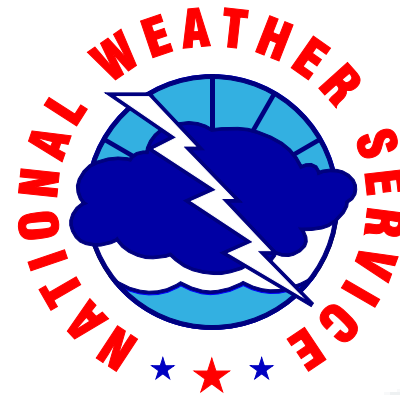
What does Watershed Protection do?



**WATERSHED
PROTECTION**

HSEM Flood Response

- Monitor NWS Forecast Products
- Co-locate with FEWS
- Briefings / Conference Calls
 - NWS / TDEM / Austin
- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)
 - Alerting Authorities
 - NWS / CAPCOG / County / Austin
 - No subscription necessary
- Warn Central Texas
 - Subscription necessary
- Gap / Recommendation
 - Delegation of Authority to Order Mandatory Evacuation





Questions?

