



City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 24-6444, **Agenda Item #:** 85.

1/30/2025

Posting Language

Conduct a public hearing and consider an ordinance amending City Code Title 25 (*Land Development*) to create exceptions for providing an erosion hazard zone analysis and increasing the distance for erosion hazard zones along the Colorado River below Longhorn Dam. Funding: This item has no fiscal impact.

Lead Department

Watershed Protection Department.

Fiscal Note

This item has no fiscal impact.

Prior Council Action:

On June 9, 2022, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 20220609-061, initiating amendments to City Code Title 25 regarding green stormwater infrastructure, improving runoff management, wetland protections and buffers along Lady Bird Lake, and more.

On October 27, 2022, the City Council adopted Ordinance 20221027-045 which addressed many of the elements on Resolution No. 20220609-061.

For More Information:

Matt Hollon, Watershed Protection, matt.hollon@austintexas.gov, (512) 974-2238 Liz Johnston, Watershed Protection, liz.johnston@austintexas.gov, (512) 468-6406.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

Reviewed by Codes and Ordinance Joint Committee on October 16, 2024; recommended on a vote of 6-0 with amendments.

Reviewed by Environmental Commission on November 6, 2024; recommended on a vote of 7-0 with amendments.

Planning Commission postponed on November 12, 2024 to December 10, 2024.

Additional Backup Information:

Case Number: C20-2022-0025

This ordinance responds to Council Resolution No. 20220609-061, which initiated Land Development Code amendments related to environmental, drainage, and landscape requirements. The proposed ordinance addresses direction to staff to “evaluate the effectiveness of the existing Critical Water Quality Zone and Erosion Hazard Zone buffers on the Colorado River downstream of the Longhorn dam and to propose protections that will provide adequate protections to the river that will ensure a healthy riparian corridor to stabilize the riverbank and protect property from erosion.”

The proposed code change would expand the Erosion Hazard Zone (“EHZ”) associated with the Colorado River downstream of the Longhorn Dam to 200 feet from the ordinary high-water mark (federally defined edge of river bank) and clarify what type of development is not required to provide a new EHZ analysis. The existing

EHZ is measured 100 feet from the ordinary high-water mark. The EHZ would only apply to new habitable structures (e.g., residential houses) and infrastructure (e.g., new roadways, water and wastewater pipes) and not to existing structures and infrastructure or to new sheds, pools, patios, decks, fences, and the like. Staff are proposing that EHZ requirements for hard-surfaced trails remain at 100 feet. Additionally, these code amendments would clarify that the EHZ would not extend past existing public rights-of-way. Thus, for example, a property on the far side of a public roadway from river would not be subject to the EHZ. Additionally, single-family residential construction in the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction would not be affected by this ordinance since Travis County, not the City of Austin, regulates such construction.