

**RESOLUTION NO. 20131121-060**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council is committed to establishing policies that protect the long-term health and viability of our city and community; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council passed a resolution in February 2007 that established the framework for the Climate Protection Plan, which focused primarily on how to reduce the greenhouse gases emitted by the City and the community but did not explicitly address climate adaptation or resiliency; and

**WHEREAS**, climate resiliency is the planning and implementation of actions to reduce a city's vulnerability to long-term changes in climate and major weather events, and to protect the economic, environmental, and social health of a community; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a renewed focus on climate resiliency as extreme heat and drought occur more frequently and major weather events become more common and intense, impacting cities across the nation and the world and causing tens of billions of dollars in damage; and

**WHEREAS**, a changing climate and extreme weather events are evident in Central Texas with examples including the summer of 2011 when Austin had 90 days with temperatures of at least 100 degrees, the 2011 Bastrop fires which were connected to multiple fires occurring in the region from dry conditions, an expansive presence of combustible materials, and strong winds from a nearby tropical storm (displacing thousands of people and causing estimated property damages of over \$320 million), and the recent local flood event that caused extensive damage to homes and businesses and displaced hundreds of residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a scientific body established by the United Nations with 195 member countries, recently released its latest climate assessment based on research from more than 800 scientists that stated “warming of the climate system is unequivocal” and that “the frequency or intensity of heavy precipitation events has likely increased in North America”; and

**WHEREAS**, in February 2013, federal agencies released draft Sustainability Plans that included climate change adaptation strategies for the first time, and many cities including Baltimore, Boulder, Chicago, Denver, Flagstaff, New York City, and Tucson have studied the local impacts of extreme weather and adopted plans to be better prepared for those impacts and to increase the resilience of governmental operations; and

**WHEREAS**, in March 2013, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) received a federal grant to complete a Climate Change and Extreme Weather Vulnerability Assessment for Transportation Infrastructure for the six-county region that will evaluate and rank assets based on their criticality to regional transportation and vulnerability to extreme weather events, and CAMPO will produce a final report with recommendations on how to incorporate future vulnerability and risk into transportation decision-making by September 2014; and

**WHEREAS**, in early 2014 a National Climate Assessment will be completed by the U.S. Global Change Research Program, which consists of thirteen federal entities including the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency, among others, that

will provide information about the anticipated trends for climate in the U.S.; and

**WHEREAS**, changing climate patterns and local extreme weather events demonstrate a clear need for enhanced awareness and preparation for a likely future of unpredictable and potentially dangerous weather; and

**WHEREAS**, a vulnerability assessment uses past and current climate information to help model future climate projections and then identify the key areas of risk and concern for a city's population, built infrastructure, and ecosystems; and

**WHEREAS**, a vulnerability assessment of city operations and facilities not covered by other concurrent efforts would benefit decisions on long-term municipal planning efforts and investments, would help identify the areas that have already been addressed by city planning efforts and the areas that need more attention, and would enhance Austin's adaptive capacity; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

The City Manager is directed to explore how to make the City of Austin more resilient to climate change by analyzing climate change projections, determining how departmental planning efforts integrate future impacts of climate change and could be enhanced moving forward, identifying a process for performing departmental vulnerability assessments, and recommending next steps needed to develop, prioritize, and implement departmental strategies to increase resilience, including working with

strategic community partners on addressing key vulnerabilities and specifying steps for regular evaluation of the strategies.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager should perform a detailed study of climate projections of future temperature and precipitation averages and extremes for Central Texas for the mid- and late-century timeframes. The study should include information on the availability and completeness of climate change projection data for Central Texas, a summary of what is currently known about climate change projections for Central Texas, and an assessment of key data that is still needed and recommendations on obtaining the required data.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager should determine how current operations, current asset management, and future capital investments could be impacted by changes in climate. This analysis should include the economic, environmental, and social impacts of climate change. A report back to the City Council should include departmental assessments regarding how and where adapting to climate change impacts could be integrated into the following:

- Transportation infrastructure operations, asset management, and future capital investments including: transportation demand projections, and protecting key assets from extreme weather, and ensuring continuous access to the transportation network; and
- Electric utility infrastructure operations, asset management, and future capital investments including: electricity demand projections,

protecting key assets from extreme weather, maximizing energy efficiency and diversifying resources to offset future demand caused by extreme heat, and ensuring continuous electricity delivery to critical facilities; and

- Water utility infrastructure operations, asset management and future capital investments including: water availability and demand projections, protecting key assets from extreme weather, maximizing water efficiency, and ensuring continuous water delivery to critical facilities; and
- Drainage utility infrastructure operations, asset management and future capital investments including: identifying and planning for areas susceptible to flooding, evaluating the locations and ability of flood water gauges to operate in major flood events, and analyzing changing floodplain models to determine potential impacts on current and future developments; and
- Community health and wellness efforts including climate change impacts, especially on vulnerable populations due factors related to age, income levels, or other social factors, such as: vector-borne diseases, water- or air-borne diseases, poor air quality, extreme heat, and access to food and potable water; and
- Disaster preparedness and emergency response including: enhancing communication strategies for alerting affected communities in emergency situations, ensuring continuity of governmental and emergency operations, preparing for refugees coming to Austin due to catastrophic events, and providing aid to displaced Austin residents.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

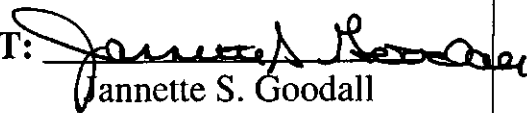
The report to City Council should also include recommendations on resources needed and a timeline for developing departmental climate change vulnerability assessments for major existing and planned water utility, electric utility, transportation, and drainage utility assets. The recommendations should also identify the subsequent resources and steps needed to develop, prioritize, and implement departmental strategies to increase resilience, including working with strategic community partners on addressing key vulnerabilities and specifying steps for regular review of the strategies.

The report should describe how the results of the work may be incorporated into existing plans or concurrent planning efforts, such as Imagine Austin, the Land Development Code rewrite, the Emergency Operations and Hazards Mitigation Plan, the Community Health Assessment, the Community Health Improvement Plan, the Floodplain Management Plan, the Drought Contingency Plan, the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, the Austin Energy Resource, Generation, and Climate Protection Plan, and future annual City budgets and the City's Capital Improvements Program. This review should consider regional efforts with regional partners such as Travis County, the Lower Colorado River Authority, the Capital Area Council of Governments, and CAMPO.

The City Manager shall provide this report to Council by May 1, 2014.

**ADOPTED:** November 21, 2013

**ATTEST:**

  
Jannette S. Goodall  
City Clerk