

# Storm Water Management Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at 6:00 P.M.

The Storm Water Management Advisory Board will hold a meeting in the Municipal Plaza, Meeting Room “B”, 100 S. Flores Street, beginning at 6:00 P.M. Once convened, the Storm Water Management Advisory Board will take up the following items.

## Roll Call

**Present:** Nefi M. Garza, Rodolfo Alejandro Munoz, Suzanne Brennan Scott, Deborah Reid, Jennifer Ramos, Peter Onofre, Bernardino N. Villasenor, Bianca Maldonado, John Gilbert Hafernack, Luis Alday, and Patrice Melancon

**Absent:** Kelsey Ann Krueger and Roger Andrade

**Staff:** Jessica Shirley-Saenz, Victoria Escobedo, April Alcoser Luna, and Laura Flores

## Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of the Minutes from the meeting held on April 15, 2025.
  - Proposed by Nefi:
    - Comments are to be added from the individuals who signed up to speak at the meeting on April 15, 2025.
    - Addition of a comment to reference the presenter’s response to a question regarding additional funding and the scope needed to address the project shortcomings associated with the Prue Road project that was included in the briefing on the Oakland Estates Area Bond Drainage projects.
  - Motion for Approval: Bianca Maldonado
  - Seconded: Patrice Melancon

## Public Comment

2. Public Comment.
  - There were no individuals signed up to speak.

## Staff Presentations

3. Project Scoring Matrix Worksession

The members of the Storm Water Management Advisory Board reviewed examples of typical projects assessed by the City’s Public Works Storm Water staff and confirmed the scoring for each project. They were also given the opportunity to ask questions about how these scores were determined, allowing them to better understand how the evaluation criteria was applied.

The Board Chair suggested that the committee assess and consider the scoring system's value and importance. Stating this will be a crucial part of the next phase, which will involve restructuring the scoring criteria.

**The following projects were reviewed and discussed:**

**Encino LWC – Score: 60**

- The project involved elevating the roadway but not mitigating any structures.
- It is combined with the Southwell LWC, which was scored separately, to elevate the roadway and provide unflooded access.
- State and Federal grant funding was being considered; however, the federal grants were paused.
- These projects are not dependent upon each other but were combined for economies of scale, leveraging the benefits of elevating low-water crossings and providing unflooded access.

**Committee Discussion:**

*Summarized below are the comments and questions exchanged among the committee and staff regarding the scoring of the Encino LWC project.*

- How are complaints regarding the mitigation of roadway flooding and the concerns of neighbors affected by flooding in the streets being addressed? Roadway flooding, often referred to as nuisance flooding, does not currently have an assigned score. However, it could fall under street scoring aimed at improving areas prone to flooding.
- To effectively mitigate property flooding, it is essential to highlight this issue within a clear category. During discussions within the drainage Bond committee, citizens expressed confusion about the lack of clarity on this matter. If flooding occurs, should it be categorized under public safety and mobility? Public safety and mobility currently have a score of 12. The initial score for the Watershed and Stormwater Management (BRWM) will start at zero for hydraulic and hydrologic significance, while the public safety and mobility category will maintain its score of 12.
- Complaints, as a measure of concern, are not always reliable. Residents in affected areas often do not voice their issues, and it was suggested that the term "complaint" be removed from discussions. A balanced approach is necessary in resource allocation. Presently, funds are being allocated to infrastructure that may not align with community needs, and designs are being created that do not meet the desires of residents. The accessibility of the complaint matrix is also under scrutiny, especially for individuals unaware of how to reach out through channels like 311. It is important to remember that not all projects stem from complaints; hence, a balanced approach is crucial. If a project benefits only a few people, its feasibility must be carefully evaluated. It may even be better to acquire the property and dedicate it to the City to prevent further impacts on residents.
- The significance of community support in project decisions was also emphasized. Although a project may appear beneficial on paper, its success relies heavily on community backing. Nevertheless, the City must balance this with the need to ensure public safety.
- Regarding street flooding criteria, participants in the discussion raised a question about expectations if the elevation surpasses a 100-year flood. The City adheres to the Unified Development Code (UDC). The expectations are as follows: during a 5-year storm, water should remain within the curb from curb to curb; during a 25-year storm, water should stay within the right-of-way; and during a 50-year storm, water may overtop the curb. The anticipated depth of the

street should be 7 inches from curb to curb, and water velocities are also considered, which may influence project design.

- Additionally, the description of the Travel Lane Availability criteria needs to be revised to improve clarity and understanding. This criteria, which assesses the number of open lanes, would receive a score if it aligns with the requirements for a 25-year storm. Clear communication is vital for ensuring the audience feels informed and engaged in the decision-making process.
- Consideration should be given to the maximum score within each category. For instance, the maximum score for a Low Water Crossing is 35 points, categorized under Project Dependency and Adverse Impacts, which represents more than half the total points available.
- It was stressed that assessing a project's feasibility must involve input from stormwater maintenance staff. Their expertise is essential to determine if a project can be effectively maintained after its completion.

#### **Sumner Area Drainage Improvements – Score: 74**

- This is a drainage improvement project, which is typical for a bond project.
- As it relates to the project its conditions include standing water in the roadway, flooding from alleys, and some properties experiencing erosion and washout.
- While there is no significant focus on addressing complaints, improving existing structures, or relocating structures at risk of flooding, there has been some progress in reducing flooding on a few properties.
- It is important to note that this is not a regional project, as it is not located within a floodplain.

#### **Committee Discussion:**

*Summarized below are the comments and questions exchanged among the committee and staff regarding the scoring of the Sumner Area Drainage Improvements project.*

- There were questions raised about why this project received a high score despite not removing properties from the floodplain.
- The project earned 35 points from the Dependency and Adverse Impact category, which contributed to its overall high score. Members recommended separating these points for further review. This category will be discussed and modified.
- It is essential that bond projects, especially those focused on drainage improvements, prioritize the removal of properties from the floodplain. This should be a key focus area for such projects.
- During the meeting, the members explored the potential of nature-based solutions as alternatives to large construction projects. Solutions like incorporating a bioswale or other potential green infrastructure provide unique opportunities to address drainage issues and should be considered in future project planning.

#### **Concepcion Creek Drainage Improvements – Score: 92**

- The original scope of the project included a large detention pond in Phase 1, channel improvements in Phase 2, and the upsizing of underground infrastructure between Nogalitos and General Hudnell in Phase 3.
- This project aims to remove many homes and parcels from the floodplain.

**Committee Discussion:**

*Summarized below are the comments and questions exchanged among the committee and staff regarding the scoring of the Concepcion Creek Drainage Improvements project.*

- The City has committed to no mandatory displacement, meaning that no non-voluntary buyouts will occur.
- The original scope of the project was reviewed to assess its scoring. The different phases of the project are not considered interdependent; however, when targeting a grant, all phases should be included to increase the likelihood of securing funding.
- When assessing the potential adverse impact, the risk of improvements causing flooding to other properties is considered, which may warrant further review for modifications. It is recommended to assess property acquisitions even before hiring a consultant. This approach would help ensure community openness to the project and build trust within the community.
- Additionally, there is a recommendation to add a category similar to the BRWM, which includes funding sources and indicates whether funds are being leveraged. The funding for the Concepcion Creek Drainage Improvements project, scheduled to come before the city council in June 2025, is a grant from Congressman Castro. Funds are also being leveraged to match previously appropriated amounts for the project using Storm Water Regional Funds.
- A consultant will be hired to review previous preliminary engineering reports and develop a new approach. It has been suggested to ensure consistency in the project, factors to take into consideration such as changing of elected officials and incorporating community input should be a fundamental aspect of every project. The San Antonio River Authority effectively involves public stakeholders in community discussions.
- It was noted that the original Concepcion Creek project faced communication challenges. Creative solutions should be considered, such as including affordable housing options. Although residents were not currently experiencing flooding, the City aimed to be proactive due to data indicating potential future flooding risks. Instead of focusing on hiring for a preliminary engineering report, it would be more beneficial to hire a consultant for a community outreach strategy, as education needs to occur first to build awareness.
- The data played a crucial role in driving the Concepcion Creek Drainage Improvements project. In such cases, what actions should the City take? A Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) was utilized for this project. If property acquisitions are planned, scoring criteria should be established to confirm whether community outreach has been conducted. A percentage of impacted individuals should also be included as a requirement. If community outreach has not occurred, the recommendation should be that the project does not proceed.

**Round Table – End of Meeting Comments:**

*Summarized below are the final comments exchanged among the committee and staff regarding the scoring criteria of drainage projects.*

- The 35 points allocated for Dependency and Adverse Impact are excessively high. One possible solution is to separate Dependency from Adverse Impact, as they appear to be two distinct factors.
- The BRWM scoring system provides a more comprehensive approach. While some factors may not be directly applicable, they can be adapted to fit the City's unique scoring matrix. This adaptability allows for a more engaging and participatory process.
- It's important to incorporate a score for social impact or community support.
- More emphasis should be placed on green stormwater infrastructure or nature-based solutions.

- It is crucial to reevaluate the scoring ranges, as a binary yes or no answer should not solely determine the total number of points. A more balanced scoring system will ensure a fair evaluation of projects and their impact on the community.
- Committee members suggested staff to also consider best practices from other agencies, as this will provide a broader perspective and potentially improve the current scoring criteria.
- Dependency should not be based solely on 311 calls; critical projects should be mapped, and community outreach to those affected should be included.
- The criteria categories should be revised to reflect a more thoughtful approach to the benefits of the projects.
- The current threshold for removing homes from the floodplain is too low; the number of impacted homes should at least triple.
- It was commented on that property owners wait until they find themselves in the floodplain to understand the severity of the situation.
- The Benefit-Cost Analysis is a vital factor.
- More points should be awarded for properties that are removed from flooding, for projects that significantly benefit the community, and for those with flooding complaints. Conversely, negative points should be assigned to property acquisitions, while additional points should be granted for projects that include a mitigation plan.
- A maintenance category should be added, as maintenance is crucial; if you cannot maintain a project, it becomes problematic.
- If property acquisitions are to be considered, it is essential to seek community input before allocating any funds. This approach ensures that the community feels valued and integral to the decision-making process.
- It is important to include a funding category in the scoring criteria. This will provide a sense of security and confidence regarding the financial aspects of the project.
- Community education is necessary, and efforts should be made to secure elevation certificates for those in the floodplain, particularly for those who cannot afford them.

## **Board Discussion**

### 4. Future Agenda Items

## **ADJOURNMENT**

- Motion to Adjourn: Nefi Garza
- Seconded: Deborah Reid
- Meeting was adjourned at 7:35 P.M.

At any time during the meeting, the Storm Water Management Advisory Board may meet in executive session for consultation with the City Attorney's Office concerning attorney client matters under Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.

## **ACCESS STATEMENT**

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