



**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Councilwoman Adriana Rocha Garcia, District 4
COPIES TO: Erik Walsh, City Manager; Tina Flores, City Clerk; Andy Segovia, City Attorney; John Peterek, Assistant to the City Manager; Ana Bradshaw, Assistant to City Council
SUBJECT: COSA Emergency Preparedness Implementation Plan
DATE: June 24, 2021

Issue Proposed for Consideration

COSA - CITY CLERK
2021 JUN 24 AM 11:30:07

I ask for your support for the inclusion of the following item on the agenda of the earliest available meeting of the Governance Committee:

Discussion and review of a request directing City staff to develop an Emergency Preparedness Implementation Plan that will be reviewed at an assigned City Council Subcommittee.

Brief Background

For more than 300 years, San Antonio has seen its share of tragic events including wars, natural disasters, mass casualty events, health crises, and other incidents requiring immediate response. As some of these occurrences become more common and other types of emergencies emerge, the City's Office of Emergency Management along with the Bexar County Emergency Management have led the coordination and response plan for our region with support from other partner organizations including the Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council.

Historic floods and other inclement weather events have informed the vast majority of our preparedness strategy over the years. Many of our regional partners including our municipally-owned utilities, San Antonio Water System and CPS Energy have contingency plans in place much like the City of San Antonio and other major organizations to address a multitude of situations and events. To be best equipped to respond all three entities should have a coordinated response to potential risks and emergencies.

The 2021 February winter storm and the subsequent response from multiple governmental agencies demonstrated the need for heightened scrutiny and collaboration not just during and immediately after a catastrophic event, but year-round. On February 22, 2021, Mayor Ron Nirenberg announced the creation of the Committee on Emergency Preparedness (CEP). It was comprised of three community stakeholders and four Councilmembers. This committee worked with the City of San Antonio, CPS Energy and SAWS to gather information and study the



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actions before, during and after the winter storm. The CEP presented their final report to the full City Council on June 24, 2021, after four months of meetings.

The recommendations presented included work for SAWS, CPS Energy, and the City of San Antonio. The City Council must take the lead in beginning to implement these recommendations and create policy to support them, which includes revisiting the relationship between the City and the utilities, not just during an emergency.

The winter storms in February are prime examples of why we need to ensure contingency plans are in place and followed by after-action reports so that community trust and confidence can be restored. Timely communication and public discussion are fundamental components of our response. More importantly, these contingency plans, especially those involving critical infrastructure, need to be periodically reviewed and updated.

Much like other governmental entities and organizations, our City already has a set of guidelines in place that are ready to be implemented or altered to meet specific needs when a crisis occurs, but these should be reviewed with a critical lens to serving vulnerable populations. When developed in coordination with regional partners like STRAC, JBSA-San Antonio, and nonprofits, the contingency protocols should include responses to a variety of security hazards and threats like cyberattacks, domestic terrorism, and environmental disasters. These emergency-related plans, as well as other city-wide plans, should be the responsibility of a singular executive or department head.

Our proactive efforts as a city should include the formation of a City Council subcommittee specifically charged to annually review, audit, and assess our municipally-owned utilities. To thoroughly brief the City Council, there needs to be more than one forum where policymakers can engage with the leadership at CPS Energy and SAWS to assist and review their policies, programs, resources, and contingency plans. Relying solely on the Board of Trustees at each respective utility company is insufficient and the creation of a Council subcommittee allows City Council to engage in a dialogue with our utility services providers to address matters as they relate to provide essential services to our residents.

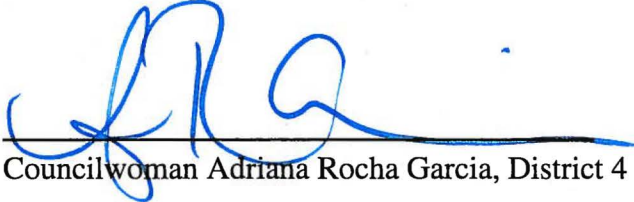
Preparedness is important in city government, and as such, City Council as policy makers should also be involved with the preparations before potentially catastrophic events occur. With the advances in weather forecasts and technology, we have the ability to plan ahead and as such we should have a plan for the possibility of special Council sessions to be added to our planning calendars as placeholders, within a week of the upcoming event, so that Council can act, at least a few days prior to an expected emergency event or soon after if it is unforeseen. Time is of the






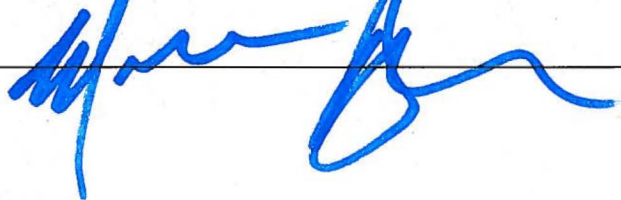
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essence when responding to a crisis and every minute we spend planning ahead by developing and refining our response efforts allows us the opportunity to better mitigate the consequences.

Submitted for Council consideration by:


Councilwoman Adriana Rocha Garcia, District 4

Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures (only 4)

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