

AGENDA



Wednesday, June 18, 2008

Item(s) to Set Public Hearing(s)
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Item No. 65

Subject: Set a public hearing to consider the use of approximately 128,384 square feet (2.95 acres) for Drainage use, approximately 43,416 square feet (1.00 acre) for Storm Water Subterranean Tunnel use, approximately 7,567 square feet (0.17 acre) for Access use, approximately 48,170 square feet (1.11 acres) for Temporary Working Space use and approximately 74,078 square feet (1.70 acres) for Temporary Staging Area and Material Storage Site use for the construction of the Waller Creek Tunnel Project through dedicated parkland known as Waterloo Park, Waller Creek Greenbelt, Palm Park and Waller Beach Park near Lady Bird Lake in accordance with Sec. 26.001 et seq. of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code. (Suggested date and time: July 24, 2008, 6:00 p.m. at Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second Street, Austin, TX).

Amount and Source of Funding: All costs associated with construction, as well as any parkland restoration will be paid by requester.

Fiscal Note: There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

For More Information: Junie Plummer 974-7085, Gary Jackson 974-7115, Stan Evans 974-3378, Robin Field 974-7064

Boards and Commission Action: To be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Board June 24, 2008.

Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code provides that the use of parkland for non-park purposes may be approved upon a finding that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of this land.

The Public Works Department, on behalf of the Watershed Protection and Development Review Department, is proposing to construct a storm water bypass tunnel beginning with an Inlet structure in Waterloo Park and ending at an Outlet structure at Waller Beach Park near Lady Bird Lake. The tunnel will be approximately 22 feet in diameter and will be approximately one mile long. The portion of the bypass tunnel located within Palm Park and Waller Creek Greenbelt will not have any surface disturbance.

This project is expected to reduce the size of the 100-year floodplain of the lower Waller Creek watershed by an estimated 28 acres and will allow denser development in a very desirable area of downtown. The tunnel system will have the capability to divert flood events (up to the 100-year flood) into the Inlet at Waterloo Park and convey the floodwaters through the tunnel to the Outlet shaft at Lady Bird Lake. In addition, the two Inlets along the creek will increase the ability to maintain safe water levels in the creek below Waterloo Park during storm events and will enhance water quality by adding stilling ponds and riffles in the creek. By controlling the water levels in the creek below Waterloo Park, no further deterioration of the creek banks will occur as a result of erosion, and future redevelopment of the creek banks will be made possible. The Waller Creek Tunnel Project is the first phase of a long term plan to address development, public use, hike/bike access, and aesthetics for the Waller Creek District.

In addition to the Chapter 26 process, the use of the park is also subject to additional approval by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the National Park Service due to a previous Federal Grant.

Approval of the use of parkland is made on the condition that all restoration is completed in accordance with the Standard Specifications and Construction Standards of the City of Austin and the Parks and Recreation Department's "Construction in Parks Specifications". Watershed Protection and Development Review Department is required to pay all costs associated with the restoration and tree mitigation.

There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the dedicated parkland which includes all reasonable planning to minimize harm to such lands. The dates of public notification in the Austin American-Statesman are June 29, July 6 and July 13, 2008.