

## AGENDA



Thursday, January 14, 2010

**Parks and Recreation  
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION****Item No. 21**

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**Subject:** Authorize the negotiation and execution of an Interlocal Agreement between the City of Austin and Texas State University - San Marcos to conduct a comprehensive business analysis of the City of Austin owned cemeteries in an amount paid to Texas State University not to exceed \$24,000.

**Amount and Source of Funding:** Funding is available in the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Operating Budget of the Parks and Recreation Department.

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

**For More Information:** Cora Wright, 974-6743, Nancy McAleer 974-6719

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The purpose of this Interlocal Agreement between Texas State University - San Marcos and the City of Austin's Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) is to conduct a comprehensive business analysis of the City's practices for managing cemeteries. The project scope will include stakeholder input process and a review and analysis of current industry practices and standards for municipally -owned cemeteries across the country. The findings will be compared and contrasted with the practices used by the City of Austin (COA). The review of the COA managed cemeteries will include an assessment of current cemetery assets, service capacity and funding, management and operations, and an overview of input from stakeholders.

The expected outcome will be the recommendation of strategic business solutions and specific service-level options for future Council consideration. The scope will also include a commentary on the role and responsibility of municipalities in managing cemeteries. Dr. Thomas Longoria, Associate Professor of Political Science, will serve as the principal researcher. His areas of specialization include urban and ethnic politics, urban administration and non-profit administration.

The project will begin in February 2010 and conclude with a comprehensive final report to be submitted in August 2010. The term of the agreement may be extended subject to mutual approval. PARD will be the administrators of the agreement and project funding will not exceed \$24,000.

The City, through the Public Works Department, began operating cemeteries in 1856 with the acquisition of Oakwood Cemetery located in Central East Austin. The city owns five cemetery properties (Oakwood, Oakwood Annex, Evergreen, Plummers and Austin Memorial Park). Cemetery operations were assigned to PARD in 1987. In 1990, following three consecutive years of revenue shortfall, the department outsourced the day to day funeral services and related operations to InterCare Corporation. InterCare continues to serve as the City's cemetery management contractor.