

A G E N D A



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council

Item ID

15210

Agenda Number

24.

Meeting Date:

4/26/2012

Department:

Parks and Recreation

Subject

Approve an ordinance amending the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Parks and Recreation Department Capital Budget (Ordinance No. 20110912-006) to appropriate \$306,800 in Parkland Dedication Fees for the renovation of Wooldridge Square.

Amount and Source of Funding

\$306,800 in Parkland Dedication in FY 2011-2012.

Fiscal Note

A fiscal note is attached.

Purchasing Language:

Prior Council Action:

For More Information: Marty Stump, 974-9460; April Thedford, 974-6716; Tina Van Wie 974-7921

Boards and
Commission Action:

MBE / WBE:

Related Items:

Additional Backup Information

Approval of this budget amendment will allow the Department to proceed with Phase 1 renovations to Wooldridge Square.

The total amount of \$306,800 is calculated based on two Parkland Dedication (PLD) cases which were filed and approved during FY 2011-2012. Below is the detail of these cases:

Subdivision Name	PLD Zone	Amount
3rd & Brazos	5	\$ 178,100
ACC OP (West Campus)	5	\$ 128,700

TOTAL

\$

According to Ordinance No. 20070621-027 25-1-605 E, "The deposit must be used for the acquisition or improvement of neighborhood parks that will benefit the residents of the subdivision or site plan and that are located in the service area defined by the Parks and Recreation Department." PARD determined the service area to be a 1-mile buffer from the site plan or subdivision which generated the PLD funding.

When the concept for improvements to Wooldridge Square was proposed earlier this year, PARD staff researched the availability of PLD funds and identified the two aforementioned cases to be scheduled for appropriation in FY 2012-2013. At that time, these two cases were assigned to Wooldridge Square in the PLD tracking system for future reference. Due to recent discussions regarding the renovation of Wooldridge Square, PARD is requesting a mid-year appropriation for FY 2011-2012 in the amount of \$306,800 to meet a tight project schedule. See more detailed information below on project history and scope.

Park History

From the Downtown Parks and Open Space Master Plan

Wooldridge Square is located in the northwest quadrant of the original city plan, southwest of the Capital Square site. It is bounded by Tenth Street on the north, Guadalupe Street on the east, Ninth Street on the south and San Antonio Street on the west. In the Waller Plan, the Square was planned to be flanked with "churches" on its south and was destined to serve as the focal point of Austin's first residential neighborhood. However, for 70 years, the dedicated public square did not become a park, and in the early 20th century, it was used as a dump, perhaps because its depressed physical form lent itself to this purpose.

In 1909, Austin's Mayor Wooldridge initiated and completed the effort to transform the space into a true park and civic space, including a series of ponds created by damming the existing brook running through the park. In the following year, a pergola-covered bandstand was dedicated, and the *Statesman* newspaper remarked on the park's "suitability for public speaking" as well its capacity to "comfortably seat between 2,000 and 3,000 people", noting that "in all parts of the park the slightest word or faintest note of music could be heard". Upon its completion, Friday evening concerts were held at the bandstand for over 20 years, and the park became the preferred forum for political speeches and rallies. In the 1928 City Plan, Wooldridge Park was described as a "neighborhood park" and was considered attractive and well-kept, a beauty spot and breathing place". In 1971, a Texas Historical Marker was dedicated to the park.

The most remarkable physical characteristic of Wooldridge Square is its depressed topography, forming a steep bowl and an amphitheater-like shape. Mature trees in clusters throughout most of the park create a pleasant environment, although the southwest quadrant, which is the deepest part of the bowl, is fairly barren with eroded slopes where runoff is funneled to a large area drain. Today, the historic wooden bandstand/pavilion still stands near the center of the depressed area of the park. It has been repaired and somewhat altered through the years, but still maintains its architectural integrity. A lockable storage area has been built underneath the bandstand. A random mix of furnishings are scattered throughout the park: picnic tables, benches, a few trash bins. The park's main users are homeless, who congregate to meet the Mobile Loaves and Fishes van, which serves lunch and dinner from San Antonio Street every day.

Project Scope

Phase 1 scope of work for this park project is intended to provide a basic renovation of turf areas without significantly altering existing site topography, paving or structures. Work may include design and construction of temporary fencing, tree protection and erosion controls, landscaping (soil amendment, fine-grading, sod, hydromulch), undergrounding of existing electric service, automated irrigation system for turf and trees, drinking fountain replacement, planting trees, and related efforts.