

# **City of Austin Policy Workshop Parks and Open Space**



## **Partnerships and Conservancies**

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## **Key Policy Issue:**

***What are the benefits and challenges of partnerships and conservancies?***

# Public-Private Partnerships (P3)

- ◆ **Definition: Private partner shares significant risks, resources and responsibilities with PARD.**
- ◆ **PARD invites individuals, for-profit and non-profit organizations to form P3 agreements to carry out revenue-generating or capital-related programs in alignment with PARD strategic priorities.**
- ◆ **Partnerships include:**
  - Building and donating a PARD park or facility;
  - Building and operating a park or facility that has a complete or partial PARD purpose; and,
  - Operating and maintaining an existing PARD park or facility.

# Onion Creek Metro Park District

- ◆ **Creation: 2013 Legislature and obtained official city consent for operation in Spring 2014; District has the power to tax, but no eminent domain authority.**
  - First district in Texas created as 'Parks District'; model for future parks.
  - Classified as a municipal management district and organized pursuant to Local Govt. Code (Ch. 375).
  - Operates under City Consent Agreement and has 7 Board of Directors.
- ◆ **Purpose: fund cost of administration/operation inside the District's boundaries and the adjacent Onion Creek Metro Park & reimbursement of Austin Goodnight Ranch (developer) for pre-financing the District.**
  - Developer is pre-financing all costs for APF to create a Master Plan by Early Summer 2015 & providing up to \$160,000/year for O&M of Base Parkland Improvements installed by the City until District Tax Collection is sufficient to cover those costs.



# Onion Creek Metro Park District



- ◆ Consists of 700 acres, located within city limits of Austin, 7-miles from downtown and in desired development zone.
- ◆ Located adjacent to the City's Onion Creek Metro Park (555 acres).

# Onion Creek Metro Park District

## ◆ Benefits of P3 Example

- 1) District will have approx. 120 acres of park improvements within its boundaries, including hike/bike trail & open fields.
- 2) City originally purchased Onion Creek Metropolitan Park in the late 1990s and will now be able to develop it due to P3 funding; City lacks enough funding to maintain existing park system, much less improve/maintain new park.
- 3) Developer covering O&M costs of Base Park Improvements installed by the City until District Tax Collection is sufficient to cover those costs.
- 4) Developer does not have specific entitlement to the park; responsible for handling the daily operations/management.
- 5) Developer working with neighborhood housing for attractive financing for affordability.

## ◆ Challenges of P3 Example

- 1) Identifying collaborative opportunities to implement P3 model
- 2) Although this is a Smart Housing Project, City plan review process extremely long, which adds cost to overall project/housing prices.

# Foundations & Conservancies

- ◆ **Foundations and conservancies collect private funds and organize volunteer workdays for parks, as well as join forces with PARD and hundreds of volunteers and local businesses.**
- ◆ **Example park foundations and conservancies in Austin:**
  - Austin Parks Foundation
  - The Trail Foundation
  - Austin Community Foundation – Umlauf Sculpture Garden Endowment Fund
  - Barton Springs Conservancy
  - Pease Park Conservancy
  - Shoal Creek Conservancy
  - Waller Creek Conservancy
  - Zilker Botanical Gardens Conservancy



# Foundations & Conservancies

## ◆ Benefits

- 1) Provide flexible giving options for philanthropists;
- 2) Mobilize valuable skill set of volunteers;
- 3) Assist PARD in an efficient and effective partnership (i.e. hiring professional fundraiser, charging facility rental fees, etc.);
- 4) Provide flexible procurement options for securing professional service contracts;
- 5) Team with PARD and match financial contributions; and,
- 6) Raise funds (money goes directly to PARD vs. General Fund) and host events.

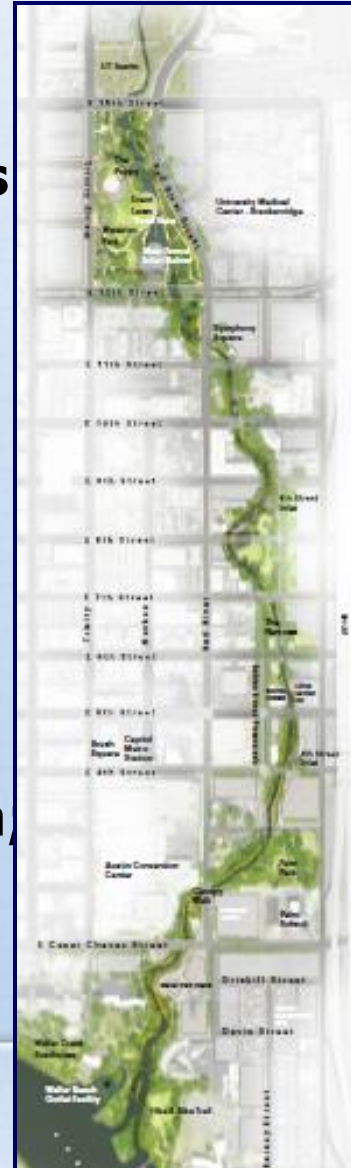
## ◆ Challenges

- 1) Making timely decisions as a group;
- 2) Maintaining transparency throughout process; and,
- 3) Compromising on leadership/management roles.



# Waller Creek Conservancy

- ◆ Conservancy working to implement a chain of connected green spaces, including world-class outdoor event space; bike/pedestrian trails integrated with the trail network; interactive play spaces; and restored creek ecology;
- ◆ Conservancy conducted nationwide search for a new CEO and hired former Exec. V.P. of NYC Friends of the High Line;
- ◆ Conservancy formed a historic partnership with City in 2011, both committing \$400,000 to fund new master plan for Waller Creek area;
- ◆ Conservancy raised over \$1 million from private philanthropy for the design competition and operations; and,
- ◆ The City and the Conservancy signed a Joint Development Agreement in 2014.



# **COA-YMCA North Austin Community Recreation Center**

- ◆ **Model partnership between the YMCA and PARD;**
- ◆ **North Austin Community Recreation Center was constructed in 2012 with joint financial contributions from YMCA and PARD;**
- ◆ **Partnership allowed facility to be constructed approx. twice the size as originally budgeted by PARD;**
- ◆ **YMCA manages, operates and maintains facility;**
- ◆ **YMCA constructed project efficiently and effectively within budget constraints while still addressing the community's request for an indoor pool, exercise room and meeting rooms;**
- ◆ **North Austin Community Recreation Center is the most heavily used facility and provides an expansive Community Garden, in collaboration with Art in Public Places.**