



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Council

From: Greg Meszaros, Director, Austin Water

Date: March 28, 2015

Subject: BCCP Coordinating Committee Secretary item on March 31 Agenda (Item # 2)

Action Requested

As part of the March 31 Council agenda, Council will be asked to authorize the negotiation and execution of an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement (Interlocal) between the City and Travis County regarding the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP) Coordinating Committee Secretary position.

The BCCP is the basis for the City's and County's shared federal permit for protection of multiple endangered species in the region. That permit, nearing its 20th anniversary, has been pivotal in meeting requirements of the federal Endangered Species Act while allowing growth to continue in areas with endangered species habitat. The permit established the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP), a 31,000 acre preserve system that provides mitigation for the loss of endangered species habitat in the remainder of Western Travis County. The City owns 13,610 acres of the preserve system and manages those lands to enhance habitat for the species covered by the permit. Purchasing and then preserving this land enables private development to occur in endangered species habitat, and also provides mitigation for the City's public infrastructure projects.

The BCCP Coordinating Committee Secretary position serves as the chief administrator of the BCCP and deals with a wide range of matters including working with both public and private entities to permit private construction and public infrastructure projects within the BCCP permit area. Another key responsibility of the Secretary is to sit as the chief administrative officer to the BCCP Coordinating Committee, the governing body of the BCCP, as established in a 1995 Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the City and County. The BCCP implementation Interlocal Agreement has served as the basis of BCCP governance since that time. Under the 1995 agreement the members of the Coordinating Committee were established as one voting member from the Austin City Council, one voting member from the Travis County Commissioners Court, and one non-voting ex-officio member from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Currently serving are Council Member Leslie Pool, County Commissioner Gerald Daugherty, and USFWS Field Office Supervisor, Adam Zerrenner.

The duties of the BCCP Secretary are described in more detail in the Council Request for Action (RCA) and in the proposed Interlocal with Travis County.

The Secretary position was previously combined with the duties of the Division Manager of Austin Water's Wildlands Conservation Division. That division is responsible for managing more than 40,000 acres of City lands for endangered species and water quality protection, including the City's portion of the BCP and the City's Water Quality Protection Lands, primarily in the Barton Springs Zone. Years of experience have shown that assigning the Secretary and Division Manager duties to one employee results in an extremely heavy workload. Consequently, when the long-time Wildlands Division Manager retired last year, Austin Water and Travis County staff agreed that it would be in the best interest of the partnership to break the responsibilities into two positions. Travis County agreed to fund half of the BCCP Secretary position, and both Travis County and Austin Water staff agreed that the position should remain a City position/employee. This position and its associated funding were included and approved as part of Austin Water's FY 2016 budget, as well as in Travis County's FY 2016 budget.

The Wildlands Division Manager position will continue to oversee land management of the 40,000 acres of both water quality protection lands and endangered species preserves, and will continue to be a City employee.

The Travis County Commissioners Court unanimously approved the Interlocal on March 1, 2016; the item was approved on consent with the caveat that the former Secretary be involved in the hiring process. The Austin Water Wastewater Commission unanimously recommended approval of the Interlocal on March 9, 2016.

Please contact me if you require further details, and I am happy to provide any additional information.

cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Robert Goode P.E., Assistant City Manager