

AGENDA



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	Item ID	66676	Agenda Number	23.
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Meeting Date:	1/26/2017	Department:	Parks and Recreation
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Subject

Approve an ordinance amending the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Parks and Recreation Department Operating Budget Special Revenue Fund (Ordinance No. 20160914-001) to accept \$50,000 in grant funds from the National League of Cities and amending the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Parks and Recreation Department Capital Budget (Ordinance No. 20160914-002) to transfer in and appropriate \$50,000 from the Parks and Recreation Department Operating Budget Special Revenue Fund for the Connecting Children to Nature Implementation Grant. (Related to Item # 22)

Amount and Source of Funding

Funding is available from the National League of Cities in the amount of \$50,000. A City funding match is not required.

Fiscal Note

Fiscal notes are attached detailing the acceptance of grant funds and the transfer of those funds to the Capital Budget.

Purchasing Language:	
Prior Council Action:	February 25, 2016 - City Council approved the budget amendment to accept the \$25,000 for the Cities Connecting Children to Nature planning grant.
For More Information:	Liana Kallivoka, Acting Assistant Director; 512-974-9455, Angela Means, Acting Assistant Director, 512-974-6712; Vera Labriola, Business Process Specialist 512-974-6716
Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:	
MBE / WBE:	
Related Items:	

Additional Backup Information

Connecting children to nature has long been a core principle for the Parks and Recreation Department's (PARD) youth programming. With the recent publication of Richard Louv's "Last Child in the Woods", Austin has joined the national movement of Children in Nature through building collaborative projects, setting goals for nature programming across areas, and increasing access to nature.

The work done by Austin was summarized in a survey for the National League of City's (NLC) Connecting Children to Nature Leadership Academy and resulted in Austin being chosen as one of a select number of cities invited to participate in the conference. In a follow-up to the conference, a request for proposal for a planning grant for work related to connecting children with nature, with an emphasis on underserved populations, has been directed to the 16 cities that attended the academy.

PARD received the \$25,000 planning grant on March 14, 2016, and conducted an extensive strategic planning process over six months in partnership with other city departments, AISD, non-profit organizations, and healthcare leaders to create a comprehensive plan for connecting children from underserved populations to nature. The work performed

under this grant has generated positive momentum for the Children in Nature initiative and continues to be emphasized in park planning and programming.

One of the final deliverables for this planning grant was to develop an implementation plan that could result in additional funding from the NLC Cities Connecting Children to Nature program. PARD was recently awarded a \$50,000 implementation grant which will support the execution of key strategies outlined in Austin's Cities Connecting Children to Nature Implementation Plan.

These strategies include:

- A Green School Park pilot project to provide nature access on school campuses;
- A citywide public awareness campaign to inform residents on the importance of regular nature access for overall healthy development;
- Program and park activation activities to create a comprehensive nature-based program directory and align programs with available park space in neighborhoods of need; and
- Policy tracking methods to develop nature access policy initiatives for inclusion in the Development Code and department master plans.

This funding will also be used to pay for a temporary Program Coordinator position that will oversee the activities outlined above, organize and communicate with the implementation leadership team, track project progress, and report on milestones. The results of the implementation grant will include basic capital improvement projects at select, jointly-owned AISD campuses, cross department collaboration on policy related to nature access, a public awareness campaign and marketing materials, multiple community engagement opportunities, and renewed cross-sector relationships.

The General Fund will not be required to contribute additional funds beyond those currently budgeted to this grant. When the grant funds expire, the Parks and Recreation Department's need for continuing funding will be evaluated and may be denied.