

Urban Trails Proposed Code Change

AUGUST 18 2021



PUBLIC WORKS

*Well-Built
Well-Maintained
Well-Being For All*





Agenda 8.18.2021

- I. Background
- II. Proposed Code Changes
 - I. LDC 25-8-341/342
 - II. LDC 25-1-261(B)(3)(c)
- III. Q&A

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Council directs the City Manager to create an urban trails stakeholder group to examine the administrative processes and requirements associated with the design and permitting of urban trails on public land, public easements, or rights-of-way.

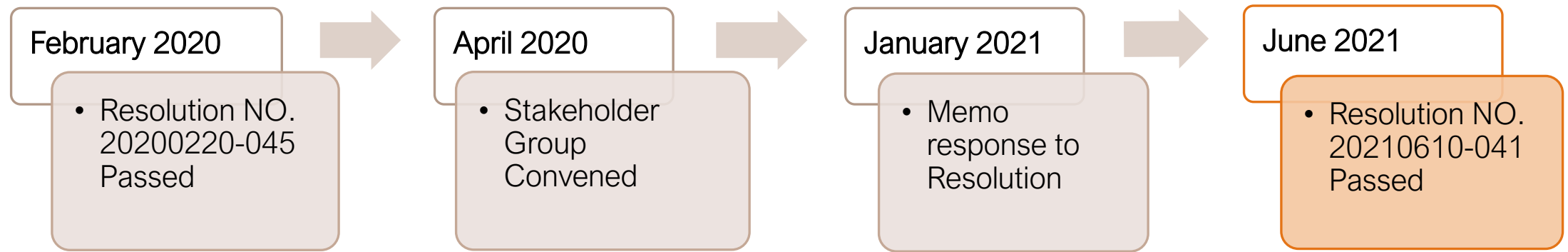
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Council directs the City Manager to include in the urban trails stakeholder group the relevant city departmental staff, representatives from relevant boards and commissions, and leaders of community organizations that are directly involved in building urban trails. The City Council encourages the City Manager to include representatives from Austin Energy, Austin Water, Austin Transportation Department, Development Services Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works Department, Watershed Protection Department, Shoal Creek Conservancy, Hill Country Conservancy, The Trail Foundation, Waterloo Greenway Conservancy, Environmental Commission, Parks and Recreation Board, and Urban Transportation Commission in the stakeholder group.

Background

Resolution
NO. 20200220-045.]

Background



Resolution NO. 20210610-041

“(2) Council initiates the following amendments to the Land Development Code, as recommended by PWD and WPD in Appendix B of the January 4, 2021 memo from PWD, and asks that they be brought back to Council by August 26, 2021:

(a) Amend Land Development Code 25-8-341 and 25-8-342 to grant urban trails projects greater cut and fill allowances under specific environmental circumstances.

(b) Amend Land Development Code 25-8-261(B)(3)(c) to reflect current policy that trails within the critical water quality zone be limited to 12 feet in surface width plus one-foot shoulders on each side.

PURPOSE

- Streamline review process
- Create transparency
- Formalize internal policy



LDC 25-8-341 & 25-8-342: Cut and Fill

Current Status:

- Cut and/or fill in a suburban watershed is limited to 4 ft in depth
- Administrative variance typically granted to allow up to 8 ft, with certain conditions
- Construction of roadways in public right-of-way has no cut or fill limit

Proposed Improvement

- Allow cut and/or fill of up to 8 ft for a public trail if:
 - The cut or fill is not located on a slope of more than 15%
 - The cut or fill is not located within 100 ft of a classified waterway; and
 - The trail is constructed in accordance with the Environmental Criteria Manual.



NORTHERN WALNUT CREEK TRAIL

Northern Walnut Creek Trail Phase 2A

- Construction beginning November 2021
- Granted admin variance from cut and fill requirements



LDC 25-8-261: Critical Water Quality Zone Development

Current Status:

- A hard surface trail within the critical water quality zone is limited to 12 feet in width, unless a wider trail is designated in a Council adopted plan.
- Current language does not make clear if the 12 ft refers to the surface width or if it includes the sub-grade shoulders that extend beyond the usable width of the trail.

Proposed Improvement

- Clarify the language to formalize the current interpretation to make clear that a trail within the critical water quality zone is limited to 12 ft plus one ft compacted sub grade shoulders on each side



CURRENT EXAMPLE

- Lower Boggy Creek Trail

UPCOMING PROJECTS:

- Country Club Creek Trail
- Northern Walnut Creek Trail



Questions?

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LDC 25-8-341 – Cut Requirements

(A) Cuts on a tract of land may not exceed four feet of depth, except:

- (1) in an urban watershed;
- (2) in a roadway right-of-way;
- (3) for construction of a building foundation or swimming pool;
- (4) for construction of a water quality control or detention facility and appurtenances for conveyance such as swales, drainage ditches, and diversion berms, if:
 - (a) the design and location of the facility within the site minimize the amount of cut over four feet;
 - (b) the cut is the minimum necessary for the appropriate functioning of the facility; and
 - (c) the cut is not located on a slope with a gradient of more than 15 percent or within 100 feet of a classified waterway;
- (5) for utility construction or a wastewater drain field, if the area is restored to natural grade;

(6) in a state-permitted sanitary landfill or a sand or gravel excavation located in the extraterritorial jurisdiction, if:

- (a) the cut is not in a critical water quality zone;
- (b) the cut does not alter a 100-year floodplain;
- (c) the landfill or excavation has an erosion and restoration plan approved by the City; and
- (d) all other applicable City Code provisions are met.

(7) for cut associated with construction of a multi-use trail, if:

- (a) the cut is not located on a slope with a gradient of more than 15 percent or within 100 feet of a classified waterway;
- (b) the cut is limited to no more than eight feet in depth;
- (c) the cut is located in a public right-of-way or public easement; and
- (d) the trail is constructed in accordance with the Environmental Criteria Manual.

LDC 25-8-341 – Fill Requirements

(A) Fill on a tract of land may not exceed four feet of depth, except:

- (1) in an urban watershed;
- (2) in a roadway right-of-way;
- (3) under a foundation with sides perpendicular to the ground, or with pier and beam construction;
- (4) for construction of a water quality control or detention facility and appurtenances for conveyance such as swales, drainage ditches, and diversion berms, if:
 - (a) the design and location of the facility within the site minimize the amount of fill over four feet;
 - (b) the fill is the minimum necessary for the appropriate functioning of the facility; and
 - (c) the fill is not located on a slope with a gradient of more than 15 percent or within 100 feet of a classified waterway;
- (5) for utility construction or a wastewater drain field; or

(6) in a state-permitted sanitary landfill located in the extraterritorial jurisdiction, if:

- (a) the fill is derived from the landfill operation;
- (b) the fill is not placed in a critical water quality zone or a 100-year floodplain;
- (c) the landfill operation has an erosion and restoration plan approved by the City; and
- (d) all other applicable City Code provisions are met.

(7) for fill associated with construction of a multi-use trail, if:

- (a) the fill is not located on a slope with a gradient of more than 15 percent or within 100 feet of a classified waterway;
- (b) the fill is limited to no more than eight feet in depth;
- (c) the fill is located in a public right-of-way or public easement; and
- (d) the trail is constructed in accordance with the Environmental Criteria Manual.

LDC 25-8-261: Critical Water Quality Zone Development

A hard surfaced trail may cross the critical water quality zone pursuant to Section 25-8-262 (*Critical Water Quality Zone Street Crossings*). A hard surfaced trail that does not cross the critical water quality zone may be located within the critical water quality zone only if:

- (a) designed in accordance with the Environmental Criteria Manual;
- (b) located outside the erosion hazard zone unless protective works are provided as prescribed in the Drainage Criteria Manual;
- (c) limited to 12 feet in **surface** width **plus one-foot compacted sub-grade shoulders**, unless a wider trail is designated in a Council-adopted plan;
- (d) located not less than 25 feet from the centerline of a waterway if within an urban watershed;
- (e) located not less than 50 feet from the centerline of a minor waterway, 100 feet from the centerline of an intermediate waterway, and 150 feet from the centerline of a major waterway if within a watershed other than an urban watershed;
- (f) located not less than 50 feet from the shoreline of Lake Travis, Lake Austin, Lady Bird Lake, and Lake Walter E. Long, as defined in Section 25-8-92; and
- (g) located not less than 100 feet from the ordinary high water mark of the Colorado River downstream from Longhorn Dam.