

# AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL

## AGENDA



Thursday, August 24, 2006

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### Austin Water Utility RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION

ITEM No. 3

**Subject:** Approve constructing Water Treatment 4 at its current and fully permitted site or at the alternative Cortaña site and approve a resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit a proposal to amend Federal Fish and Wildlife Permit PRT - 788841 through a minor amendment to the United States Fish and Wildlife Department (USFWS).

#### Additional Backup Material

(click to open)

[BCP Resolution](#)

**For More Information:** William Conrad, 263-6430

**Boards and Commission Action:** Recommended by the Water and Wastewater Commission; Reviewed by the Environmental Board; Reviewed and approved with conditions by both the Science Advisory Committee and the Citizens' Advisory Committee of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve; and, to be reviewed by the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve Coordinating Committee on August 21, 2006.

The Coordinating Committee of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve will meet on Monday, August 21, 2006 to consider approving the submittal of a Minor Amendment to Federal Fish and Wildlife Permit PRT-788841, which would provide for the construction of Water Treatment Plant 4 on the Cortana site, which is a part of the Balcones Canyonland Preserve. The Scientific Advisory Committee and the Citizens' Advisory Committee of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve have reviewed this proposal and have approved it with conditions. As part of this recommendation, we are committing to the conditions imposed by these two advisory bodies.

Travis County and City of Austin will consider the Balcones Canyonlands Coordinating Committee's recommendation on the Minor Amendment at meetings on August 22 and 24, respectively. If the Coordinating Committee supports the amendment and if both the City and the County also vote to adopt the amendment, the Secretary of the Balcones Canyonlands Coordinating Committee is authorized to submit the Minor Amendment to the United States Fish and Wildlife Services. The submittal will not occur until the investigations of karst features are completed.

In 1984 the City acquired approximately 240 acres in the Bull Creek Macrosite, of which 102 acres was intended for use as the WTP#4 plant site, with the remaining 138 acres being on-site mitigation that was dedicated to the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP). The 102 acre original site was not dedicated to BCP, but was established as a Utility infrastructure special use tract. Given concerns about the environmental setting of these 102 acres at the headwaters of Bull Creek by members of both the Environmental Board and the Water and Wastewater Commission, alternate sites were identified and evaluated. Staff presented Council with an alternate site that was deemed to be more appropriate environmentally than the original site.

This minor amendment will authorize the City to relocate Water Treatment Plant 4 from approximately 102 acres owned by the City located within the Bull Creek Macrosite (but not dedicated as Balcones Canyonlands Preserve land) to approximately 45 acres of the North Lake Austin Macrosite of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve area known as Cortana.

The 45 acre alternate site is located within a 1700 acre parcel known as the Cortana site in the North Lake Austin Macrosite. No additional mitigation is required under the permit. However, in order to further public support and to assure that BCP benefits from this action, the City is also offering an additional commitment of 1030 acres of land dedicated to BCP in two tracts. First is the original 102 acre plant site. The second is the 928 acres of Water Quality Protection Land known as the Little Barton Tract. It is currently dedicated for water quality purposes. The Little Barton Creek site is currently habitat for golden cheek warblers and provides potential habitat for black-capped vireos.

Black cap-vireo occupy habitat that includes young growth of trees and shrubs, which is entirely consistent in maintaining land for Water Quality purposes.

Moving WTP#4 from the Bull Creek Macrosite is a significant increase (102 acres) in the most important Macrosite with the highest land value. It is a more significant increase in the Barton Creek Macrosite and this is the first BCP acquisition of this size since 1997.

The addition of 102 acres to the Bull Creek Macrosite assures that there will be no construction in the vicinity of the main stem of the headwaters of Bull Creek and provides for the protection of the Jollyville Salamander habitat. It removes a significant infrastructure in-holding from this macrosite. Furthermore, it reduces the total infrastructure within BCP by 57 acres. The proposed land addition for taking 45 acres of the North Lake Austin Macrosite is a net increase of 985 acres to BCP.

The Balcones Canyonlands Coordinating Committee will recommend specific actions at its August 21, 2006 meeting, which recommendations will be delivered to Council as late back up.

**RESOLUTION NO. 20060---**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin, at the request of its citizens-including members of advisory boards and commissions, reviewed alternative sites for construction of Water Treatment Plant #4 (**WTP#4**); and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin determined that the approximately 102 acres purchased in 1984 at the headwaters of Bull Creek for WTP #4 (called “Headwaters Site”) was no longer an environmentally appropriate site for constructing WTP #4; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin owns approximately 1700 acres (known as “Cortaña”) of Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (**BCP**) property in the same general vicinity of northwest Austin, which contains less sensitive and more easily duplicated preserve habitat than the Headwaters Site; and

**WHEREAS**, in keeping with its commitment to the BCP, the City of Austin wanted to provide additional benefit for the taking of dedicated BCP preserve habitat for infrastructure improvements by dedicating additional City owned land to BCP and committing to sensitive construction methodologies and accelerated restoration of 400 acres of to replace habitat lost or damaged by WTP4 construction; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

1. Council adopts the recommendations of the BCCP Coordinating Committee to request a minor amendment to Federal Fish and Wildlife Permit PRT – 788841 transferring the Special Use Tract

designation in the permit from the original 102 acre site to the new 45 acre alternate site and authorizes the BCCP Secretary to forward the amendment request to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for review, along with all necessary and advisable information and documentation needed for the amendment to be processed.

2. The permit amendment will become effective upon certification of approval by USFWS.

**ADOPTED:** \_\_\_\_\_, 2006

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Shirley A. Gentry  
City Clerk