



SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICY BOARD RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS, the Land Water and Transportation Plan (LWTP) will provide a framework for formulating policies and developing capital improvement programs to guide growth and protect land and water resources in unincorporated Travis County (areas outside of city limits) as it faces a tremendous amount of population growth; and

WHEREAS, Travis County will be incorporating public input into the draft LWTP over the next two months for final approval by the Travis County Commissioner's court in late 2014, which will guide resource allocation and policy development that will impact land availability for food production; and

WHEREAS, the market value of Travis county's agricultural products was an approximate \$41.7 million in 2012; and

WHEREAS, Travis County voters in 2011 passed Bond Proposition 2, which earmarked \$8.3 million to preserve open space, and agricultural lands through the purchase of conservation easements; and

WHEREAS, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides millions of dollars in funding annually to assist with the purchase of conservation easements in Texas in order to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits, whereby Travis County could effectively leverage local funding; and

WHEREAS, the method and incentives to preserve farmland as contained in the Travis County Conservation Easement Program provides an example of how Central Texas can take immediate and effective action;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND ACCESS WORKING GROUP of the Sustainable Food Policy Board recommends that the Travis County Commissioners' Court ensure that the final Land, Water, and Transportation Plan includes strong support for conserving land for food production and that prime agricultural soils, wherever they occur, should be a priority in selecting land parcels while, when possible, also preserving other important conservation values such as water quality, wildlife habitat, scenic views and cultural resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funding adequate staff and resources to develop and implement related policies, programs, and collaborations also be a priority in the final version of the LWTP.

Date of Approval: October 13th, 2014

Record of the vote: (Unanimous on a 7-0 vote)

Attest: _____



Edwin Marty

Food Policy Manager

Office of Sustainability | City of Austin