# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Sara L. Hensley, CPRP, Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

**DATE:** December 22, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Council Resolution No. 20161103-050: Increase Connectivity to N. Lamar and Georgian Acres Planning Area

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a response to Council Resolution No. 20161103-050. The City Manager was directed to provide options for increasing connectivity and accessibility in the area surrounding the parkland located in the North Lamar and Georgian Acres Planning Area.

Through community engagement, the Parks and Recreation Department identified top priorities for connectivity to Georgian Acres Neighborhood Park:

1. Removal of subdivision plat restrictions on the Remington House property
2. Require Woodland Heights Apartments to provide access through existing fencing
3. Require multiple apartments to provide access through existing fencing
4. Provide a cut-through trail along undeveloped property to access the park
5. Build a hike and bike trail along Little Walnut Creek

The opportunities and constraints are explained below:

**1. Remington House Plat Restriction** (Label 1)
**Constraints:** A subdivision plat note states, "No access except for emergency access shall be permitted from Oak Plaza and Oertli Lane." In addition, the property owner has not been in favor of removing the deed restriction due to security concerns that may arise with a direct park connection.
**Opportunity:** The current walking distance for residents to the park, along the I-35 frontage road sidewalk and E. Powell Lane, is approximately ½ mile. If the deed restriction is removed, and the owner provides pedestrian access, gates could be installed for a more direct connection to the park.

**2. Woodland Heights, East Side Adjacent Property** (Label 2)
**Constraints:** The walking distance for Woodland Heights Apartments residents to the park is ¼ mile using the sidewalk along I-35 frontage road and E. Powell Lane. The apartment complex is also surrounded by a five-foot metal, picket security fence.
**Opportunity:** Installation of gates along the fence line would provide easier access for residents. PARD does not restrict adjacent properties access to public parks, and would support the owner's installation of pedestrian gates.

**3. West Side Adjacent Properties** (Label 3)
**Constraints:** Numerous multi-family properties adjacent to the west side of the park have a combination of wood privacy and chain link fencing along the property line. Currently, the residents can access the park at E. Powell Lane and John Nance Garner Circle.
**Opportunity:** Installation of gates along the fence line would provide easier access for residents. PARD does not restrict adjacent properties access to public parks, and would support the owner's installation of pedestrian gates.

**4. Cut-through Trail to Georgian Acres Park from E. Wonsley Drive** (Label 4)
**Constraints:** Travis County owns property on E. Wonsley Drive. The property has a deed restriction "for medical use only". Travis County would need to pursue removing the deed restriction. Once the deed restriction is removed, PARD could explore acquiring a hike and bike trail easement. Also, the properties north of the Travis County property are City of Austin owned land but carry the same deed restriction. Pursuing easements would require funding for surveys, legal documents, staff time, permit drawings, recording fees, construction funding, and ongoing maintenance. Options vary, but an estimated cost for completing this proposal would be $400,000 to $3 million, including purchasing the property.
**Opportunity:** A cut-through trail would provide easier access for residents on E. Wonsley Drive and E. Lola Drive.

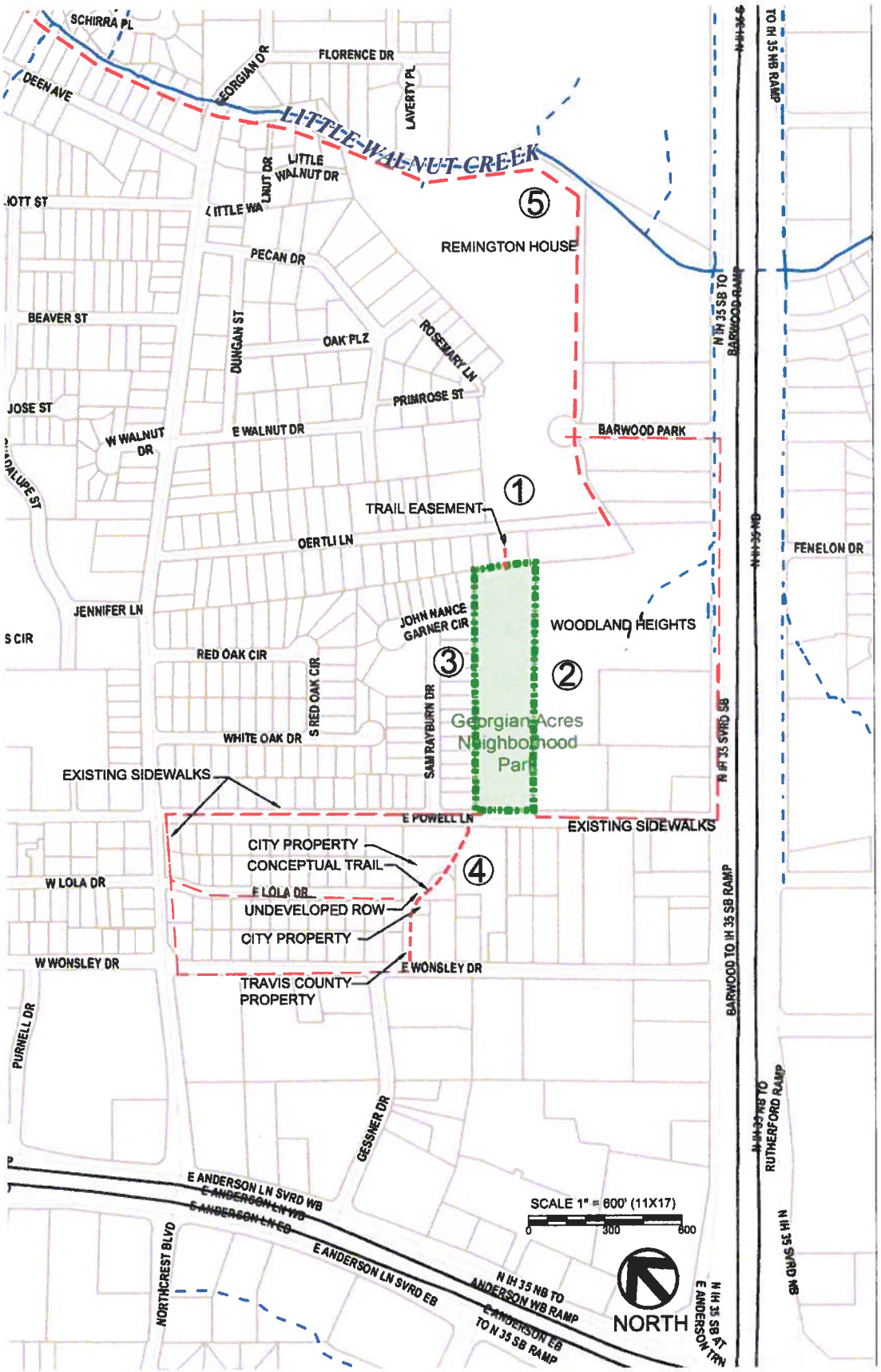
**5. Hike and Bike Trail** (Label 5)
**Constraints:** Multiple residential and commercial properties would require new or amended easements and/or purchases. Also, the Land Development Code does not allow multi-use trails within the inner half of the critical water quality zone, within the flood plain, without a variance providing no reasonable alternative. The estimated cost for easements, purchases, surveys and staff time is between $12.5 and $21 million. This estimate does not include engineering, design, and construction cost. At this time, PARD does not have the funding available to pursue this trail connection.
**Opportunity:** Building a hike and bike trail along the Little Walnut Creek would provide multi-use access from N. Lamar Blvd. to I-35, and through the Remington House property to Oertli Lane. Also, existing drainage or utility easements could be used as an alternative connection.

The Public Works Department is currently developing a Sidewalks Master Plan and an Urban Trails Master Plan to address connectivity concerns. The Sidewalk Master Plan calls for several additional segments of very high priority sidewalks along routes in the Georgian Acres Planning Area that will provide on-street connections to existing parkland. The Urban Trails Master Plan calls for a Tier 2 trail along the Little Walnut Creek, just north of the park. This connection will provide another option for the community to access the park.

While PARD supports increasing access and connectivity to city parks, our top priority is providing park spaces and amenities to neighborhoods that are deficient or lacking park spaces. Purchasing and developing the property for Georgian Acres Park is a result of this effort. Purchasing additional land and easements in this area is important, but the Department staffing and funding is limited. However, PARD takes the opportunity to acquire easements and trail connections when they arise.

Should you have any questions, please contact my office at (512) 974-6717.

Cc: Elaine Hart, Interim City Manager
Bert Lumbreras, Assistant City Manager


SCHIRRA PL
DEEN AVE
GEORGIAN DR
FLORENCE DR
LAVERTY PL
LITTLE WALNUT CREEK
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LNUT DR
IOTT ST
PECAN DR
REMINGTON HOUSE
BEAVER ST
DUNGAN ST
OAK PLZ
ROSEMARY LN
PRIMROSE ST
JOSE ST
W WALNUT DR
E WALNUT DR
BARWOOD PARK
DALUPE ST
TRAIL EASEMENT
OERTLI LN
FENELON DR
JENNIFER LN
JOHN NANCE GARNER CIR
WOODLAND HEIGHTS
S CIR
RED OAK CIR
S RED OAK CIR
SAM RAYBURN DR
Georgian Acres Neighborhood Park
WHITE OAK DR
EXISTING SIDEWALKS
E POWELL LN
EXISTING SIDEWALKS
CITY PROPERTY
CONCEPTUAL TRAIL
W LOLA DR
E LOLA DR
UNDEVELOPED ROW
CITY PROPERTY
W WONSLEY DR
E WONSLEY DR
TRAVIS COUNTY PROPERTY
PURNELL DR
GESSNER DR
E ANDERSON LN SVRD WB
E ANDERSON LN WB
E ANDERSON LN EB
E ANDERSON LN SVRD EB
NORTHCREST BLVD
N IH 35 NB TO ANDERSON WB RAMP
E ANDERSON EB TO N 35 SB RAMP
E ANDERSON TRN
N IH 35 SB AT
N IH 35 SB TO BARWOOD RAMP
BARWOOD TO IH 35 SB RAMP
N IH 35 NB TO RUTHERFORD RAMP
N IH 35 SVRD NB
N IH 35 SVRD SB
N IH 35 NB
TO IH 35 SB RAMP
SCALE 1" = 600' (11X17)
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300
600
NORTH
1
2
3
4
5