

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, there has been a steady increase in the amount of land area in Austin covered by impervious surfaces, and a steady decrease in the amount of pervious land area capable of absorbing rainfall; and

WHEREAS, the result has been an increasing rise in the amount of runoff that flows off-site from developed properties and into older, undersized stormwater drain systems, creeks, rivers, and lakes; contributing to increases in flooding severity, damage to private property, loss of life, and water pollution; and

WHEREAS, retrofits to stormwater infrastructure are necessary to reduce runoff and pollution, but capital investment is daunting, presenting a significant economic burden but also an opportunity to re-evaluate the most efficient way to invest in stormwater infrastructure and environmental protection and restoration programs; and

WHEREAS, the Flood Mitigation Task Force Final Report of May 2016 included Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) recommendations and asserted “when implemented on a widespread basis throughout a neighborhood, they can provide essential benefits”; and

WHEREAS, GSI is a stormwater management practice referring to a set of design features in buildings and landscapes that can retain and beneficially re-use rainwater on-site and increase infiltration of rainwater to improve stream baseflows thereby decreasing the amount of runoff that flows off-site; and

WHEREAS, using GSI for urban stormwater retrofits can reduce stormwater pollution while also reducing the burden and demand on existing infrastructure by capturing rainfall on-site; and

WHEREAS, GSI has the potential to be less costly than or cost competitive with traditional water quality and conservation infrastructure and provides additional environmental and economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, GSI, broadly utilized, offers the potential for significant cumulative benefits across watersheds that would help reduce the burden and extend the utility life of our existing stormwater infrastructure, improve water quality and provide other environmental benefits, as well as extend our potable water supply that is subject to growing population and drought; and

WHEREAS, GSI can provide additional benefits, such as improving streetscapes and bikeways with increased tree canopy and lower ambient air temperatures and appreciable economic and aesthetic value as well as human and ecological health benefits; and

WHEREAS, GSI has been endorsed by the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (2012), the Water Resource Planning Task Force (2014), the Flood Mitigation Task Force (2016), the Green Infrastructure Working Group (2016), and the Environmental Commission (2017); and

WHEREAS, parcel and district-scale rainwater and stormwater capture are being considered as water demand reduction and supply augmentation options in the Austin Water Forward Plan, the city's 100-year water supply planning effort being overseen by the Austin Integrated Water Resource Planning Community Task Force ; and

WHEREAS, the CodeNEXT draft of the land development code recommends more beneficial use of stormwater on-site via GSI to enhance creek

baseflow, support on-site vegetation, reduce potable water consumption, and for the implementation of a “Functional Green” program; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin was an early adopter and has long been a national leader in the implementation of GSI projects, regulations and practices; and

WHEREAS, Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan identifies Green Infrastructure as one of the eight priority programs (Priority Program 4), directing the use of: “... green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city” and further frequently cites green infrastructure should be expanded and integrated into our urban environment; and

WHEREAS, Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, Priority Program 4, pages 195 and 196, further states “An integrated green infrastructure system can also reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by providing alternatives to automobiles, reducing water use, and shading buildings; and

WHEREAS, the Imagine Austin Green Infrastructure Priority Program Implementation Team provides a forum for inter-departmental collaboration on policies and programs relating to open space acquisition, regulatory policies, and programs relating to the management of City of Austin lands; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

The City Manager is directed to:

- Develop a list of green stormwater infrastructure practices that can be utilized to achieve on-site beneficial use of stormwater;

- Evaluate and test the proposed “Functional Green” tools in Exhibit A using different types of example projects to determine the most appropriate threshold(s) for the application of the tool;
- Evaluate and test the “On-Site Beneficial Reuse” tools in Exhibit A using different types of example projects to determine the most appropriate thresholds for application of the tool with a focus on 3-9 unit developments;
- Clarify the coordination of “Functional Green” and “On-Site Beneficial Reuse” tools in Exhibit A on projects as they are reviewed by Watershed Protection and Development Services Departments and develop language to summarize the environmental elements integrated throughout the code, and citation of their locations in the code, to inform and achieve the natural and sustainable vision of Imagine Austin;
- Include the Environmental Commission as a review Board and Commission to provide recommendations to Council as it relates to aspects of the code with environmental impact; and
- Implement the Environmental Commission recommendations for an inventory of all efforts at implementing GSI and establishment of a program that encourages increased use of GSI as well as to include continued collaboration with Austin Water’s Water Wise program and Watershed Protection Department’s storm water management, particularly in small-scale beneficial re-use programs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to assess the City's progress toward achieving the vision, goals, policies, and actions relating to green infrastructure, as defined in the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan and to identify and evaluate opportunities and strategies to further integrate and leverage the City's green infrastructure related programs and projects. The product of this assessment should be a work plan for an Integrated Green Infrastructure Plan as set forth in the Priority Program 4 "Short Term" Work Program in the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. The work plan for development of an Integrated Green Infrastructure Plan shall:

- Be developed with consideration of the sub-tasks specified in the Priority Program 4 "Short Term" Work Program and other existing City plans relating to green infrastructure such as the Austin Parks Department Long-Range Master Plan, the Urban Forest Plan, the Community Climate Plan, the Urban Trails Master plan, Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and the Watershed Protection Master Plan;
- Include tasks assessing critical gaps relating to green infrastructure policies and priorities, identifying and evaluating opportunities and strategies to further integrate the City's green infrastructure related policies and programs, and recommending solutions to address identified gaps. These tasks may relate to open space and parkland acquisition; integration of CodeNEXT recommendations pertaining to on-site stormwater management and beneficial re-use with the Water Forward Integrated Water Resources Plan; and improved management of public lands; and

- Include recommendations regarding the required resources, the process, and the timeline for the development of the Integrated Green Infrastructure Plan under the direction of the Imagine Austin Green Infrastructure Priority Program Implementation Team.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to bring forth a catalog of existing Green Stormwater Infrastructure initiatives and an integrated plan that further leverages cross departmental programs by December 2017.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to bring the work plan for the development of an Integrated Green Infrastructure Plan to relevant Boards and Commissions for review and to City Council for approval by March 31, 2018.

ADOPTED: _____, 2017

ATTEST: _____

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk