

RESOLUTION NO. 20200312-041

WHEREAS, Austin is home to nearly 20,000 acres of parks and trails which play an essential role in the city's overall environmental health as well as in the physical and mental health of all Austinites; and

WHEREAS, as the City's population continues to grow, these parks and trails are increasingly important to the environmental, health, and mobility needs of the citizens of Austin; and

WHEREAS, on March 8, 2018, the City adopted a Strategic Direction, including several goals that specifically depend on having strong and sustainable parks and trails systems, including Economic Opportunity and Affordability, Mobility, Health and Environment, and Culture and Lifelong Learning; and

WHEREAS, as areas of the City continue to redevelop with denser populations, the acreage of parks also grows due to the critical benefits provided by the City's Parkland Dedication Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) is currently responsible for the care and maintenance of the vast majority of these approximately 20,000 acres of parkland across the city; and

WHEREAS, as the parks and trails, and the number of people who depend on them, increases, the need for innovative partnerships with local nonprofits becomes increasingly worth exploring; and

WHEREAS, PARD is committed to partnerships that align with its overall mission, vision, and commitment to benefit the public through the Austin parks system; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Department Long Range Plan specifically outlines partnerships as a sustainability strategy for developing, improving, maintaining and programming park spaces; and

WHEREAS, PARD works with nonprofit organizations, conservancies, community groups, and businesses to enhance and improve parks, increase recreational and cultural opportunities, and preserve natural areas in Austin; and

WHEREAS, the goals of these partnerships are to enhance and expand public use of PARD's grounds and facilities; encourage active recreation and healthy lifestyles; improve environmental stewardship through public participation and education; celebrate arts, culture, and history to build community; and maximize public benefit at minimum taxpayer cost; and

WHEREAS, many peer cities such as Dallas, Houston, Chicago, New York City, and others have negotiated partnerships with nonprofit organizations dedicated to the maintenance and stewardship of particular parks; and

WHEREAS, nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving parks and open space for the benefit of the community often have the ability to fundraise and other opportunities that municipalities do not have; and

WHEREAS, in Austin, some nonprofits have already begun partnering with the City to improve parkland by contributing needed infrastructure, maintenance, and programming; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Texas Local Government Code, an agreement between a municipality and a nonprofit organization for management services to a municipal park to which the organization has provided significant financial or other benefits is not subject to State competitive bidding requirements; and

WHEREAS, a coalition of partners led by The Trail Foundation in cooperation with PARD has been exploring concepts for entering into agreements regarding maintenance of certain parks following consultation with an Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Panel that took place on August 25-30, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Panel's work culminated in a report which lays out a potential structure and steps that could be

taken toward an agreement with the City to increase nonprofits' permission to maintain and improve parks and trails, and to do so in a more efficient and effective way; and

WHEREAS, such an arrangement reduces the burden on PARD's budget and resources; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

The City Council expresses support for the concept of parkland agreements between nonprofit organizations and PARD if the agreements further the mission and vision of the department with regard to non-enterprise fund public parks and trails in an effective, efficient, and inclusive manner.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

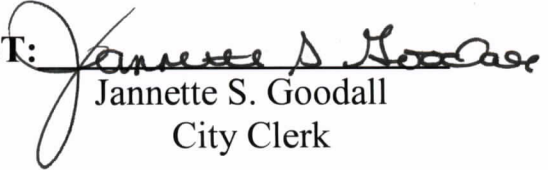
The City Council directs the City Manager to work with parks nonprofit partners that have established relationships with PARD, including but not limited to The Trail Foundation and the Pease Park Conservancy, to create opportunities for partnership agreements that benefit the community, and to outline roles and responsibilities between those groups and PARD.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Council further directs the City Manager to deliver a status report on potential partnership agreements to City Council by April 30, 2020, and to bring any partnership agreements that may be ready for consideration to City Council by June 4, 2020.

ADOPTED: March 12, 2020

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk