

AGENDA



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	Item ID	47819	Agenda Number	60.
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Meeting Date:	8/20/2015	Department:	Office of Real Estate Services
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Subject

Conduct a public hearing and consider a resolution for the use of dedicated parkland known as the Waller Creek Greenbelt, consisting of approximately 2,115 square feet of permanent above ground pedestrian walkway and approximately 8,832 square feet of temporary working space, to construct, use, maintain, repair, and replace an above ground pedestrian walkway in accordance with Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code (District 9).

Amount and Source of Funding

All costs associated with construction, as well as any parkland restoration will be paid by requester.

Fiscal Note

There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

Purchasing Language:	
Prior Council Action:	
For More Information:	Junie Plummer, Office of Real Estate Services, (512) 974-7085; Gordon Derr, Austin Transportation Department, (512) 974-7228; Greg Montes, Parks and Recreation Department, (512) 974-9458; Lauraine Rizer, Office of Real Estate Services, (512) 974-7078; Amanda Glasscock, Office of Real Estate Services, (512) 974-7173.
Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:	June 23, 2015 - Approved by the Parks and Recreation Board on a 5-0 vote with Board Members Abell and Casias absent. Recommendation No. 20150623-003.
MBE / WBE:	
Related Items:	

Additional Backup Information

Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code provides that the use of parkland for non-park purposes may be approved upon a finding that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of this land.

The Austin Transportation Department sponsors the application for an above-grade walkway over Red River Street between the Austin Convention Center and the Fairmont Hotel. Pedestrian access on the eastern side of the Convention Center is limited to an at-grade cross-walk at the corner of Red River and Cesar Chavez. Pedestrian access along Cesar Chavez is constrained by a bridge with a less-than-five-foot walkway from curb top to the bridge railing. The existing sidewalk is sub-standard to meet future use. The hotel will have 1,000 rooms and 100,000 square feet of conference space. There is a potential for the space to be used in conjunction with the convention center, requiring large volumes of pedestrians needing to get back and forth between the facilities in limited time periods.

The existing connection is not sufficient to support that activity.

The proposed above ground walkway will create a pedestrian walkway that is Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible with sufficient capacity to serve the needs of both facilities. The hotel will tie into Waller Creek Trail and Palm Park, expanding the usefulness of the facility.

The proposed use of parkland supports several City priority programs and policy directives set forth in the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan by investing in a compact and connected pedestrian network, as well as by creating places and access to adjacent parkland.

The Austin Transportation Department requests the use of the parkland to improve mobility and safe access for Convention Center guests and pedestrians across the Red River right-of-way.

Approval of the use of parkland is made on the condition that all restoration is completed in accordance with the Standard Specifications and Construction Standards of the City of Austin and the Parks and Recreation Department's "Construction in Parks Specifications". The Transportation Department is required to pay all costs associated with the restoration and tree mitigation as part of the site restoration process.

There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the dedicated parkland, which includes all reasonable planning to minimize harm to such lands. The dates of public notification in the *Austin American-Statesman* were July 26, August 2 and 9, 2015.