ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD MOTION EB061709-4A

Date: June 17, 2009

Subject: WPDR FY 2009-2010 Proposed Budget

Motioned By: Phil Moncada Seconded By:Rodney Ahart

Recommendation

1. The Environmental Board recommends approval with conditions of the WPDR FY 2010 Proposed Budget as presented to the Environmental Board FY09 Subcommittee. This budget enhances the staff and performance metrics necessary to promote the three core missions of the Watershed Protection and Development Review Department – water quality protection and enhancement, flood mitigation, and erosion protection.

2. The Board recommends staffing be commensurate with the increased activity within the Department due to on-going implementation of Bond projects and continued operational needs. This includes funding for the following positions:
   a. Engineering Technician C for Flood Hazard Mitigation to assist with stormwater infrastructure updating of records
   b. Truck Driver in Storm Drain Rehabilitation to assist with construction activities.
   c. Environmental Inspection Specialist to further increase the number of pond inspections and follow-up visits to check for compliance
3. The Board recommends approval of a $0.60 increase per ERU per month per residential unit and a $14.83 increase per impervious acre per month for non-residential properties beginning in FY2010. FY 2006 was the last of a five year phased increase in the drainage fee. Since then, the department has been structurally unbalanced, operating at a deficit in FY 2008 and a projected deficit for FY 2009. The Drainage Utility Fund's reserve balance has funded these deficits, but an increase in the drainage fee beginning in FY 2010 is needed to continue to provide adequate program resources and maintain a stable transfer to the Utility Fund's Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

4. The Board recommends approval of a differential rate for those multi-family customers in residential vertical construction properties that have a significantly lower impact on the drainage system than the defined equivalent residential unit (ERU). The Board supports updating the Drainage Ordinance and proposal of a discounted ERU of 0.5 for vertical construction, which is defined as a structure with seven or more stories of dwelling units.

5. The Board recommends that additional Erosion Control crews be added, or that consultant/contractor help be solicited for erosion repairs.

6. The Board recommends that Watershed Protection & Development Review Department develop additional metrics to quantify the value of open space in protection of creek/stream water quality, and with these revised metrics investigate the opportunity to use CIP funds for fee-simple land, or conservation easement, purchase as a percentage of the total "water quality" projects annually.

7. The Board recommends that a metric be instituted that measures elevated review of stormwater controls in the recharge zone during rain events.

8. The Board recommends that the Department leverage, to the greatest extent possible relationships with local community organizations (i.e., American Youth Works) to maximize both the environmental learning potential for those who need those type of services, and the tangible environmental benefits organization like these bring to the Austin environment (i.e., re-vegetation of stream banks, invasive species removal, tree planting, etc.).

Rationale

The Environmental Board formed an ad hoc subcommittee whose members asked detailed questions of staff concerning the proposed budget and received a comprehensive presentation from staff to address those questions. The budget accurately identified funds needed to protect water quality, stabilize eroding creek banks, and mitigate channel and localized flooding, along with implementing improvements in development review, enhancing inspections, performing infrastructure and waterway maintenance, rehabilitating dry wet ponds, continuing to restore and enhance habitat, and restoring populations of local endangered species.

The Board notes that the Watershed Protection and Development Review Department continues to work effectively with other City Departments in accomplishing related watershed-oriented goals. An example of this type of interdepartmental cooperation is the Austin Clean Water Program, where over $8 million of stream bank stabilization and restoration has been realized to date on creek rehabilitation projects undertaken under the Austin Clean Water Program (ACWP). In addition, Parks and Recreation Department also received parkland improvements including stream bank work, trail rebuilding and vegetation removal.

Vote: 6-0-0-1

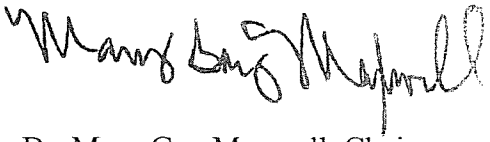
For: Ahart, Benzanson, Dupnik, Maxwell, Moncada, and Neely

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Beall

Approved By:



Dr. Mary Gay Maxwell, Chair