



AUSTIN-TRAVIS COUNTY FOOD POLICY BOARD RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation Number: 20190513-5iv2a

Consideration of Agricultural Production on County/City Land

WHEREAS, Between 1982–2007, 14 million acres of prime farmland in the U.S. were lost to development and over the last 11 years Travis County has lost 25% of its farmland ranking second in the state to farmland lost to development; and

WHEREAS, Farmers in Travis County currently only produce 1% of the food consumed in Austin. This number will likely decrease as the land needed for food production is being developed at an unprecedented rate (9 acres/ day); and

WHEREAS, Healthy soil holds more water and loses less water to runoff and evaporation. Organic matter holds 18-20 times its weight in water and recycles nutrients for plants to use. One percent of organic matter in the top six inches of soil would hold approximately 27,000 gallons of water per acre; and

WHEREAS, Soil health management can improve soil productivity over time, maintains the sustainability of the soil for future generations, improves water quality, reduces flood potential, and improves the resiliency of soil to extreme and variable weather events such as intense rainfall and droughts; and

WHEREAS, When managed sustainably, soils can play an important role in climate change mitigation by storing carbon and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Austin Travis County Food Policy Board recommends that agricultural production be considered as a best use of publicly acquired land on property with a USDA prime farmland designation.

Date of Approval: May 13th, 2019

Record of the vote: 10 in favor, none opposed

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edwin Marty".

City of Austin, Office of Sustainability, Food Policy Manager/ ATCFPB Staff Liaison