



## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MOTION 20190918 007a

**Date:** September 18, 2019

**Subject:** Briefing, discussion, and possible action on a recommendation to Austin City Council on the Parks and Recreation Long Range Plan for Land, Facilities, and Programs

**Motion by:** Katie Coyne

**Seconded by:** Peggy Maceo

### **RATIONALE:**

**WHEREAS**, the Environmental Commission recognizes the purpose and goals of the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) draft Long Range Plan: to assess the state of the current park system, to define a vision for 2028, to guide future growth and development, and to provide citywide recommendations and priorities for parks; and

**WHEREAS**, the Environmental Commission recognizes parks and trails play a key role in maintaining the environmental function of the City as a whole; and

**WHEREAS**, the Environmental Commission recognizes the implementation of the draft Long Range Plan's city-wide strategies: relief from urban life, park access, urban park spaces, alignment of programs, and efficiency of operations, have measurable impacts on the natural systems, quality of life, and climate resilience of the City of Austin; and

**WHEREAS**, the Environmental Commission recognizes the synergy between the Parks and Recreation Long Range Plan and other initiatives, plans, and studies in the City is vital to ensure Austin is a resilient city in the long-term.

**THEREFORE**, the Environmental Commission recommends support for the Parks and Recreation Department Long Range Plan with the following conditions:

### **Environmental Commission Conditions:**

- Require new trails, including primitive trails in highly sensitive environmental areas be reviewed by the Environmental Commission.
- Require natural areas acquisition and development to be reviewed by the Environmental Commission.
- Require review from the Environmental Commission for any Parks or Natural Areas Master Plan.
- Include a recommendation to create standards for the integration of green infrastructure and climate adaptive features into parkland including green stormwater infrastructure, but also including features that promote diverse ecosystem functions such as mitigating urban heat island, sequestering carbon, providing enhanced habitat, and mitigating air pollution, among others.

- In recommendation B.2.2.3 – include language emphasizing the need to balance mitigating environmental degradation with recreational goals.
- Adapt recommendation A.3.4 to include balancing water access in some places with more functional management of eroding shorelines in other places including the implementation of living and hybrid shorelines as piloted by the Watershed Protection Department.
- Edit the draft “Score Card Tool” to include metrics on green infrastructure, climate resilience features, and other multi-functional goals as outlined in the plan’s recommendations.
- Conduct a rigorous study on the environmental carrying capacity of parks, open space, and trail systems and utilize that information to make decisions about environmental/user tradeoffs.
- Create standards regarding the appropriate application of increased lighting to mitigate safety concerns to minimize environmental impacts on sensitive ecologies; and ensure all lighting is Dark Skies compliant.
- Require temporary lighting to comply with Dark Skies standards or to be reviewed by the Environmental Commission.
- Clarify the use of displacement data in application – i.e. ensure the City is not advocating for a lower level of service or environmental quality in areas most at risk of displacement.
- Reduce single-occupancy vehicle parking lots on parkland and emphasize mass transit access at all parks and facilities.
- Prohibit styrofoam at all events at all parks and facilities.
- Emphasize nature-based playscapes and nature-based playgrounds for children and children with disabilities to interact with and learn about nature.
- Consider more infrastructure and program opportunities to highlight urban nature even in dense areas, including the development of satellite or permanent “urban nature centers” in downtown or east Austin.
- Ensure that environmental, cultural, and heritage programs are integrated in ways that promote a holistic story of Austin.
- In E.1.5, include the Watershed Protection Department as a key partner in recommendations regarding partnerships for implementing climate adaptive and green infrastructure features.
- Include a more substantial recommendation around how cross-departmental cost-sharing and project coordination (i.e. between Watershed and PARD for instance) could be better leveraged for increased efficiency.
- In E.4, explore opportunities to add more Full Time Es to support coordination with PARD partners to ensure efficient collaborations for all parties.
- Upon completion of the “How we will measure and track progress (The Matrix)” section, the Environmental Commission may review and provide comments prior to plan adoption.

## **VOTE 9-0**

For: Bedford, Creel, Thompson, Guerrero, Coyne, Ramberg, Neely, Maceo, and Gordon

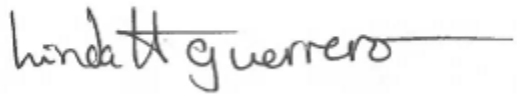
Against: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Absent: Smith

Approved By:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Guerrero". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Linda Guerrero, Environmental Commission Chair