



Recommendation for Action

File #: 20-2887, **Agenda Item #:** 31.

9/17/2020

Posting Language

Approve adoption of the Vision Plan for John Treviño Jr. Metropolitan Park at Morrison Ranch as developed by Gustafson Guthrie Nichol LTD and the Parks and Recreation Department.

Lead Department

Parks and Recreation Department.

Fiscal Note

This item has no fiscal impact.

Prior Council Action:

February 21, 2019 - Council unanimously approved negotiation and execution of a contract with Gustafson Guthrie Nichol LTD (GGN) to provide consulting services for a vision plan for the John Treviño Jr. Metropolitan Park.

For More Information:

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Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

July 10, 2020 - Approved by the Parks and Recreation Board on a 9-0 vote with Board Members Faust and Taylor absent.

August 5, 2020 - Approved by the Environmental Commission on a unanimous vote with a request for the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) to return to the Environmental Commission as more detailed park designs are developed. Recommendation Number 202000805-003c.

Additional Backup Information:

John Treviño, Jr. Metropolitan Park at Morrison Ranch is a 330-acre undeveloped park located at 9501 FM 969 in east Austin. This former ranch was purchased by PARD in 2003 and named after former Council Member and Mayor Pro Tem, John Treviño, Jr., in 2006.

Funding for the vision plan was provided through several sources including \$250,000 provided by Austin Parks Foundation through the Austin City Limits Music Festival Funds; \$150,000 provided through an allocation to the Fiscal Year 2019 PARD Capital Budget and the remaining \$30,150 through parkland mitigation funds.

The goal of the planning process was to outline a vision for the park that will direct an initial development to open the park in the near-term to meet current resident needs and guide future recreational development of the park as Austin grows and changes. In addition, the plan seeks to guide PARD to manage and develop the property in a sustainable manner through the fostering of community partnerships.

GGN, a landscape architecture firm with national prominence, was selected through a Request for Proposals

process to develop the vision plan and procured in February 2019. The community engagement for the vision plan started in March 2019 with small group meetings that included the Treviño family, park partner organizations, conservation organizations, surrounding schools and neighborhoods to introduce the park and understand initial desires and concerns for the park. Overall, the public engagement process continued through December 2019 and included four large community meetings, three online surveys and 11 small group meetings. The first and last community meetings were held at the park to provide the community the opportunity to see and experience the currently inaccessible property. In addition to community feedback, a Technical Advisory Group representing multiple City departments, Travis County and Capital Metro provided technical assistance throughout the process.

Through the early community engagement, the planning team developed the following three values upon which the vision plan is based: 1) Advancing the community through the legacy of John Treviño, Jr.; 2) Adapting the heritage of the site as a former ranch; and 3) Engaging the intersection of prairie and river to preserve and enhance the varied natural ecologies of the site. The final draft vision plan is organized through two primary zones for the park—the prairie upland level and the river level below, which is within the 100-year floodplain. Within these zones, sub-areas offer unique experiences and can be developed independently as resources allow. At the prairie level, the Field sub-area is closest to FM 969 and features neighborhood park amenities including pavilions, a playground, open play fields and an off-leash dog park set within a larger landscape proposed to be restored Blackland prairie. The Ravine, within a wooded area of the property, is a nature play and discovery area engaging varied slopes and shadier portions of the site. The Farm is anchored at an existing barn and field area for community meeting and event spaces, as well as the potential for community agriculture. Home is a passive recreation area at the edge of the bluff overlooking the river below. The river level, which represents two-thirds of the park property, is to be predominantly reforested with multiple trail opportunities. In addition, there is a location for river access at the southeastern corner of the site. Throughout both zones, the vision plan proposes to preserve and enhance the rich and variable natural ecology of John Treviño Jr. Metropolitan Park through an adaptive natural management program.

The draft vision plan was completed in February 2020 and is reflective of the community desires as understood through the comprehensive public engagement process between March and December 2019. It will be a guide for PARD to develop and manage the park in order to provide maximum recreational benefit to the public in a thoughtful and sustainable manner.

Strategic Outcome(s):

Health and Environment; Culture and Lifelong Learning.