



Recommendation for Action

File #: 21-3378, **Agenda Item #:** 56.

12/2/2021

Posting Language

Conduct a public hearing and consider an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 25-8 related to cut and fill requirements and critical water quality zone development regulations for urban trails.

Lead Department

Public Works Department.

Fiscal Note

This item has no fiscal impact.

Prior Council Action:

June 10, 2021 - Council passed Resolution No. 20210610-041 initiating the following amendments to the Land Development Code: a) Amend Land Development Code 25-8-341 and 25-8-342 to grant urban trails projects greater cut and fill allowances under specific environmental circumstances; and b) Amend Land Development Code 25-8-261(B)(3)(c) to reflect current policy that trails within the critical water quality zone be limited to 12 feet in surface width plus one-foot shoulders on each side.

February 20, 2020- Council passed Resolution No. 20200220-045 directing the City Manager to create an urban trail stakeholder group to develop recommendations for City Council on City Code or administrative process changes with the goal of making the design and permitting of urban trails less costly and more efficient while maintaining appropriate environmental protections.

For More Information:

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Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

Planning Commission recommended amendment on October 12, 2021.

Codes and Ordinances Joint Committee recommended to full Planning Commission on a 6-0 vote on September 15, 2021.

Environmental Commission recommended amendment on a 7-0 vote on August 18, 2021.

Additional Backup Information:

In response to Resolution No. 20200220-045, the Urban Trails Program convened a stakeholder group in April 2020 to discuss and identify issues faced during trail projects. The stakeholder group consisted of representatives from the Parks and Recreation Department, Watershed Protection Department, Austin Transportation Department, Shoal Creek Conservancy, Hill Country Conservancy, Waterloo Greenway, The Trail Foundation, Austin Parks Foundation, and Red Line Parkway Initiative. In the six months following this initial meeting, conversations were held between City staff and non-profit groups to further identify common obstacles in trail development and evaluate options to address them.

The code amendments proposed were identified as solutions that would reduce urban trail project timelines and expense, while maintaining appropriate environmental protections. All departments and stakeholders involved are supportive of these amendments, including the Watershed Protection Department. See Appendix A for a plain language summary of the proposed amendments.

Following council initiation of the code amendments in June 2021, the draft amendments have been recommended by the Environmental Commission (August 18, 2021), Codes and Ordinances Joint Committee (September 15, 2021) and Planning Commission (October 12, 2021).

Strategic Outcome(s):

Mobility.