



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Katie Coyne, AICP, Certified Ecologist – ESA
Environmental Officer / Assistant Director
Watershed Protection Department

DATE: October 13, 2022

SUBJECT: Staff Recommendation for Proposed Phase 1 Environmental Code Amendments Item 48

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify staff's position related to the Planning Commission recommendation for the proposed amendments to Land Development Code Chapters 25-2 Zoning, 25-7 Drainage, and 25-8 Subchapter A Water Quality. The Planning Commission did recommend staff's proposed ordinance, with recommendations, unanimously on October 11, 2022. Of note, Planning Commission recommended that Council delay adoption of certain elements within the ordinance that need more time to allow for more robust public engagement efforts. The Planning Commission's recommended ordinance, which is included as a yellow copy in today's backup, does align with staff's current recommendation. Those recommendations include the following:

- Delay Functional Green landscape requirements to allow for additional time to engage stakeholders.
- Delay proposed amendments that would ensure that environmental regulations do not disincentivize missing middle projects to allow for additional stakeholder engagement.
- Delay proposed amendments related to major rehabilitations of utility lines to allow for Austin Water and Watershed Protection staff additional time to develop a unified proposal.

Planning Commission also recommended clarifying language to ensure that there is not a conflict between the need to protect landscape areas from vehicles, while also allowing stormwater to enter these landscape areas. That language is also reflected in the ordinance and is acceptable to staff.

Staff is pleased to bring forth this ordinance, which includes a number of critically important initiatives that will help Austin maintain its high standards of water quality resource protection, including improved protections of the Colorado River downstream of the Longhorn Dam, increased use of Green Stormwater Infrastructure, expanded protections for wetlands on Lady Bird Lake, and improved stormwater management within parking lots.

Sincerely,

Katie Coyne, AICP, Certified Ecologist – ESA

City of Austin Environmental Officer / Assistant Director, Watershed Protection Department

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
 Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager
 Rodney Gonzales, Assistant City Manager
 Jorge Morales, P.E., CFM, Director, Watershed Protection Department