



## Recommendation for Action

**File #:** 23-1554, **Agenda Item #:** 24.

4/13/2023

### **Posting Language**

Authorize negotiation and execution of an amendment to the lease with TreeFolks, Inc., a Texas non-profit corporation, for approximately 2,150 square feet of office space and 6.43 acres of land out of the real property located at 10803 Platt Lane in Travis County, Texas, for a term of 10 years, for an annual lease rate of \$100, with two 10-year extension options.

### **Lead Department**

Financial Services Department.

### **Fiscal Note**

This item has no fiscal impact.

### **For More Information:**

Michael Gates, Financial Service Department, 512-974-5639; Cathy Curtis, Financial Services Department, 512-974-5649; Sherri Kuhl, Austin Water, 512-972-1664.

### **Additional Backup Information:**

TreeFolks, Inc., is a Texas non-profit corporation that empowers Central Texans to strengthen the community by planting and caring for trees. Their planting program includes:

- Engaging over 950 volunteers yearly to plant trees in parks and public places;
- Distribution of nearly 6,000 5-gallon native and native-adapted trees to Austin residents annually to combat the urban heat island effect and improve the health of our urban forest and,
- Working with economically disadvantaged residents reaching approximately 2,500 lower income residents with free trees each year.

The TreeFolks Central Texas Floodplain Reforestation Program annually restores approximately 50 acres of degraded floodplain on private and public land-generating Carbon+ and City Forest Credits. The TreeFolks education program reaches about 1,500 community members annually through a wide variety of experiential learning events, tree identification hikes, online learning tools, and an advanced ecological workshop series.

Since 2002, TreeFolks has officed out of 10803 Platt Lane, Austin, Texas, located within the City's 2-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction. Originally a residential home, it is now used as the operation center and primary office for the public purpose of promoting tree planting, tree education, and urban forest related community partnerships.

Austin Water is planning a substantial capital project at the building to address several aging systems (roof, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, etc.) as well as make the facility a more functional long-term facility for the tenant. TreeFolks will be responsible for any fixtures or finishes that are above building standard. The expansion from the current 1-acre footprint to 6.43 acres will allow for the construction of a covered parking structure and multiple greenhouses to address the increasing need for local native tree species used in community tree planting and tree adoption programs. TreeFolks will pay all costs associated with the parking structure and greenhouses.

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TreeFolks' greenhouse operation, referred to as "Seeds to Trees," will be established in the coming year and will expand over the next five years to reach capacity for the production of 220,000 saplings and up to 13,000 5-gallon potted trees. TreeFolks' work serves to fulfill urban forest and tree canopy goals of the Austin Climate Equity Plan. TreeFolks contributes to the City's SD23 Health and Environment outcome by focusing on access to quality greenspace, environmental quality, and climate resilience, and even contributes to food security by planting many nut and fruit-bearing trees.

As a condition of the lease, TreeFolks will track and report annual quantifiable performance measures and report those measures to Austin Water. The annual Performance Measures consist of the following:

- Distributing 6,000 trees, with at least 50% going to high-priority areas to address the heat island effect.
- Reforest 50 areas of regional floodplain land to combat climate change.
- Engage 950 community volunteers in tree planting and tree care activities (recruiting, training, and placement).
- Plant an estimated 12,000 trees on sensitive watershed land within the City of Austin.
- Incremental expansion over 5 years resulting in capacity for 220,000 saplings and 13,000 5-gallon container trees to address the need for greater volume and greater diversity of native species.

**Strategic Outcome(s):**

Health and Environment.