



RECA
REAL ESTATE COUNCIL
OF AUSTIN

Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and Council,

The Real Estate Council of Austin encourages you to vote **Yes on Item 39** on the March 21 Council agenda. This item, related to green infrastructure and right-of-way management, would enhance the urban environment and simplify one of the most complicated parts of the development process.

This resolution is important because it will allow City staff to break through existing silos to improve our complicated and inefficient right-of-way management process, which is often one of the biggest impediments to on-time project delivery in our urban environment. This resolution also provides the right balance by giving direction and leeway to staff, allowing them to work on creative solutions to potentially complex right-of-way issues.

Finally, this resolution will encourage a culture of “yes” with the right-of-way departments and the license agreement process, two areas that are currently impediments to getting needed housing on the ground quickly. By streamlining the right-of-way management and license agreement processes, this resolution allows for the increased viability of green infrastructure, like street trees and other urban public space improvements.

Please support Item 39 this Thursday.

Sincerely,

Dianne Bangle
CEO
Real Estate Council of Austin

From: Olivia Larson <[REDACTED]> **On Behalf Of** Dewitt Peart
Sent: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 2:24 PM
To: Watson, Kirk <Kirk.Watson@austintexas.gov>; Harper-Madison, Natasha <Natasha.Madison@austintexas.gov>; Fuentes, Vanessa <Vanessa.Fuentes@austintexas.gov>; Velasquez, Jose <Jose.Velasquez@austintexas.gov>; Vela, Jose "Chito" <Chito.Vela@austintexas.gov>; Alter, Ryan <Ryan.Alter@austintexas.gov>; Kelly, Mackenzie <Mackenzie.Kelly@austintexas.gov>; Pool, Leslie <Leslie.Pool@austintexas.gov>; Ellis, Paige <Paige.Ellis@austintexas.gov>; Qadri, Zo <Zo.Qadri@austintexas.gov>; Alter, Alison <Alison.Alter@austintexas.gov>
Cc: Garza, Jesús <Jesus.Garza@austintexas.gov>
Subject: RE: Item #39, Downtown Austin Alliance's Support of the Green Infrastructure Resolution

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March 20, 2024

Re: Item #39, Downtown Austin Alliance's Support of the Green Infrastructure Resolution

Dear Mayor Watson and City Council Members,

The Downtown Austin Alliance endorses the "Green Infrastructure" Council resolution, which advocates prioritizing the planting of street trees within Austin's public rights-of-way. This initiative aligns with and advances the organization's "Tree Canopy" strategic plan objective which sets an ambitious goal of increasing the downtown tree canopy by 10% over the next five years. Per research conducted by the Downtown Austin Alliance, impervious coverage in downtown districts can reach up to 86% in some areas, limiting opportunities to expand downtown's tree canopy to the public right-of-way (see attachment). Increasing downtown's tree canopy coverage will help mitigate the adverse side effects of Urban Heat Island Effect, while an increase in street trees will create cooler and safer pathways for pedestrians, bicyclists, mobility device users, and transit users.

The resolution's request for a study to explore the potential impacts of a mandate requiring street trees in the right-of-way for private projects that abut roadways could have major implications to downtown development. This study needs to be coupled with efforts to explore the combination of the license agreements and site plan applications for a streamlined development process, as this would be the key benefit that could offset the cost burden of a tree mandate or fee-in-lieu program.

The Downtown Austin Alliance requests to be an active participant in the implementation of this resolution to provide a crucial development perspective to the impacts of the studies. With this consideration in mind, we view this resolution as an initial step towards these goals and accomplishing the Downtown Austin Alliance's strategic plan objectives.

By passing this resolution, City Council can significantly advance the Green Infrastructure Resolution's objectives, fostering a more sustainable and equitable city for all Austinites, now, and for years to come.

Sincerely,

Dewitt Peart
President & CEO
Downtown Austin Alliance

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