



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MOTION 20240918-003

Date: September 18, 2024

Subject: Great Spring Project

Motion by: David Sullivan

Seconded by: Mariana Krueger

WHEREAS, the Environmental Commission was given a presentation by Trails and Transportation Planner, Mikey Goralnik, of the Great Springs Project. The Great Springs Project (GSP) is an Austin-based non-profit organization with a demonstrated capacity to support local governments and other partners in the region with implementing priority trail and conservation projects; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Commission understands the Great Springs Project is creating a greenway of protected lands between Austin and San Antonio over the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone. Connected by a network of spring-to-spring trails which link the four iconic springs of Central Texas: Barton Springs, San Marcos Springs, Comal Springs, and San Antonio Springs. Great Springs Project works to unify existing local efforts to address the most critical water, land, wildlife, and public health challenges facing the Central Texas region.; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan identifies the Urban Trails System, highlighted by the Tier I and Tier II Urban Trails, as “an integral part of the transportation network” to “increase connectivity between neighborhoods, facilitate active trips, promote healthy lifestyles and outdoor experiences, and strengthen our community’s connection to nature and our ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, numerous local and regional planning efforts, including the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, Climate Equity Plan, Green Infrastructure Strengths and Gaps Assessment, and Central Texas Regional Air Quality Plan, state the importance of partnerships between the city and non-profit partners for rapidly and fully implementing the community’s vision of a connected, resilient, healthy, and prosperous Austin, and

WHEREAS, Great Springs Project has a mission, capacity and resources to support the City’s connectivity, mobility, resiliency, vitality, and equity objectives. The organization also furthers the goals of conservation and watershed protection of environmentally sensitive karst areas and springs; and

THEREFORE, the Environmental Commission recommends the Parks and Recreation Department, Watershed Protection Department, Transportation and Public Works Departments, and others as necessary, be encouraged to partner and collaborate with the Great Springs Project. Collaboration could entail a variety of activities, such as partnering on applications to state and federal grants to support various trail implementation activities that the partnership determines to be necessary and effective.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Environmental Commission, recommends City Council consider, a memorandum of agreement, memorandum of understanding, resolution of support, or similar, to establish a partnership with Great Springs Project that will serve the City's interest with respect to connectivity, transportation, conservation and watershed protection outcomes. And such a partnership emphasizes the need to include communities of color as part of the process to provide feedback and facilitate open communications along every part of the projects to ensure those communities are not underserved, as has been the case in our history.

VOTE 6-1

For: Haris Qureshi, Mariana Krueger, Perry Bedford, Melinda Schiera, Colin Nickells, David Sullivan
Against: Richard Brimer
Recuse: Hanna Cofer
Absent: Jennifer Bristol

Approved By:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Perry Bedford". The signature is stylized with large, rounded letters and a prominent initial "P".

Perry Bedford, Environmental Commission Chair