



## BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

### Austin Travis County Food Policy Board

Recommendation Number: (20250210-003): Support for community agriculture on City parkland

WHEREAS, the Austin/Travis County Food Plan was approved by City Council on October 10, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Goal 1 of the Food Plan is to expand community food production, preserve agricultural lands, and increase the amount of farmland dedicated to regenerative food production long-term in Austin/Travis County which includes Strategy 1.12 to “fully fund City and County park plans that include strategies to support community agriculture (such as the Vision Plan at John Treviño Jr. Metropolitan Park) and include support for staff to implement community agriculture programs in these locations and distribute food grown to surrounding communities”; and

WHEREAS, “community agriculture” may be defined as agricultural activities that have a larger community impact, including, but not limited to a) individuals, organizations or groups growing food for distribution through food pantries, faith communities or resource centers, b) community gardens and food forests, or c) agricultural education.

WHEREAS, the John Treviño Jr. Metropolitan Park Vision Plan was adopted by the Austin City Council on October 15, 2020 with one of the defined values to adapt the heritage of the site by carrying the site’s productive agricultural heritage into the present and future by exploring possibilities for food production and agricultural education, and includes “The Farm” in the design of the park to to connect local food production and education with opportunities for multi-generational participation; and

WHEREAS, Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) has funding and is in the design process for Phase I of the Treviño Vision Plan which includes basic park infrastructure to be able to open the park to the public, and Phase II of the Treviño Vision Plan could include community agriculture at the park; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin’s 2024 Environmental Investment Plan recommends \$10 million in funding for Phase II of the Treviño Vision Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin already has a Community Gardens Program (started in 2009 when the Austin City Council passed the Urban Farm Ordinance) to establish a single point of contact and streamline the process for establishing community gardens on city land; and

WHEREAS community survey responses for Our Parks, Our Future, the City of Austin Parks & Recreation Department’s Long Range Plan names the following strategies: 4.4 “Increase the number of dedicated

park staff for the community garden program”, 4.4.1. “Consider creating a ‘community gardener’ position” 4.5.2. “Proactively identify potential sites for new community gardens and food forests.”; and

WHEREAS, the Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board’s Recommendation Number 20240318-7 urged the City of Austin to allocate funds and create a full-time equivalent (FTE) position to support the implementation of the Food Plan; and

WHEREAS, Goal 2 of the Austin Climate Equity Plan is to by 2030, protect 500,000 acres of farmland from development in the five-county region through legal protections or regenerative agriculture programs by 2030 and Goal 1 states: “by 2030, 100% of Austinites can access a pro-climate, pro-health, food system that is community-driven, prioritizes regenerative agriculture, and minimizes food waste.”; and

WHEREAS, community agriculture on City parkland provides vital opportunities for community-based food access, culturally-relevant food production, community-led food access solutions, emergency preparedness, climate resilience; and

WHEREAS, the Community Garden Process Revision document created by PARD Community Gardens Program Coordinator and presented to the Food Policy Board April 2019 recommends: “Better coordination between City departments, equitable access to gardens for entire community, a more streamlined overall process, simplification of the water permitting process, and increased staff support”; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20210729-115 set precedence for expanding use of public parkland for community-led food forestry through the Festival Beach Food Forest, and is a model for an agricultural green workforce and community governance to maintain and sustain such projects; and

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2023 Austin Parks and Recreation Department has secured funding for Phase 1 of the adopted the concept plan for Grand Meadow Park to include a new community garden and public food forest which will be stewarded by Friends of Grand Meadow Park, a project fiscally sponsored by Fruitful Commons, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, and has been named in Resolution No. 20240814-029 as a park planning effort to receive additional funds for tree planting and maintenance; and

WHEREAS the Green Infrastructure Strengths and Gaps Assessment led by the City of Austin Watershed Protection Department and Office of Sustainability sites Local Small-Scale or Organic Farms as a metric stating: “Urban agriculture provides green space, reducing runoff from precipitation, mitigating the urban heat island effect, reducing food transportation costs, creating habitat, and increasing biodiversity. They can also provide more equitable access to nutritious foods.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Austin Travis County Food Policy Board encourages the Austin City Council to fund City park plans that include strategies to support community agriculture and include financial support for staff or an external entity to implement community agriculture programs in these locations and distribute food grown to surrounding communities, including full funding for the

implementation of the Vision Plan at John Treviño Jr Metropolitan Park and the Grand Meadow Neighborhood Park Concept Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Austin Travis County Food Policy Board encourages the Austin City Council to ensure that agricultural activities, including community agriculture, are included in future municipal bond packages; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board encourages the Austin City Council to allocate funds and explore all available means in order to establish a dedicated interdepartmental management mechanism, such as a dedicated city department or full-time equivalent staff (FTE), to oversee and coordinate urban agriculture efforts and coordinate interdepartmental collaboration between PARD, Austin Water, Austin Energy, Public Works and any other essential City of Austin departments.

Date of Approval: February 10th 2025

Record of the vote: 11-0-0

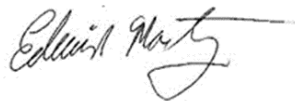
Vote in Favor: Andrea Abel, Lisa Barden, Marissa Bell, Mark Bethell, Joi Chevalier, Beth Corbett, Hilda Gutierrez, Kacey Hanson, Natalie Poulos, Matt Simon, Andy Smith

Vote Against: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: Larry Franklin

Attest:



City of Austin, Office of Climate Action and Resilience, Food Policy Manager/ ATCFPB Staff Liaison

## REFERENCES

PARD Community Garden Process Revision:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HL0pVKxvTTMHijeOW\\_D4kwlfPvzWalV/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HL0pVKxvTTMHijeOW_D4kwlfPvzWalV/view)

Resolution No. 20210729-115:

<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=365208>

Grand Meadow Park Concept Plan:

<https://www.austintexas.gov/GrandMeadowPark>

Green Infrastructure Strengths and Gaps Assessment Memo, City of Austin Watershed Protection Department and Office of Sustainability:

<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/pio/document.cfm?id=386899>

Resolution No. 20240814-029:

<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=435097>