



City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 26-1819, **Agenda Item #:** 49.

5/28/2026

Posting Language

Authorize the negotiation and execution of an amendment to the interlocal agreement with Travis County to procure consultant services to update the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan to increase the City's share from an amount not to exceed \$650,000 to a revised amount not to exceed \$1,025,000 over the five-year term. Funding: \$350,000 is available in the Operating Budget of Austin Water. Funding for the remaining term is contingent upon available funding in future budgets.

Lead Department

Austin Water.

Fiscal Note

\$350,000 is available in the Operating Budget of Austin Water. Funding for the remaining term is contingent upon available funding in future budgets.

Prior Council Action:

October 24, 2024 - Council authorized negotiation and execution of an interlocal agreement with Travis County for procurement of consultant services to update the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan, with the City's share not to exceed \$650,000 over the five-year term.

For More Information:

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Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

May 20, 2026 - To be reviewed by the Water and Wastewater Commission.

Additional Backup Information:

This action authorizes an amendment to the interlocal agreement (ILA) between the City of Austin and Travis County for consultant services related to the update and renewal of the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP) Permit and Habitat Conservation Plan.

The amendment is necessary because actual consultant contract costs exceed the estimate included in the original ILA as authorized by Council on October 24, 2024. That estimate was developed several years ago, and due to the extended time required for multi-agency coordination, procurement, and scope refinement, the final negotiated cost reflects current market conditions. Travis County has now determined, through procurement and negotiation, that the consultant cost is approximately \$2,050,000, requiring the parties to revise their contributions to ensure the BCCP updates and permit renewal can be completed. This amendment will also update administrative provisions to support execution of the ILA over the agreement term. The parties will split the final costs of this contract equally.

The BCCP provides a fast-track solution to habitat mitigation that supports compliance with the federal Endangered Species Act while also enabling continued economic growth and protection of endangered species habitat. It honors multiple community priorities by enabling the construction of roads, utilities, and

buildings while upholding a commitment to natural resources, including the parks, creeks, and preserves that make up the region's green infrastructure. The "BCCP Permit" refers to the Federal Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit issued to the City of Austin and Travis County in 1996 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, combined with the BCCP Habitat Conservation Plan, which is the governing document that established the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (Preserve).

The City-owned Preserve lands and the permitting process for infrastructure projects are both managed by Austin Water. Some tracts within the Preserve system are City parks and are co-managed with Austin Parks and Recreation. In the 30 years since the BCCP was created, more than 1,200 private landowners and developers have applied for BCCP take permits, resulting in the development of over 17,100 acres and the authorization of more than 300 public infrastructure projects.

The BCCP implementation to date has been a success. The City and County have nearly met, met, or exceeded almost all the required conservation actions, and have done so with substantially less impact on covered species habitat than predicted. Over time, opportunities to refine and improve certain elements of the plan have naturally surfaced. This update will help address those opportunities and continue effective implementation.