



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council Members

**THROUGH:** Robert Goode, P.E., Assistant City Manager 

**FROM:** Shay Ralls Roalson, P.E., Director, Austin Water 

**DATE:** November 8, 2024

**SUBJECT:** **Response to City Council Resolution No. 20240530-116**

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Austin Water (AW) is providing an update on staff efforts to implement Council Resolution No. [20240530-116](#). This resolution described the history and attributes of a wastewater pipeline currently known as the Barton Creek Interceptor (BCI) and directed staff to:

- study options for removing this pipeline from Barton Creek Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ) and restoring needed capacity in the interceptor,
- consult with representatives of proposed redevelopments serviced by the pipeline to address wastewater treatment needs while a permanent solution is being explored, with the goal of facilitating redevelopment that improves environmental protection over the status quo, and
- return with an update and recommendations to the Austin Water Oversight Committee Meeting on November 12, 2024.

### Background

The BCI was constructed in the 1960s to serve the entire Barton Springs watershed. In 2002, a construction project to “right-size” the BCI permanently reduced the capacity of the interceptor, in accordance with the 1997 Robert E Lee Road Relief Interceptor Planning Study Report of the Consensus Building Group. The Consensus Building Group established maximum wastewater flows in the study area, generally limited to existing collection system customers and service commitments, which are still used today in service extension requests for new development and redevelopment in the study area.

Austin Water inspection data indicates that the existing BCI is in good condition, with no breaks or repairs since the 2002 construction, and only one 50-gallon overflow in 2015, caused by a line blockage. Watershed Protection Environmental Integrity Index data indicates that Barton Creek is one of Austin’s healthiest streams, with fair to good water quality scores and low occurrences of *E. coli* bacteria.

### Study Results

AW Engineering Services staff examined alternatives for removing the BCI from the CWQZ and restoring capacity in the interceptor. The option that is most protective of the environment is to construct a new interceptor along the west side of Mopac Expressway. The new interceptor would collect all wastewater

flows from west of Mopac that are currently served by the BCI (approximately 65% of current flows). Completely removing the existing BCI from the CWQZ was determined to be infeasible, but under the scenario as described, the BCI would only serve local wastewater flows.

The conceptual level opinion of construction cost for the new interceptor is approximately \$60 million, with a timeline for planning, design, and construction of approximately 10 years. The construction would be coordinated with the proposed Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority MoPac South project.

#### Engagement with Proposed Redevelopment Projects

AW's Utility Development Services staff identified six stakeholders that are currently served by the pipeline. These stakeholders include commercial properties, a multi-family property, and municipalities. Staff met with stakeholders to discuss their utility service needs and proposed development or redevelopment on their property. Staff explored options for interim service plans to provide wastewater service to their projects. The existing BCI has sufficient capacity to accommodate expected rates of development and redevelopment in the wastewater basin for 10 or more years until the new interceptor can be designed and constructed.

#### Next Steps

AW staff will brief the Austin Water Oversight Committee on November 12, 2024.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
Jorge Morales, P.E., Director, Watershed Protection  
CMO Executive Team

Attachments: [Staff Report on Barton Creek Interceptor](#)