

RESOLUTION NO. 20240530-116

WHEREAS, protecting our environment is the foundation for sustaining our planet, community, and economy; and

WHEREAS, the Drinking Water Protection Zone designation located on the west side of Austin has restricted development through regulations creating positive environmental outcomes; and

WHEREAS, City Code does not allow for utility infrastructure such as pipes and manholes to be placed within creeks, which can cause erosion and other severe and long-lasting consequences that can be expensive to reverse; and

WHEREAS, current City environmental policy, City Code Chapter 25-8-261, Subsection (D) aims to move wastewater infrastructure out and away from creeks where spills can cause harm to fish, wildlife, and other ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 971001-20 engaged the University of Texas's School of Law's Center for Public Policy to provide consultant services to the Water and Wastewater Utility (now Austin Water) for community involvement activities associated with the Robert E. Lee Relief Interceptor Planning Study; and

WHEREAS, from the community engagement emerged a consensus-building group that studied the service area, capacity limit, facilities, and costs; and

WHEREAS, the consensus-building group completed their work on October 7, 1997, and offered several recommendations, including limiting capacity and extensions of the wastewater pipe; and

WHEREAS, with Resolution No. 980204-8, Council approved a portion of the Report of Consensus Building Group, authorizing the City Manager to initiate

negotiations with the cities of Rollingwood and West Lake Hills through interlocal agreements for wholesale wastewater service with conditions but did not approve any other recommendations included in the report; and

WHEREAS, on December 14, 2000, Council authorized a contract to rehabilitate and “right size” the wastewater pipe which limited the capacity of the existing wastewater interceptor that runs under Barton Creek; and

WHEREAS, the City’s “2023 State of Our Environment Report,” showed that the Barton Creek reach between Highway 71 and Zilker Park scored only “Fair” for water chemistry, despite the creek's expansive protective environmental buffers and low impervious cover; and

WHEREAS, per that same report, between 2006 and 2021, the same stretch of Barton Creek had several instances of higher than average E.coli levels which could indicate leaking wastewater pipes; and

WHEREAS, the Barton Creek Wastewater Interceptor serves parts of south Austin near Zilker Park, West Lake Hills, Rollingwood, and other nearby areas in southwest Austin including Barton Creek Mall; and

WHEREAS, the communities of West Lake Hills and Rollingwood are also impacted by the same growth pressures found in Austin, leading to the need for additional wastewater treatment; and

WHEREAS, many properties served by the Barton Creek Wastewater Interceptor were developed prior to the Save Our Springs ordinance (SOS) and do not meet SOS standards or other modern environmental code requirements; and

WHEREAS, the current Barton Creek Wastewater Interceptor pipe size is inadequate to serve properties wanting to redevelop, including affordable housing

projects, and therefore is impeding the improved environmental protections that could be secured by properties redeveloping under current Code; and

WHEREAS, capital projects can take significant time to study, design, fund, and construct; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

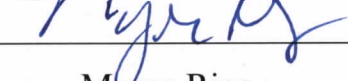
The City Manager is directed to develop a report that identifies options for moving the wastewater pipe out of the Barton Creek Critical Water Quality Zone and restoring needed capacity in the pipe, including the related costs, benefits, risks, and a potential timeline.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to work with the representatives of proposed redevelopment projects serviced by the Barton Creek wastewater pipe 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 through decreased impervious cover, improved water quality treatment, rewilded creek buffers, and/or other measures in alignment with current Code.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to return to the Austin Water Oversight Committee on November 12, 2024, with the report on options for addressing the Barton Creek Wastewater Interceptor and an update on staff facilitation of redevelopment as described above.

ADOPTED: May 30, 2024 **ATTEST:** 
Myrna Rios
City Clerk