

City of Austin



Recommendation for Action

File #: 25-1142, Agenda Item #: 94.

6/5/2025

Posting Language

Conduct a public hearing and consider an ordinance granting site-specific variances and amendments to City Code Title 25 (Land Development) for the construction of the Walnut Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Enhancement and Expansion Project; waiving notice and review requirements of City Code Section 25-1-502; and waiving requirements of City Code Section 25-8-41. Funding: This item has no fiscal impact.

Lead Department

Austin Water.

Prior Council Action:

March 27, 2025 - Council approved Resolution No. 20250327-062 initiating variances and amendment to the LDC, including site-specific amendments to LDC Chapters 25-1 (General Requirements), 25-5 (Site Plans), 25-7 (Drainage), and 25-8 (Environment) as minimally required to allow the construction of the Walnut Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Enhancement and Expansion Project.

For More Information:

Heather Cooke, Austin Water Chief Administrative Officer, 512-972-0083 or heather.cooke@austintexas.gov.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

April 2, 2025 - The Environmental Commission approved a recommendation to amend City Code Title 25 (Land Development) ("LDC") with conditions on Commissioner Bristol's motion, Commissioner Sullivan's second on an 8-1 vote, with Commissioner Ganguly absent.

April 22, 2025 - The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing and approved a recommendation to amend City Code Title 25, specifically, Chapter 25-1 (General Requirements and Procedures), 25-5 (Site Plans), 25-7 (Drainage), and 25-8 (Environment) for the construction of the Walnut Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Enhancement and Expansion Project, on Commissioner Maxwell's motion and Commissioner Haney's second, on an 11-0 vote.

April 23, 2025 - Council's Climate, Water, Environment, and Parks Committee received a briefing on proposed site-specific variances and amendments to the LDC for the construction of the Walnut Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Enhancement and Expansion Project.

Additional Backup Information:

The Walnut Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) receives wastewater flow from Austin Water's wastewater collection system. The plant was originally built in 1977. Over the years, the treatment plant has undergone numerous improvements and upgrades to modernize treatment methods as well as expand treatment capacity to 75 million gallons per day (MGD), with a 2-hour peak flow of 165 MGD. Treated plant effluent is discharged into the Colorado River. A portion of the treated effluent is used for non-potable water on the plant site and supplies much of the City's Reclaimed Water program.

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This project will expand the plant to treat and discharge an annual average daily flow of 100 MGD and a 2-hour peak flow of 300 MGD. The expansion is needed based on projected future flows of wastewater into the plant, in accordance with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) regulations and the requirements of Texas Administrative Code. Additionally, the project will implement Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) in both the existing and proposed facilities to meet more stringent effluent quality limits in the plant's discharge permit issued by TCEQ that will go into effect with the expansion. The project includes several distinct components: a new 25 MGD treatment train with BNR, upgrade of the existing treatment to BNR, new peak flow treatment, new influent siphons, new effluent pipe and outfall, and a flood wall around the site.

On March 27th, 2025, Council approved Resolution No. 20250327-062 initiating variances and amendment to the LDC, including site-specific amendments to LDC Chapters 25-1 (General Requirements), 25-5 (Site Plans), 25-7 (Drainage), and 25-8 (Environment) as minimally required to allow the construction of the WWTP Enhancement and Expansion Project. The resolution directs staff to return an ordinance to Council by May 8, 2025, granting site-specific variances and amendments to the LDC, including amendments to Chapters 25-1, 25-5, 25-7, and 25-8.