



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

**Urban Transportation Commission**

Recommendation Number 20241001-004: Great Springs Project Partnership

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of the Urban Transportation Commission (UTC) “to serve as an advisory body to the city council, the city manager, and all other transportation-related departments concerning transportation-related matters including...pedestrian and bikeway programs and projects; and

**WHEREAS**, among the UTC’s responsibilities are “to promote close cooperation between the city council, other city boards and commissions, city departments, and individuals, institutions, and agencies concerned with transportation-related activities so that all similar activities in the City may be coordinated to secure the greatest public welfare.;" and

**WHEREAS**, Great Springs Project (GSP) is an Austin-based non-profit organization with a demonstrated capacity to support local governments and other partners in the region with implementing priority trail and conservation projects; and

**WHEREAS**, Trails and Transportation Planner for Great Springs Project Mikey Goralnik has engaged with UTC members to introduce the Great Springs Project, its history, resources, and plans for supporting local efforts to implement priority trail projects in the City of Austin, and

**WHEREAS**, GSP has diverse expertise in a range of topics that align with the UTC’s mandate to support the City’s connectivity and active transportation culture, including supporting urban trail implementation through right-of-way acquisition, designing and permitting priority trails, and programming trails with activities and events; and

**WHEREAS**, the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan identifies the Urban Trails System, highlighted by the Tier I and Tier II Urban Trails, as “an integral part of the transportation network” to “connect the street grid [and] provide additional pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and shorten walking and bicycling distances...[that] increase connectivity between neighborhoods, facilitate active trips, promote healthy lifestyles and outdoor experiences, and strengthen our community’s connection to nature and our ecosystem; and

**WHEREAS**, numerous local and regional planning efforts, including the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, Climate Equity Plan, Green Infrastructure Strengths and Gaps Assessment, and

Central Texas Regional Air Quality Plan, state the importance of partnerships between the city and non-profit partners for rapidly and fully implementing the community's vision of a connected, resilient, healthy, and prosperous Austin, and

**WHEREAS**, GSP has a mission to support the City's connectivity, mobility, resiliency, vitality, and equity objectives in the organization's project area, and the capacity and resources necessary to implement these stated priorities; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin must direct City staff to approve formal collaboration between external not-for-profit partners such as Great Springs Project to complete public works projects such as those GSP is pursuing in the City of Austin, Travis County, Hays County, and elsewhere;

**WHEREAS**, the Bicycle Advisory Council passed Recommendation No. 2024-0820-005, recommending further partnership with the Great Springs Project.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the Urban Transportation Commission, do recommend that City staff, including those in the Parks and Recreation Department, Watershed Protection Department, Transportation and Public Works Departments, and others as necessary, be fully authorized and encouraged to partner with the Great Springs Project to collaboratively implement shared projects of interest.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that shared projects of interest include, but are not limited to, the Onion Creek Greenway (Old San Antonio Road Trail to Onion Creek Metro Park), the Williamson Creek Greenbelt (Sunset Valley to McKinney Falls SP), and trail along the Colorado River below Longhorn Dam, all of which are mapped in the "[Proposed Urban Trail Network](#)". Collaboration could entail a variety of activities, such as partnering on applications to state and federal grants to support various trail implementation activities that the partnership determines to be necessary and effective.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we, the Urban Transportation Commission, do recommend that City Council take whatever action it determine necessary, such as a memorandum of agreement, memorandum of understanding, resolution of support, or similar, to establish a partnership with GSP that will serve the City's interest with respect to connectivity, transportation, and other outcomes that are important to our group.

Motioned by: Commissioner Schumacher

Seconded by: Commissioner Brooks

Date of Approval: 10/1/24

Record of the vote: 9-0

Attest: *Natalie Leone*