



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:

Agenda Item Number: 9

Agenda Date: December 7, 2023

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Public Works Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Razi Hosseini

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: District 3

SUBJECT:

Funding Agreements: Mitchell Lake Audubon Center

SUMMARY:

An ordinance approving the execution of two funding agreements related to Mitchell Lake Audubon Center located in Council District 3: (1) a funding agreement between the National Audubon Society and the City of San Antonio in an amount up to \$6,000,000.00 for the design and construction of improvements at the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center; and, (2) a funding agreement between the San Antonio Water System and the City of San Antonio in an amount up to \$265,000.00 for the design and construction of the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center Entrance Gate. Funding in the amount of \$6,000,000 is available from the 2022 General Obligation Bond Program and \$265,000 from Certificates of Obligation and included in the FY 2024 – 2029 Capital Improvement Program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center (MLAC)

The Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, located at 10750 Pleasanton Road in San Antonio, Texas, is a unique bird haven consisting of the 600-acre Mitchell Lake, which includes 30,000 acres of wetland and ponds, 300 acres of grassland, brushland, and woodland habitats. The Mitchell Lake

Audubon Center has documented over 340 bird species as a critical stopover along the Central Flyway. It is an internationally recognized bird habitat that draws visitors from around the world, serving over 12,000 visitors and 4,000 students annually, with 70 percent of students served coming from Title I schools.

This center is one of the few green spaces located in a rapidly developing and historically under-resourced area on the south side of San Antonio. With potential connectivity to the Howard W. Peak Greenway Trail System, a growing network of approximately 82 miles of developed multi-use and accessible trails, Mitchell Lake Audubon Center is viewed by many in the community as the “hidden gem of San Antonio’s Southside.”

MLAC 2022 Bond Improvements

On May 7, 2022, San Antonio voters approved the 2022 – 2027 General Obligation Bond Program totaling \$1.2 billion and authorized Parks and Recreation bond funds to construct facility improvements and rehabilitate the birding center at the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center. Funds in the amount of \$6,000,000.00 will be allocated from the 2022 Bond Program, of which \$5,880,000.00 will be for this project and \$120,000.00 will be retained by the City of San Antonio for program management.

The National Audubon Society, through its Texas State Office and Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, will manage the project in partnership with the City of San Antonio. The opportunity presented by City bond funds is the first step in a larger plan to reimagine and expand the impact of Mitchell Lake Audubon Center over the next decade.

This agreement will be executed in compliance with the Small Business Economic Development Advocacy (SBEDA) Program, which requires contracts be reviewed by a Goal Setting Committee to establish a requirement and/or incentive unique to the particular contract to maximize the amount of small, minority, and women-owned business participation on the contract. The Goal Setting Committee set a 23% Minority/Women Business Enterprise (M/WBE) subcontracting goal and a 2% African American Business Enterprise (AABE) subcontracting goal. The National Audubon Society has committed to 23% Minority, Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) and 2% African American Business Enterprise (AABE) subcontractor participation.

MLAC Entrance Gate Improvements

The Audubon Center is located on SAWS property and needs an entrance renovation reflective of its international status and local recognition as a “hidden gem of San Antonio’s South Side. The Mitchell Lake Audubon Center Entrance Gate Project will renovate the Mitchell Lake facility entrance with \$265,000.00 allocated from Certificates of Obligation, of which \$259,700.00 will be for the project and \$5,300.00 will be retained by the City of San Antonio. The San Antonio Water System will manage the project with the City of San Antonio.

This agreement will be executed in compliance with the Small Business Economic Development Advocacy (SBEDA) Program, which requires contracts be reviewed by a Goal Setting Committee to establish a requirement and/or incentive unique to the particular contract to maximize the amount of small, minority, and women-owned business participation on the contract. The Goal Setting Committee set a 21% Minority/Women Business Enterprise (M/WBE) subcontracting goal

and a 2% African American Business Enterprise (AABE) subcontracting goal. SAWS has committed to meeting the subcontractor participation goals.

ISSUE:

This ordinance approves the execution of two funding agreements related to Mitchell Lake Audubon Center: (1) a funding agreement between the National Audubon Society and the City of San Antonio in an amount up to \$6,000,000.00 for the design and construction of improvements at the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center; and, (2) a funding agreement between the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) and the City of San Antonio in an amount up to \$265,000.00 for the design and construction of the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center Entrance Gate.

MLAC 2022 Bond Improvements

The funding agreement with the National Audubon Society will provide for facility improvements and the rehabilitation of the birding center at the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, which will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Site improvements and preparation
- Educational pavilion improvements and expansion
- Improved pavement base at interior park roadways
- Asphalt roadway improvements and control gates
- New full-service restroom and parking area
- New parking at entry and improvements to existing parking
- New bird viewing stations

The National Audubon Society will oversee the construction of the improvements at the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center in accordance with the bond brochure and funding agreement. The City's funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis once the design and construction are verified and approved. Construction on the new facility is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2027.

MLAC Entrance Gate Improvements

The funding agreement with SAWS provides for the construction of site improvements, including site demolition, site preparation and earthwork, fencing, lighting, walls, columns, and signage. SAWS will oversee the construction of the improvements for the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center Entrance Gate in accordance with the funding agreement. The City's funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis once the construction is verified and approved. Construction on the new facility is anticipated to be completed by September 2024.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternatively, the City Council could choose not to approve these Funding Agreements; however, doing so would delay and conflict with the City's commitment to provide funding for the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center improvements and entrance gate.

FISCAL IMPACT:***Mitchell Lake Audubon Center (2022 Bond Improvements)***

This ordinance authorizes the execution of a funding agreement between the National Audubon Society and the City of San Antonio in an amount of up to \$6,000,000.00, of which \$5,880,000.00 will be for the project and \$120,000.00 will be retained by the City for program management for the design and construction of improvements at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center. Funds are available from the 2022 General Obligation Bond Program funds included in the FY 2024 – FY 2029 Capital Improvement Program.

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center (Entrance Gate Improvements)

This ordinance also authorizes the execution of a funding agreement between the San Antonio Water System and the City of San Antonio in an amount up to \$265,000.00, of which \$259,700.00 will be for the project and \$5,300.00 will be for program management for the construction of entrance gate improvements at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center. Funds are available from Certificates of Obligation and included in the FY 2024 – FY 2029 Capital Improvement Program. The City's funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis once the construction is verified and approved.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends authorizing the execution of a funding agreement with the National Audubon Society in an amount of up to \$6,000,000.00 for the design and construction of improvements at the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center and the execution of a funding agreement with SAWS in an amount of up to \$265,000.00 for the design and construction of the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center Entrance Gate.