



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:

Agenda Item Number: 25

Agenda Date: October 19, 2023

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Parks & Recreation Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Homer Garcia III

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Edwards Aquifer Protection Program Acquisition – Moos Ranch Phase II

SUMMARY:

An ordinance authorizing payment in the amount of \$1,029,513.40 to Mission Title Company as escrow agent for title on a conservation easement, due diligence and closing costs on a 626.56-acre tract of land known as Moos Ranch Phase II located in Uvalde County, Texas. Funding is available from the San Antonio Municipal Facilities Corporation and included in the FY 2024 - FY 2029 Capital Improvement Program.

This action also authorizes the execution of necessary documents to accomplish said acquisition.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The purpose of the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program is to obtain property rights by fee simple purchase, conservation easements or donations of land over the sensitive zones of the Edwards Aquifer. This program was initiated in May 2000 when voters approved Proposition 3, a 1/8-cent sales tax venue up to \$45 million for the acquisition of lands over the Edwards Aquifer for parks and watershed protection. Proposition 3 ran from 2000 through 2005 and was limited to Bexar

County.

The 2005 Proposition 1 program was an extension of the initial voter-approved Edwards Aquifer protection endeavor and was extended by voters in 2010 and renewed again in 2015. Changes in state legislation allowed watershed protection activities to expand outside of Bexar County. In 2020, City Council approved a 10-year, \$100 million alternative funding program through the San Antonio Municipal Facilities Corporation which will issue debt for the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program to continue its mission of protecting recharge water quality and quantity over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge and Contributing Zones.

The proposed purchase of the conservation easement on Moos Ranch Phase II is located over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone and consists of 626.56 acres in Uvalde County, Texas. The property was initially identified through use of the Scientific Evaluation Team's GIS Spatial Model and subsequent site visits identified favorable recharge features on the property. Moos Ranch Phase II is located within the Indian Creek and Cooks Slough watersheds which contribute to the Nueces River and contributes to significant recharge of the Edwards Aquifer. The Edwards Aquifer Authority issued a geological assessment of the property confirming that preservation would provide high-to-very-high water quantity benefit and high water quality benefit for the City of San Antonio. City Council authorized the acquisition of a conservation easement on the adjacent 2,267.58-acre Moos Ranch Phase I property in March 2023.

ISSUE:

This ordinance authorizes payment in the amount of \$1,029,513.40 to Mission Title Company as escrow agent for title on a conservation easement, due diligence and closing costs on a 626.56-acre tract of land known as Moos Ranch Phase II located in Uvalde County, Texas. Acquisition cost for this easement is consistent with the appraised value of the property.

Acquisition of this property is consistent with the policy for implementation of the San Antonio Municipal Facilities Corporation funding as approved by City Council and will increase the total protected lands under the City's aquifer protection program by 626.56 acres; the current protected acreage is 178,901 acres. The City Council-appointed Conservation Advisory Board has reviewed and recommended this acquisition.

ALTERNATIVES:

An alternative would be to defer this acquisition until a later date subject to the property owner's willingness to sell real estate interests and future market conditions. Additionally, other properties could be targeted for acquisition foregoing this conservation easement and foregoing the geological benefits and the protection of additional acreage within the Indian Creek and Cooks Slough watersheds in Uvalde County.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This acquisition is a one-time expenditure in the amount of \$1,029,513.40 for purchase of a 626.56-acre conservation easement located in Uvalde County over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone. Funding is available from the San Antonio Municipal Facilities Corporation and included in the FY 2024 - FY 2029 Capital Improvement Program.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the acquisition of a conservation easement on the 626.56-acre Moos Ranch Phase II in the amount of \$1,029,513.40 funded under the San Antonio Municipal Facilities Corporation.