



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:

Agenda Item Number: 31

Agenda Date: May 18, 2023

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Neighborhood and Housing Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Veronica Garcia, Director

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: District 1, District 2

SUBJECT:

Brackenridge Park Plan reconciliation

SUMMARY:

This ordinance authorizes the execution of a Funding Agreement between the Midtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone #31 and the City's Office of Historic Preservation in an amount up to \$225,000 for a consultant to reconcile the Brackenridge Park Master Plan, Brackenridge Park Conservancy Cultural Landscape Plan, and other plans related to Brackenridge Park and the surrounding area. The funding will also provide for the necessary support staff to facilitate the process. Funding is available in the Midtown TIRZ Fund and was approved by the Midtown TIRZ on December 13, 2022.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Brackenridge Park is one of San Antonio's oldest and most historic parks. It encompasses 349 acres near the headwaters of the San Antonio River and its location has evidence of human activity for more than 11,000 years. The formal Park location was established in 1899 with the donation of 199 acres by George Brackenridge for public parkland. Over the years the Park has grown, and many popular destinations have been added within its boundaries including the San Antonio Zoo, the Witte Museum, the Japanese Tea Gardens, the First Tee, and the Sunken Garden Theater. The

Park also has many picnicking areas, pavilions, a miniature train ride and other facilities that have been popular for family enjoyment for generations. Combined annual visitation to the Park and its destinations exceeds 1.5 million visitors a year. Brackenridge Park is on the National Register of Historic Places and is a Texas State Antiquities Landmark. The Japanese Tea Garden, a footbridge, and other works by artist Dionicio Rodriguez, and the Water Works Pump House No. 1 are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The rich history of the Park adds to its charm and significance to the cultural and heritage of San Antonio.

Over the past several years, plans have been completed identifying improvements and projects for Brackenridge Park. The existing plans share many overlapping components but require reconciliation and consolidation into a comprehensive, community supported inventory of projects that can then be prioritized and phased into a holistic action plan for park improvements.

On March 2, 2017, the Brackenridge Park Master Plan was approved by City Council. With community input and additional feedback gathered in October and November 2016, three approved public strategies were presented including (1) Restoration of natural park features; (2) Restore, preserve, and articulate park cultural and historic features; and (3) Increase visibility and pedestrian access to and within the Park.

In June 2019, City Council adopted the Midtown Regional Center Plan which includes several goals and strategies for the neighborhoods and commercial districts surrounding the Brackenridge Park.

In 2021, the Brackenridge Park Conservancy released a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) to build upon the recommendations of the Master Plan through the development of an interdisciplinary systems-based approach to the Park's preservation and future growth and sets four intentions: (1) to heal Brackenridge Park's ecology, (2) to protect and celebrate its many layers of historic significance and cultural diversity, (3) to elevate its identity locally and nationally, and (4) to usher it into the 21st century. The CLR identified a treatment plan focused on eight natural and constructed landscape systems.

To ensure that the City properly addresses the opportunities and issues relating to the operation of Brackenridge Park, the City, through its Office of Historic Preservation, seeks to hire a consultant for the approximate amount of \$150,000 to reconcile the Brackenridge Park Master Plan, the Brackenridge Park Conservancy Cultural Landscape Plan, and other plans related to Brackenridge Park and the surrounding area. The Office of Historic Preservation will also execute a funding agreement with the Brackenridge Park Conservancy to provide the necessary support staff for the effort in an amount not to exceed \$75,000. On December 13, 2022, the Midtown TIRZ Board of Directors approved a Funding Agreement with the City through Resolution T31 2022-12-13-02R for an amount not to exceed \$225,000.00 for reconciliation of the plans.

ISSUE:

City Council consideration is requested for the approval of a Funding Agreement between the Midtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone #31 and the City's Office of Historic Preservation in an amount up to \$225,000.00 for a consultant to reconcile the 2017 Brackenridge Park Master

Plan, Brackenridge Park Conservancy Cultural Landscape Plan, and other plans related to Brackenridge Park and the surrounding area and to execute a contract with the Brackenridge Park Conservancy for the necessary staff support for the initiative.

The Brackenridge Park Stakeholder Advisory Committee will be engaged throughout the process and provide feedback on the reconciliation plan and priority project list. The Advisory Committee was reconstituted in February 2022 to facilitate public engagement and information sharing as the City and its partners proceed with existing and future opportunities within Brackenridge Park. The next meeting will be in June and will include an update on the next steps related to Phase 2 of the 2017 Bond project improvements and an overview of the proposed Reconciliation Plan and next steps to include a briefing on each of the following plans: 2017 Brackenridge Park Master Plan, Brackenridge Park Conservancy Cultural Landscape Plan, and the Midtown Regional Center Plan. City staff will return to City Council in August 2023 with a recommendation for the consultant. Staff will also return to a City Council B Session in late 2023 for a briefing on the Reconciliation Plan and Project list prior to finalization.

ALTERNATIVES:

If City Council chooses to not approve the Funding Agreement, the Reconciliation Plan will not be initiated and project improvements in Brackenridge Park may be delayed.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funding for this agreement is available through the tax increment produced by the Midtown TIRZ. There is no immediate fiscal impact to the City's General Fund.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of a Funding Agreement between the Midtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone and the City's Office of Historic Preservation in an amount up to \$225,000.00 for a consultant to reconcile the Brackenridge Park Master Plan, Brackenridge Park Conservancy Cultural Landscape Plan, and other plans related to Brackenridge Park and the surrounding area and to execute a contract with the Brackenridge Park Conservancy for the necessary staff support for the initiative. Funding is available in the Midtown TIRZ Fund.