



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
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Agenda Item Number: 2

Agenda Date: December 13, 2022

In Control: Community Health, Environment and Culture Committee

DEPARTMENT: Development Services Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Michael Shannon

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Transfer of operations and management of the Crane Bat Cave preserve from the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program (EAPP) to the Southern Edwards Plateau Habitat Conservation Plan (SEP-HCP).

SUMMARY:

Briefing and possible action on the transfer of operations and management of the Crane Bat Cave preserve from the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program (EAPP) to the Southern Edwards Plateau Habitat Conservation Plan (SEP-HCP).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The EAPP, administered by the Parks and Recreation Department, purchased the Crane Bat Cave preserve for protection of Edwards Aquifer recharge quality and quantity through the 2015 Proposition 1 (Prop 1) program for \$2,059,144.18 in 2020. Approximately 75 acres of this preserve are eligible for Karst Fauna Area (KFA) establishment, with a confirmed occupied feature present

(Medium Quality KFA). If approved, 40 acres of this preserve would be allocated to TxDOT for the Loop 1604 project to mitigate Karst impact. TxDOT has already transferred funds for this impact to the SEP-HCP. The remaining 35 acres would be available for SEP-HCP and would generate approximately 358 karst enrollment acres for future project enrollments.

Development Services Department, who administer the SEP-HCP, are proposing to reimburse the EAPP the full investment of Prop 1 funding (\$2,059,144.18) for the transfer of operations and management of the Crane Bat Cave preserve. SEP-HCP accepts that the transfer will require a conservation easement placed on the property and held by the Edwards Aquifer Conservancy; an aquifer protection layer via the conservation easement will remain on the land even with the transfer of management. Moving forward, this property would benefit from two layers of protection: EAPP conservation easement and SEP-HCP requirements. SEP-HCP would then be responsible for maintenance and management.

The current ordinance requires the SEP-HCP to share 50 percent of its revenues generated from enrollments on Prop 1 property with the EAPP. Alternatively, reimbursing the Prop 1 program the full initial investment results in substantially greater funding for the Prop 1 program. Additionally, this method is more administratively efficient and provides the Prop 1 program the ability to preserve more land by future purchases.

US Fish and Wildlife expressed support for the proposal in March 2022. The Southern Edwards Plateau Habitat Conservation Plan Coordinating Committee and Conservation Advisory Board considered this proposal on May 24th and 25th, 2022 respectively. Both boards recommended approval of the transfer.

ISSUE:

Approval of this proposal will require City Council to authorize this alternative funding arrangement in lieu of revenue sharing. Should this not be approved, the SEP-HCP will need to identify other methods to generate further karst enrollment acres.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If approved by City Council, the SEP-HCP would fully reimburse the EAPP the total initial investment of the 2015 Prop 1 funding for transfer of operations and management of the Crane Bat Cave preserve a total of \$2,059,144.18.

ALTERNATIVES:

The SEP-HCP program could utilize the existing funding structure and share revenues for enrolled properties with the EAPP. This alternative would result in significantly less funding for EAPP.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends Approval of the transfer of operations and management of the Crane Bat Cave preserve from EAPP to the SEP-HCP.