



Legislation Text

File #: 1991-2021, **Version:** 1

Background: This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Recreation and Parks Department to enter into contract with Watson General Contracting for the Stockbridge Elementary School Demolition Project. The contract amount is \$174,950.00, with a contingency of \$25,050.00, for a total of \$200,000.00 being authorized by this ordinance.

The Recreation and Parks Department purchased the former Stockbridge Elementary School site in 2020 with the assistance of a Clean Ohio Conservation Fund Grant through the Ohio Public Works Commission. The intent has been to demolish the school in order to create an urban forest as part of the entire 22 acre activated park space. This ordinance will allow the Director of Recreation and Parks to enter into a contract to demolish the vacant school building and pavement.

The Stockbridge Urban Forest Project is located in the city's Scioto Southland Community. This second phase of the project is to demolish the derelict elementary school and hard surfaces in order to prepare the site for trees and walking paths. The property is adjacent to the City's existing Stockbridge Park and will provide an additional 11 acres of parkland to the community. Columbus City Schools offered the property for sale and this was a unique opportunity to provide more park space and natural area in a heavily built out neighborhood with a significant deficit in green space. The Stockbridge Urban Forest Project will be the City's first pilot project to restore urban tree canopy on a large scale to one of the city's most hard hit communities for trees. To accomplish this, the Department has prepared a plan to raze the school, eliminate the hard scape, remediate the soil, and reforest much of the former school property. Thousands of native trees of mixed sizes will be planted and a 1 mile walking path will be installed. The result can be a unique case study of transforming an unusable neighborhood property into a significant activated 22 acre park and natural area.

Vendor Bid/Proposal Submissions (ODI designation status):

Bids were advertised through Vendor Services, in accordance with City Code Section 329, on June 3, 2021 and received by the Recreation and Parks Department on June 23, 2021. This project was also picked up by various local and regional plan rooms and distributed to their membership. Bids were received from the following companies:

Watson General Contracting (MAJ): \$174,950.00
Reclaim Company, LLC (MAJ): \$259,588.00

After reviewing the bids that were submitted, it was determined that Watson General Contracting was the lowest and most responsive bidder. Watson General Contracting and all proposed subcontractors have met code requirements with respect to prequalification, pursuant to relevant sections of Columbus City Code Chapter 329.

Principal Parties:

Watson General Contracting
PO Box 425, Newark, OH, 43058
Bill Watson, (740) 366-9066
Contract Compliance Number, Tax ID: 005357, 31-1429409
Contract Compliance Expiration Date: November 2, 2022

Emergency Justification: Emergency action is requested because Stockbridge Elementary School has been vacant since 2007 and is a severe health and safety risk to the community due to unwanted activity occurring in the building.

Benefits to the Public: Creating the Stockbridge Urban Forest provides a space for urban reforestation, in support of the tree canopy goals in the City’s Urban Forestry Master Plan. Residents in the neighborhood will benefit from a shaded and biodiverse 11 acre space that doubles the size of the existing Stockbridge Park, creating more space for recreation and respite from increasing summer temperatures.

Neighborhoods in the Far South area of Columbus face significant environmental stresses, including poor air quality, industrial land use degradation, lower than average life expectancy, and some of the city’s lowest tree density at 18% tree cover on average. The Stockbridge Urban Forest Project lies within a subset of this area with only 11% tree cover. The area surrounding Stockbridge Park ranks in the 80th to 90th percentile in the Respiratory Hazards Index according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s (US EPA) National Air Toxics Assessment. The area also ranks in the 80th to 90th percentile in the Proximity to Hazardous Waste Facilities according to the US EPA’s Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Information as well as the Toxic Concentrations of Wastewater Discharge according to the US EPA’s Risk Screening Environmental Indicators Model. Trees and green space provide proven benefits to urban residents, including improved air quality, water filtration, and cooling, all of which have physical and mental health benefits.

Community Input/Issues: The Far South Area Commission is in support of this project and the preservation of green space is supported in the Scioto Southland Area Plan. On March 6, 2020, a public open house to present the Urban Forestry Master Plan received input from communities across Columbus, including the Far South. Comments from the Far South community were consistent with their area plan recommendations and the Department’s ongoing engagement with the community. Residents recognize the need for additional park and street trees in their community. The community also supports policies that result in increased tree plantings to mitigate the impact of the area’s hard surfaces.

Area(s) Affected: Far South (64)

Master Plan Relation: This project supports the department’s Master Plan by protecting the environmental health and resilience of the city’s waterways, providing long term protection corridors for outdoor experiences, as well as improved and equitable access to trails and greenways.

Fiscal Impact: \$200,000.00 is budgeted and available from within the Recreation and Parks Voted Bond Fund 7702 to meet the financial obligations of this contract

To authorize the Director of Recreation and Parks to enter into contract with Watson General Contracting for the Stockbridge Elementary School Demolition Project; to authorize the transfer of \$200,000.00 within the Recreation and Parks Voted Bond Fund, to authorize the amendment of the 2020 Capital Improvements Budget; to authorize the expenditure of \$200,000.00 from the Recreation and Parks Voted Bond Fund; and to declare an emergency. (\$200,000.00)

WHEREAS, it is necessary to authorize the Director of the Recreation and Parks to enter into contract with Watson General Contracting for the Stockbridge Elementary School Demolition Project; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to authorize the transfer of \$200,000.00 within the Recreation and Parks Voted Bond Fund 7702; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to authorize the amendment of the 2020 Capital Improvements Budget Ordinance 2521-2020 in order to provide sufficient budget authority for this and future projects; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to authorize the expenditure of \$200,000.00 from the Recreation and Parks Voted Bond Fund 7702; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operations of the Recreation and Parks Department in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director to enter into contract with Watson General Contracting because

Stockbridge Elementary School is a severe health and safety risk to the community due to unwanted activity occurring in the vacant building, all for the preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety, and welfare and, **NOW, THEREFORE**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Director of Recreation and Parks be and is hereby authorized to enter into contract with Watson General Contracting for the Stockbridge Elementary School Demolition Project.

SECTION 2. That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated, and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

SECTION 3. That the City Auditor is authorized to make any accounting changes to revise the funding source for all contracts or contract modifications associated with this ordinance.

SECTION 4. That the City Auditor is hereby authorized to transfer the unencumbered balance in a project account to the unallocated balance account within the same fund upon receipt of certification by the Director of the Department administering said project that the project has been completed and the monies are no longer required for said project.

SECTION 5. That the transfer of \$200,000.00 or so much thereof as may be needed, is hereby authorized between projects within the Recreation and Parks Bond Fund 7702 per the account codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 6. That the 2020 Capital Improvements Budget Ordinance 2521-2020 is hereby amended as follows in order to provide sufficient budget authority for this ordinance and future projects.

Fund / Project / Project Name / Current / Change / Amended

Fund 7702; P512000-100000; New Development - Misc. (SIT Supported); \$3,241,219 / (\$200,000) / \$3,041,219

Fund 7702; P512024-100000; Stockbridge Elementary School Demolition 2021 (SIT Supported) / \$0 / \$200,000 / \$200,000

SECTION 7. For the purpose stated in Section 1, the expenditure of \$200,000.00 or so much thereof as may be necessary to pay the cost thereof, be and is hereby authorized from the Recreation and Parks Voted Bond Fund 7702 in object class 06 Capital Outlay per the accounting codes in the attachments to this ordinance.

SECTION 8. That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.