



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 0329-2021, **Version:** 1

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**Background:** This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Recreation and Parks Department to apply for grant funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Clean Ohio Trails Fund (COTF) which will be used to build a section of the Big Walnut Trail from Winchester Pike to Helsel Park.

The southern segment of the Big Walnut Trail is developing into one of the region's most scenic greenways. It is also putting the regional trail network within reach of thousands of residents of the Mid East neighborhoods of Columbus, recognized as one of the least served areas of the city for parks and trails. This project will build 1.25 miles of trail from its current end at Winchester Pike to Helsel Park, directly connecting to a local shared use path for the Hamilton and Refugee Road neighborhoods. This will be the first of two phases of south Big Walnut trail development, with a second phase continuing the trail to Nafzger Park. In 2020, the Department studied alternatives for this path alignment, including what wetlands or significant environmental assets are along the corridor. The project will include one bridge over Big Walnut Creek at Helsel Park and a connector path for the Edgewater Park and Harbor Boulevard neighborhoods.

ODNR administers statewide grant funding for the construction of trails and this ordinance authorizes an application for 2021 COTF grant funds only. ODNR requires that a resolution, ordinance, or other written documentation obligate funds for the project as part of the application. This ordinance is a commitment to provide the necessary match funds at a later date to satisfactorily complete the proposed project and become eligible for reimbursement under the terms and conditions of the grant. If the grant funding is awarded, future legislation will follow to authorize acceptance, appropriation, and expenditure of City funds from within the Recreation and Parks Voted Bond Fund.

**Principal Parties:**

Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks  
2045 Morse Road, E-2, Columbus, OH 43229  
Marlin Holloway, (614) 265-6471

**Emergency Justification:** Emergency action is requested in order to obtain approval to apply for this grant as it is required to be submitted by March 15, 2021.

**Benefits to the Public:** The Southeast area of Columbus lacks safe significant trail and park access. The timing of constructing a greenway trail along the Big Walnut Creek ties directly to the city's goal of providing a lift to inner city neighborhoods cut off from safe and easy access to greenways and outdoor experiences. The construction costs estimated in this applications relies heavily upon outside funding assistance, such as the Clean Ohio Trails Fund, to achieve these goals.

**Community Input/Issues:** The department has been engaging with the key stakeholders of the neighborhoods involved and will continue seeking input throughout the project.

**Area(s) Affected:** Mid East (57)

**Master Plan Relation:** This project will support the Recreation and Parks' Master Plan by improving access to trails and greenways corridors while providing safe connections to the regional trail network for nearby neighborhoods.

**Fiscal Impact:** No fiscal action is required at this time. Future legislation will accept, appropriate, and encumber funding

for this project as needed if the grant is awarded.

To authorize the Director of Recreation and Parks to apply for grant funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Clean Ohio Trails Fund (COTF) which will be used to build a section of the Big Walnut Trail from Winchester Pike to Helsel Park; and to declare an emergency. (\$0.00)

**WHEREAS**, it is necessary to authorize the Director of the Recreation and Parks to apply for grant funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Clean Ohio Trails Fund (COTF) which will be used to build a section of the Big Walnut Trail from Winchester Pike to Helsel Park; and

**WHEREAS**, this ordinance shows the City of Columbus's support for all application requirements; 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 apply for this grant funding so the grant application can be submitted by March 15, 2021, all for the preservation of public health, peace, property, safety, and welfare; **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 and directed to apply for grant funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Clean Ohio Trails Fund (COTF) which will be used to build a section of the Big Walnut Trail from Winchester Pike to Helsel Park. This Council hereby supports this action.

**SECTION 2.** That this ordinance authorizes an application for the grant funds only and is not a commitment to expend City funds.

**SECTION 3.** That future legislation will accept, appropriate, and encumber funding for this project as needed if the grant is awarded.

**SECTION 4.** That the City of Columbus does agree to obligate the funds required to satisfactorily complete the proposed project and become eligible for reimbursement under the terms and conditions of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Clean Ohio Trails Fund (COTF) Program.

**SECTION 5.** 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.