



Legislation Text

File #: 0330-2021, **Version:** 1

Background: This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Recreation and Parks Department to apply for grant funding from the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program which will be used to acquire three properties for preservation of the city's natural resources.

OPWC administers statewide grant funding to preserve natural areas and greenway corridors and this ordinance authorizes an application for 2021 Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program grant funds only. OPWC 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.

This grant application is intended to secure funding towards fee simple acquisition of three sites in Columbus. Two sites along Big Walnut Creek will allow for the expansion of Cherrybottom Park in the Northeast area of the city. One site along Mason Run in the city's Mid East area will protect a stream corridor. Additional information about these sites is below.

Cherrybottom Park Expansion - Capitol City Baptist and the Venice Club (Two Sites):

Big Walnut Creek is considered one of the highest quality major waterways in Central Ohio. For several years, the Recreation and Parks Department has focused on the north segment of the creek, looking to acquire and preserve valuable riparian corridor that serves as a buffer zone between land and water. Acquiring two adjacent properties would add 7.3 acres to Cherrybottom Park, a significant 90 acre parkland between Morse Road and State Route 161. The first site is referred to as Capitol City Baptist and consists of 3.25 acre tract of natural land along the top of a ridge overlooking Big Walnut Creek. The second site is referred to as the Venice Club and consists of a 4.1 acre tract of land directly along Big Walnut Creek, including 45 feet of stream frontage, 750 feet of forested cliff side, and two high quality wetland areas. Acquiring these sites provides substantial long term preservation for water quality, forest preservation, protection of habitat, and future new public access for the neighborhoods along Sunbury Road.

Refugee Road/Mason Run Preservation:

Mason Run is a primary tributary stream of Big Walnut Creek that runs from John Glenn Regional Airport to Winchester Pike. This project would protect a substantial tract of 78.6 acres of land on the city's southeast side, between Refugee Road and Kimberly Parkway. The site contains approximately 56 acres of woodlands and approximately 21 acres of open meadow with floodplain. Five existing access points surround the perimeter of the property. The spans of the site, from Kimberly Parkway to Refugee Road, is over a half mile long, placing almost 5,000 residents within a 10 minute walk. In 2007, the department acquired an adjacent 21 acre conservation property along Mason Run. In 2009, a 24 acre natural area at the confluence of Mason Run and Big Walnut was acquired. The total impact is almost 1.25 miles of connected stream corridor protection.

Principal Parties:

Ohio Public Works Commission, Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program, District 3
65 East State Street, Suite 312
Columbus, OH 43215
Jennifer Kline, 614-752-8118

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 19, 2021.

Benefits to the Public: Protection of the city's high quality waterways, greenway corridors, ravines, and urban forests is of great benefit to current and future generations. These sites are within rapidly urbanizing areas of the city and preservation of key natural sites is one of the main missions of Recreation and Parks. Conservation of the sites proposed relies heavily upon outside funding assistance to achieve these benefits.

Community Input/Issues: During the past decade, residents in these communities, and the city at large, have expressed strong priority for more protected stream corridors, headwater tributaries, access to nature, walking paths, and urban forest conservation.

Area(s) Affected: Rocky Fork-Blacklick (33), Mid East (57)

Master Plan Relation: This project will support the Recreation and Parks' Master Plan by protecting the environmental health and resilience of the city's waterways. It will provide long term protected corridors for walking, biking, and outdoor experiences while improving the equitable access to trails and greenways.

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 Public Works Commission (OPWC) Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program which will be used to acquire three properties for preservation of the city's natural resources; 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 Public Works Commission (OPWC) Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program which will be used to acquire three properties for preservation of the city's natural resources; 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 19, 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 Public Works Commission (OPWC) Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program which will be used to acquire three properties for preservation of the city's natural resources. 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 Public Works Commission (OPWC) Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation 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.