



Legislation Text

File #: 2096-2023, **Version:** 1

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) H2Ohio Program. The H2Ohio Program is accepting applications for funding to preserve and restore natural areas. If awarded, the funding will be used to restore wetland areas at Three Creeks Park.

ODNR administers grant funding through the H2Ohio Program to support projects focused on nutrient reduction and water quality improvement. The Recreation and Parks Department intends to submit a grant application that will include a focus on Three Creeks Park in the project scope. Three Creeks Park is a 1,097 acre park in the Far South Community and is joint-managed by the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department and Franklin County Metro Parks. Grant applications are due in August of 2023 and notification of the grants being successfully awarded is expected in November 2023. Projects are required to be completed within a two year timeline. Project completion would be expected in early 2026. This reimbursable grant is expected to be approximately \$500,000.00 to \$1,000,000.00 and no match is required for this grant.

Three Creeks Park was historically farmed but wetlands have been developing over the past decade as the land has naturally converted from agricultural use. It is important that the Recreation and Parks Department apply for this grant to restore the wetlands at Three Creeks Park, as 90 percent of all wetlands in Ohio have been lost. Wetlands improve water quality and provide flood control. Wetlands serve as critical habitat for a variety of wildlife and capture carbon dioxide. Additionally, this grant would allow for the planting of additional trees to help support the Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP) and the low canopy within the far south of the City. If the grant funding is awarded, future legislation will follow to authorize acceptance, appropriation, and expenditure of City funds.

Principal Parties:

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
H2Ohio Program
2045 Morse Road, Building B
Columbus, Ohio 43229

Benefits to the Public: Protection of the city's high quality waterways and wetlands is of great benefit to current and future generations. Wetlands improve water quality, improve flood control, reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the air, and serve as a critical habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. The restoration of wetlands at Three Creeks Park will also support the Urban Forestry Master Plan with additional tree plantings.

Community Input/Issues: The Recreation and Parks Department has engaged the Williams Creek Community and the Far South Area Commission to gain additional input from the community.

Area(s) Affected: Far South (64)

Master Plan Relation: This project will support the Recreation and Parks' Master Plan by conserving, protecting, and enhancing the City's natural resources and overall environmental health, benefitting current and future generations of residents.

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) H2Ohio water quality initiative which will be used to restore wetlands at Three Creeks Park. (\$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) H2Ohio Grant Program which will be used to preserve and restore the City's wetlands ; and

WHEREAS, this ordinance shows the City of Columbus's support for all application requirements; and

WHEREAS, it has become necessary in the usual daily operations of the Recreation and Parks Department in that it is necessary to authorize the Director to apply for this grant funding so the grant application can be submitted, 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) H2Ohio Grant Program which will be used to preserve and restore the City's wetlands. 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) H2Ohio Grant Program.

SECTION 5. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.