

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****September 21, 2021**

Page 1 of 1

SUBJECT: OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PROGRAM UPDATE

The purpose of this report is to provide background information and a status update on the Open Space Conservation Program in advance of a presentation to City Council in October.

The Open Space Conservation Program and an interdepartmental Open Space Working Group were established in the fall of 2019. The program's mission is to conserve high quality natural areas as the City grows to provide environmental benefits and recreational opportunities that support economic development and enhance the livability and desirability of Fort Worth. The conservation of open space promotes multiple City goals:

- Ecosystem preservation
- Stream, river, and lake health
- Community health
- Passive recreation
- Flood control
- Equitable access to natural spaces
- Economic development

In June 2020, the City Council approved a contract with the Trust for Public Land to:

- Develop a data-driven, publicly accessible mapping tool to identify and prioritize open space throughout the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction
- Perform benchmarking of other cities' open space programs
- Develop funding and policy recommendations
- Develop a "story map" website highlighting key information in an engaging way
- Assist the City with public and stakeholder engagement
- Document findings and recommendations in a summary report

The majority of TPL's scope of work discussed above will be complete this October. Once complete, TPL will provide two years of support to assist the City's Information Technology Solutions Department with annual updates to the prioritization tool.

In addition to countless meetings with City staff and partners at the North Central Texas Council of Governments, Streams & Valleys, and the Tarrant Regional Water District, extensive public and stakeholder engagement has been undertaken throughout the course of TPL's effort. Two public meetings, two stakeholder meetings, four survey presentations, three policy small group meetings, and over 1,400 survey respondents provided feedback that informed TPL's prioritization criteria and policy recommendations. A third stakeholder and public meeting will be held this fall to share TPL's findings, present the story map, and show the community how to use the prioritization tool. Staff will ask stakeholders to share the story map and tool with their networks and encourage further engagement with the program.

More information can be found on the program website: www.FortWorthOpenSpace.org
Questions can be directed to Brandi Kelp, Senior Planner and Open Space Team Lead, at 817-392-7901.

David Cooke
City Manager