

MEMORANDUM

TO: Donna Barron, City Manager

FROM: Mendie White, Sustainability Manager

DATE: January 28, 2019

SUBJECT: Approval of Resolution Recognizing the Necessity of Protecting the Natural Areas (Greenbelts) Adjacent to Creeks and Other Waterways; Using the Denton County Greenbelt Plan (“Plan”) as a Tool for Preserving Greenbelts; Endorsing the Plan as an Urgent Regional Program for the County, Cities, Towns and Utilities to Help Protect Water Quality in Local Watersheds; and Expressing the City of Lewisville’s Intent to Participate in Implementing Strategies That Will Preserve and Protect the Environment and Safeguard the Public Welfare.

BACKGROUND

The Plan was created through a collaboration of local stakeholders, including Denton County, Upper Trinity Regional Water District, University of North Texas, and multiple city/town officials and staff. It provides a free voluntary toolkit to encourage coordination between local stakeholders to preserve and protect existing greenbelt assets throughout Denton County.

The Plan defines a greenbelt as the “vegetated portion of land typically adjacent to area streams, creeks, rivers or lakes that is set aside for preservation purposes.” As the County continues to experience fast population growth, development will continue to occur at an increased pace. The Plan provides a guide for stakeholders to prioritize greenbelt corridors and associated streams through a variety of strategies. These strategies were developed based on a comprehensive study commissioned by the Upper Trinity Conservation Trust, Denton County, and Upper Trinity Regional Water District. The study emphasized identification of existing greenbelt areas along the County’s major streams and the Elm Fork of the Trinity River, with identified opportunities for developing and expanding greenbelt corridors and prioritizing these corridors using a watershed management approach.

The Plan identified approximately 1,225 miles of “priority streams” within Denton County that were considered to be significant contributors to local water supply reservoirs. Greenbelts serve an essential function in filtering and sequestering stormwater in riparian zones bordering these streams, resulting in improved quality of water actually entering the stream. Conserving and protecting these natural assets through a coordinated effort among stakeholders is vital to maintaining ecological and water quality functions in these priority zones. The Plan was adopted on August 15, 2017, by the Denton County Commissioner’s Court and has since been adopted by multiple Denton County entities, including Aubrey, Pilot Point, Flower Mound, Corinth, Justin, Lake Cities MUA, Hickory Creek, and Double Oak. Sanger and Denton are currently in the process of adoption.

ANALYSIS

The Denton County Greenbelt Plan aligns with the Lewisville 2025 Plan Big Move #1: Green Centerpiece, Big Move #2: Extending the Green, and Big Move #9: Sustainability. Additionally, it supports the watershed protection goals laid out in the City of Lewisville's Storm Water Management Plan. It provides the opportunity for community engagement and interdepartmental collaboration on an important regional issue with the strength of a county wide outreach campaign and a toolkit for customizing local programs and initiatives, as appropriate.

The City's adoption of the Plan does not commit the City to adopt any new regulations and/or budget additional money. The Plan is merely a guide. It provides a diverse menu of resources for stakeholders to implement strategies to protect and preserve their greenbelts. These resources will assist staff during our Development Code Overhaul project and help inform our decisions when planning future CIP or maintenance projects relating to these greenbelt areas. The resources that the Plan provides include:

- Maps, data, and comprehensive analysis of natural aquatic resources specific to Denton County
- Public awareness campaigns (brochures, videos, bill inserts, public speakers, school curricula, etc.)
- Recommended protection measures
- Resources for private landowners
- Funding sources and opportunities
- Greenbelt Design Criteria and Standards
- Greenbelt Trail Standards
- Implementation strategies

The Plan provides a common vision to preserve natural assets that play a crucial role in water quality in Denton County. It allows municipalities, developers, landowners, and other local stakeholders to coordinate efforts to strategically preserve the highest priority greenbelt areas and protect our valuable water supply while still ensuring economic growth. The plan may be found in its entirety here:

<http://www.utct.org/pdfFiles/Final%20DCGBP%20For%20the%20Future.pdf>

The Sustainability Manager is working with a staff committee with internal stakeholders to develop a Lewisville-specific approach to incorporating elements of the Plan, as appropriate. While the Plan is a guide, it will have impacts on ongoing policies and have potential budget implications in the future.

RECOMMENDATION

City staff recommends approval of the resolution in support of the Denton County Greenbelt Plan.