

CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM DEPARTMENT HEAD'S SUMMARY FORM

DEPARTMENT: Park and Recreation

CITY CLERK DEPT.

AGENDA DATE: 3/20/07

07 MAR 12 PM 2:58

CONTACT PERSON/PHONE: Norman C. Merrifield/541-4910

DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: All

SUBJECT:

Rio Bosque Wetlands Park ("Rio Bosque")

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

This resolution supports the management of Rio Bosque, which is the University of Texas at El Paso, and there recommendation to be communicated to the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation Albuquerque Area Office, requesting they accept UTEP's "Rio Bosque Alternative" to be incorporated into the Enviornmental Assessment and selected as the Preferred Alternative for the proposed "El Paso County Riverside Canal and Structure Improvement Project.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:

Has the Council previously considered this item or a closely related one?

Yes, when the original contact was signed between the City of El Paso and the University of Texas at El Paso allowing UTEP to provide the management service for this 372 acre nature park.

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

How will this item be funded? Has the item been budgeted? If so, identify funding source by account numbers and description of account. Does it require a budget transfer?

N/A

BOARD / COMMISSION ACTION:

Enter appropriate comments or N/A

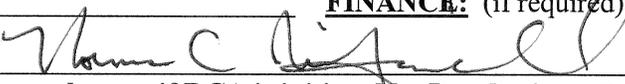
N/A

*****REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION*****

LEGAL: (if required) _____

FINANCE: (if required) _____

DEPARTMENT HEAD: _____


(Example: if RCA is initiated by Purchasing, client department should sign also)
Information copy to appropriate Deputy City Manager

APPROVED FOR AGENDA: _____

CITY MANAGER: _____

DATE: _____

RESOLUTION

CITY CLERK DEPT.
07 MAR 19 PM 5:03

WHEREAS, Rio Bosque Wetlands Park and surrounding areas (“Rio Bosque”) is a 372-acre nature area owned by the City of El Paso (the “City”) and managed under license agreement by the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) with the goal of re-establishing the mosaic of native habitats characteristic of El Paso’s river valley in pre-settlement days; and

WHEREAS, Rio Bosque was designated in 1993 as the site for creation of a shallow-water emergent wetland as mitigation for impacts associated with the federally-funded construction of the Rio Grande American Canal Extension and with maintenance dredging on the Rio Grande Rectification Project; and

WHEREAS, to date, the mitigation commitment has not been realized due to lack of water at Rio Bosque during the growing season, thereby hindering the realization of Rio Bosque’s full biological, educational, recreational and economic potential; and

WHEREAS, UTEP and others have identified potential negative impacts to Rio Bosque by the proposed “El Paso County Riverside Canal and Structure Improvement Project” (“the Project”) that would be built by El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 (El Paso No. 1) with funding from the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR); and

WHEREAS, UTEP has submitted the “Rio Bosque Alternative” for consideration as an additional alternative to be included in USBR’s draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Project; and

WHEREAS, Texas Parks & Wildlife, the Texas Forest Service and many other organizations and individuals have endorsed UTEP’s “Rio Bosque Alternative” and recommended it be selected as the Preferred Alternative by the EA; and

WHEREAS, the “Rio Bosque Alternative” proposes the following five modifications to the Project that will mitigate the Project’s negative impacts and help achieve the original 1993 mitigation commitment of creating a shallow-water emergent wetland at Rio Bosque:

- Constructing a turn-out from the Riverside Canal connecting to Rio Bosque’s water channel to permit delivery of irrigation water made available through any assignments or transfers of water rights for the benefit of Rio Bosque;

- Establishing an administrative mechanism to enable long-term water-rights transfers from willing sellers or donors for the benefit of Rio Bosque;
- Constructing a connection at the downstream end of Rio Bosque to permit water that has flowed through the park and surrounding area to be delivered to the Riverside Canal for use by El Paso No. 1 irrigators;
- Diverting a flow of water through Rio Bosque during the irrigation season, measuring water flowing into and out of the park and surrounding area, and charging only the actual volume consumed against Rio Bosque’s irrigation water allotment once water rights are secured for the benefit of Rio Bosque;
- Constructing a walkway across the Riverside Canal near the Partidor Check Structure to facilitate pedestrian access to Rio Bosque from City of El Paso property located on Socorro Road; and

WHEREAS, the City is supportive of the Rio Bosque Alternative.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS:

THAT, the City Manager be authorized to send a letter on behalf of the El Paso City Council to be addressed and delivered to the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation Albuquerque Area Office, expressing the City of El Paso’s desire that the “Rio Bosque Alternative” be incorporated into the Environmental Assessment and selected as the Preferred Alternative for the proposed “El Paso County Riverside Canal and Structure Improvement Project.”

ADOPTED this ____ day of March, 2007.

CITY CLERK DEPT.
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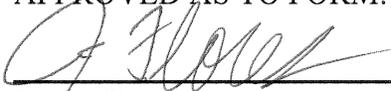
THE CITY OF EL PASO

John F. Cook, Mayor

ATTEST:

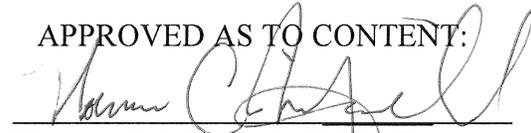
Richarda Duffy Momsen
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



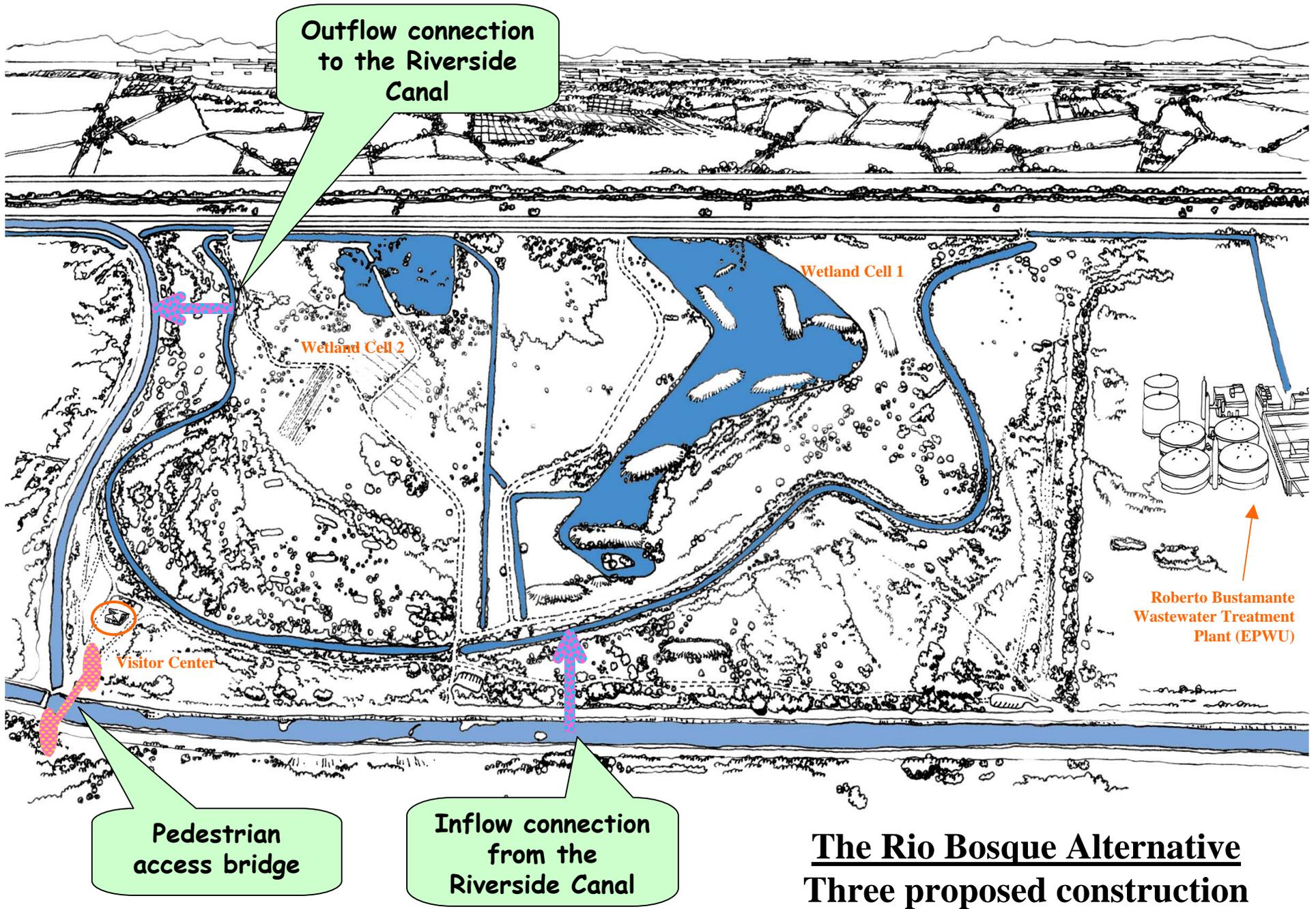
Josette Flores
Assistant City Attorney

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:



Norman C. Merrifield, Ed.D., Director
Parks and Recreation Department

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The Rio Bosque Alternative
Three proposed construction modifications