



# City of San Antonio

## Legislation Details (With Text)

**File #:** 20-5055

**Type:** Real Property Acquisition

**In control:** City Council A Session

**On agenda:** 9/17/2020

**Title:** Ordinance approving the acquisition of a conservation easement over the Edwards Aquifer Contributing Zone on a 1,181.19 acre tract of land known as the Monier Ranch in Bandera County and Medina County from Monier Ranch Ltd, at a cost of \$2,367,312.15, to be funded through the voter approved 2015 Sales Tax Proposition 1 Edwards Aquifer Protection Program included in the FY 2020 – FY 2025 Capital Improvement Program. [Colleen M. Bridger, MPH, PhD, Assistant City Manager; Homer Garcia III, Director, Parks and Recreation]

**Sponsors:**

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:** 1. Draft Conservation Easement for Monier Ranch Property, 2. Map, 3. Contracts Disclosure Form - John L. Monier, Monier Ranch, Conservation Easement Acquisition, 4. Ordinance 2020-09-17-0653

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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**DEPARTMENT:** Parks and Recreation

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Homer Garcia III

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** City Wide

**SUBJECT:**

Edwards Aquifer Protection Program Acquisition

**SUMMARY:**

Consideration of an ordinance authorizing payment in the amount of \$2,367,312.15, to be funded through the voter approved 2015 Sales Tax Proposition 1 Edwards Aquifer Protection Program included in the FY 2020 - FY 2025 Capital Improvement Program, to Texas Heritage Title as escrow agent for title on a conservation easement, due diligence and closing costs on a 1,181.19 acre tract of land known as the Monier Ranch located in Bandera County and Medina County.

This action also authorizes the execution of necessary documents to accomplish said acquisition.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The purpose of the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program is to obtain property rights by fee simple purchase, conservation easements or donations of land over the sensitive zones of the Edwards Aquifer. This program was initiated in May 2000 when voters approved Proposition 3, a 1/8-cent sales tax venue up to \$45 million for the acquisition of lands over the Edwards Aquifer for parks and watershed protection. Proposition 3 ran from 2000 through 2005 and was limited to Bexar County.

The 2005 Proposition 1 program was an extension of the initial voter-approved Edwards Aquifer protection endeavor and was extended by voters in 2010 and renewed again in 2015. Changes in state legislation allowed watershed protection activities to expand outside of Bexar County.

The proposed purchase of a conservation easement on the 1,181.19 acre Monier Ranch is located over the Edwards Aquifer Contributing Zone and consists of 320.89 acres in Bandera County and 860.3 acres in Medina County. The property was initially identified through use of the Scientific Evaluation Team's GIS Spatial Model and subsequent site visits identified favorable recharge features on the properties. The Monier Ranch is located within the Hondo Creek watershed which contributes to significant recharge of the Edwards Aquifer. The Edwards Aquifer Authority issued geological assessments of the properties confirming that preservation would provide moderate-to-high water quantity and high water quality benefits for the City of San Antonio.

The Monier Ranch is located adjacent to Hill County State Natural Area and is in close proximity to numerous conservation easement properties protected through Edwards Aquifer Protection Program. If approved, inclusion of this property will increase the total protected lands under the City's aquifer protection program by 1,181.19 acres for a total of 161,511 acres.

## **ISSUE:**

This ordinance authorizes payment in the amount of \$2,367,312.15 to Texas Heritage Title as escrow agent for title on a conservation easement, due diligence and closing costs on a 1,181.19 acre tract of land known as the Monier Ranch located in Bandera County and Medina County.

Acquisition of this property is consistent with policy for implementation of the Proposition 1 Edwards Aquifer Protection Venue Project as approved by voters. The City Council-appointed Conservation Advisory Board reviewed and recommended this acquisition at the July 8, 2020 meeting.

## **ALTERNATIVES:**

An alternative would be to defer acquisition until a later date subject to the property owner's willingness to sell real estate interests and future market conditions. Additionally, other properties could be targeted for acquisition foregoing this conservation easement and losing the moderate-to-high water quantity and high water quality benefits and the opportunity to protect additional acreage within the Hondo Creek watersheds in Bandera County and Medina County.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

This acquisition is a one-time expenditure in the amount of \$2,367,312.15 for purchase of a 1,181.19 acre

conservation easement located in Bandera County and Medina County over the Edwards Aquifer Contributing Zone funded through the voter approved 2015 Sales Tax Proposition 1 Edwards Aquifer Protection Program included in the FY 2020 - FY 2025 Capital Improvement Program.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the acquisition of a conservation easement on the 1,181.19 acre Monier Ranch in the amount of \$2,367,312.15 to be funded through the voter approved 2015 Sales Tax Proposition 1 Edwards Aquifer Protection Program included in the FY 2020 - FY 2025 Capital Improvement Program.

The Contracts Disclosure Form required by the Ethics ordinance is attached.