



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:** 18-5254

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**Agenda Item Number:** 7.

**Agenda Date:** 10/4/2018

**In Control:** City Council A Session

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**DEPARTMENT:** Parks and Recreation

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Xavier D. Urrutia

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** City Wide

### **SUBJECT:**

Edwards Aquifer Protection Program - Conservation Easement Acquisition for Briseno Ranch

### **SUMMARY:**

Consideration of an Ordinance authorizing payment in the amount of \$1,530,156.03 to Texas Heritage Title Company as escrow agent for title on a conservation easement, due diligence and closing costs on a 1,175.144 acre tract of land known as the Briseno Ranch located in Medina County, Texas.

### **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 Briseno Ranch is located over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge and Contributing Zones 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 Briseno Ranch is located within the Medina River watershed which combined with faults and fractures contributes to significant recharge of the Edwards Aquifer. The Edwards Aquifer Authority issued a geological assessment of the property confirming that preservation would provide moderate-to-high water quantity and high water quality benefits for the City of San Antonio.

The Briseno Ranch is located directly adjacent to another Edwards Aquifer protected property. If approved, inclusion of these properties will increase the total protected lands under the City's aquifer protection program by approximately 1,175.144 acres for a total of 157,256 acres.

#### **ISSUE:**

This Ordinance authorizes payment in the amount of \$1,530,156.03 to Texas Heritage Title Company as escrow agent for title on a conservation easement, due diligence and closing costs on a 1,175.144 acre tract of land known as the Briseno Ranch located in Medina County, Texas.

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 the acquisition of this conservation easement at the May 23, 2018 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 quality and high water quantity benefits and the opportunity to protect additional acreage within the Medina River watershed.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

This conservation easement acquisition in the amount of \$1,530,156.03 has been appropriated through Proposition 1 of the Edwards Aquifer Protection Sales Tax fund included in the FY 2019-2024 Capital Improvement Program Budget.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of this acquisition of a conservation easement on the 1,175.114-acre tract of land known as the Briseno Ranch for a total of \$1,530,156.03 under the Proposition 1 Edwards Aquifer Protection Venue Project.

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