



**Application for a Reimbursable Grant from the Texas
Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) for
Improvements to the Hans & Pat Suter Wildlife Refuge**

City Council Meeting
January 28, 2025



Background



- The Hans & Pat Suter Wildlife Refuge is a well-known park with a 1.3-mile nature trail for observing & exploring the diverse, coastal ecosystem of the Oso Bay.
 - Parks & Recreation, in conjunction with the Grants Program, is requesting to submit an application to TPWD for necessary recreational trail improvements to the Refuge.
 - This proposal includes much needed improvements to the current asphalt trail.
 - Additionally, a grant in the amount of \$346,991 was previously awarded to PARD in 2023 by the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program to fund similar improvements to the Refuge (Ord#033223).
 - This proposal to apply for the TPWD grant is an effort to secure additional funding for the construction phases.
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Nature Trail



- It is proposed to resurface/convert the current trail to an 8-foot-wide, concrete trail (ADA accessible).



- The new trail will improve safety & resiliency to sustain inclement weather; improve accessible tourism and recreation.





Proposed Timeline



- Texas Parks & Wildlife Department will notify awarded recipients 1st week of June 2025.
 - Funds will be available for reimbursement beginning June 2026 after one-year environmental review by TxDOT and Federal Highways.
 - TPWD allows four years for project completion after the environmental review is complete.
 - Construction bid process for the trail improvements will follow.
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Policy Alignment



- The Refuge provides a unique opportunity to use the area's natural resources for a successful, nature-based recreation & tourism program.
 - Nature-based recreation/tourism strategies can increase revenues & strengthen economic development by creating & supporting local nature businesses/hospitality industries.
 - A strategy of the 10-year Parks & Rec Master Plan is to utilize partnerships with birding businesses to promote/advertise birding activities & tours.
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Recommendation



- Staff recommends approval of the Resolution to apply for a grant from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department for recreational trail improvements to the Hans & Pat Suter Wildlife Refuge.