



Legislation Text

File #: 11-1570, **Version:** 1

Resolution to Approve a Land Management Plan for the Conservation Easement at the Ann Arbor Maintenance Facility (Wheeler Service Center) Wetland Mitigation Area
Attached for your review and action is a resolution to approve a Land Management Plan as Exhibit E to the existing Conservation Easement at the Ann Arbor Maintenance Facility (Wheeler Service Center) wetland mitigation area.

The corrective action plan for restoration of the wetland mitigation area as part of ITB-4192 includes the planting of 250 trees in 2.23 acres of forested wetland. This quantity was negotiated with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and Pittsfield Township, and reflects a fifty-nine percent (59%) reduction in the number of trees that would have otherwise been required to meet the conditions of the MDEQ and Township wetland permits. This reduction represents a density of 162 trees per acre surviving at the end of the monitoring period rather than the original permit requirement of 300 trees per acre. This change allows 609 fewer trees to be planted during the current project than would have otherwise been required, based on Township planting guidelines that allow for 20% mortality.

The reduction in tree density was desired by the City because the other conditions of the MDEQ and Township permits will be more achievable if the tree density is decreased. In particular, the permit requires less than ten percent (10%) cover by invasive species, maintained by practices such as herbicide and prescribed burning, which are currently used by the City on site. If trees are planted in the wetland area at the original density of 300 trees per acre—the equivalent of one tree every thirteen (13) feet on-center—the logistical constraints for using these invasive species control methods will reduce effectiveness and add cost. A density reduction was also desired so that greater attention could be given to the survival of the trees that are planted rather than assuming there will be high mortality and continuing the cycle of tree re-planting. The original planting of 780 trees during initial wetland construction yielded 80% mortality. The corrective action plan includes measures to prevent tree mortality so that the density requirements can be achieved in a timely manner without extensive re-planting. Both the MDEQ and the Township recommended additional measures for tree survival, such as the topsoil mounds and tree specifications included in the contract for ITB-4192, and agreed to the new density standard in order to help the City dedicate the resources for these measures to take place.

For agreeing to these changes, the MDEQ is requiring that the City approve Exhibit E, Land Management Plan, as an attachment to the existing Conservation Easement for the wetland mitigation area. The City will benefit from having this agreed-upon plan because the existing Conservation Easement requires the City to obtain written permission every time management actions are taken. Because Exhibit E details each management objective and practice, the City will be able to engage in highly effective time-sensitive practices such as prescribed burning without the constraints of a lag time for MDEQ approval.

Staff is recommending approval of the attached Land Management Plan as Exhibit E to the existing

Conservation Easement, also attached.

Prepared by: Lara Treemore Spears, Natural Area Technician
Reviewed by: Matt Kulhanek, Fleet and Facilities Manager
Craig Hupy, P.E., Interim Public Services Administrator
Approved by: Steven D. Powers, City Administrator

Whereas, The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and Pittsfield Township are requiring that corrective actions be taken, in order for the wetland mitigation area constructed at the Ann Arbor Maintenance Facility (Wheeler Service Center) to meet the requirements of the MDEQ and Township wetland permits;

Whereas, The City will realize operational benefits by reducing the tree density from the original permit requirements when implementing the corrective actions;

Whereas, The MDEQ and Pittsfield Township have agreed to reduce tree density on the condition that a Land Management Plan be approved as Exhibit E to the existing Conservation Easement;

Whereas, The City will realize operational benefits by modifying the Conservation Easement to include management activities;

RESOLVED, That the City Council approve the attached Exhibit E, Land Management Plan, for Conservation Easement with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality;

RESOLVED, That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute the Agreement on behalf of the City following approval as to form by the City Attorney and as to substance by the City Administrator; and

RESOLVED, That Council authorizes the City Administrator to take the necessary administrative actions to implement this resolution.