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A Bigger & Brighter Future for the Shoal Creek Trail *Shoal Creek Conservancy Kicks Off Trail Planning Process*

AUSTIN, TEXAS – Today, Shoal Creek Conservancy announced the kickoff of an exciting new project to engage the community in the creation of the Shoal Creek Vision to Action Trail Plan. This Plan will not only lay groundwork for major improvements to the existing Shoal Creek Trail, but will create a framework for extending the Trail northward past U.S. 183. The Shoal Creek Trail currently runs 3.25 miles from Lady Bird Lake to 38th Street. When complete, the new Trail will span over 10 miles and link destinations such as the Northern Walnut Creek Trail, the Domain, J.J. Pickle Research Campus, the University of Texas, and Downtown Austin.

“Imagine walking or riding your bike on a safe, continuous pathway from downtown Austin to the Domain,” shared **Joanna Wolaver, Executive Director of Shoal Creek Conservancy**. “The future Shoal Creek Trail will serve both as an alternative transportation corridor and a peaceful, revitalizing setting to experience the creek’s wildlife, natural features and historic places. The expanded Trail will encourage green, human-powered transportation, provide a setting for outdoor family activities, and inspire Austinites to discover Shoal Creek’s hidden natural and historic gems,” added **Wolaver**.

Over the next 9 months, the Conservancy, in partnership with the City of Austin, will work with stakeholders to develop a community-driven master plan for the Trail. The Plan will guide its overall look and feel and identify gaps and opportunities for connecting existing segments of the trail. The Plan will also recommend phasing and routes for extending the trail. The resulting plan will be submitted to City Council for consideration and adoption. This process will be led by a team of skilled and experienced planners at McCann Adams Studio and Siglo Group. It will also benefit from the pro bono expertise of Certified Heritage Interpreter and Certified Interpretive Planner Ted Lee Eubanks of Fermata, Inc. The Plan will be guided by a Community Advisory Group and a Technical Advisory Group, consisting of City staff.

Local stakeholders can add their input to the planning process by attending the public meetings or joining the Community Advisory Group. “Incorporating stakeholder feedback is key to ensuring that the Shoal Creek Trail is redeveloped in a way that makes sense for the community and that facilitates maximal accessibility for people of all abilities,” said **Wolaver**. “Listening to and learning from community members about how they currently use the Trail, or, conversely, why they do not, will illuminate ways to foster increased use of the Trail through design improvements. Their insights will also help to guide the alignment and design of the proposed Trail extension,” she added.

“The Shoal Creek Trail is an identified priority trail in the council-adopted Urban Trails Master Plan. This effort will grow Austin’s expanding urban trail network by envisioning connection from the Shoal Creek Trail to the Northern Walnut Creek Trail to the north and to the Butler Hike and Bike Trail and the regional Violet Crown Trail to the south. We look forward to working with Shoal Creek Conservancy and the broader community to develop the Plan in the coming months,” stated **Janae Ryan, Urban Trails Program Manager at City of Austin**

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Public Works Department.

To learn more and get involved as a stakeholder, please contact info@shoalcreekconservancy.org. The first of three public meetings to develop the plan will be held in June with more details forthcoming.

This community project is made possible by private donations from the Downtown Austin Alliance, Jack and Carolyn Long, Constructive Ventures, the Georgia B. Lucas Foundation Fund, and the Charles and Betti Saunders Foundation Fund. “We are extremely grateful for their dedication to our community and their support of this project,” concluded **Ted Siff, President of the Board of Shoal Creek Conservancy.**

Shoal Creek runs through the heart of Austin, Texas. In 1839, it was the city’s original western boundary. Today, it is an artery into its urban core. The mission of Shoal Creek Conservancy is to restore, protect, and enhance the ecological, social, and cultural vibrancy of Shoal Creek by engaging the public and partnering with the community. Shoal Creek Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. For more information and to support the Conservancy, visit www.shoalcreekconservancy.org.

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