

**Written Justification for
Hidalgo County Precinct 3 5K Mansion Linear Park Trail
ARPA-23-123-328**

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Description of Harm or Need

Today, the global pandemic continues to underscore continuous challenges and limitations to our society's quality of life. During this time, people turned to outdoor activities not only for exercise and fresh air but also for its benefits to mental health.¹ The COVID-19 pandemic created a circumstance of immobility, including less walking, running and physical activity leading to a sedentary lifestyle that in turn could lead to adverse impacts on the whole body, specifically health issues such as cardiovascular disease or diabetes, hence more doctor visits, hospitalizations and medications for various illnesses. Historically, Hidalgo County has faced persistent health challenges over the years, and the impacts of COVID-19 heightened them. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported in recent years that 27% of adults in Hidalgo County have diabetes and another 32% have pre-diabetes. Additionally, 1 in every 3 adults is considered obese² with the global pandemic significantly exacerbating these numbers. Furthermore, Texas is one of the leading states with elevated heart disease with death rates for Hidalgo County showing an elevated level of 353 per 100,000 deaths for the hispanic population.³

It has been proven that regular outdoor activity is beneficial and essential to a community's quality of life and well-being. As such, the CDC actively recommends physical activity such as walking, running, hiking, and biking as one of the main treatments and recovery methods for cardiac rehabilitation.⁴ Research has continuously demonstrated the positive effects that parks and trails can have on our

¹ <https://www.tpl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Parks-and-Pandemic-TPL-special-report.pdf>

² https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2019/pdf/19_0125.pdf

³

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/heart-disease-stroke/heart-attack-stroke-data-collection-overview/cdc-heart-disease-stroke>

⁴ https://www.cdc.gov/heart-disease/about/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/about.htm

mental and physical wellbeing; such as improving heart health, decreasing the risk of certain respiratory problems, reducing anxiety and lowering the risk of depression.⁵ However, a lack of safe and accessible spaces in Hidalgo County has limited the opportunities for residents to be physically active.⁶ Precinct 3 is no exception as there are currently no walking trails in this area. This situation curtails opportunities for constituents to experience healthier lifestyle choices. It is crucial that Precinct 3 residents be provided accessible opportunities to engage in outdoor recreational activities within their own community. Access to a linear trail would align with early intervention measures which may help to prevent health complications such as cardiovascular disease.⁷ For these reasons, Precinct 3 plans to dedicate ARPA funds to a no cost resource, the 5K Mansion Linear Park Trail, to support residents' improved health outcomes and leverage health equity.

The proposed trail will be 3.1 miles or 5 kilometers and located along three areas which are all located in low to moderate income neighborhoods and will strategically pass near three public schools to allow for exercise programs or events. Treasury recognizes the connection between neighborhood built environment and physical health outcomes as discussed in the research and analysis provided by commenters, including risk factors that may have contributed to disproportionate COVID-19 health impacts in low-income communities. As such, neighborhood features that promote improved health and safety outcomes respond to the preexisting disparities that contributed to COVID-19's disproportionate impacts on low-income communities. As such, the final rule includes enumerated eligible uses in disproportionately impacted communities for developing neighborhood features that promote improved health and safety outcomes, such as parks, green spaces, recreational facilities, sidewalks, pedestrian safety features like crosswalks, projects that increase access to healthy foods, streetlights, neighborhood cleanup, and other projects to revitalize public spaces.⁸

This trail development project will create healthy recreation and transportation opportunities for people of all ages in this underserved community.

⁵ <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/trails/benefits-of-hiking.htm>

⁶ https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2019/pdf/19_0125.pdf

⁷ https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2019/pdf/19_0125.pdf

⁸ Department of the Treasury. (2022). Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. *Federal Register*, 87(18), p. 4373

724 Breyfogle, Mission, TX, 78572

2218 Moorefield, Mission, TX, 78572

LMISD by Block Group: Block Group 3, Census Tract 202.02, Hidalgo County, Texas

Source	2015ACS
geoname	Block Group 3, Census Tract 202.02, Hidalgo County, Texas
Stusab	TX
Countyname	Hidalgo County
State	48
County	215
Tract	020202
Blckgrp	3
Low	880
Lowmod	1300
Lmmi	2090
Lowmoduniv	2570
Lowmod_pct	50.58
ucLowmod	
ucLowmod_p	0.00
MOE_Lowmod	+/-12.96
MOE_ucLowm	

LMISD by Block Group: Block Group 3, Census Tract 202.02, Hidalgo County, Texas

Source	2015ACS
geoname	Block Group 3, Census Tract 202.02, Hidalgo County, Texas
Stusab	TX
Countyname	Hidalgo County
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Lowmod	1300
Lmmi	2090
Lowmoduniv	2570
Lowmod_pct	50.58
ucLowmod	
ucLowmod_p	0.00
MOE_Lowmod	+/-12.96
MOE_ucLowm	

2401 Moorefield, Mission, TX, 78574

LMISD by Block Group: Block Group 1, Census Tract 202.02, Hidalgo County, Texas

Source	2015ACS
geoname	Block Group 1, Census Tract 202.02, Hidalgo County, Texas
Stusab	TX
Countyname	Hidalgo County
State	48
County	215
Tract	020202
Blckgrp	1
Low	990
Lowmod	1230
Lmmi	1835
Lowmoduniv	2860
Lowmod_pct	43.01
ucLowmod	
ucLowmod_p	0.00
MOE_Lowmod	+/-12.76
MOE_ucLowm	

Justification of a Capital Expenditure

As the spread of COVID-19 resulted in global widespread social distancing measures, many began to seek lower risk alternative activities. It was seen how outdoor activities were highly favored due to their low risk of transmission and their ability to improve overall well being. These practices continue even today due to fluctuating COVID-19 trends as many individuals continue to practice social distancing measures.⁹ According to the CDC, “building healthy communities calls for transformative changes that address systemic barriers to public health.”¹⁰ It is the intention of Hidalgo County Precinct 3 to develop a trail that will promote and encourage healing by providing a safe and inviting environment for all residents to actively participate in

⁹ <https://www.cdc.gov/ncird/whats-new/covid-19-can-surge-throughout-the-year.html>

¹⁰ https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2019/pdf/19_0125.pdf

their health journey. By providing safe outdoor spaces to the public, Hidalgo County Precinct 3 can actively assist its residents to lead healthier lifestyles.

As seen, the importance of regularly engaging in any type of physical activity for both physical and mental health is well established and may be beneficial in protecting the body in limiting the damage caused by COVID-19. In addition, regular exposure to nature and green spaces have been proven to have many mental health benefits such as reducing anxiety, depression, and may increase levels of happiness.¹¹ The 5K Mansion Linear Trail Project aims to build stronger communities by investing in neighborhood development, utilizing existing resources including the Moorfield Road Right of Way and the Mansion property and collaborating with the Drainage District to construct a 5 kilometer trail. The proposed trail will run from North Breyfogle Rd. in Palmview, Texas, to North Inspiration Rd. in Mission, Texas. Trail benefits may include exercise stations, rest stops, safety features, disabled accessible curb ramps, and other provisions like pavement markings to communicate routes and safety standards. The trail promises to be an asset to the Hidalgo County Precinct 3 community. Improved outcomes include fitness, mental-well being and overall improved quality of life.

This trail will service a larger portion of the Hidalgo County community and provide safe recreational spaces for constituents living in, near and around Low to Moderate Income (LMI) locations, and support people's physical, social, emotional, and mental health. This type of investment will greatly benefit residents of all ages and provide the setting for community engagement, educational experiences, economic growth and a safe environment that will build stronger, healthier communities. Moreover, this trail will lower barriers to physical activity thereby reducing the impacts of health-related ailments for our most vulnerable population for years to come. Based on the National Institute of Health (NIH), outdoor natural environments may provide some of the best all-round health benefits by increasing physical activity levels with lower levels of perceived exertion, altering physiological functioning including stress reduction, restoring mental fatigue, and improving mood and self-esteem and perceived health.¹² By taking active measures towards the health and wellbeing of its constituents, Hidalgo County Precinct 3 will contribute to the long term health and wellbeing of not only current generations but future ones as well.

¹¹ <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/eap.2248>

¹² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3710158/>

Comparison of the Proposed Capital Expenditure Against Alternatives

Hidalgo County Precinct 3 has researched various options to determine the best alternative in designing and constructing the 5K Mansion Linear Trail. In making the best decision, several options were taken into consideration including, retrofitting, outsourcing and insourcing. The most superior alternative will leverage costs and optimize long-term service outcomes.

Retrofitting-

Because there is currently no existing recreational trail, retrofitting and improving is not an option for this project.

Insourcing:-

Hidalgo County Precinct 3 is unable to meet the demands, manpower and resources to fully and satisfactorily meet trail development tasks; therefore, this is not a superior option.

Outsourcing:-

Hidalgo County Precinct 3 collaborated with B2Z Engineering to provide a preliminary estimate for the design and construction. The total estimated cost submitted for this project will be below \$3 million and will include the trail itself with all proposed amenities. The design includes the following:

- 17,322 square yards of 6" concrete sidewalk
- 20,022 square yards of lime treated subgrade
- 2 high-intensity activated crosswalk beacons for pedestrian safety
- 16,900 linear feet of pavement markings
- 10 trail protective bollards
- 16, ADA compliant curb ramps
- 17 storm drain inlets

The use of the Drainage District's facilities and Mansion property will also reduce land acquisition cost for this project, preventing further elevation of costs. To meet project specifications and requirements set forth by the Hidalgo County Drainage District, concrete was selected as the primary material for the construction of the trail. As Hidalgo County Precinct 3 does not possess the necessary equipment and skilled labor for concrete work, it was recommended that the work for the Hidalgo County Precinct 3 5K Mansion Linear Park Trail be outsourced. The 5k Mansion Linear Park Trail will

begin at North Breyfogle Rd. and end at North Inspiration Rd., a 3.1 mile trek for bicyclists, pedestrians, and event enthusiasts. This trail will service a larger portion of the Hidalgo County Precinct 3 community and provide safe recreational spaces for constituents living in, near and around Low and Moderate Income (LMI) locations, and support people's physical, social, emotional, and mental health.

Since Precinct 3 is unable to meet the labor demand and there is not a park to retrofit, outsourcing the development of the Hidalgo County Precinct 3 5k Mansion Linear Park Trail is the most superior option for this project. By developing this trail, Hidalgo County Precinct 3 is investing in the health and wellbeing of its residents by providing a critical no cost health resource to its underserved community.