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## **PRESS RELEASE – City of Schertz & Great Springs Project Announce New Park**

**Schertz, Texas** – The City of Schertz and Great Springs Project are pleased to announce a new 10.5-acre park on Dry Comal Creek generally at Bunker Street and FM 482.

Directly abutting this new park is historic St. Joseph's cemetery, and across the street is the St. Joseph's German Chapel—designated as a historic site by the Schertz Historic Preservation Committee in 2011. This parcel, the church, the cemetery, and several surrounding parcels are part of the Historic Comal township.

This park provides trail connectivity for the Great Springs Trail and is along the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail. Given the remarkable historical and heritage value of the area with the trail connectivity, this will be a valuable park and recreational commodity for local residents.

"Schertz residents have been asking for more trails across the city, and we've made a lot of headway with the addition of the first segment of the Great Northern Trail that opened to the public in June 2022. The new trailhead at Dry Comal Creek will have a future connection to the Great Northern Trail via Schwab Road and provide access to additional recreational green space for our northern residents. Combining the recreational amenities with the rich history of this Comal Township area is a win-win," said Lauren Shrum, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services for the City of Schertz.

This new park was made possible in part by Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation, which partnered with Great Springs Project to provide a low-interest bridge loan to purchase the land along Dry Comal Creek in the City of Schertz to serve as a park and key connector for the trail network. The Schertz City Council committed to purchase the tract from the Great Springs Project, with the goal of operating it as a public park. Elizabeth Love, CEO of the Foundation, said "We are pleased to support conservation and trail building work in one of the fastest growing regions in the U.S. where opportunities to conserve the most ecologically important lands over the aquifer are becoming fewer and farther between, particularly in the rapidly urbanizing corridor between Austin and San Antonio."

Garry Merritt, CEO of the Great Springs Project: "Real estate transactions move quickly, and the bridge loan provided by the Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation was pivotal to Great Springs Project's capacity to complete this land deal efficiently while affording the City of Schertz time and flexibility to do its due diligence. The Foundation's support has been transformational in our ability to successfully complete this land conservation transaction and trail connection with the City of Schertz."

About Great Springs Project – Founded in 2019 to conserve 50,000 acres of high conservation value land between Austin and San Antonio over the Edwards Aquifer recharge and contributing zones for conservation and a 100+ mile trail network linking four of Texas' iconic springs – Barton Springs, San Marcos Springs, Comal Springs and San Antonio Springs.

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