

# Parks and Recreation Department Aquatics Division

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## Sustainability of City-wide Aquatic Operations

Open Space, Environment and Sustainability  
Committee

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Presented by Kimberly McNeeley,  
Assistant Director

# Overview

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Austin's current Aquatics program is not environmentally, financially, or operationally sustainable.

Moving into the 2015 swim season, the Parks and Recreation Department believes it is both responsible and appropriate to increase sustainability by making a series of immediate changes in how we manage public pools now and consider more permanent changes for the future.

The Department's desired "Aquatic State" includes sustainable family aquatic centers in consort with a balanced preservation of historical aquatic assets, smaller neighborhood pools and splash pads.

# Environmental Sustainability

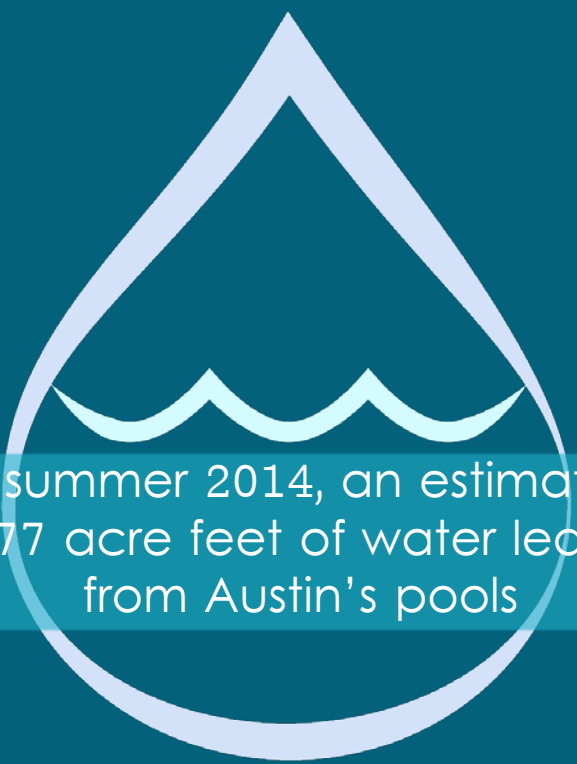
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Since the drought began in March of 2008, the highland lakes have seen record low inflow.

As reported by Austin Water in Feb. 2015, the highland lakes are currently only 35% full (LCRA states 37% full). Emergency levels will be reached if the lakes lose another 110,000 acre feet of water and fall below 30% full.

Climate scientists do not expect the drought to end anytime soon.

**As the drought continues, Austin must look for additional ways to reduce water waste.**



In summer 2014, an estimated 56.77 acre feet of water leaked from Austin's pools

# Environmental Sustainability

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## 2014 Leak Detection Study:

Austin's pools leak a combined 256,000 gallons of water per day.

Metz (21,192 gallons/day) and Mabel Davis (25,561 gallons/day) are two of the worst offenders.



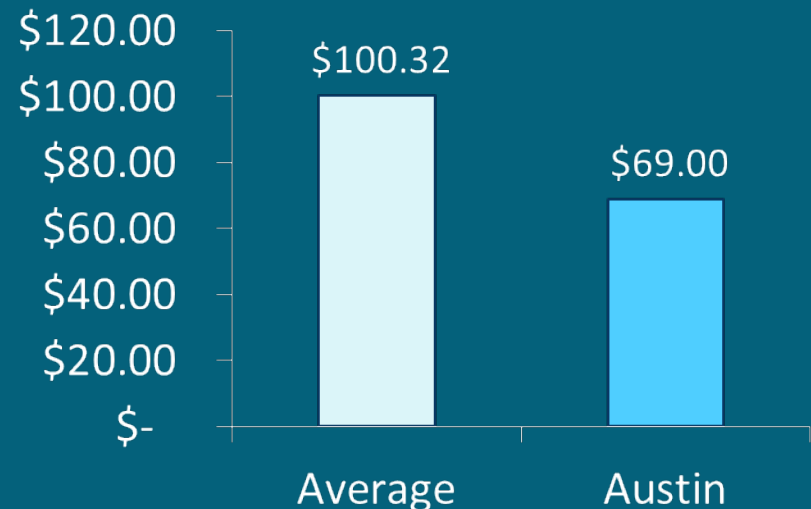
**In 2014, Mabel Davis & Metz leaked the amount of water used by 374 Austinites each day while only averaging a combined 328 daily visitors.**

# Financial Sustainability

Austin ranks in the top 15 cities nationwide based on the number of pools per capita.

1. Cleveland, OH
2. Cincinnati, OH
3. Pittsburgh, PA
4. Washington, D.C.
5. Tucson, AZ
6. Henderson, NV
7. Philadelphia, PA
8. Denver, CO
9. Tulsa, OK
10. Orlando, FL
11. Omaha, NE
- 12. Austin, TX**
13. Jacksonville, FL
14. Tampa, FL

Park Spending per Resident:  
Top 15 Pools per Capita



# Financial Sustainability

Based on the results of the 2014 Aquatic Facility Assessment, it will cost \$47 million to bring all of Austin's public pools into good repair.

The City Council appropriated \$6 million to address Govalle & Shipe in FY 2015 but an additional \$41 million is still needed.

## Inflation Estimates

2015	\$41 million
2016	\$42.2 million
2017	\$43.5 million
2018	\$45 million



# Financial Sustainability

**Due to their poor condition, 7 of our 36 pools are at risk of failure in the next 5 years. These pools are all recommended for replacement.**

1.	<b>Givens</b>	<b>District 1</b>	<b>1958/1959</b>	Est. Cost <b>\$6.88 million</b> (original state)
2.	<b>Montopolis</b>	<b>District 3</b>	<b>1977</b>	Est. Cost <b>\$7.5 million</b> (original state)
3.	<b>Northwest,</b>	<b>District 7</b>	<b>1956</b>	Est. Cost <b>\$8.13 million</b> (original state)
4.	<b>Civitan,</b>	<b>District 3</b>	<b>1964</b>	Est. Cost <b>\$3.13 million</b> (original state)
5.	<b>Gillis,</b>	<b>District 3</b>	<b>1954/1979</b>	Est. Cost <b>\$3.13 million</b> (original state)
6.	<b>Govalle</b>	<b>District 3</b>	<b>1954/1986</b>	Funding Allocated/Replacement
7.	<b>Shipe</b>	<b>District 9</b>	<b>1934</b>	Funding Allocated/Replacement

Remaining Cost

**\$28.77 Million**

# Financial Sustainability

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## **Aquatics Division historically exceeds divisional budget allocation**

- **FY 2012**            **\$342,270**
- **FY 2013**            **\$264,379**
- **FY 2014**            **\$482,392**
- **FY 2015**            **anticipate similar overage**

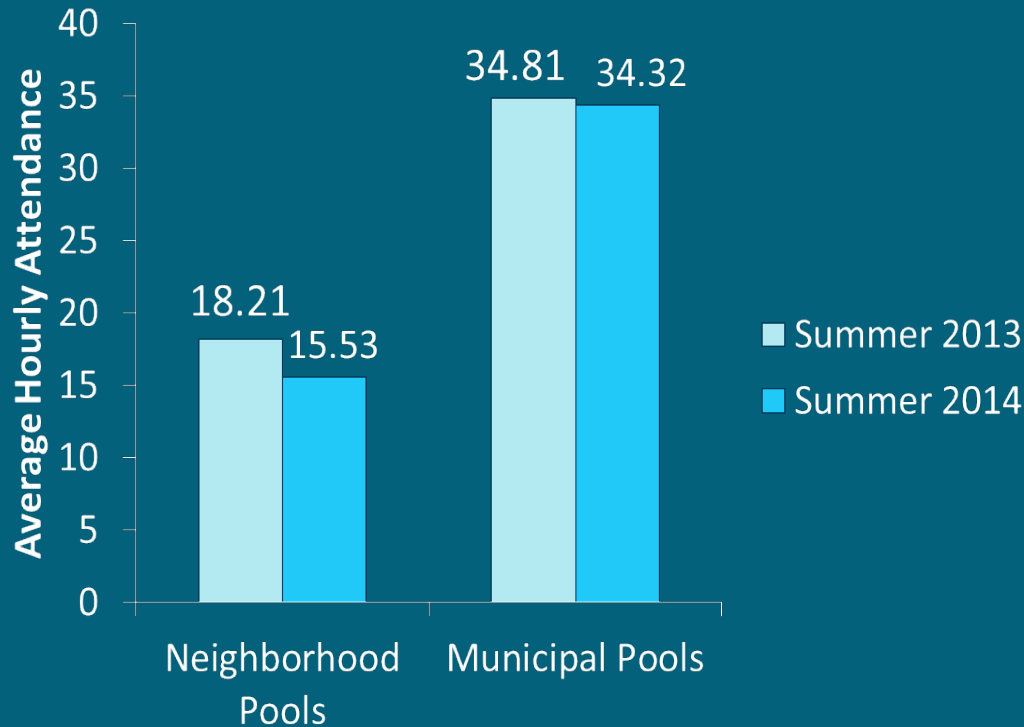
**Overage requires Parks and Recreation Department  
to realign budget allocations taking resources  
from other department programs**



# Operational Sustainability

In Summer 2014 citizen advocacy and Council direction led the City to open pools earlier in the season and for more hours a day.

However, these increased hours did not increase pool attendance and there is no evidence that pools were used adequately during extended hours to justify the additional cost.



In Summer 2014, Austin was not able to hire enough life-guards to open every pool on June 6<sup>th</sup>

To date, only 244 guards have registered for lifeguarding classes.

This is 25 less than this time last year despite increased recruitment efforts.

# Immediate Action

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## Close Metz and Mabel Davis Pools

- These pools have a large environmental impact, are in close proximity to other pools, and have comparatively low attendance.
- Closing these pools will increase environmental and financial sustainability

## Return to a Staggered Pool Schedule

- This change will allow us to open pools as advertised and ensure that there are enough guards for each pool
- By and large, citizens did not increase pool visits when hours were extended in 2014. The traditional staggered schedule provides a sufficient level of service.
- This change will increase operational sustainability
- This change will require less lifeguards– contributing to fiscal sustainability

## Implement Weekly Maintenance Days at Pools

- Scheduled weekly maintenance days will allow the Department to address issues at pools proactively and reduce unplanned closures.
- Implementing Maintenance Days will increase environmental and operational sustainability and reduce daily lifeguard needs

## Immediate Financial Impacts– **Projected Cost Savings \$505,195**

# Desired State

The Parks and Recreation Department offers the following for consideration

*The desired aquatic state includes sustainable family aquatic centers in combination with a balanced preservation of historical aquatic assets, smaller neighborhood pools and splash pads.*



# Getting to the Desired State

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## Usage Trends Analysis

- Rectangular or “box” pools obsolete
- Once people experience the fun of a waterpark they are less interested in visiting a flat water pool

World Water Park Association's Aleatha Ezra/document prepared by Seattle Parks and Recreation 2002





# Getting to the Desired State

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## Determine Austin Values

- Aquatic Master Plan funding/Task Force
- Policy Discussion regarding Austin Aquatic Values
  - Austin Residents Expect More
  - Balance Recreational Needs
  - Balance Program Needs
  - Consider desired Economic Impact
  - Consider desired Social Impact
  - Preservation



**Municipal Waterpark**

# Getting to the Desired State

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## Identify Sustainability Components

- Environmentally
- Economically
- Operationally
- Socially
- Structurally





# Desired State Action Plan

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- Conduct Planned Task Force Process
- Develop an innovative process to define
  - The Desired State
  - How to get to the Desired State





# Questions ?

