



City of Austin

**Leslie Pool, Council Member
District 7**

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Items OT1.16 & PK1.03 Investing in Our Cultural and Historical Resources

These proposals would:

- Invest \$300,000 in continuing the Council-initiated historic resources survey that the city is performing to document our community's heritage and identify historic properties (OT1.16); and
- Invest \$120,803 in a position dedicated to managing cultural assets on city parkland (PK1.03).

Austin is working on a phased historical resources survey to document its history and identify potential historic properties – but the proposed budget does not invest in completing this effort.

- Historic surveys help the city document its heritage and identify potential historic landmarks. They also improve city planning and permitting efficiency by proactively providing important information city staff need for planning efforts and demolition permitting at the beginning of those processes.¹
- The last time the city completed a large-scale survey of historic resources was over 30 years ago.²
- Council recognized the need for a new, comprehensive historic resources survey in 2014 by initiating an effort to be completed in phases.³ Since then, the city has contracted with a consultant to perform the first phase of the survey in East Austin, which is currently in draft form.³
- A number of other major American cities have also recognized these important benefits and are currently investing in historic surveys, including: Denver, Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.¹
- However, the proposed city budget does not include the Planning and Zoning Department's request for resources to continue the historic survey momentum and fund phase two of this effort.⁴

The Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) has also recognized the need for staff to manage the department's historic and cultural resources.

- Promoting cultural experiences is a key part of the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC)'s mission.
- However, PARC currently does not have a staffer solely dedicated to managing the department's historic and cultural resources. While the department requested a new position to fulfill this crucial need, the proposed budget did not fund this request.⁵
- Investing in a dedicated cultural resource manager would improve PARC's ability to manage its assets and work more efficiently with the Historic Preservation Office and the Historic Landmark Commission on planning and preservation efforts.

These two proposals would invest in department-identified needs to improve Austin's ability to preserve our heritage, manage our historical and cultural resources, and operate more efficiently.

¹ Letter from Alyson McGee (Preservation Austin) to Austin City Council (5 August 2016).

² Resolution No. 20140626-098

³ "City of Austin Historic Resources Survey" (Draft East Austin Historic Survey), Planning and Zoning Department (2016).

⁴ Planning and Zoning Request #10, FY 2016-17 Initial Funding Requests.

⁵ Parks and Recreation Request #20, FY 2016-17 Initial Funding Requests.