



June 9, 2017

The Downtown Austin Alliance has worked collaboratively with the Austin Parks & Recreation Department to develop a comprehensive Management & Programming Plan for Republic Square. One aspect of this plan is a programming and events schedule developed by a group of community stakeholders who made up a Programming & Events Advisory Committee. The vision for Republic Square is to create an inclusive and welcoming space for a diversity of users. This space was originally designated as a community gathering space in the 1839 plan, and our intent is that Republic Square will continue to be that for residents, employees, and visitors of Austin. The guiding programming principles, as determined by the committee, include:

- Republic Square is first and foremost a neighborhood park, with the improvements and operations intended to support and encourage regular, everyday use and to provide a true outdoor asset to those who live, work or visit downtown Austin.
- Programs and amenities will support a diversity of users—including nearby residents and employees, families with children, seniors, transit users, tourists and others.
- The park will continue to serve the SFC Farmers' Market each Saturday. This is defined as an in-use park event, open to the public.

The agreement requires the Downtown Austin Alliance to be responsible for all operations, programming and management of the park. This includes revenue from park rentals in order to support not only daily operations, but the infrastructure to manage and coordinate free programming activities in the park.

Programming and Park Management

The Downtown Austin Alliance hired park expert Tim Marshall and his team at ETM Associates to help create an operating plan that recognizes the balance of scheduling events and their direct impact on the landscaping and health of the park. ETM recommends “rest periods” between events based on the number of attendees, the time of the year, set-up requirements and the areas utilized. This “rest period” ranges from 7 to 21 days between major events. For this reason, we do not anticipate hosting more than two events in any month that would have a major impact on park accessibility.

The Management Committee (Austin Parks & Recreation, Austin Parks Foundation, and Downtown Austin Alliance) will continue to meet and provide oversight in regard to park operations and programming.

Closure Defined

Based on the Parkland Events Task Force recommendations, the Austin Parks & Recreation Department has adopted definitions related to park impacts. The initial year of use will be about

managing a well-balanced approach to programming in close coordination with the management team, but also with the Austin Parks and Recreation Office of Special Events.

Parkland Events Task Force Use Definitions

- **Open** – full accessibility – normal day in the park without event uses.
- **In Use** – no fences, no barriers, significant portion of the park reserved/impacted by the event. Includes increased pedestrian and vehicular activity.
- **Partially Open** - greater than 50% available without a ticket and unfenced.
- **Minimally Open** - more than 50% closed, only available to ticketed patrons.
- **Closed** – no accessibility - ticketed participation only.

Closed Events and Costs to the Public

All events will be vetted to ensure the guiding principles of the Management Committee are implemented. As a priority Republic Square is first and foremost a neighborhood park, with the improvements and operations intended to support and encourage regular, everyday use and to provide a true outdoor asset to those who live, work or visit downtown Austin.

- Following the maintenance and operations plan would prevent the Downtown Austin Alliance from renting the park out for major events every weekend during peak seasons.
- To balance the infrequent revenue-producing opportunities, the Downtown Austin Alliance intends to activate the park throughout the year with free and family-friendly active and passive programming.
- Revenue generated from “closed events” will help support free programming in the park.
- The Downtown Austin Alliance will implement a flat fee schedule with no ticket share requirement.
- The 20 requested full-closure days could include set-up and tear-down days in association with an event. Therefore, 20 days does not necessarily equal 20 events.
- Some full-closure events may be ticketed, while some may be free to invited guests only. It is a business decision of each event to set ticket pricing in response to its own financial and business model.
- Placing restrictions on individual event producers is prohibitive and limits revenue opportunities essential to funding Republic Square.

Progress Reporting

The Downtown Austin Alliance will provide a written programming and events report to the City Council in advance of the 2018 consideration of maximum closure days.

- The report will include information on the number and type of confirmed events.
- The report will include a visual calendar of open weekends at the park.
- The Downtown Austin Alliance will provide this written update to City Council as follows:
 - The 3-month operational period, and the sooner of 6 months of operations, or at a time when 10 of the closed days are confirmed and booked at the park.