# Challenge Statements
# Drafts for Council Review

Enclosed are a series of draft Challenge Statements around Council's six Strategic Outcomes. Challenge Statements define strategic imperatives for the City of Austin over the 3-5 years at a more specific level than Outcome description.

- **Diagnosis**: The Challenge Statement is a clear articulation of the diagnosed problem/opportunity people are experiencing.

- **Evidence-Based**: Challenge Statements take into account context. They are informed by evidence, including data, subject-matter expertise, outside-in perspectives, and on-the-ground realities.

- **Basis for Opportunities**: The Challenge is phrased in a way that drives toward ultimate impact, allowing for a variety of solutions.

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## Our Vision

Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens, and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.

## Our Strategic Outcomes

Together we strive to create a complete community where every Austinite has choices at every stage of life that allow us to experience and contribute to all of the following outcomes:

**Economic Opportunity and Affordability**
Having economic opportunities and resources that enable us to thrive in our community.

**Mobility**
Getting us where we want to go, when we want to get there, safely and cost-effectively.

**Safety**
Being safe in our home, at work, and in our community.

**Health**
Enjoying a sustainable environment and a healthy life, physically and mentally.

**Cultural and Learning Opportunities**
Being enriched by Austin's unique civic, cultural, ethnic, and learning opportunities.

**Government that Works for All of Us**
Believing that city government works effectively and collaboratively for all of us—that it is equitable, ethical and innovative.

## Health

Strategic Outcome:

Enjoying a sustainable environment and a healthy life, physically and mentally.

Council Indicators:

- Healthy conditions among individuals [absence of unhealthy conditions]
- Accessibility to quality health care services, both physical and mental
- Accessibility to quality parks, trails, and recreational opportunities
- Environmental quality and resilience
- Food security and nutrition

Challenges (DRAFT):

1. How do we create conditions that result in optimal physical, mental, and behavioral health, while ensuring access to health services are available to all Austinites?
2. How do we ensure race, ethnicity, gender, age, education, geographic location, and income level do not pre-determine whether you are able to achieve better health?
3. How do we achieve high standards on environmental quality (air, water, and land) for all Austinites, as well as equitable access to parks and open space, to realize the health benefits provided by a sustainable environment?
4. How do we support more resilient and connected communities, strengthening our community well-being and enabling more effective responses and recoveries tied to major events?
5. How do we embed consideration of factors that affect health status within all City departments, and strengthen collaboration with external providers and stakeholders, to increase synergy and improve health outcomes?

**HEALTH CHALLENGE #1**

How do we create conditions that result in optimal physical, mental, and behavioral health, while ensuring access to health services are available to all Austinites?

## Nature of the Challenge

A person's health, and ability to make healthy choices, is directly affected by where they live, work, learn, and play. Healthy lifestyles include prenatal care and immunizations, infant and child well checks, regular adult preventative screenings, eating well, good mental health, being physically active, and tobacco-free living. Mental and behavioral health issues, including substance use disorders, living with developmental disabilities, and mental illness, disproportionately affect our most vulnerable community members. And reducing barriers of language, transportation, and costs enables all people to have access to health professionals for prevention and treatment.

Additionally, the built environment is a key determinant of health outcomes, demonstrated by poor health in neighborhoods with limited access to healthy food, recreational opportunities, active transit options, and healthcare services. Today's challenge is to improve the current built environment with a health lens and to incorporate health considerations into future decision-making.

## Evidence

- Data shows significant personal, business, and community costs related to poor health. For example, there were 12,185 potentially preventable hospitalizations in Travis County due to chronic diseases, accounting for $702 million in charges, in 2013. (Chronic Disease in Travis County Report, 2016)

- Health professionals identified the link between obesity (especially in children) and hunger in impoverished communities with minimal access to full-service grocery stores and recreation facilities, but an abundance of convenience stores or fast-food restaurants in these areas. (Community Health Assessment, 2017)

- Of all City services, mental health services received the highest percentage of resident votes to increase funding in fiscal year 2018. (City budget simulator tool, 2017)



Photo Credit: Annette Royalty
*"I took this photo showing my strength and pride in who I am as an individual and proud to be married to my soulmate… Healthy Living is not a chore; it's a way of life!"*

**HEALTH CHALLENGE #2**

# How do we ensure race, ethnicity, gender, age, education, geographic location, and income level do not pre-determine whether you are able to achieve better health?
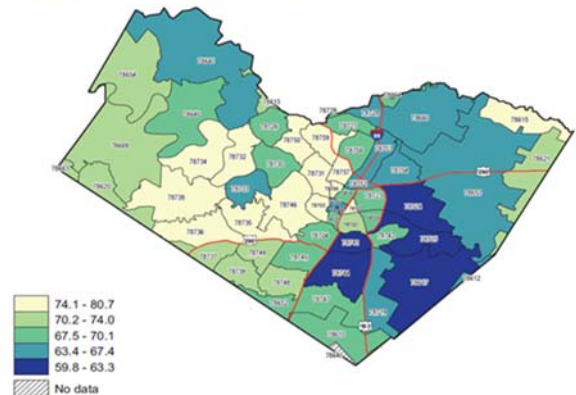
## Nature of the Challenge

Austin is generally considered a healthy city. However, there are dramatic health disparities among communities of color, communities living in East Austin, low income residents, the elderly, individuals with physical and developmental disabilities, those experiencing poor mental health, the homeless, recent immigrants, and refugees. Some of these disparities are a result of long-term racial and economic inequities, as well as consequences of detrimental land use decisions.

Resident feedback from the 2017 Community Health Assessment confirmed Austin's continued growth and increased economic prosperity is only being realized by some Austinites. This compounds issues related to the suburbanization of poverty and gentrification of central city neighborhoods historically comprised of minority populations. As individuals and families move farther from the urban core, seeking to maintain or improve their quality of life coping with the rising cost of living in Austin, they face diminished access to important health care and health-related services.

## Evidence

- Social determinants of health among populations of color have been directly affected by historic and systemic institutional racism, and racism in land development and planning policy. (Task Force on Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequities Report, 2017)

- Gentrification is forcing populations out of Austin's urban core, away from resources, and displacing families. Undocumented families are fearful of deportation and many are not accessing services. (Community Health Assessment, 2017)

- Blacks have the highest death rates of cancer, heart disease and stroke. Diabetes death rates among Hispanics and Blacks is more than double that of Whites. Infant mortality rate for Blacks is approximately twice the rate compared with Whites and Hispanics. (Critical Health Indicators Report, 2017, Austin Public Health)

Average Age of Death Travis County 2011-2015

74.1 - 80.7
70.2 - 74.0
67.5 - 70.1
63.4 - 67.4
59.8 - 63.3
No data

Data Source: 2017 Critical Health Indicators Report, Austin Public Health

*There is a variance of 20-plus years from the ZIP code with the lowest average age at death (78741) to that of the highest (78731). Overall, certain factors are enabling people to live longer on the west side of Travis County than on the east side.*

*Data Source: Texas Department of State Health Services, Center for Health Statistics*

**HEALTH CHALLENGE #3**

# How do we achieve high standards on environmental quality (air, water, and land) for all Austinites, as well as equitable access to parks and open space, to realize the health benefits provided by a sustainable environment?

## Nature of the Challenge

The City of Austin's comprehensive plan, Imagine Austin, established sustainability as the central policy direction of the plan. Two of the core plan principles for action are to "integrate nature into the city" and "sustainably manage water, energy, and other environmental resources." A growing body of research confirms the many associated mental and physical health benefits from sustainable environments: improved cognition, reduced respiratory disorders, reduced symptoms of ADHD in children, and alleviated stress for daily life and longevity of life.

The City has made progress on the established policies and goals related to high standards of environmental quality and access to open spaces. Providing all Austinites park access within a short distance from their homes, reaching the goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 for our community, and developing an Integrated Green Infrastructure Plan is currently underway. How the city develops, recognizing continued population growth and the increasing development pressures in lower income neighborhoods within the eastern crescent, will impact our ability to achieve environmental goals and health outcomes.

## Evidence

- Declining trends in resident satisfaction from 2009 to 2016 (37 percent to 13 percent) on how well the City plans for future growth; forty-six percent of respondents indicated that flood control efforts were the most important environmental service for the City to provide, this item also received the lowest levels of positive satisfaction among the five items that were listed. (City of Austin annual resident survey, 2016)



Photo Credit: #showusyouraustin
*Kids cooling off at Doris Miller Splash Pad on a 100-degree Austin afternoon.*

- The Trust for Public Land states 54 percent of Austinites are within a 10-minute walk of a park, which ranks as 25th in the nation out of the 100 largest cities.

- The recently updated Austin Energy Resource, Generation, and Climate Protection Plan lays out a plan to reach significant energy-related emissions reductions through increased renewable energy and energy efficiency over the next 10 years. If implemented fully, then determining how to address transportation-related emissions will be the key challenge we face in the next 3-5 years. (Austin Community Climate Plan, 2015)

**HEALTH CHALLENGE #4**

# How do we support more resilient and connected communities, strengthening our community well-being and enabling more effective responses and recoveries tied to major events?

## Nature of the Challenge

In today's Austin, many people lack a sense of belonging and feel disconnected from the institutions and resources that support well-being within the community. Rapidly changing racial and ethnic compositions of neighborhoods, a fast-growing elderly population, increasing income inequality, a reliance on online social networks for community interaction, and policy changes at the state and national level are just some of the continuous changes that impact individuals and families in our community. In an ever-more complex world, with constant threats to mental and physical health, vulnerable populations are more stable and protected in socially connected, stronger communities.

Austin and the surrounding region have seen an increasing frequency of floods and wildfires causing destruction to people's homes and lives. While extreme weather events (and human-caused incidents) are happening, the focus is on the immediate public safety response. However, the closest responders to those in need are typically neighbors and nearby family and friends. The ability to get critical information to everyone if they are able to prepare for an impending event depends heavily on the social networks of the individuals and families involved. And in the aftermath of major events, as communities begin to rebuild both emotionally and physically, it is this social cohesion that impacts the ability of a neighborhood to come back stronger than before.

## Evidence

- Spirit of East Austin comments point to decreasing social cohesion: "Gentrification has driven out our businesses and neighbors so it's no longer like a small city, friendly."

- African Americans who moved east and north of Austin in the past 15 years reported declines (9 percent and 21 percent, respectively) in having good relationships with neighbors. (Those Who Left Austin Report, 2014)

- During the 1995 Chicago heat wave hundreds of residents died, but researchers found that the variation of death rates across neighborhoods with similar sociodemographic characteristics was attributable to the quality of the social networks in each community. ("Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago," Eric Klinenberg, 2002)
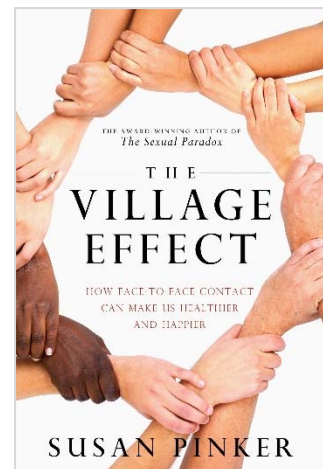
*In her book, "The Village Effect", psychologist Susan Pinker shares research which confirms cohesive communities have extra helping hands for the young and the old and everybody in between, helping people feel they belong somewhere.*

**HEALTH CHALLENGE #5**

## How do we embed consideration of factors that affect health status within all City departments, and strengthen collaboration with external providers and stakeholders, to increase synergy and improve health outcomes?

### Nature of the Challenge

The health care system is complicated, with many private, public, and non-profit entities providing some level of service and with each having their own respective interests. The many factors that determine an individual's health outcome are complex, with a growing understanding of the impact on health outcomes by the social determinants of health. Within the organization, a broader understanding of how seemingly distinct investments in mobility infrastructure or affordable housing programs, as examples, relate to improved community health will produce better health outcomes. Recognizing all of these factors, it is important that the City's organizational structure and allocation of resources are adaptable to craft and implement creative solutions.

Residents want to receive timely, affordable, easily accessible services when they are needed, regardless of which organization is providing them. Developing and implementing unified strategies and programs to achieve improved health outcomes, with a shared understanding by residents, the City, and other health providers of their roles and critical contributions, is key for success as a community. The City can play an important role as convener to ensure all actors understand the parts that make up the system, utilize the latest verified data, and identify gaps where the needs are greatest in our community.

### Evidence

- Fostering effective partnerships with the new medical school, nonprofit health care providers, and the private sector, was identified as one of the top critical issues for the Health Outcome.

- Plan reviews by the Health Outcome Team demonstrated that, historically, City staff have not tracked residents served across different departments to understand which City programs and services could be utilized to holistically serve the same individual, family, or household.



*The City's Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST) is comprised of City staff from multiple departments and partner organizations who have come together to implement an innovative multi-disciplinary approach to proactively address the needs of people living on the streets.*

- There are few examples from previous multi-million-dollar bond programs when multiple City departments worked together to develop new, co-located service delivery locations.

## Economic Opportunity and Affordability

Strategic Outcome:

Having economic opportunities and resources that enable us to thrive in our community.

Council Indicators:

- Employment
- Income equality
- Cost of living compared to income
- Housing and homelessness
- Skills and capability of our community workforce
- Economic mobility

Challenges (DRAFT):

1. How might we break the cycle of poverty and inequity so that all residents experience economic mobility?
2. How do we maintain a resilient economy that provides equitable opportunities for people and business?
3. How might we ensure Austin's land use policies, processes and programs help create more complete communities in our city?
4. As cost of living rises, how might we increase equitably distributed options for household affordability in all parts of town?
5. How might we work to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in Austin?

# ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND AFFORDABILITY CHALLENGE #1
## How might we break the cycle of poverty and inequity so that all residents experience economic mobility?

## Nature of the Challenge

Inequity is an issue facing many growing cities in the United States. CEO salaries have risen tenfold while worker wages have remained stagnant. Many economically prosperous cities are experiencing wage inequality and segregation as low-wage service sector jobs grow alongside high-wage jobs.

Historical policies, such as the 1928 Master Plan and economic transition including rapid suburbanization, lack of affordable housing, and mobility throughout the city exacerbate inequity and segregation in Austin, placing Austin at the very top of Martin Prosperity Institute's ranking for economic segregation amongst large U.S. metropolitan areas.
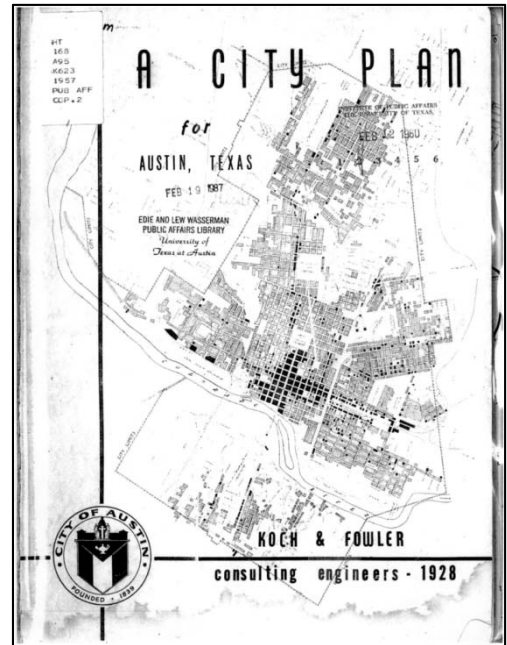


Image: 1928 City of Austin Master Plan
*Discriminatory zoning laws compelled African American residents to move east of IH-35. The City would not provide basic services to residents who refused to move.*

## Evidence

- Segregation: Austin is the most economically segregated metro area in the nation and ranks No. 9 for wage inequality (Martin Prosperity Institute).

- Employment disparities: Although Austin has low unemployment, unemployment for Black residents (5.6 percent) in the city is 30 percent higher than that for White residents (4.3 percent); unemployment is also higher for Hispanics (4.8 percent) (Austin City Demographer, 2015). The discrepancy is greater at the county level, with Blacks experiencing twice the unemployment rate of Whites (Community Action Network Dashboard, ACS Data 2015).

- Poverty amidst strong economic growth: According to Workforce Solutions, total employment in the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) grew more than 20 percent between 2010 and 2015. Over the same period, gross metropolitan product increased 37 percent, and median household income increased almost 20 percent. Yet American Community Survey (ACS) data shows more than 99,000 families in the MSA live at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, and more than 76,000 individuals living below the poverty level are employed. In addition, nearly half of jobs created in 2016 pay a median annual wage between $20,000 and $40,000 per year (JobsEQ for CAPCOG Capital Area).

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND AFFORDABILITY CHALLENGE #2
## How do we maintain a resilient economy and provide equitable opportunities for people and business?

### Nature of the Challenge

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines resilience as a city's ability to "absorb, adapt, transform and prepare for past and future shocks and stresses in order to ensure sustainable development, well-being and inclusive growth." Economic resilience is supported with a diverse industry base, innovative culture, and skilled workforce.

A 2016 panel by the Urban Institute discussed determinants of economic resiliency, e.g. maintaining low levels of poverty and a skilled adaptable workforce. According to the Austin Metro Area Master Community Workforce Plan, more than 60,000 health care, information technology, manufacturing and other middle-skill jobs will become available in Austin between 2017 and 2021. These positions can provide financial stability, however Austin has been challenged in developing local workers to fill them.
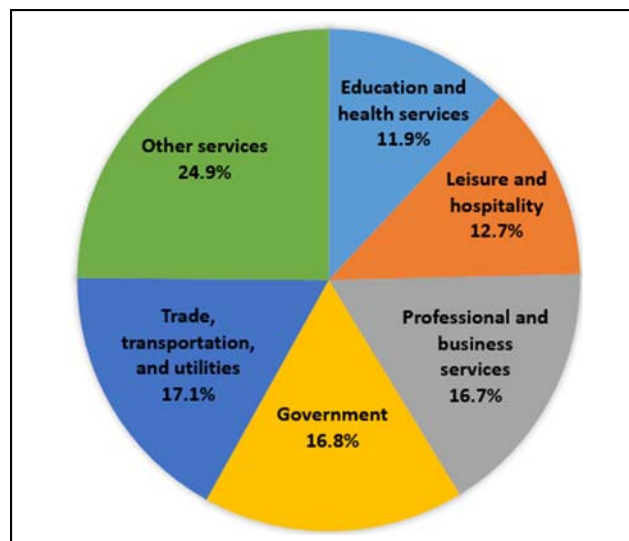


Image: Austin Area employment by Sector (August 2017)
*Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

### Evidence

- Prosperous but unaffordable: Real per capita Gross Domestic Product grew 16.6 percent in five years, making Austin the fourth best performing major metro in the US (Austin Chamber of Commerce). While Austin remains a prosperous city overall, TXPs 2017 Economic and Sales Forecast notes that cost pressures and mobility issues are driving economic activity out of the city.

- Importance of small business: According to local economic consulting firm Civic Analytics, local small businesses employ about 35 percent of the Austin workforce. These businesses are crucial to Austin's economic resilience. Small businesses provided more than 8,400 additional jobs from 2009 to 2011, which offset job losses at the area's largest employers.

- Mismatch of jobs and skillsets: In the Austin MSA, 26 percent of jobs require a bachelor's degree while 45 percent of people age 25 to 64 have achieved that education level. On the other hand, 43 percent of jobs require a high school diploma or less while 9 percent of the population has this level of education (American Community Survey).

**ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND AFFORDABILITY CHALLENGE #3**

How might we ensure Austin's land use policies, processes and programs help create more complete communities in our city?

## Nature of the Challenge

The City is poised to make a major step towards Imagine Austin Priority Program 8 to "revise Austin development regulations and processes" when it adopts a new land development code, but that is just the beginning.

Locations of education, jobs, transit, housing, and commercial space have significant impact on equity, household affordability, transportation options, economic mobility, and ability of small businesses to flourish. As such,



*Austin's new land development code provides a significant opportunity to foster future development toward achieving community values, but it cannot do it alone. Existing land use policies, plans, and processes must also support Imagine Austin and the Strategic Outcomes.*

land use regulations, policies, and processes will significantly influence how Austinites experience Economic Opportunity and Affordability, Mobility, and other Strategic Outcomes intended to achieve the Imagine Austin 30-year vision for the city.

## Evidence

- Historic impact of land development code: The impact of Austin's 1928 Master Plan can still be seen. Nearly 100 years later, Austin is the most economically segregated large metro area in the US (Martin Prosperity Institute).

- Cost benefits from Compact and Connected: Implementation of Imagine Austin's Growth Concept, creation of activity corridors and centers, can save the city between $4.8 billion and $21.5 billion compared to the city's current low density growth pattern (Imagine Austin).

- City jurisdiction: Austin has limited jurisdiction in addressing many barriers to achieving Strategic Outcomes, making Austin-owned tools like the land development code and related policies and processes even more relevant to achieving community priorities.

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND AFFORDABILITY CHALLENGE #4
### As cost of living rises, how might we increase equitably distributed options for household affordability in all parts of town?

### Nature of the Challenge

Like many growing cities nationally, Austin is facing a serious affordability challenge. The Code Diagnosis, an assessment of major issues within Austin's current land development code conducted by Opticos Design in 2014, notes a lack of "missing middle" housing supply. Insufficient diversification of housing products reduces affordable housing options for families of different income levels throughout Austin.
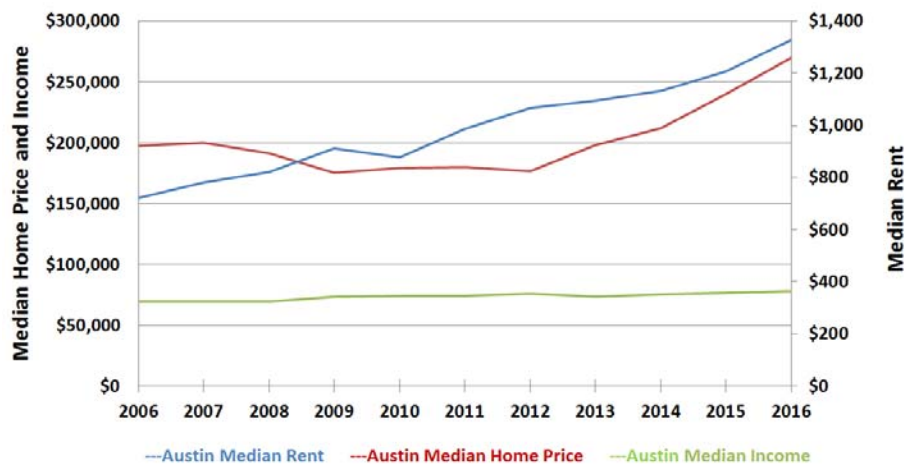


Data from National Association of Home Builders and Austin Investor Interests
*Austin rents and home prices have increased substantially over the last decade, while wages remained relatively stagnant.*

Distances between housing, jobs, services and educational institutions continue to increase as households "drive until they qualify." This burdens transportation infrastructure, impacts household budgets, and presents geographic barriers to access jobs and resources. Affordable housing is needed near transit and services to enable seniors to age in place, provide housing choices for persons of all abilities, and mitigate financial impact of rising transportation costs.

### Evidence

- Affordable housing shortage: Austin has a shortage of 48,000 affordable rental units. From 2012 to 2014, about 16.5 percent of rental units became unaffordable to households earning $25,000 per year (BBC Research & Consulting).

- Disproportionate burden: About 35 percent of Austin households earn 60 percent Median Family Income (MFI) or below, and only 15 percent of the city's housing stock is affordable to them. Affordable homes to buy are concentrated in far northeast, south, and southeast Austin (BBC Research & Consulting).

- Diminishing housing supply: TXP's 2017 Economic and Sales Forecast for Austin reports tight housing markets with strong demand and diminishing excess supply.

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND AFFORDABILITY CHALLENGE #5
## How might we work to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in Austin?

### Nature of the Challenge

Data from the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) shows more than 2,000 people in Austin experience homelessness daily, and more than 7,000 on an annual basis. Persons experiencing homelessness are disproportionately African American, and disproportionately older Americans (ages 45-64). Underlying causes for persons becoming homeless include loss of family support, mental or behavioral health issues, addiction, challenges related to the criminal justice system, along with issues related to housing affordability, transit, and jobs.

An Austin success, the recently completed Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST) pilot provided a model for improved service delivery to chronically homeless at reduced cost to the City and other agencies. Additional Austin successes include achieving functional zero for veterans (i.e. a system is in place to rapidly house veterans), and housing 62 homeless youth in 2016, however we have not effectively reduced the number of people experiencing homelessness.

Image Credit: System Components to End Homelessness in Austin/Travis County (ECHO)
*Homelessness is a complex challenge. Root causes of homelessness span the individual, the community, systems, and infrastructure.*

### Evidence

- Cost avoidance: An analysis of system costs attributed to homelessness shows the top 500 homeless "super utilizers" of crisis systems for health care, on average, each consume nearly $100,000 per year in health resources (Corporation for Supportive Housing).

- Number of organizations working to alleviate homelessness: More than 20 nonprofits and City departments work to directly or indirectly serve people experiencing homelessness.

- Homeless in Austin: ECHO estimates 3,350 total units of housing are needed to achieve functional zero, with more than 1,000 households in need of permanent supportive housing and ongoing services.

# Culture and Learning

Strategic Outcome:

Being enriched by Austin's unique civic, cultural, ethnic, and learning opportunities.

Council Indicators:

- Educational attainment
- Quality, accessibility, and diversity of civic and cultural venues, events, programs, and resources
- Vibrancy of creative industry ecosystem
- Appreciation, respect, and welcoming of all people and cultures
- Honoring of historical and ethnic heritage

Challenges (DRAFT):

1. How do we inclusively honor and preserve Austin's unique and diverse history, culture, and traditions?
2. How do we foster and model relationships of trust, incorporate diverse viewpoints, and work to undo discrimination and racism at all levels (personal, cultural, and institutional) in our community and in our organization?
3. How do we create systems that recognize the ability of underrepresented communities to co-create solutions with local government and with each other?
4. How do we ensure Austin is equitably and effectively supporting lifelong learning?
5. How do we ensure the creative ecosystem has equitable access to capacity building and revenue development resources and capital?
6. How do we increase the supply of affordable public and private spaces (e.g., housing, work, studio, performance) for our creative ecosystem to survive?

# CULTURE AND LEARNING CHALLENGE #1
## How do we inclusively honor and preserve Austin's unique and diverse history, culture, and traditions?

## Nature of the Challenge

In 2017, U.S. News and World Report ranked Austin the No. 1 place to live because of its vibrant culture. This includes tangible and intangible aspects of culture, including the City's cultural institutions, traditions, food, music, historic landmarks, storytelling, performing arts, and festivals. Austin continues to grow because people are drawn to the essence of this city's character, and in order to sustain the unique qualities that make Austin special, attention is needed to support the infrastructure that can preserve and bolster Austin's cultural vibrancy.

While visitors and future residents benefit from the expansion of our city, development and market pressures contribute to the displacement of communities, especially for those who currently live here, and have lived here for generations, particularly communities of color. This displacement weakens community spirit, integrity, and sense of place. How do we then ensure that Austin preserves and promotes a network of successful and sustainable cultural spaces that reflect Austin's diversity and multicultural heritage, while supporting the needs of both current and future residents?

## Evidence

- The East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016) identified 6,600 historic resources east of IH-35, but also outlined a story of loss, particularly in the last decade and a half. This includes a loss of people and cultural heritage. The Austin History Center's Community Archivist Program and the Cultural Arts Division's Cultural Asset Mapping Project are two examples of City initiatives that address this public concern.

- Austin is the only city among the ten fastest growing U.S. cities where general population growth and African American growth point in opposite directions (U.S. Census, 2010)
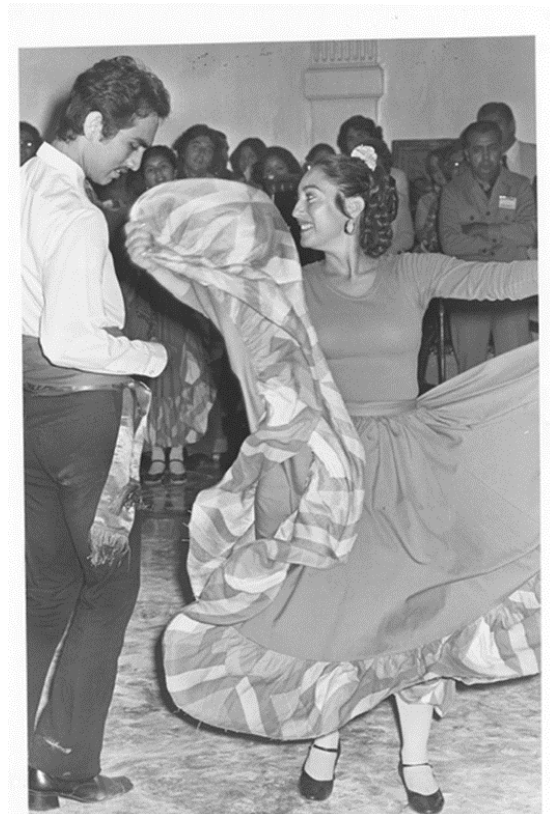


Photo Credit: Austin History Center
*Roy Lozano and Patsy Haynes Guerra dance Baile Folklórico in 1977. Roy Lozano's Ballet Folklórico de Texas was founded in 1982 and remains a vibrant part of Austin's cultural heritage.*

## CULTURE AND LEARNING CHALLENGE #2
How do we foster and model relationships of trust, incorporate diverse viewpoints, and work to undo discrimination and racism at all levels (personal, cultural, and institutional) in our community and our organization?

### Nature of the Challenge
The City of Austin Equity Assessment Tool (2017) leads with race because it is the primary predictor of access, outcomes, and opportunities for all quality of life indicators. By focusing on racial equity, this tool introduces a framework that can be applied to additional marginalized social identities which intersect with racial identity including age, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability.

Austin receives the designation of being a liberal and inclusive city, yet reports from the African American, Asian American, and Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Initiatives, in addition to resident interviews demonstrate that not all city residents, particularly those with lower incomes and communities of color, feel welcome, equally represented, or able to afford to live within the city limits. Similar sentiments are noted in the 2015 Austin: Welcoming City Initiative Final Report, particularly in relation to how many in the community continue to experience challenges related to segregation along racial and class lines.

In examining historic missteps in the loss of cultural preservation and the displacement of lower income and communities of color in cities such as Chicago, New York, and San Francisco, Austin has an opportunity to retain its cultural, economic, and social capital and be a city that all Austinites can be proud to call home.

### Evidence
- The 2017 Task Force on Racism and Systemic Inequities Report seeks to "dismantle systemic inequities and racism in the Austin region… [to] create a better Austin not plagued by persistent and deep disparities."
- Austin's 1928 Plan set the groundwork for decades of legally enforced racial segregation and inequities. Recent City plans like The Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (2012), CreateAustin Cultural Plan (2012), and The Spirit of East Austin Initiative (2015) recognize we must reverse a legacy of racial and cultural inequity.



Photo Credit: Austin History Center
*The Brown Berets and Austin community members protest the 1970s Aqua Festival boat races.*

- The top three reasons for Austin's dwindling Black population are affordability, the need for better schools, and experiences with racist and unwelcoming behavior from various communities within Austin. (University of Texas report, "Those Who Left: Austin's Declining Black Population," 2016)

**CULTURE AND LEARNING CHALLENGE #3**

## How do we create systems that recognize the ability of underrepresented communities to co-create solutions with local government and with each other?

### Nature of the Challenge

Community organizations are powerful public involvement tools—but, even the most developed systems struggle to involve the full diversity of people in a community. Civic literacy is the knowledge of how to actively participate and initiate change in your community and the greater society. It is the foundation by which a democratic society functions: citizen power as a check and as a means to create avenues for social change.

According to 2015 Census data, Austin is a majority-minority city, and it is imperative that we engage with and include all Austinites in civic matters. We have an opportunity to co-create inclusive and sustained community involvement. People not only want to be involved in their community, they also want to be seen, listened to, and valued. It is our responsibility to make everyone feel welcome to participate, to provide the tools to know how, when, and where these opportunities exist, and recognize the power of community members' experiences to add valuable contributions to decision-making.

### Evidence

- The 2016 Task Force on Community Engagement Final Report states, "quality public engagement offers opportunities for ALL voices to be heard and respected, which leads to better representation of the community, which in turn results in better decisions and policies."



Photo Credit: Victor Ovalle
*Spirit of East Austin community Engagement Kickoff event September 2015. More than 500 Austin residents participated in a discussion about inequities in East Austin.*

- The Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan includes community/civic engagement as a key component of the complete community. Through the City's Summer Youth Internship Programs, Youth Council, CityWorks Academy, Austin Conversation Corps, Boards and Commissions, and Citizen Communications available at Austin Public Libraries, the City is actively creating the capacity for sustained community involvement that is culturally rich and can build meaningful relationships.
- In 2015 the City's Commission on Immigrant Affairs released the *Austin: Welcoming City Initiative Final Report*. This report reflected current perceptions of Austin, conditions that impact Austin's relative degree of welcome and inclusion of immigrants, and recommendations for how Austin can be a more welcoming city.

## CULTURE AND LEARNING CHALLENGE #4
## How do we ensure Austin is equitably and effectively supporting lifelong learning?

### Nature of the Challenge

It is important that equitable learning opportunities are available for students of all ages in order to create a community that is representative of our population. Affordability, transportation, facility conditions, and language are all barriers to accessing quality learning opportunities. How do we close gaps in achievement and access experienced by historically underrepresented community members?

The wealth of resources in the community is not tapped into to provide quality and equitable education for every student. This creates opportunity gaps and students who are not prepared for college, career, and life. (Task Force on Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequities Report, 2017)

The primary responsibility of educating students and lifelong learners falls outside the scope of the City of Austin. However, the City has many cultural and learning related facilities. How do we partner with other organizations and maximize the use of these existing venues to deliver services within the educational community to meet the needs of Austinites?

### Evidence

- Only 46 percent of Central Texas children are school-ready when they begin kindergarten. The greatest disparity in school readiness occurs by income: 28 percent of low-income kindergartners were school-ready in 2016, compared to 63 percent of children from moderate and high-income families. (Community Advancement Network [CAN] Dashboard)
- While Austin, Pflugerville, and Round Rock ISDs realized improved graduation rates from 2011 to 2015, Del Valle ISD saw a 2 percent decrease in the four-year graduation rate.
- In 2016 AISD once again hit an all-time high graduation rate. However, enrollment in higher education within a year of graduating has dropped, and college completions are flat. (E3 Alliance analysis of data at the UT Austin Education Research Center)
- The 2017 Del Valle ISD/Campus Improvement Plan found that DVISD did not meet the 2016 State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) minimum target performance in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- In 2015-16 Pflugerville ISD, nearly half (48.8 percent) of Pflugerville ISD students were considered at risk of dropping out of school.



Photo Credit: AISD
*AISD Pre-K students learning with their teacher.*

# CULTURE AND LEARNING CHALLENGE #5
## How do we ensure the creative ecosystem has equitable access to capacity building and revenue development resources and capital?

## Nature of the Challenge

Imagine Austin identified creativity as an engine of Austin's prosperity, and that arts, culture, and creativity are essential keys to the city's unique and distinctive identity. If Austin is to attract and retain its creative community, artists and arts organizations need to be able to sustain themselves as successful small businesses. However, many artists do not know about resources offered and do not have a clear roadmap for securing capital, diversifying their revenue streams, and conducting long-range business planning to sustain their businesses.

The creative sector's need for professional development, including revenue development, is identified in the Austin Music Census (2015) and Building Austin's Creative Capacity (BACC) (2016). Universities' fine arts departments often do not teach these skills in traditional curriculum. Further, there is a severe shortage of seasoned and resourced community organizations who can serve as fiscal sponsors, mentors, and incubate emerging arts growth.

## Evidence

- Artists appreciate and take advantage of the variety of support services available in Austin, but they nonetheless report considerable barriers in accessing resources (e.g., time, a range of information delivery types, mentoring, and peer dialogue). ALAANA (African-American, Latino, Asian-, Arab- and Native American) focus groups reported other challenges, such as cultural and language barriers. (BACC, 2016)



Photo credit: Austin History Center
*ABC House of Music was a musician-owned business in East Austin circa 1970 that has now closed.*

- Individual creatives and arts/cultural nonprofits report that there is not enough information about available support services, or the information is not disseminated in ways that are easily received or applied, and they often miss learning opportunities. (BACC, 2016)

- There is a need for musicians to "invest in better, targeted professional development; shift the professional development services focus to methodically and consistently address the needs of existing working professional musicians rather than entry-level or early stage musicians and bands; provide professional, best practices training on expanding revenue opportunities; focus on expanding the connection of Austin's musicians to businesses and revenue opportunities in other cities and countries via investment in better networking, and increase trade export opportunities to connect professional musicians to more revenue." (Austin Music Census, 2015)

## CULTURE AND LEARNING CHALLENGE #6
## How do we increase the supply of affordable public and private spaces (e.g., housing, work, studio, performance) for the creative ecosystem?

### Nature of the Challenge

We know that local artists bring both immense economic and social impact to Austin, as shown by the $4.35 billion in economic activity reported by Economic Impact of the Creative Sector Study by TXP Partners in 2010 and the No. 17 ranking in the National Center for Arts Research Most Vibrant Arts Communities Index in 2017. However, we are also faced with a robust market economy with intense development pressures that is displacing cultural spaces at a rapid rate.

To preserve Austin's unique arts and music scene and our culture of innovation, collaboration, and creativity, cultural producers need access to affordable creative space, both public and private, that includes housing, studio, rehearsal, performance, and administrative spaces. How do we increase this supply, and further, how do we address the isolation and displacement of not only artists, but also underrepresented members of the creative community?

### Evidence

- The Austin Music Census (2015), Artspace Market Study (2013), CreateAustin (2012), Building Austin's Creative Capacity (BACC) (2016), and the Fashion and Apparel Industries in Austin Report (2015) reinforce the need to create a greater supply of affordable, accessible creative spaces citywide. It is the No. 1 priority of the Music and Creative Ecosystem "Omnibus" Stabilization Recommendations (2016).



Photo Credit: The Austin Chronicle
*In June 2016, Salvage Vanguard Theater vacated its location on Manor Road that it had called home for 10 years.*

- Design research interviews with local artists and recent data collected through the City's Creative Space Survey and Cultural Asset Mapping Project (CAMP) indicate the vast majority of the creative community lacks resources to buy property or pay rents at market rate.
- Many artists and arts organizations lack the financial capital to qualify for traditional mortgages and loans. Underrepresented members of the creative ecosystem have an even tougher challenge finding financial means to compete and secure space in this market, due to historically lower organizational budgets and disposable income of their audiences and donors. (BACC)
- Recent responses collected through the Creative Space Survey show 52 percent of respondents said they have considered leaving Austin due to creative space-related issues.
- In the 2015 Austin Music Census, 70.8 percent of respondents identified a lack of affordable rental housing.

## Safety

Strategic Outcome:

# Being safe in our home, at work, and in our community

Council Indicators:

- Emergency Response
- Community Compliance with Laws and Regulations (actual and perceived)
- Community Prevention and Preparedness
- Administration of Justice
- Quality and Reliability of Safety-related Infrastructure and Utility Services

Challenges (DRAFT):

1. How do we deliver timely, effective public safety services for a diverse community in the face of challenges such as significant population growth, racial inequities, and traffic congestion?
2. How do we ensure and build meaningful community relationships so that by working together we create a safe Austin for all of us?
3. How do we strengthen community relationships so that all Austinites are prepared to respond to natural and human-caused hazards, including digital security breaches?
4. How do we ensure that City enforcement and justice processes are consistently fair and impartial and strive to eliminate inequities?
5. As the region grows, how do we proactively identify, assess, and manage risks related to the quality and reliability of critical infrastructure and utilities services?

## SAFETY CHALLENGE #1
How do we deliver timely, effective public safety services for a diverse community in the face of challenges such as significant population growth, racial inequities, and traffic congestion?

## Nature of the Challenge

Traffic is a big problem for first responders when someone is not breathing. Every second counts. Traffic congestion continues to create problems for Austinites including the City of Austin's first responders. As Austin grows and traffic increases, how do we reach every Austinite in the right time with the right response?

Response times are critical to saving life and property. But they are only a part of the story. Getting the right emergency response at the right time involves understanding what Austinites need and designing services to meet those needs.

Austinites speak many different languages and come in all ages, colors, and backgrounds. Every Austinite has a particular health, relationship, and financial status.



Over the next five years, the City of Austin has the opportunity to engage even more closely with our diverse community so that together, we can design and deliver the appropriate response in every emergency situation.

## Evidence

- Continued low-density suburban development can strain the public safety budget, as more development on the city's fringes require additional related infrastructure to ensure adequate response times. For example, in 2017, 90 percent of Priority 2 Emergency Medical Services calls originating in the area around Station No. 31 (Southwest Austin) were responded to within 12:33 minutes; while 90 percent of Priority 2 calls originating around the area of Station No. 6 (downtown) were responded to within 9:22 minutes.

- For Austin Police, call quantity has steadily increased over the last five years. From Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-15 to FY 2015-16 the number of emergency and urgent calls responded to increased by 4 percent.. (City of Austin FY 2015-16 Performance Report)

- The demographic composition of City public safety departments does not reflect the general population. For example, in 2016 the Austin Fire Department was 78 percent Caucasian; 4.1 percent African American; 16 percent Hispanic; 1.5 percent Asian/Pacific Islander; and 0.4 percent American Indian. When compared to 2010 census data, it shows minority populations are underrepresented within the department (2016 Council Budget Question 169; 2010 Census).

## SAFETY CHALLENGE #2
## How do we ensure and build meaningful community relationships so that by working together we create a safe Austin for all of us?

### Nature of the Challenge

Everyone who lives, works in or visits Austin expects to feel safe. According to a 2016 anonymous community policing survey, residents and non-residents agree that they feel safe in Austin and the [Austin Police] department provides a high level of service. (Matrix Consulting Group 2016)

Collaboration on safety is critical in a complex urban environment. "Now that a growing number of essential systems are interconnected, city experts stress the need to build stronger relationships in all parts of a community before threats strike." (The Safe Cities Index 2015, Economist Intelligence Unit)

Austin is known internationally for large festivals such as South by Southwest (SXSW) and Austin City Limits. These events require extraordinary public safety support from several City departments such as Transportation, Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services. Staffing these events is a topic of continual conversation as Austinites question whether public safety service delivery is negatively impacted by the dedication of staff to these events.

### Evidence

- "The increase in older and younger Austinites will require additional services oriented to these age groups. The changing ethnic and racial composition of the city will also shift demand for certain services, including an increased need for multilingual communications." (Imagine Austin)



Photo Credit: City of Austin

*The Austin Police Department and community members from the Rundberg area come together to beautify their neighborhood.*

- Patrol resources have limited opportunities to be more proactive. Proactivity levels are at an overall level of approximately 22 percent, well below the 35-45 percent range typically considered to represent effective level of patrol services. (Final Report on Community Policing, Matrix Consulting Group, 2016)

## SAFETY CHALLENGE #3
## How do we strengthen community relationships so that all Austinites are prepared to respond to natural and human-caused hazards, including digital security breaches?

### Nature of the Challenge

Does every Austinite know how to best prepare for and respond to different types of disasters? Having information in different languages and culturally relevant contexts increases access and understanding. Through greater collaboration with community groups, Austin can provide appropriate public outreach that raises hazard awareness and communicates actions to be taken (Flood Mitigation Task Force, Final Report, May 2016).

As we saw during Hurricane Harvey, mobile devices and social media were used extensively to assist people in need who evacuated to Austin. Some evacuees relied solely on their mobile phones for the most current evacuation information, navigation, and resources that they could use.

Adding to natural hazards, Austin needs to be prepared for digital security breaches that could disrupt city services or even steal Austinites' identities. In April 2017, the city of Dallas woke up to sirens blaring when a hacker breached their systems. On a global scale, in May through June of 2017, hackers accessed Equifax systems, stealing people's names, Social Security numbers, birth dates, and addresses and, in some instances, driver's license numbers.

### Evidence

- "Recent extreme events are likely to be the new normal. Vulnerable populations are likely to be disproportionately impacted due to limited ability to adapt. (Toward a Climate Resilient Austin, Executive Summary, 2014)

- It is critical for emergency management organizations to establish themselves on social media outlets before a disaster strikes. During non-disaster periods, emergency management professionals should explore how they can use social media to deliver information. (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2017)

- "If you have a credit report, there's a good chance that you're one of the 143 million American consumers whose sensitive personal information was exposed." (Federal Trade Commission, September 2017)
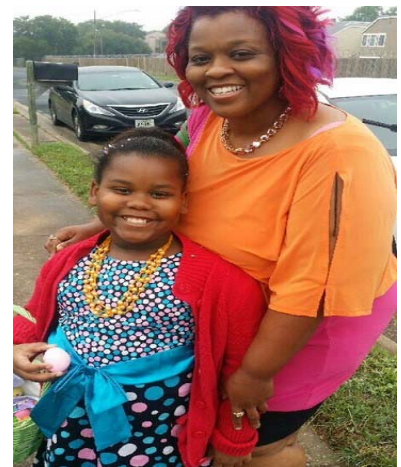


Photo Credit: Austin Teressa
*An evacuee and her daughter before evacuating to Austin from Houston during Hurricane Harvey (2017).*

## SAFETY CHALLENGE #4
## How do we ensure that City enforcement and justice processes are consistently fair and impartial and strive to eliminate inequities?

### Nature of the Challenge
Austin faces many of the same challenges as the nation today. Researcher Phillip Atiba Goff wrote in October 2016 for the Research Center for Policing Equity and John Jay College of Criminal Justice that "Public trust in law enforcement is alarmingly low in many communities nationwide,". Gobb presents research showing "positive police community relationships are crucial for safer communities."

Austin will need to take important steps toward recognizing and addressing racism at the personal, institutional, structural, and systemic levels. Over the next five years, the community has the opportunity to focus on and enhance current efforts to make enforcement and justice processes fair and equitable for all Austinites.

### Evidence

- The Community Advancement Network (CAN) 2017 Dashboard reports the disproportionality ratio of jail bookings for Blacks in 2011 was 2.8 and 2.6 in 2015.

- The City Auditor's Special Request Report on Alternatives to Incarceration at Municipal Court (July 2016) indicates that Austin and other Texas cities are working to expand alternatives to incarceration for indigent defendants guilty of fine-only offenses.
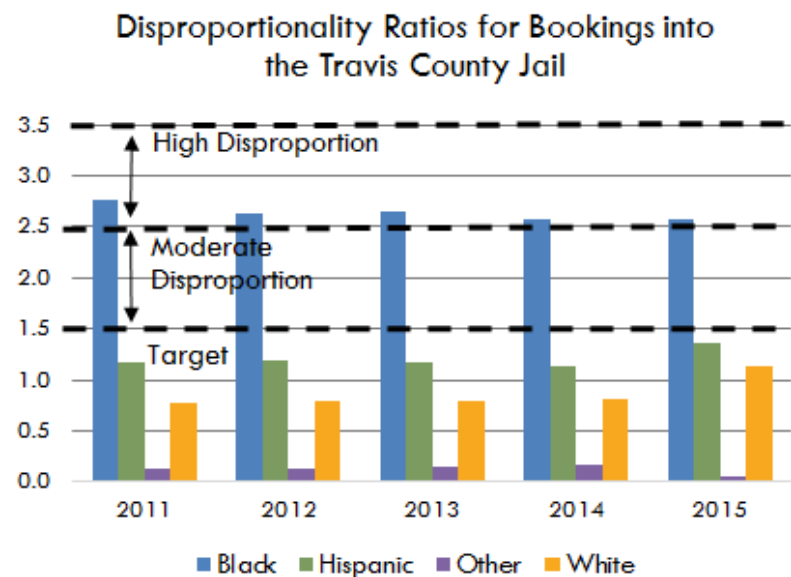


Data Source: Community Advancement Network

*The disproportionality ratio of jail bookings for Blacks has exceeded the "high disproportion" threshold for five years.*

**SAFETY CHALLENGE #5**

As the region grows, how do we proactively identify, assess, and manage risks related to the quality and reliability of critical infrastructure and utilities services?

## Nature of the Challenge

All Austinites expect to have safe water to drink, electricity to power their homes and businesses, and safe, drivable roads. Austin's growing, sprawling population combined with climate change can have significant impact on the City's ability to deliver these basic, core public services.

Extreme weather tested Texas' critical infrastructure beyond the breaking point in several cases in 2017: Corpus Christi, Victoria, Houston, and surrounding areas experienced either extended power outages, boil water notices, or severely damaged roadways during the fall 2017 Hurricane season.

To prevent these undesirable events in Austin, the City will need to strengthen coordinated, proactive risk management efforts with City, regional, state, and federal partners. In Austin's 2014 report on Climate Resiliency, the Office of Sustainability identified potential impacts to critical infrastructure and recommended that the City "Develop vulnerability assessments, and integrate current departmental planning efforts such as: Enterprise Risk Management, Business Continuity Plans, Long Term Plans, and Capital Plans."

## Evidence

- Hazard mitigation activities are an investment in a community's safety and sustainability. It is widely accepted that the most effective hazard mitigation measures are implemented at the local government level, where decisions on the regulation and control of development are ultimately made. (City of Austin Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, 2016)



Photo Credit: City of Austin
*The Austin Memorial Day floods of 2015 tested many bridges and roads.*

- Citizen satisfaction with flood control efforts has decreased from 65 percent in 2012 to 48 percent in 2016 (City of Austin Community Survey, 2016).

- There are more than 700 buildings in the 25-year floodplain, according to recent data analyzed by the Watershed Protection Department.

## Government That Works For All of Us

Strategic Outcome:

Believing that city government works effectively and collaboratively for all of us—that it is equitable, ethical, and innovative.

Council Indicators:

- Financial cost and sustainability of City government
- Condition/quality of City facilities and infrastructure and effective adoption of technology
- Satisfaction with City services
- Employee engagement
- Stakeholder engagement and participation
- Equity of City programs and resource allocation
- Transparency and ethical practices

Challenges (DRAFT):

1. How might we build a more trusting, collaborative decision-making process amongst Council, City Management, and our Community to increase productivity and transparency?
2. How might we achieve more equitable outcomes and deliver services that meet or exceed the expectations of the people we serve?
3. How might we continue to meet the needs of a rapidly growing city, while managing organizational capacity and ensuring fiscal responsibility?
4. How might we improve our approach to facilities and infrastructure management to ensure a high-quality, efficient, and sustainable portfolio that supports staff and customer?
5. How might we mature the City's data and technology capabilities to provide secure and scalable solutions that enable staff to deliver accessible, modern, and impactful services to all residents?
6. How might we attract and retain a talented workforce that sustains a workplace culture of engagement, customer focus, and high performance?
7. How might we improve engagement to include voices of our most vulnerable populations, demonstrate the impact of public input, and generate meaningful outcomes for the community?

## GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS - CHALLENGE #1

## How might we build a more trusting, collaborative decision-making process amongst Council, City Management, and our Community to increase productivity and transparency?

### Nature of the Challenge

Governance is the collection of rules, norms, and actions that structure the way decision-making is carried out in an organization. This includes the political processes which exist within an organization and it is the way policies are structured and regulated. The City is currently a 10-ONE geographic district based structure which began in 2014. Because 10-ONE is still relatively new, there is a learning curve for staff and elected Council Members to work as efficiently and effectively as possible in terms of both representativeness and responsiveness.

An open transparent government is vital in building trust and communication between Council, staff, and the community. This is exemplified in the fact that a very large number of hours are spent at Council work sessions, Council meetings, and budget work sessions before decisions are made, and even then, some items are postponed to a different time in the future for additional vetting and discussion. Amongst Council, staff, and the community, there is a resonating desire to improve how we operate as an organization to provide services more equitably, efficiently, and adaptively. The base of this change is a need to further improve the collaboration and trust between Council, the community, and staff.

### Evidence

- 2016 Council Meeting Statistics - 557 hours at Council Meetings and Work Sessions (*2017 staff briefing to Council "Council Meeting Efficiency and Deliberation"*)



- 2016 Council Meeting Speaker Statistics -
    - 3,161 registered speakers
    - 9,483 total speaker minutes or 158 hours equals 45 percent of Council meeting time. (*2017 staff briefing to Council "Council Meeting Efficiency and Deliberation"*)

- 2016 Council Committee Meeting Statistics - 95 Council committee meetings scheduled, of which 30 were cancelled. (*2017 staff briefing to Council "Council Meeting Efficiency and Deliberation"*)

- There are more than 80 Council appointed boards, commissions, and task forces ranging from very active to inactive. Each body requires varying levels of staff support.

**GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS - CHALLENGE #2**

How might we achieve more equitable outcomes and deliver services that meet or exceed expectations of the people we serve?

## Nature of the Challenge

Austin is a growing community, in terms of both the City as an organization and the population we serve. While the City of Austin continues to be a high-performing organization when measured against peer cities nationwide, keeping up with the associated service demands in a balanced and efficient way has proven a challenge. The City lacks sufficient mechanisms to track and measure service outcomes in a way that helps us understand the needs of different communities. As a result, the service delivery experience can be inconsistent and inequitable.

While Austin is renowned for its quality of life and economic resiliency, major issues such as poverty, hunger, and homelessness continue to impact our City, all of which disproportionately affect communities of color. As documented by the 2017 Task Force on Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequities Report, racial and economic segregation is exacerbated by a lack of citywide availability of affordable housing, public transportation, healthy food options, healthcare, and other neighborhood services. Although well intended, our decision-making processes have not always yielded equitable results. The City has both internal and external customers. Our ability to excel in service delivery externally depends on our ability to meet our internal service delivery needs.

## Evidence

- While Austin was recently recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as, "The Best Place to Live in the U.S." in 2015, the Martin Prosperity Institute listed Austin as the most economically segregated in the country. (City of Austin Equity Assessment and Recommendations Report)



*Carver Branch Library employee assists library patron.* Photo by Hennig Photography.

- Satisfaction with the overall quality of City services has decreased over the last five years from 65 percent in 2011 to 47 percent in 2016. (Austin Community Survey, 2016)
- In 2016, 36 percent of Community Survey respondents gave a dissatisfied or very dissatisfied ranking for overall value received for City taxes and fees. (Austin Community Survey, 2016)
- 48 percent of respondents to the City's annual survey report being satisfied or very satisfied with the City's efforts to serve people equally regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, age, or abilities; however, when this information is disaggregated demographically, 27 percent of African American respondents report being dissatisfied with the same measure. (Austin Community Survey, 2016)

## GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS - CHALLENGE #3

## How might we continue to meet the needs of a rapidly growing city, while managing organizational capacity and ensuring fiscal responsibility?

### Nature of the Challenge

While Austin's continued growth brings increased fiscal prosperity, it also creates some fiscal challenges to both the residents and the government. With the rapid growth, comes an increased need to provide more services in both type and amount. The need to ensure everyone has equal access and understanding is even more expansive in a city as diverse as Austin.

The rapid increase in population creates additional challenges in trying to balance policy goals with fiscal responsibility. Many policies have a fiscal impact such as the cost of increasing the living wage or adopting a local preference purchasing policy, and policymakers must decide which policy goals are worth the investment. These sometimes competing priorities make it important to ensure a budget process that is priority-driven and transparent.

Austin must be prepared for possible new state or federal legislation outside the control of the City, which can significantly impact expected tax revenues.

### Evidence

- 36 percent of Austin residents are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the value they receive for their taxes and fees. (Austin Community Survey, 2016)

- Austin's population has grown by more than 29 percent from 718,912 in 2006 to 926,426 in 2016. (Estimates from City Demographer, Department of Planning, City of Austin.)



Photo Credit: City of Austin

- The number of employees working for the City of Austin has increased 17 percent in the past 10 years from about 11,795 to 13,825 (City of Austin Budget Office)

- The tax rate in Austin has increased from 0.4126 with collections of $249,137,327 in Fiscal Year 2007 to 0.4418 with estimated collections of $547,352,549 in Fiscal Year 2017 (City of Austin Budget Office)

## GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS - CHALLENGE #4

## How might we improve our approach to facilities and infrastructure management to ensure a high-quality, efficient, and sustainable portfolio that supports staff and customer?

### Nature of the Challenge

Many of the facilities and infrastructure the City owns are in poor or failing condition or fail to appropriately support community and department needs. Properly maintaining these assets directly affects the safety and engagement of the employees who work in them and their ability to meet the needs of the public who visit them.

The City's facilities and infrastructure will continue to require additional investment to ensure they serve the residents and visitors of Austin efficiently, and protect the health and safety of all. Because of limited funding options and the magnitude of capital renewal needs, the City will fall behind unless we continue making substantial investments in capital renewal efforts as well as implement proactive approaches to address facilities maintenance. The City also must balance maintenance with investments in new infrastructure capacity to meet the service demands of our growing population. Doing this requires a long-term approach to portfolio management and exploration of additional funding sources that meet all of the City's important goals.

### Evidence

- The City currently operates over 250 facilities, 20,000-plus acres of park land, water and wastewater treatment plants, power generation facilities, nearly 8,000 lane miles of streets, 2,400 miles of sidewalk, and nearly 250,000 trees in parks, trails, and rights of way.
- In 2013 the American Society of Civil Engineers stated portions of the City's infrastructure are classified in poor or failing condition:
    - 24 percent of water treatment facilities
    - 40 percent of wastewater treatment facilities
    - 12 percent of streets
    - 13 percent of traffic management devices
    - 11 percent of park infrastructure
    - 27 percent of public trees
    - 10 percent of creek crossings are at high risk for flooding



Oscar Amos, Wes Crow

- Council approved a Capital Rehabilitation financial policy in Fiscal Year 2016 and initial one-time funding of $1.2 million to address deferred facilities maintenance. Assuming the current maintenance backlog of $70 million in facilities, the budget would require $5.9 million in funds annually to eliminate the backlog by 2036. (RSPI assessment)
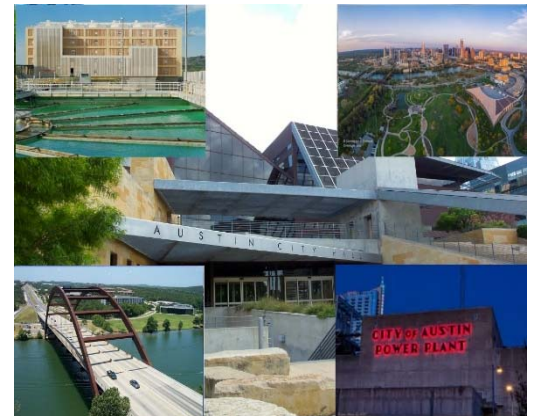
**GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS - CHALLENGE #5**

## How might we mature the City's data and technology capabilities to provide secure and scalable solutions that enable staff to deliver accessible, modern and impactful services to all residents?

### Nature of the Challenge

The success of Austin as a leading digital city presents significant challenges to the City of Austin as a municipal government. Can the City deliver data and technology services to internal and external customers at the same high levels as industry? Can these services meet the expectations of a high-tech community but still be accessible and equitable to all?

While the City of Austin Information Technology (IT) capabilities are successful in meeting the basic needs of a large, growing organization—there are several areas where continued focus is needed to keep pace and improve. These challenges include:

- Enhancing the citywide IT governance structure to better prioritize and fund projects,
- Strengthening software management standards and processes to improve quality, and increased use of linked technologies to create a seamless user experience for residents,
- Balancing new and emerging technology implementation with maintaining existing operations including network infrastructure, legacy software systems, and personal computing and communication tools, and
- Attracting and retaining highly skilled technical employees in a highly competitive IT talent market.

These challenges limit the ability for City IT to keep pace with more modern technology frameworks and practices that can better serve staff and the community.

### Evidence

- Each year the City is only able to approve approximately 10 percent of IT budget requests submitted by departments. (Information Technology Governance Data, 2015-2017)
- There is no citywide strategy to identify, prioritize, or implement online services to residents. (Online Services Audit, 2017)
- 42 percent of surveyed residents would need assistance to get online access to City Services (City of Austin Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan Survey, 2014)
- 35 percent of IT staff are eligible to retire in the next five years. (Human Resources Report, 2017)
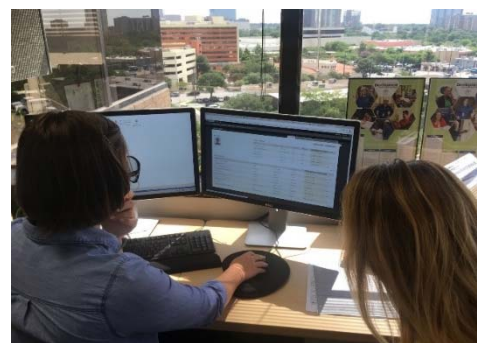


*Understanding the needs of staff and residents is key in delivering meaningful data technology services. City staff members assess the usefulness of an online service found on AustinTexas.gov.*

# GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS - CHALLENGE #6

## How might we attract and retain a talented workforce that sustains a workplace culture of engagement, customer focus, and high performance?

## Nature of the Challenge

Improving workplace culture and unlocking thoughtful and effective talent management is essential to our success as a City. The City of Austin ranks No. 9 on the Forbes list of best employers and while this is a distinct honor, a recent third-party assessment concluded areas of opportunity around strengthening the City's culture. Factors associated with strengthening the City's culture include retaining and attracting motivated employees, commitment to engaging and serving the community, and thoughtful employee engagement.

As a City we must be able to create a municipal culture that listens and facilitates high performance while generating trust and promoting transparency. Establishing a clear culture at every level that promotes interdepartmental and cross-functional lines of communication will ensure greater transparency, improved performance, and a sense of community within the City workforce.

Growing pains associated with the City's transition to a Municipal Civil Service system have created new challenges and questions regarding how the organization can continue to hire and retain the highest quality workforce to serve our community. Pending retirements and turnover in key positions present a need to prepare for knowledge transfer and new leadership. Striving to attract and retain highly sought after talent in a highly competitive workforce market and maintaining a workforce that is customer oriented, responsible, accountable, innovative and ethical will help us better meet the needs of our City over the next 3 to 5 years.

## Evidence

- When compared to average scores for 180 other organizations, the City of Austin scored lower across the six major metrics: culture strength, discipline, openness, strategic growth, performance, and relationships. (Culture Analysis by Russell Reynolds and Associates, 2017)
- In 2012, City of Austin residents voted for the implementation of a Municipal Civil Service (MCS); the rules were implemented in 2014
- 11 percent of the City of Austin workforce is eligible for retirement.


*Photo Credit: City of Austin*

- According to the 2016 Listening to the Workforce Survey:
    - 43 percent thinks the survey is used to make improvements to the workplace.
    - 49 percent thinks that personnel policies are interpreted and used fairly.
    - 38 percent feel department recognition programs makes them feel appreciated.
    - 43 percent are satisfied with their promotion and career opportunities.
    - 56 percent believe they can report unethical behavior without retaliation.

**GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS - CHALLENGE #7**

How might we improve engagement to include voices of our most vulnerable populations, demonstrate the impact of public input, and generate meaningful outcomes for the community?

## Nature of the Challenge

The City of Austin is committed to community engagement when soliciting feedback from the public about large-scale or long-range civic initiatives, such as CodeNEXT or the Spirit of East Austin. During Council meetings, General Citizen Communication is another example of a way in which the public can directly have their voice heard on issues of importance to them and impact their community. Additionally, City departments and offices often seek input from stakeholders before implementing programs and services.

However, as the City has increased the number of engagement opportunities available to the public, concern about accessibility, trust, and follow-through has been raised. There is a sense of overall skepticism for how the City uses data collected from its various input methods. Overlapping opinions surface in different engagement settings, which can create frustration and an inadvertent feeling of mistrust for government. Furthermore, it can be difficult for low-income families and individuals working multiple jobs to attend a public meeting. As Austin's demographic and language profile changes, how might we best engage all residents (particularly those who have been historically marginalized) in setting the direction of City government without producing "engagement fatigue"?

## Evidence

- When the community was surveyed, 47 percent expressed low satisfaction with the outcomes of their engagement with the city. (Task Force on Community Engagement Report, 2016)

- In 2016, 34 percent of residents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall effectiveness of the City's communication. This is 4 percent below the national average for this benchmark. (Austin Community Survey, 2016)



Photo Credit: City of Austin
*Public input session for CodeNEXT (2013)*

- Resident satisfaction with the City's overall effectiveness of communication has declined from 50 percent to 34 percent over the last 5 years. (Austin Community Survey, 2016)

# Mobility

Strategic Outcome:

## Getting us where we want to go, when we want to get there, safely and cost-effectively.

Council Indicators:

- System efficiency and congestion
- Transportation cost
- Accessibility to and equity of multi-modal transportation choices
- Safety
- Condition of transportation-related infrastructure

Challenges (DRAFT):

1. How do we lower the risk of travel-related injury and protect and promote public health?
2. How do we supply a transportation network that can meet the demands of a growing region while providing equitable access to transportation choices, opportunities, and services?
3. How do we prepare for and lead in leveraging rapidly evolving technology in transportation?
4. How do we ensure a financially and environmentally sustainable transportation network?
5. How do we effectively collaborate with agencies, organizations and the Austin community around mobility decision-making?

## MOBILITY CHALLENGE #1
## How do we lower the risk of travel-related injury and protect and promote public health?

### Nature of the Challenge

Safety is the most important consideration in transportation decision-making. Even with that mission defining much of the work of the Austin Transportation Department, dozens of people die each year on Austin's roads. Our transportation network's most vulnerable users, people who walk, bike, and ride motorcycles, as well as people of color, people with lower incomes, and those experiencing homelessness are disproportionately affected. People traveling by modes other than driving account for only 6.5 percent of Austin commuters, yet they represent half of traffic fatalities. And for each person killed, eight more victims of crashes are seriously injured, changing their lives forever.

In addition to protecting Austinites from serious injury and death, transportation can affect public health in other ways. For instance, reducing vehicle-miles traveled reduces emissions associated with automobiles. Emissions, specifically ground-level ozone, have health effects on vulnerable populations, including children and seniors. Transportation can also promote public health by increasing access to healthy food, healthcare, recreational opportunities, and active transportation options for commuting or meeting daily needs that can allow for physical activity as part of a daily routine - one of the leading ways to incorporate daily physical activity.

### Evidence

- On average, 64 people lose their lives on Austin streets each year. The most common causes of crashes are caused by human factors, such as distracted driving, speeding, drug impairment, and failing to yield or stop. (Vision Zero Action Plan, 2016)


Photo Credit: Austin Transportation Department

- Regional data confirms that automobiles account for nearly 50 percent of ozone-forming emissions released within Central Texas. Unhealthy levels of ozone can lead to increased respiratory ailments, especially in young children, older adults, asthma sufferers, and those with chronic conditions. (City of Austin Air Quality Program Website, 2017)
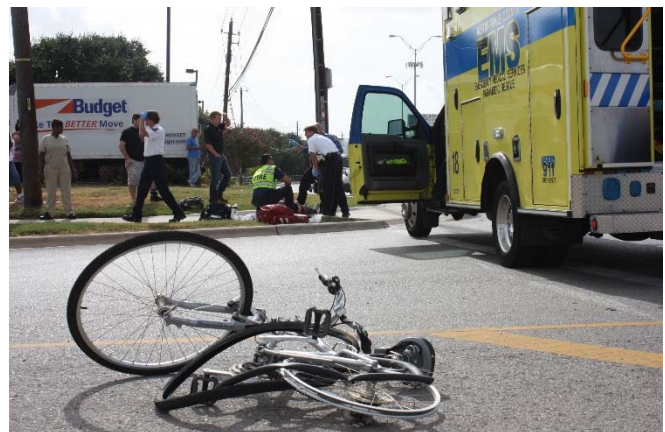
**MOBILITY CHALLENGE #2**

How do we supply a transportation network that can meet the demands of a growing region while providing equitable access to transportation choices, opportunities, and services?

## Nature of the Challenge



Photo Credit: Austin Transportation Department

Transportation Demand - With Austin's population doubling approximately every 20 years, our region struggles with the demand that growth has on our transportation network. The challenge is furthered by the fact that 74 percent of Austinites drive to work or school alone. The demand on our roadway system is especially evident in the traffic congestion we see during peak hours. Traffic congestion can lead to unreliable and slower travel times, as well as other critical externalities such as inefficiencies in goods movement, emissions from vehicles idling in traffic, and reduced access to jobs and services.

Transportation Supply - While growth can bring economic vibrancy to the city, the supply of an efficient and accessible multimodal transportation network is required to capitalize on these benefits for all Austinites. Adding supply to the transportation network is a desire of the community. Participants in Mobility Talks, the public engagement initiative in 2016, indicated their top choice for congestion management was to increase public transportation options and services while the third-highest priority was to add capacity to existing roads where possible.

This is a complicated challenge. Providing multimodal transportation infrastructure requires prioritization and tradeoffs, as space is finite and resources are limited. Additionally, while the community supports adding supply to the transportation system, supply for what mode or where is often debated.

## Evidence

- The regional transportation network is built for cars, and the growing congestion we see is the direct result of increasingly distant growth with few transportation options. Too many people live and work in places where densities are too low to support regular transit service or are outside of a transit agency's service area." (Imagine Austin, 2012, pg. 74-75)

- There are approximately 32 centerline miles of new arterial roadways identified in the 2025 Austin Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan (AMATP) remaining to be built.

- As of November 2015, there were 2,580 miles of absent (missing) sidewalks in the citywide sidewalk system. (City of Austin Sidewalk Master Plan/ADA Transition Plan Update, 2016)

- As of the end of Fiscal Year 2016, 62 percent of the City's arterial roadway system did not have bicycle facilities. (City of Austin Performance Measure)

Austin Strategic Direction 2023 – DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

# MOBILITY CHALLENGE #3
## How do we prepare for and lead in leveraging rapidly evolving technology in transportation?

## Nature of the Challenge

The mobility landscape is changing due to rapidly evolving technology and its use in transportation. Organizational connectedness amongst City departments, other agencies, and private partners as well as advances in legal and regulatory areas are essential for successful implementation of these new technologies.

While many of the barriers in our existing transportation systems, like congestion, affordability, accessibility, and environmental concerns, can be mitigated by technological advances, there may also be unintended consequences. These consequences could include increased single-occupancy vehicle trips and vehicle-miles traveled on city roadways as a result of autonomous vehicle use. Additionally, access to mobility services that rely on smartphones or other technology might not be available to all residents. Gaining value from new technologies in a way that integrates well with our existing infrastructure and continued development of basic transportation systems, such as our pedestrian, bicycle and public transit systems, will be important to success.

There are "unknown unknowns" about what is to come and how society will respond to and adopt new technologies. Additionally, there is a need to balance government resources on technology while continuing to complete our traditional transportation systems (roadway connections and active transportation systems).

## Evidence

- "In the near future, self-driving cars will simply circulate through cities, freeing road space and liberating millions of acres of parking lots for more useful purposes. Combine that with the ongoing electrification of the vehicle fleet, and it might look as if we are nearing an urban transportation utopia. But the dream of cheap, clean mobility in cities might run up against some harsh realities—soaring energy consumption, supercharged sprawl, and intensified traffic congestion—if AVs [autonomous vehicles] are simply deployed to encourage more driving." (*The Self-Driving Dilemma*, CityLab, 2017)



Photo Credit: Waymo

*Austin's own Mueller community was the site for Steve, a legally blind man, to be the first non-Google employee to ride in a self-driving Google car (now Waymo) in 2015.*

- 17 percent of Austinites do not have a smartphone, 4.4 percent do not own a cell phone at all, and 8 percent do not have Internet at home. (Digital Inclusion in Austin, Results of 2014 Citywide Survey, pages 1 and 2)

Austin Strategic Direction 2023 – DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

## MOBILITY CHALLENGE #4
## How do we ensure a financially and environmentally sustainable transportation network?

### Nature of the Challenge

Efficient, strategic and targeted mobility investments are needed to ensure the financial sustainability of the City, environmental protection, and delivery of more affordable transportation choices for residents. Today, transportation agencies are called upon to design, implement, and operate transportation systems that, in addition to providing mobility and safety, are also socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable. With constrained financial resources, the City has the challenge of most efficiently using public resources to invest in infrastructure for more affordable mobility systems.

Many factors impact the implementation, operations and maintenance of our transportation network. This includes not only maintaining the integrity and useful life of infrastructure, but also environmental stewardship. Balancing trade-offs with limited resources is challenging.

### Evidence

- 21 percent of streets are in poor or failing condition; 16 percent of traffic management devices, such as traffic signals, pedestrian hybrid beacons, school zone beacons, closed-circuit television cameras, and emergency vehicle preemption devices are in poor or failing condition; and 14 percent of aviation assets are in poor condition. (City of Austin Comprehensive Infrastructure Assessment, 2014)



Photo Credit: City of Austin Public Works

- Almost 30 percent, or 117, of the 412 major bridges are past their currently accepted design life of 50 years. (Public Works Department, Critical Infrastructure Assessment - Bridges, 2017)

- 10 percent of the 705 creek crossings are at high risk for flooding, 13 percent at very high risk. (City of Austin Comprehensive Infrastructure Assessment, 2014)

**MOBILITY CHALLENGE #5**

## How do we effectively collaborate with agencies, organizations, and the Austin community around mobility decision-making?

### Nature of the Challenge

Collaboration with the community, partner agencies and the private sector is vital to planning for our future mobility needs, yet remains a major challenge. Multiple communities within Austin, including communities of color, people with disabilities, seniors, youth, and communities impacted by poverty are often underrepresented in processes leading to important decisions. We must find creative ways to remove barriers to engagement that commonly prevent historically underserved and underrepresented community members from engaging in mobility decision-making.

To the community, it often does not matter who manages or implements a project. Therefore, it is also important to find common ground among the multiple agencies and private sector companies that directly or indirectly impact transportation, such as the Texas Department of Transportation, Capital Metro, Travis County, and others. These challenges are different than the community challenges in that they can include regulatory barriers, varying levels of responsibility, and different views of what to prioritize.

### Evidence

- Despite customized and enhanced efforts in Council Districts 2 and 4 to encourage and provide ample opportunities for public involvement in the 2016 Mobility Talks citywide engagement effort, those Districts had the lowest levels of participation with 3 and 5 percent respectively. ([2016 Mobility Talks Public Engagement Report, Table 1.2, page 6](#))



Photo Credit: Austin Transportation Department

- "Many people expressed the perception that only certain people really have a voice in civic decision-making and that too many don't." (Task Force on Community Engagement Report, 2016)

In 2016, to overcome public engagement barriers to hearing different voices led to enhanced coordination between the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Project Connect initiative and the City of Austin's Strategic Mobility Plan. The two projects formed a joint community advisory committee to ensure coordination.