

Late Backup

Posting Language: Approve a resolution directing the City Manager to take actions related to improving transportation options and addressing parking challenges in and around Zilker Park.

Sponsor: Kitchen

Cosponsors: Troxclair, Alter, Pool

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, Zilker Metropolitan Park has become a destination for community members, tourists and visitors to experience the unique natural features, cultural facilities, educational facilities, recreational assets and special events resulting in an estimated annual visitation rate of over 2 million visitors per year; and

WHEREAS, the Parkland Events Task Force devoted ample time to analyzing the special events schedule associated with Zilker Metropolitan Park and recommended 27 special event days to include, Austin City Limits, Blues on the Green, The Kite Festival, the Zilker Tree Lighting and Trail of Lights to be held at Zilker Park attracting an estimated attendance of 787,000 annually; and

WHEREAS, facilities like the Austin Nature and Science Center, Zilker Hillside Theater, Barton Springs Pool and the Zilker Botanical Garden offer daily program opportunities and occasional special events attracting approximately 1.3 million additional visitors annually; and

WHEREAS, operationally, Zilker Metropolitan Park has managed the visitation numbers and event staging by creating temporary staging and temporary parking areas at both the Polo Fields and along Stratford Drive to reduce the impacts to area neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the Polo Fields are located over the recharge zone for Barton Springs, making parking in the space less than desirable; and

WHEREAS, in order to accommodate the current visitation numbers, Zilker Metropolitan Park operationally utilizes both the Polo Fields and the Stratford Drive landfill space to accommodate temporary parking and temporary staging for special events, instead of restoring and utilizing these as green spaces for park use ; and

WHEREAS, the Parkland Events Task Force, created under the direction of Council Resolution No. 20170202-046, made recommendation C4- "Develop a parking and traffic solution for parks that would reduce usage of green space parking, such as the Polo Field at Zilker Park"; and

WHEREAS, the land along Stratford Drive, north of the street and south of Lady Bird Lake and east of the Mopac overpass and west of Lou Neff Drive is a capped landfill covering approximately 12 acres in total and 7.5 acres in the above described space; and

WHEREAS, the landfill cap has experienced deterioration over the past decade and this deterioration has created erosion, depressions in the landfill cap, undesirable vegetation growth, and drainage issues; and

WHEREAS, Zilker Metropolitan Park will benefit from a comprehensive traffic and parking analysis; and

WHEREAS, Zilker Metropolitan Park's unique cultural, recreational and natural assets have necessitated individualized feature specific master planning processes to be initiated, absent of a holistic master planning process; and

WHEREAS, the City is committed to exploring and implementing transportation options, including solutions such as shuttles, special events

transportation, and transportation demand management strategies to address the challenges of congestion; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Department under the guidance of the Watershed Protection Department and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) have proposed a short term temporary improvement plan to remove cars from the Polo Fields, opening the recharge zone and fortifying the landfill cap to improve erosion issues, improve water quality issues and improve drainage issues; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to form a working group made up of Environmental and Parks Commission working group members, Urban Transportation Commission representative(s), surrounding neighborhood leaders, representatives of park users from across the city, Barton Springs Pool, Botanical Gardens, and Hillside Theater representatives, as well as Watershed, Parks and Recreation Department, and Austin Transportation Department staff serving as support tasked to:

- Determine the viability of proposed improvement plans to fortify the landfill cap along Stratford Drive and make recommendations of terms for implementation of the improvements, including pilot solutions;
- Evaluate immediate options and opportunities for parking outside of the park area and strategies for reducing traffic in Zilker Metropolitan Park and at surrounding amenities with a goal of piloting options by October 2018;
- Make recommendations to establish a plan to permanently remove parking on the Polo Fields, taking into consideration possible strategies to reduce parking demand and utilization of transportation demand management strategies; and

- Provide a report to Council by March 1, 2019 on the working group's findings and recommendations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to:

- Indefinitely postpone the temporary improvement plan to fortify the landfill cap to allow the working group time to make its determinations;
- Identify funding for a Zilker Metropolitan Park Master Plan and report funding options to Council by December 30, 2018;
- Research and begin implementation of a possible shuttle system and/or other transportation and parking improvements as identified by the working group and staff by March 1, 2019; and
- Conduct a traffic and parking study to be completed no later than December 31, 2019 and brief Council by January 30, 2020 regarding determinations and recommendations for improvements.

ADOPTED: _____, 2018

ATTEST: _____

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk