AUSTIN STRATEGIC
DIRECTION | 2023

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AUSTIN LANDSCAPE
COUNCIL/MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT

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Mayor · **10 GEOGRAPHIC COUNCIL DISTRICTS** → **City Manager**

At-Large · 6 7 8 9 10 · **Daily Operations**

963K

200k 400k 600k 800k
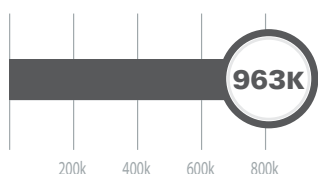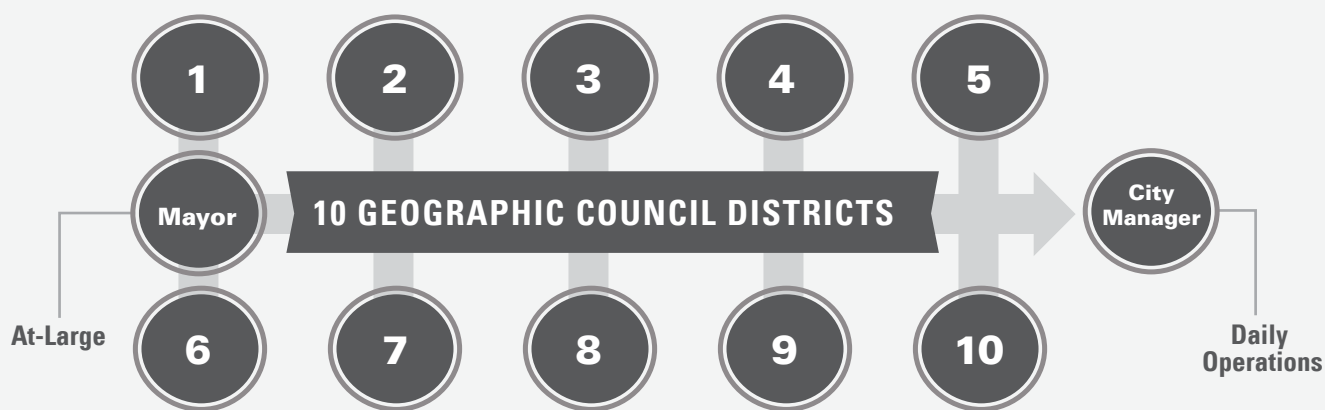
Population: 963,116
(as of January 2018)

Nearly **1 in 3 homes** speak **languages** other than English

100+ people moving to Austin daily

16%

16% of Austinites **living in poverty**
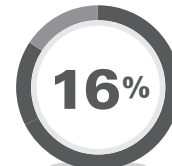*(2016)*

300 parks
227 miles of **trail**

7,760 lane miles of **City streets**
2,685 miles of **sidewalks**
250+ miles of **bike lanes**

I feel **safe** in my neighborhood.
daytime: 90%
nighttime: 73%
(2017)

829
ORGANIZATIONS

829 arts, culture & heritage **organizations**

INTRODUCTION

The City of Austin is focused on improving quality of life and civic participation in the Austin community. This strategic direction guides the next three to five years and outlines imperatives to advance equitable outcomes across Austin.

IMPETUS FOR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Research conducted in 2017, a few years into the City's new 10-1 system of geographic district representation, concluded four areas for the organization to address:

1. Lack of clear, shared citywide priorities

2. Shared sense that City is not dealing with critical issues that will determine its future

3. Effective governance has been a challenge

4. Inadequate feedback and learning loops

As a single playbook for the City of Austin, this strategic direction addresses these areas of opportunity and establishes a framework for effective governance going forward.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2023

Strategic Direction 2023 is inspired by Imagine Austin, which flourished from an extensive community engagement process that laid out a 30-year vision for our community. (View the Imagine Austin Dashboard, highlighting its eight Priority Programs and related indicators, at **austintexas.gov/imagineaustin/indicators**.)

This strategic direction sets six strategic outcomes for the next three to five years. Utilizing an outcome-based approach to setting priorities and budgeting enables the City to proactively address multiple time horizons, more thoughtfully assess performance, and improve community outcomes.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2023 INCLUDES:

- **Vision** - an aspirational community vision for Austin.

- **Outcomes** - results we seek the Austin community to experience.

- **Challenge Statements** - evidence-based diagnoses of critical issues facing the Austin community. "How might we…?" phrasing sets a basis for a variety of solutions.

- **Indicators and Metrics** - to assess to what degree the outcome is being achieved. Each indicator category has a series of metrics to track and report whether Austin is making progress on that outcome. These are a combination of community indicators of progress and specific contributions made by the City.

- **Strategies** - actions the City of Austin will take to address identified challenges and "move the needle" on indicators and metrics for that outcome.

OUR JOURNEY

- 5 City Council strategy workshops to set the direction for Austin.

- 6 Outcome Teams spearheaded non-traditional community engagement and internal cross-departmental collaboration to complete a series of milestones: (1) desk and field research, (2) insights, (3) challenge statements, (4) indicators and metrics, and (5) strategies.

- 8 All-Outcome strategic planning workshops and 20+ All-Outcome "huddles" to collaborate across outcomes on cross-cutting issues, such as applying the City's equity tool.

- 4 Department Director Summits and Workshops, and a series of strategic planning touchpoints with City executives and department leadership.

- Acknowledged recent community engagement results and incorporated recommendations from 125-plus City and regional plans. Outcome Teams took stock of rich insights from what the Austin community has said and integrated into cohesive results-driven strategies.

Engaging with Empathy: In partnership with the Equity Office and Communications & Public Information Office, the City's Outcome Teams participated with Quality of Life Commissioners in an Equitable Outcomes and Quality of Life Expedition visiting iconic places and community leaders around Austin. Through a "poverty simulator" exercise (not pictured), Outcome Teams also wrestled with difficult trade-offs that Austin's families, seniors, and youth are often confronted with. These engagements engendered compassion and insight into how the City could contribute to better outcomes.

OUR GUIDEPOSTS

- Be in service to Austinites and each other.

- Honor and integrate existing contributions. Avoid new layers of bureaucracy.

- Stick to a sound process and practice strategic discipline.

- Follow a structured approach to solving problems.

- Consider the needs of today and tomorrow with a boundaryless lens.

- Everyone touches the pen: unlock ability, inspiration and engagement.

- Learn along the way.

ADAPTIVE PHILOSOPHY & EQUITY

We are committed to coupling this strategic direction with a new "operating system," or way that we work, that is more outcome-oriented, adaptive, and responsive to community needs and opportunities.

As we implement strategies, we will learn and adapt from our successes and our failures. As we acquire new knowledge and insights, we will share openly. As we discover and create quality data, we will openly share it and incorporate it into decision-making. As we measure performance, we are committed to segmenting data by race/ethnicity, age, gender, income, geography, and more whenever possible to understand how well performance is being achieved from an equity standpoint. As we learn what works and does not work, we adjust and strive for better.

IMAGINEAUSTIN

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 community members and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all. (from Imagine Austin)

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

CULTURE & LIFELONG LEARNING
Being enriched by Austin's unique civic, cultural, ethnic, and learning opportunities.

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

austintexas.gov/StrategicPlan

STRATEGIC ANCHORS

ACROSS OUR OUTCOMES
Values that Support Quality of Life in Austin.

EQUITY

To advance equitable outcomes, the City of Austin is leading with a lens of racial equity and healing. Race is the primary predictor of outcomes and it is time to recognize, understand, and address racism at its various levels: personal, institutional, structural, and systemic. Equity is the condition when every member of the community has a fair opportunity to live a long, healthy, and meaningful life. Equity embedded into Austin's values system means changing hearts and minds, transforming local government from the inside out, eradicating disparities, and ensuring all Austin community members share in the benefits of community progress.

AFFORDABILITY

Austinites deserve to experience the necessities of life as affordable and accessible. Simply put, this means a household can afford rent or mortgage, transportation, child care expenses, utilities, and taxes. This strategic direction lays out strategies to increase economic opportunities and affordable choices across Austin, so that Austinites, families, businesses, City employees, and all generations can thrive.

INNOVATION

In Austin, we define innovation as any project that is new to you with an uncertain outcome. Aimed at addressing pressing challenges that affect our community, human-centered innovation means a new approach to exercising authority and decision-making that starts with the needs, behaviors, and experiences of our community, and continues through a process of questioning assumptions, engaging with empathy, stewarding divergent thought, reflecting, and learning. Innovation is future-oriented around what outcomes could be created together, rather than an analysis of already formed alternatives.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Being a sustainable and resilient community requires proactive steps to protect Austin's quality of life now, and for future generations. A sustainable city finds a balance among three goal areas: (1) prosperity and jobs, (2) conservation and the environment, and (3) community health, equity, and cultural vitality. Resiliency is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems to survive, adapt, and grow from difficult times. In Austin, we bounce back stronger.

PROACTIVE PREVENTION

The City of Austin embraces the dual responsibility of being responsive to emerging challenges while also dialing up efforts to prevent problems on the front end. For example, this translates into addressing social determinants of health outcomes, rather than only treating the disease. This means investing in preventative maintenance of public assets like bridges, service vehicles, and community facilities. An intentional focus on prevention today leads to a brighter future.

COMMUNITY TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS

Austin is a place where leadership comes from the people. We believe in honoring the spirit and soul of Austin and creating opportunities for civic engagement that are easy, meaningful, and inclusive, and that lay a foundation for lasting relationships. Trust must be earned and through strengthening partnerships with the community, we will make more progress together to advance these six outcomes.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & AFFORDABILITY

STRATEGIC OUTCOME:

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

Economic Opportunity and Affordability strategies focus on reducing economic disparities by understanding and addressing root causes, leveraging public-private partnerships, and supporting children and adults toward long-term success. These strategies also foster economic resiliency by strengthening the small-business sector, aligning worker skills and employer needs, and developing an inclusive workforce. In addition, several strategies address the need for better data and systems to ensure our efforts are cost-effective and impactful to the people we serve.

CHALLENGES WE FACE:

1. How might we break the cycle of poverty and inequity so that all residents experience economic mobility?

2. How might we maintain a resilient economy, e.g. supporting small businesses and skilled workforce, 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 (i.e. communities where people's basic needs can be met with short trips) 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 leverage both prevention and service delivery to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in Austin?

INDICATORS:

A. Employment

Sample metric: Unemployment rate (segmented by key demographics such as race and age)

B. Income equality

Sample metric: Number and percentage of residents living below the poverty level

C. Cost of living compared to income

Sample metric: Percentage of households that are considered cost-burdened based on calculation of housing and transportation costs relative to income (utilities, child care, property tax, and health care costs to be added as data becomes available)

D. Housing

Sample metric: Number and percentage of residential plan reviews completed on-time

E. Homelessness

Sample metric: Number and percentage of persons who successfully exit from homelessness

F. Skills and Capability of our community workforce

Sample metric: Number and percentage of people who successfully complete Workforce Development training

G. Economic mobility

Sample metric: Number of persons placed out of poverty into middle-skill jobs

STRATEGIES:

1	Influence the supply of jobs to support availability of and access to middle-skill jobs and expansion of jobs/employers to benefit communities experiencing high unemployment or lacking access to jobs.
2	Influence the skills of our local workforce by developing and implementing a City of Austin workforce development roadmap to meet regional goals. Align local workforce skills with needs of employers and track outcomes with a special focus on economic improvement for people of color and historically marginalized communities.
3	Assess outcomes of our programs that support entrepreneurship and designated small, minority-owned, women-owned and disadvantaged businesses and optimize for participant success (e.g. business expansion, revenue, profitability).
4	Serve as a model employer in addressing workplace inequity and influence other employers in Austin to adopt similar practices.
5	Develop and act on recommendations to reduce the number of households and businesses displaced from Austin due to unaffordability.
6	Implement "highest potential impact" actions identified in Austin's Strategic Housing Blueprint.
7	Acknowledge Austin's history of racial segregation and counter it by applying an equity perspective to the City's land development code and associated programs and policies, aligning with community priorities as articulated in *Imagine Austin*, and ensuring affordable housing options throughout Austin.
8	Define and enact our response to homelessness focusing on efficient and effective use of our resources to address disparities, prevent homelessness, and support housing stability.
9	Develop and enact recommendations for supporting successful housing and employment outcomes for individuals re-entering the community following incarceration.

10	Create equitable access to quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) by supporting families who do not qualify for existing free programs and cannot afford quality programs on their own, increasing availability of quality ECE programs, and encouraging living wages for ECE providers.
11	Advance economic mobility by equipping and empowering families with wraparound services over a multi-year period so that parents can succeed in the workforce and children are prepared to succeed in adulthood.
12	Support a resilient business environment that supports a climate of innovation, entrepreneurship, and investment and reflects our community values by optimizing City processes and regulations to improve affordability and timeliness.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME:

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

The Mobility Outcome strategies focus on making our city and transportation network accessible and reliable for all members of our community. With an emphasis on collaboration, sustainable funding, and effective planning for the future, these strategies address our goals of providing equitable and safe access to a multimodal transportation network, reducing harmful emissions, meeting the needs of our growing community, and connecting Austin to the world.

CHALLENGES WE FACE:

1. How might we lower the risk of travel-related injury and protect and promote public health?

2. How might we supply a multimodal transportation network (for driving, walking, biking and taking transit) that can meet the demands of a growing region while providing equitable access to transportation choices, opportunities, and services?

3. How might we prepare for and lead in leveraging rapidly evolving technology in transportation?

4. How might we ensure a financially and environmentally sustainable transportation network?

5. How might we effectively collaborate with agencies, organizations and the Austin community around mobility decision-making?

INDICATORS:

A. System efficiency and congestion

Sample metric: Percent reduction in estimated vehicular and transit travel time in corridors evaluated

B. Transportation cost

Sample metric: Percentage of household cost attributed to transportation

C. Accessibility to and equity of multi-modal transportation choices

Sample metric: Percent satisfaction with transportation options (aside from personal vehicle) to get around Austin (e.g. ride share, bus/train, bike, walk)

D. Safety

Sample metric: Number and percentage of crashes resulting in fatalities or serious injuries caused by the top contributing behaviors (speeding, distracted driving, impaired driving, failure to yield)

E. Condition of transportation-related infrastructure

Sample metric: Number and percentage of high-frequency transit routes with good or better street condition

MOBILITY

STRATEGIES:

1	Promote a communitywide culture of safe driving through education and enforcement focused on behaviors most contributing to injuries and fatalities, (speeding, impaired driving, distracted driving, and failure to yield) as defined by our community's Vision Zero initiative.
2	Ensure our transportation network optimizes community safety, including street safety, emergency response, flood risk, disaster resiliency, and public health.
3	Encourage use of sustainable modes of transportation and discourage driving alone and single-purpose trips citywide to maximize the use of our transportation network. Lead by example as an employer in incentivizing, offering, promoting, and implementing mobility options for all City employees, people doing business with the City, and people participating in public input opportunities.
4	Provide equitable access to multimodal transportation choices to link people to opportunities, such as education, health care, healthy food including community amenities such as grocery stores, open space, and jobs, especially in historically underserved and underrepresented communities.
5	Coordinate with Capital Metro, Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, Texas Department of Transportation, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, Capital Area Council of Governments, school districts, and other agencies to maximize the person-carrying capacity of the transportation network.
6	Collaborate with regional partners to reduce harmful emissions generated by the transportation sector, including reducing emissions generated by the City's fleet through the earliest possible conversion to zero emission electric vehicles, shared vehicles, and effective mitigation technologies.
7	Improve Austin's street network grid and fill gaps in our sidewalk, bicycle, and urban trail systems based on highest need and greatest impact.
8	Expand the airport to address passenger growth and continue connecting Central Texas to the world, in alignment with the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport 2040 Plan. Increase options for travelers and employees to get to and from the airport, including by frequent and high-capacity transit.
9	Align transportation investments with the City's established goals for all transportation modes and with community priorities expressed in the *Austin Strategic Mobility Plan* and *Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint*.
10	Work early and collaboratively with our community to assess impacts, maximize opportunities, and address potential repercussions to housing and commercial affordability caused by transportation projects.

11	Identify and implement equitable and sustainable funding models to supply, operate, maintain, and renew transportation assets and programs that meet the community's mobility needs.
12	Maintain usability and maximize the useful life and resiliency of our multimodal transportation infrastructure through good design and adhering to a proactive maintenance schedule.
13	Evaluate emerging mobility solutions with stakeholders to better understand their community impacts and benefits and invest in infrastructure that enables the adoption of emerging mobility technologies.
14	Identify and implement land use policies that support a shift toward a more sustainable mode share.

SAFETY

STRATEGIC OUTCOME:

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

To develop strategies for the Safety Outcome, we asked the community and internal stakeholders this primary question: What are the highest-impact actions that we can take in the next three to five years to address our challenges and make all community members safer at home, at work, and in the community? Their responses and the following strategies fall into four themes: 1) proactive prevention using evidence-based strategies; 2) relationship building and working regionally; 3) enhancing our ability to work with diverse and vulnerable community members, and 4) collaboratively assessing and mitigating risk across critical infrastructure systems.

CHALLENGES WE FACE:

1. How might we engage and inform the community to ensure that public safety services are delivered to a diverse community and vulnerable populations in a safe, timely, and proactive manner given the challenges of significant population growth, racial inequities, and traffic congestion?

2. How might we build meaningful community relationships that transform our organizations, foster trust and legitimacy, and increase compliance with laws and regulations?

3. How might we strengthen local and regional partnerships to prevent, prepare for, and respond to natural and human-caused hazards including digital security breaches?

4. How might we ensure that our enforcement and justice processes are accountable, fair, equitable, impartial, and transparent?

5. How might we proactively identify, assess, and manage risks related to the quality, reliability and access to critical infrastructure given the challenges of an aging infrastructure, greater climate impacts, and population growth?

INDICATORS:

A. Success of emergency response

Sample metric: Percentage of community members who say they feel the response to their emergency was delivered effectively

B. Community compliance with laws and regulations (actual and perceived)

Sample metric: Part 1 property crime rate per 1,000 population and percentage change in that rate

C. Emergency prevention, preparedness, and recovery

Sample metric: Percentage of residents who say that they are prepared to help themselves, their families, and their neighbors to respond effectively to disasters and major emergencies

D. Fair administration of justice

Sample metric: Number and percentage of use of force incidents in proportion to the number of arrest made.

E. Quality and reliability of critical infrastructure

Sample metric: Number and percentage of City departments that have completed performance and vulnerability audits of documented critical infrastructure following sector-specific guidance

STRATEGIES:

1	Develop and act on recommendations to ensure that all community members are treated fairly and equitably in the enforcement of laws and the adult and juvenile justice systems, whether they are defendants or victims of crime.
2	Enhance and build relationships between community members, organizations, and public safety professionals to define, prioritize, and address community safety needs.
3	Create a shared understanding with the community about what constitutes timely, equitable, and effective safety outcomes and align performance expectations and resource investments accordingly.
4	Strengthen individual, family, and neighborhood preparedness for emergencies to ensure effective responses and recovery.
5	Enhance our partnerships with the community, other governmental organizations, and the private sector to prepare for, respond to, and recover from hazards and threats such as flooding, wildfire, cyber breaches, and terror attacks.
6	Advance our ability to engage and communicate with the community before, during, and after a disaster or emergency in ways that effectively connect people with accurate information, critical assistance, and support systems for response and recovery.
7	Develop consistent ongoing training to develop knowledge and skills across all City departments for emergency preparedness, response, and recovery with a particular focus on our ability to deliver safety services to vulnerable and historically marginalized communities.
8	Collaboratively and comprehensively assess the vulnerabilities and interdependencies that exist for critical City infrastructure. Prioritize actions and investments to prevent and mitigate the identified risks.
9	Improve positive outcomes in the justice system by understanding the perspectives of those who interact with the adult and juvenile justice systems (crime victims, defendants, etc.). Increase information-sharing across partner organizations, with an initial focus on increasing access to services and alternatives to adjudication (formal decision by a judge).
10	Engage our workforce and Austin's public and private organizations to increase workplace safety awareness and compliance.
11	Pursue evidence-based strategies to address root causes of harm, crime, and lack of public safety.

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

STRATEGIC OUTCOME:

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

Every community member deserves opportunities to live a full, healthy life and a key foundation for that is a healthy environment. These strategies intend to address disparities within our community, building on successful programs so that all of us can access healthy food, recreational opportunities, and quality health care when needed. By building stronger community connections and protecting people and the environment from long-term effects of a changing climate and population growth, we can become a healthier, more resilient community.

CHALLENGES WE FACE:

1. How might we proactively create conditions that result in optimal physical, mental, and behavioral health, and ensure access to health services are available to all Austinites?

2. How might we ensure race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, education, geographic location, and income level do not pre-determine whether individuals are able to achieve better health?

3. How might we create equitable access to parks, trails, open space, and recreational opportunities?

4. How might we achieve success on ambitious sustainability goals, preserving the quality of the environment and availability of natural resources as we adapt to a changing climate?

5. How might we support more connected communities, strengthening our community well-being and enabling more effective responses and recoveries tied to major events?

6. How might we embed consideration of factors that affect physical, mental, and behavioral health status within all City departments, and strengthen collaboration with external health service providers and stakeholders, to increase synergy and improve health outcomes?

INDICATORS:

A. Healthy conditions among individuals [absence of unhealthy conditions]

Sample metric: Number and percentage of clients served through City's health equity contracts who achieve intended healthy outcomes

B. Accessibility to quality health care services, both physical and mental

Sample metric: Infant mortality rate

C. Accessibility to quality parks, trails, and recreational opportunities

Sample metric: Austin's ParkScore "score" and ranking among U.S. cities

D. Environmental quality

Sample metric: Number and percentage of creeks and lakes in good or excellent health

E. Climate change and resilience

Sample metric: City of Austin carbon footprint (number of metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions from our government activity)

F. Food security and nutrition

Sample metric: Number of City-supported fresh food access points in healthy-food priority areas

STRATEGIES:

1	Promote healthy living and well-being with a particular focus on areas and communities with high rates of chronic disease and high-risk behaviors who lack access to services.
2	Provide and/or support initiatives that can connect those seeking wellness and medical care with the appropriate providers, and help them navigate and overcome critical barriers to obtaining health and mental health services (e.g. getting to appointments, cost of care).
3	Convene partners to create innovative, outcome-focused, patient-centered approaches that enhance Austin's health system by clearly defining roles and responsibilities, reducing duplication of services, leveraging resources, filling community gaps in services, and advancing collective community health strategies.
4	Adjust our contracts with social service providers to include accountability for outcome-based results and determine the best approach to award multi-year contracts so that each funding category (e.g. mental health, basic needs, early childhood) can be independently reviewed on a regular cycle.
5	Incorporate health considerations into program and policy decision-making, taking into account the influence of race, income levels, education, and the built environment on health outcomes.
6	Implement community-informed initiatives that make healthy and affordable foods easily accessible to all, especially for our vulnerable populations and historically marginalized communities.
7	Improve community health, social cohesion and connections, and resilience through programs and amenities that strengthen families, foster an increased sense of community, and enhance support networks.
8	Leverage innovative financing models and partnerships to support, maintain, and expand parks, open spaces, recreational facilities, and our urban trail network.
9	Provide accessible, diverse, and inclusive parks and recreation programs and amenities to encourage utilization by all ages and abilities with a specific focus in historically marginalized communities.
10	Integrate nature into the city by developing and implementing a green infrastructure plan, as envisioned by *Imagine Austin*, that creates a network of natural lands and other open spaces while dispersing environmental risks to people and property equitably across the city.

11	Expand acquisition and designation of permanently protected natural and environmentally sensitive areas (to include farmland and wildlife habitats) across the region, and provide community access to these areas for educational and recreational programs where feasible.
12	Invest in a variety of energy, water, and air quality programs and initiatives that emphasize conservation and environmental protection, and are aligned with our long-term environmental policy goals (e.g. Austin Community Climate Plan, Zero Waste Master Plan).
13	Incorporate population growth and climate projections into City planning efforts and into programs that serve residences and buildings most at risk due to a changing climate (extreme heat, drought, flood, wildfire) to enable the community to successfully respond, adapt, and thrive.

CULTURE & LIFELONG LEARNING

STRATEGIC OUTCOME:

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

Culture and traditions make up the fabric of who we are and how we interact with each other, and lifelong learning enhances our understanding of the world around us, provides us with opportunities, and improves our quality of life. Austin's reputation as a dynamic community rooted in rich cultural heritage, diverse creative expression, and inclusive civic exchange is now at risk of disappearing. These strategies focus on preserving a comprehensive and accurate history of Austin, supporting our creative ecosystem, and enhancing lifelong learning opportunities, so that we can maintain Austin as a vibrant place to live, work, learn, and thrive.

CHALLENGES WE FACE:

1. How might we inclusively honor and preserve Austin's unique and diverse history, culture, and traditions?

2. How might we foster and model relationships of trust, welcome diverse viewpoints, and confront racism at all levels (personal, cultural, and institutional) in our community and in our organization?

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

4. How might we ensure Austin is equitably and effectively supporting lifelong learning?

5. How might we ensure the creative ecosystem has equitable access to capacity building and revenue development resources and capital?

6. How might we increase the supply of affordable public and private spaces (e.g., housing, work, studio, performance) for our creative ecosystem to survive?

INDICATORS:

A. Quality, accessibility, and diversity of civic and cultural venues, events, programs, and resources

Sample metric: Percentage of residents who report being satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the City's cultural and learning facilities

B. Vibrancy and sustainability of creative industry ecosystem

Sample metric: Number of people employed in the creative sector in the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area

C. Appreciation, respect, and welcoming of all people and cultures

Sample metric: Percentage of residents who report feeling welcome in Austin

D. Honoring and preservation of historical and ethnic heritage

Sample metric: Percentage of residents who feel that Austin is a place that honors and preserves their personal heritage

E. Lifelong learning opportunities

Sample metric: Percentage of participants satisfied with City-offered lifelong learning events, activities, and resources

STRATEGIES:

1	Regularly inventory and evaluate culture and lifelong learning programs and facilities provided by the City and our community partners, with a focus on identifying gaps, shortcomings, and opportunities that may have an impact on equity and quality.
2	Implement a standardized interdepartmental process to collect, analyze, and share demographic participation and satisfaction levels with our culture and lifelong learning offerings to evaluate and improve programs and facilities.
3	Strengthen our portfolio of culture and lifelong learning programs, events and facilities by engaging and building trust with the community to ensure equitable access and participation, and that services are aligned with community expectations.
4	Maintain a mapped inventory of City and non-City cultural and historical assets to identify and address service gaps while accurately recognizing, preserving, and elevating the profile of place-based and underrepresented histories, narratives, and gathering spaces.
5	Ensure Austin's historical narrative is comprehensive and accurate by partnering with the community to protect, preserve, and share the character of Austin's cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history.
6	Leverage City-owned assets (buildings and land) to increase the amount of affordable creative space that is available to working artists, and incentivize the equitable and inclusive development, redevelopment, and use of other publicly and privately owned assets for creative space.
7	Assist artists and creatives in all disciplines in developing a roadmap to secure capital, patronage, and build capacity to ensure their long-term prosperity.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME:

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

Strategies for the "Government That Works For All" Outcome focus on improving the experience of all community members, while increasing equity, managing long-term costs, and increasing efficiency and innovation. This work cannot be accomplished without community collaboration and strong investments in our employees, infrastructure, facilities, and technology. Additionally, the City must continue to be proactive in collaborating across governments and be vigilant about state and national policy changes that impact our community. Overall, if we are successful with this outcome, we will become a more inclusive, better performing, and more strategic organization that builds trust with everyone in our community.

CHALLENGES WE FACE:

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, in a dynamic legislative environment, 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 both staff and the customer (community members)?

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, community focus, and high performance?

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

INDICATORS:

A. Financial cost and sustainability of City government

Sample metric: Median City property tax as percentage of median family income

B. Condition/quality of City facilities and infrastructure and effective adoption of technology

Sample metric: Percentage of residents and employees who are satisfied with the condition of City-owned facilities (e.g. cleanliness, safety, accessibility)

C. Satisfaction with City services

Sample metric: Percentage of Austin residents who report being satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by the City

D. Employee engagement

Sample metric: Percentage of employees who feel that their ideas and suggestions are valued by department management

E. Stakeholder engagement and participation

Sample metric: Percentage of residents who believe Austin values dialogue between residents and government

F. Equity of City programs and resource allocation

Sample metric: Percentage of City departments implementing the equity assessment tool

G. Transparency and ethical practices

Sample metric: Number of findings of fraud, waste, and abuse by employees, officials, and contractors

STRATEGIES:

1	Regularly evaluate City taxes and fees in the context of the total financial burden experienced by the community relative to the results delivered for their investment, and communicate this information in ways that are clear and understandable to the community.
2	Demonstrate financial stewardship by following the policies and practices that have earned the City our high bond ratings, strengthen formation, management, and accountability around contracts and grants, and align resource allocation (time and money) with the six strategic outcomes in ways that yield the greatest impact.
3	Increase equity in our community by allocating City resources based on greatest need and in ways that have the highest impact, consistent with recommendations from existing City reports and studies.
4	Update and standardize the way we measure and monitor service and performance standards. Proactively communicate this information both inside and outside of the organization.
5	Enhance communication and collaboration between City Council, City staff, and community members to enhance transparency, trust, and shared decision making. Ensure collaboration is strengthened by accessible, timely, and accurate information sharing.
6	Engage community members on the matters that impact them in ways that are timely, convenient, meaningful, and honor their communication preferences; and equip employees to better engage vulnerable and historically marginalized communities.
7	Establish a consistent and clear City of Austin brand to improve communication, engagement, participation, and pride with residents, businesses, visitors, and employees.
8	Create a new integrated approach to managing community members' multiple relationships with different City departments to strengthen feedback loops, build trust, and improve satisfaction.
9	Establish standards for secure data collection, storage, and sharing while leveraging open source technologies, mobile-ready web applications, and proven agile project methodologies to improve how we manage projects and information.

10	Utilize a transparent data-driven process to prioritize improvements to and management of 1) our buildings, facilities and information technology to maximize the experience of our customers and employees; and 2) our electric, water, wastewater, stormwater, and transportation infrastructure to minimize lifecycle costs and maximize service delivery.
11	Improve our competitiveness as an employer to attract, efficiently hire, and retain a diverse, highly skilled workforce across the entire City organization.
12	Increase the use of departmental equity assessments and cultural competency training to make better informed decisions that advance equity in our community.
13	Establish a workplace culture of high performance, continuous improvement, and human-centered innovation that encourages employee growth and inclusive collaboration. In addition, embrace technology, rapidly prototype potential solutions, and improve business processes to increase efficiencies and reduce red tape.
14	Support ethical behavior by all City officials and staff members by setting clear expectations, improving training, and creating a culture of accountability that results in reduced risk and improved morale.

CITY COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Front, from left: Council Member Leslie Pool, District 7; Council Member Delia Garza, District 2; Council Member Ann Kitchen, District 5; Council Member Alison Alter, District 10; Mayor Steve Adler, City Manager Spencer Cronk; Council Member James "Jimmy" Flannigan, District 6 (row 2); Council Member Sabino "Pio" Renteria, District 3 (holding sign); Council Member Gregorio "Greg" Casar, District 4 (row 2); Council Member Ora Houston, District 1 (holding sign); Mayor Pro Tem Kathie Tovo, District 9; Council Member Ellen Troxclair, District 8 (not pictured). Middle, from left: Elaine Hart, Interim City Manager during plan development; Anne Morgan, Sara Hensley, Jackie Sargent, Rey Arellano. Back, from left: Joe Pantalion, Jason Alexander, Robert Goode, Ray Baray, Greg Canally, Mark Washington.

Strategic planning isn't easy. It's not supposed to be. Just think about the incredible range of services that Austin provides, the persistent challenges of a growing city, and the constant reality of limited resources. Charting a path that is thoughtful, sensible and achievable is imperative to making the most of our opportunities, and ensuring that no one gets left behind in the process.

It's not often that I find myself quoting Sun Tzu, but there's a famous quote that I come back to when thinking about strategic planning, and why it's so important to running a successful organization: "Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat." Public organizations often do both of these things well – we plan and strategize effectively and we implement tactics every day. But aligning those two things is the difference between truly high-performing organizations and those that struggle.

It's clear to me that Austin has always been a high-performing City. What this direction does is provide a springboard toward a new level of excellence – one that's imperative as cities find themselves asked to do more than ever in an increasingly complex environment.

I cannot thank CFO Elaine Hart and the entire Performance Management Team enough for taking on this significant endeavor, in partnership with the Mayor and Council, to develop a comprehensive strategic plan well before my arrival here in Austin. Our leaders, our employees and our residents all benefit when we have a clear sense of purpose and direction, informed by both the data and the realities facing our community every day.

This strategic direction is just the beginning of a multi-year conversation about our shared vision for the city we love, and we're all part of working together to advance these Outcomes. I believe that the framework we've created will be flexible and adaptive enough to meet both the challenges and the opportunities ahead. I look forward to helping lead that journey.

Spencer Cronk
City Manager

SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & AFFORDABILITY

Jackie Sargent**   Richard Scheel
Annemarie Diaz*   Preston Stewart
Robert Rowan   Jonathan Tomko

MOBILITY

Robert Goode**   Jen Duthie
Annick Beaudet*   Mitch Lloyd
Liane Miller*   Annie Van Zant
John Clary

SAFETY

Rey Arellano**   Sammi Curless
Molly Bolte*   Franklin Fejarang
Sean Shepard*   Matthew Russell
Keith Simpson*   Joe Silva
Nelson Andrade

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

Sara Hensley**   Jason Garza
Cassandra DeLeon*   Amanda Gastler
Lewis Leff*   Lucy Thompson

CULTURE & LIFELONG LEARNING

Ray Baray**   Amanda Jasso
Lara Foss*   Robin Otto
Patricia Bourenane   Keith Reeves
LaToya Devezin   Meghan Wells

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS FOR ALL

Mark Washington**   Matt Esquibel
Zach Baumer*   Sylba Everett
Trinh Bartlett   Marie Sandoval
Donald Baldwin   Shawn Willett
Rachel Crist

With gratitude to Elaine Hart for her steadfast leadership as Interim City Manager.

COMMUNITY

Allgo
Asian American Resource Center
Austin Pathways
Casa Marianella
Community Advancement Network
Hope Clinic

LiveWorks
Marcelino Pan y Vino
Measure Austin
M Station
Quality of Life Commissioners
Rio Rita

SAFE Alliance
Sustainable Food Center
University of Texas Center for Transportation Research

CITY OF AUSTIN INCREDIBLES

All Department Directors
Lucia Athens
Janet Stark Atkinson
Lauren Avioli
Sheila Balog
Aaron Bluitt
Nicholas Broussard
Louis Castillo
Sandra Castillo
Ming-Ru Chu
Kellee Coleman
Ashton Cumberbatch, Jr.
Javier Delgado
Matthew Dugan
Rob Duncan
Ryan Eaker
Ken Garcia
John Gillum
Louis Gonzales
Stevie Greathouse
Kay Guedea
Ben Guhin

Margaret Hackett
Andy Halm
Angela Hanson
Paul Harper
Karl Haverland
Joya Hayes
Daniel Honker
Jacqueline Hrncir
Dr. Phil Huang
Ginger Jacinic
Carla Johnson
Emi Johnson
Julia Joseph
Halana Kaleel
Nadia Kalinchuk
Kamran Karimi
Rebecca Kennedy
Erica Leak
Marie Martinez
Edwin Marty
Doug Matthews
Gena McKinley

Anne Milne
Ronnie Mendoza
Maura Newell
Carla Nickerson
Terry Nicholson
Lisa Nickle
Brion Oaks
Kerry O'Connor
Alina Ortega-Bustamante
Gregory Pepper
Ed Poppitt
Farah Presley
Dr. Kazique Prince
Charles Purma
Shirley Rempe
Ryan Robinson
Jesse Rodriguez
Gus Rosa
Marion Sanchez
Orsi Sargent
JJ Schmidt
Janet Seibert

Amy Singer
Sara Smith
Jennifer Sowinski
Jennifer Strobel
Samantha Tedford
Deborah Thomas
Gay Thomas
David Tomczyszyn
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City of Austin staff contributions

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APPENDIX

- Challenge Statements – synopses of critical issues facing Austin around each Outcome
- Metrics – full list of 180-plus Strategic Direction metrics around each Outcome
- Guide to Effective Metrics – criteria used for selecting performance metrics to pursue
- Glossary – reference for key definitions in this document
- Infographic Data – data sources for the Austin Landscape infographic on page 3

To find these materials, visit Strategic Direction 2023: **austintexas.gov/strategicplan**

RESOURCES

Austin Strategic Mobility Plan – in development: **austintexas.gov/asmp**

Imagine Austin – City of Austin comprehensive plan: **austintexas.gov/imagineaustin**

Performance ATX – Hub of performance dashboards: **performance.austintexas.gov**

Plans Portal – Repository of active City of Austin plans: **plans.bloomfire.com**

AUSTIN STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2023

austintexas.gov/StrategicPlan