



SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR THE BOND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The Bond Election Advisory Task Force was charged by the Austin City Council to make recommendations for future bond funding. In order to complete its work, the Task Force asked City of Austin staff to assist with engaging the community in the Bond Development process. This report is a summary of the community engagement activities undertaken to provide an opportunity for the citizens of Austin to learn about the bond process, understand the task of the Bond Election Advisory Task Force and provide input to the Task Force about their priorities for the City's future capital investments. The public was given a variety of opportunities and methods to engage in this process.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

January – May 2012: Meetings of the Task Force and its Committees

The Task Force and committee meetings were a key opportunity for the public to learn first-hand about the Task Force's deliberations. All meetings were open to the public; meeting agendas, back up materials, videos of Task Force meetings and audio recordings of the committee meetings were made available on the City's bond Development website www.AustinTexas.gov/BondDevelopment. All regular meetings included an agenda item for Citizens Communication. Members of the public began addressing the Task Force at their first meeting on December 14, 2011 and continued doing so at every subsequent meeting. The Task Force held 13 meetings, 2 special-called meetings/community forums and 24 committee meetings. A total of 166 speakers addressed the Task Force or its committees through Citizens Communication.

January/February 2012: Information and Initial Feedback

Speak Week – In January, the City set up booths across Austin and solicited public feedback on guiding principles for the Bond Development process. This initiative resulted in 9 Speak Week booth locations and 20 volunteer shifts. Speak Week participants were asked to rank the six Council-approved guiding principles for the bond development process in order of importance for Task Force consideration when evaluating projects for future bond funding.

Open House– Citizens were invited to attend an Open House on February 7, 2012 at the Palmer Events Center to learn more about the bond development process, the guiding principles behind it and provide input about community needs and priorities. Approximately 100 people attended the open house with about 20 staff members on hand to answer citizens' questions.

Guiding Principles Survey – During the open house and online in February, the public was given a survey to rank the importance of Guiding Principles for the City's bond development process.

The results below include combined results from the Speak Week booths, Open House surveys, and surveys completed online through SpeakUpAustin.org. Based off a sample set of 384 people, this is the final ranking of the guiding principles:



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Guiding Principle	Average Rank*
Infrastructure	2.8
Mobility (tied)	3.0
Sustainability (tied)	3.0
Cost-effectiveness	3.4
New Initiatives	4.0
Balanced Approach	4.2

* 1 = MOST IMPORTANT ---- 6 = LEAST IMPORTANT

March 2012: Prioritization

Community Workshops and Online Survey – Four community workshops were held at locations across the city (First Evangelical Free Church in the Southwest, Gus Garcia Recreation Center in the Northeast, Dove Springs Recreation Center in the Southeast, and Anderson High School in the Northwest) to give citizens the opportunity to provide feedback on what their priorities were for bond funding. City staff provided detailed background information to the public on the projects under consideration from the Needs Assessment, and staff was available to answer questions at the community workshops.

At these events, the public was asked to complete an exercise in small groups during which they discussed how to allocate money to four categories that the bonds could address. Those categories corresponded to subcommittees that the Bond Election Advisory Task Force had created. Participants were asked how to allocate \$400 million potential future bond funding, then \$300 million, and then \$200 million across four main categories:

- Affordable Housing
- City Facilities
- Parks & Open Space
- Transportation/Mobility

The same allocation exercise was available through an online survey during March and early April 2012. Presented in Tables 1-3 below are average scores for the allocation exercise under the \$400 million, \$300 million, and \$200 million scenarios, from the four workshops and the online survey. At the workshops, participants met in small groups and came to agreement on the allocations for their table. The online survey responses represented individual opinions.



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Table 1

\$400 million allocation	Workshop Results		Online Survey Results	
Affordable Housing	13%	\$52 million	19%	\$77 million
City Facilities	24%	\$95 million	17%	\$69 million
Parks & Open Space	25%	\$102 million	25%	\$99 million
Transportation/Mobility	38%	\$152 million	39%	\$155 million

Table 2

\$300 million allocation	Workshop Results		Online Survey Results	
Affordable Housing	11%	\$32 million	20%	\$60 million
City Facilities	24%	\$72 million	18%	\$53 million
Parks & Open Space	29%	\$87 million	25%	\$75 million
Transportation/Mobility	37%	\$112 million	37%	\$112 million

Table 3

\$200 million allocation	Workshop Results		Online Survey Results	
Affordable Housing	11%	\$22 million	20%	\$40million
City Facilities	23%	\$46 million	17%	\$34million
Parks & Open Space	28%	\$56 million	25%	\$50 million
Transportation/Mobility	37%	\$74 million	38%	\$76 million

At both the community workshops and online, participants were also asked to identify which ten projects in the Needs Assessment they would most like to see prioritized by the Task Force for bond funding. At the workshops, participants were given ten sticker dots and asked to visit stations around the room to indicate their top ten projects among those listed in the Needs Assessment by placing one dot next to each (limit one dot per priority project). In the online survey, participants were asked to review the Needs Assessment Project and Program Report available on the web, and then to type in their top 10 projects. Participants were also able to write-in priority projects not included in the Needs Assessment on comment cards at the meetings and in the online survey. This exercise found that citizens had a variety of priorities when it came to what the City should allocate bond money towards (See Tables 4 and 5)

Shown in Table 4 on the next page are the results of the top 10 Needs Assessment projects and programs, combining both the workshop results and the online survey results:



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Table 4

Overall Top 10 Project/Program Results (Combined Workshop and Survey Results)		#
1	Housing Affordability	258
2	North Lamar Boulevard Corridor Improvements	212
3	Burnet Road Corridor Improvements	197
4	IH-35 Improvements	178
5	Mopac Improvements	153
6	Women’s and Children’s Shelter	151
7	Open Space Acquisition	129
8	North Lamar Streetscape and Roadway Improvements (Research Boulevard to Rundberg)	121
9	Austin History Center	115
10	City wide sidewalks, curbs, ramps, and gutters	114

Table 5

	Top 10 Results – Workshops only	# dots	Top 10 Results - Online Survey only	#
1	North Lamar Boulevard Corridor Improvements	70	Housing Affordability	208
2	Housing Affordability, and Burnet Road Corridor Improvements (tied)	50	IH-35 Improvements	157
3	City Wide sidewalks, curbs, ramps, and gutters	47	Burnet Road Corridor Improvements	147
4	APD Main Headquarters	43	Mopac Improvements	143
5	North Lamar Streetscape and Roadway Improvements (Research Blvd. to Rundberg)	41	N Lamar Boulevard Corridor Improvements	142
6	Gus Garcia Neighborhood Park	34	Women’s and Children’s Shelter Repairs	134
7	Neighborhood Parks—Improvements and Renovations	24	Open Space Acquisition	111
8	PARD Land Acquisitions, Neighborhood Plan Sidewalks Program, Neighborhood Partnering Program, and IH-35 Improvements (tied)	21	Austin History Center Interior and Exterior Improvements	98
9	Neighborhood Plan Parks Improvements and Open Space Program	20	Loop 360 Improvements	87
10	District Parks-Improvements and Renovations	19	Neighborhood Parks – Improvements and Renovations	85



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April/May 2012: Feedback on Committee Recommendations

Once the Task Force's committees had developed recommendations on allocation amounts and project preferences, the City and the Task Force hosted two special-called Task Force meetings/community forums on May 2 and May 3, 2012 for citizens to provide feedback. Events at Akins High School (in the southern part of the city) and Lanier High School (in the northern part of the city) enabled 179 participants to interact in small and large group settings directly with Bond Election Advisory Task Force members to discuss their views on the committee recommendations and ask questions.

Other Community Input Opportunities

Citizens had an opportunity to provide additional comments for Bond Election Advisory Task Force consideration by completing comment cards at the Speak Week and Open House events, sending an email to bonddevelopment@austintexas.gov, leaving a voice message or text message at (512) 539-0060, and/or commenting on <http://SpeakUpAustin.org>. The bonddevelopment@austintexas.gov email account went live January 30th. The voicemail line (that also received text messages) about the bond development process went live right around the same time (first message came on February 7th). City Staff provided regular community input reports to the Task Force to ensure they possessed available information on community priorities when making their recommendations.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Over 3,000 individual comments were submitted by Austinites during the community engagement process leading up to the Bond Election Advisory Task Force recommendations. Approximately 100 people attended the Open House held at the Palmer Events Center and the guiding principles survey received 384 responses from Speak Week, Open House and online participants.

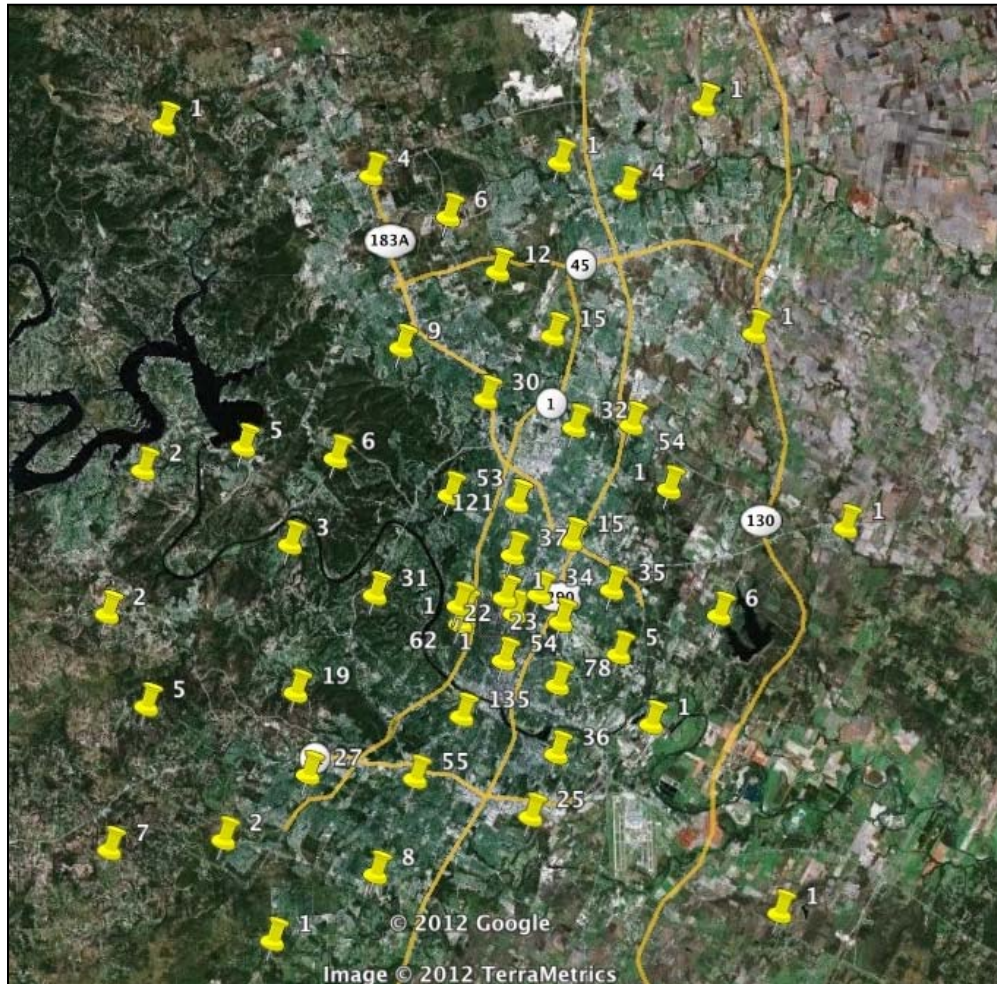
In March, the community workshops had 141 people that attended the four community engagement workshops and completed the bond allocation and top ten project identification exercises. Attendance and participation at the in-person workshops is a conservative estimate based on numbers of participants who signed in; at all of the workshops, a number of participants arrived later and did not sign in but did participate actively in the exercises. 946 people participated in the bond allocation and top ten projects online survey.

At Bond Election Advisory Task Force meetings (both committee and full Task Force meetings), 166 speakers addressed the Task Force through Citizens Communication. During the bond development process 1,405 comments were also made via email, phone call and text message.

At all community meetings and in the online surveys participants were asked to provide their zip code. As shown in the map below, collectively the 1,096 participants that responded to this optional request represent 61 zip codes geographically dispersed across Austin.

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Figure 1: Zip Code of Respondents (1,096 comments)



CONCLUSION

The public participation element of the Task Force’s Bond Development Process provided citizens of Austin the opportunity to express their views about the bond process in a variety of ways through an assortment of methods. The public was given the opportunity to receive information about the bond development process and specific projects and programs under consideration for future bond funding, and to provide feedback to Task Force Members. This was done through workshops, forums, surveys, meetings of the Task Force and its committees, and general comments provided over a period spanning more than four months. In sum, the Bond Election Advisory Task Force worked with the public to ensure that its input and feedback were heard, and directly reflected in the recommended bond package.