

**From:** Pam Thompson  
**To:** Felicia Ojeda  
**Subject:** Minority Report  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2017 8:20:10 AM

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Felicia,  
Please print for VITF & add to website.  
Thanx,  
Pam

The Visitors Impact Task Force seems to be addressing allocation of only the potential 2% increase in HOT funds that would occur with expansion of the Convention Center. The existing programs continue to expand their budgets with the increase in revenue from HOT. (City Council Resolution 20160818-075 clearly directs the Task Force to "Make recommendations to the City Council about how to best utilize *all* hotel occupancy revenue to impact tourism by April 1, 2017.") The Heritage Fund being transferred to another entity is the substantial change being presented.

Therefore a minority report is being submitted to consider that City Council request Visit Austin, formerly Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau, review the Global Sustainable Tourism criteria for implementing in Austin. Seems that this would simplify & define common goals initially in regards to expectations of business models.

One example: vendors agreeing to recycle in the convention center.

Other possibilities include:

A) Special consideration for the allocation of HOT funds to recipients who are requesting funds for the first time.

B) Inject into the tourism conversation the idea of a carrying capacity for hard and soft infrastructure.

C) Use the plan to focus more resources on transportation safety and developing new, low-emission mobility options.

D) To protect green space in the urban core from encroachment and to enhance the tree canopy.

Funding could come from the cultural/arts program. It could be tourism promotion, it could be historic preservation, it could even be fashioned as a "venue" if it was linking places in a common plan that were not geographically linked. For example, part of a sustainable tourism plan could be agri-tourism, linking our local farms and remaining operating ranches with local breweries and farm to table restaurants with other sustainable sites, including, for example, Austin Energy's East Austin solar farm.

The VITF minority report encourages the City Council to ask the Joint Sustainable Committee and the Environmental Board to be involved in the review, at a minimum.

<http://www.gstcouncil.org/en/gstc-criteria-hotels-tour-operators-destinations/criteria-for-hotels-tour-operators-industry.html?id=1296:global-sustainable-tourism-criteria-hotels>

Other recommendations are:

A) Recommend to the City Council to use the HOT for a COA Sustainable Tourism Plan .

B ) Evaluate the Austin Convention Center to determine how the existing space could be redesigned for better utilization of the hallways, vertical space and the roof.

C) Designate Trinity St. from Cesar Chavez to [4th St.](#) as a low emission zone for vehicles and have the Austin Convention Center post no engine idling signs to existing posts.

D) Include in calculations for the actual or projected economic benefit of conventions the cost of lost hours in reduced mobility due to traffic congestion in the impacted area surrounding the Convention Center and the supporting hotels.

E) Consider increasing convention center space by constructing a new building in the Domain or other part of Austin in the Desired Development Zone that has existing hotel infrastructure.

Pam Thompson  
Boards and Commissions

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