




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Kimberly A. McNeeley, CPRP, Acting Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department 

DATE: November 19, 2018

SUBJECT: Resolution 20180628-072 – Zilker Park Working Group Update

The Zilker Park Working Group was formed following the passage of Resolution 20180628-072 on June 28, 2018. In accordance with the standard working group model, while staff regularly attends meetings and committee meetings of the Zilker Park Working Group, the Zilker Park Working Group is member led and receives information from staff as requested. The Zilker Park Working Group is not required to post meetings in accordance with the "Texas Open Meetings Act." The working group has been tasked with the following:

- 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.

In organizing the Zilker Park Working Group, the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) identified key stakeholders including business owners, non-profit organizations, and neighborhood associations as members. The Environmental Commission, Urban Transportation Commission and Parks and Recreation Board, as well as all Council District offices appointed representatives to the working group. Staff members from PARC, Watershed Protection and Austin Transportation Departments support the working group and serve as resources.

The first Zilker Park Working Group meeting was held on September 5, 2018, at the Zilker Botanical Garden. Following the first Zilker Working Group meeting, an organizing committee was formed to discuss the working group's scope of work, structure, leadership roles and responsibilities, and the decision making process. Subsequently, monthly working group meetings have been scheduled, and sub-groups have been formed to focus on the following specific topics:

- Butler landfill cap and proposed improvements
- Short term parking and traffic solutions
- The Polo Fields

The working group needs more time to explore immediate opportunities and make recommendations regarding parking options and traffic solutions at Zilker Metropolitan Park. Items related to parking studies for the park as a whole, the feasibility of removing parking from the Polo Fields and the future utilization of the former landfill area along Stratford Drive have yet to be addressed, and may be incorporated into the future Zilker Park Master Plan. On behalf of the Zilker Park Working Group, PARD staff will provide a monthly update regarding progress with a goal of completing the Working Group tasks by March, 2019.

Additionally, per Resolution 20180628-072, the City Manager was 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.

In June 2018, PARD indefinitely postponed the temporary improvement plan to fortify the landfill cap along Stratford Drive. Additionally, PARD is facilitating basic work to fortify the landfill cap and re-establish grass on the space.

PARD cancelled the Request for Qualifications for a planning effort related to the Barton Springs Zone and has re-allocated the funding toward the Zilker Park Master Plan. The Zilker Master Plan process will incorporate traffic, parking, circulation, and connectivity studies of the park. Therefore, a separate traffic and parking study will not be forwarded or implemented in the near future. PARD anticipates that the Zilker Park Working Group will provide additional feedback to inform the scope of work for the Zilker Park Master Plan.

PARD continues to research the implementation of a possible shuttle system and other transportation and parking improvements in conjunction with the Zilker Park Working Group.

Should you have any questions, please contact my office at (512) 974-6722.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Sara Hensley, Interim Assistant City Manager