
Zilker Park Working Group: Back-up Material



JUNE 2019





Table of Contents

Council Resolution 3
Working Group Members 7
Working Group Purpose..... 8
Working Group and Subgroup Meeting Structure and Dates..... 9
Community Survey 10

Council Resolution

Austin City Council Resolution No. 20180628-072, June 28, 2019

RESOLUTION NO. 20180628-072

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 two 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 Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan 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 representative(s), 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;

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- 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.

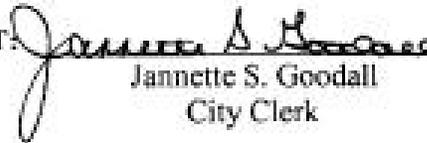
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

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: June 28, 2018

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk

Working Group Members

Organization	Name	Title
Non-Profit Organizations		
Austin Parks Foundation	Ladye Anne Wofford	Chief Mission Officer
Barton Springs Conservancy	Mike Cannatti	President
Barton Springs Conservancy	Karen Kocher	Board Member
Friends of Zilker	Jimmy McArthur	Chairman
Save Barton Creek Association	Angela Richter	Executive Director
Save Barton Creek Association	Clark Hancock	Board Member
SOS Alliance	Bobby Levinski	SOS Attorney
SOS Alliance	Bill Bunch	Executive Director
Friends of Austin Nature and Science Center	Matt Levin	Member
Friends of Austin Nature and Science Center	Jason Cheng	Member
Sunshine Camp	Erica Blue	Chief Executive Officer
The Trail Foundation	Heidi Anderson	Executive Director
Umlauf Sculpture Garden	Sarah Story	Executive Director
Waterloo Disc Golf Club	Gordon Kelley	President
Austin Area Garden Council	Judith Craft	Board member for AAGC
Zilker Botanical Gardens Conservancy	Jeff Pavlat	Board Member
Zilker Hillside Theatre Productions	Mac Ragsdale	Board Member
Friends of Barton Springs Pool	Steve Barnick	President
Zilker Trail of Lights Foundation/Kite Festival	James Russell	Executive Director
Businesses		
Rowing Dock	Ruth Framel	Co-Owner
Rowing Dock	Susan Goldberg	Co-Owner
Zilker Park Boat Rentals	Howard Barnet	Owner
Zilker Zephyr Miniature Train	Abel Rodriguez	Owner
Central Texas Valet	Corey Evars	Founder and CEO
C3 Presents	Lindsey Sokol	Festival Director
Neighborhood Associations		
Barton Hills Neighborhood Association	Mark Gentle	President
Zilker Neighborhood Association	Bruce Wiland	Treasurer
Boards and Commissions		
Environmental Commission	Hank Smith (District 8)	Commissioner
Environmental Commission	Mary Ann Neely (District 5)	Commissioner
Parks and Recreation Board	Dawn Lewis (District 10)	Board Member
Parks and Recreation Board	Tom Donovan (District 5)	Board Member
Urban Transportation Commission	Kelly Davis (District 7)	Commissioner
Urban Transportation Commission	Daniel Hennessey (District 2)	Commissioner
Council District Representatives		
District 1 Appointee	Rodney Ahart	
District 2 Appointee	No One Appointed	
District 3 Appointee	Lizette Melendez (Council Aide)	
District 4 Appointee	No One Appointed	
District 5 Appointee	Gail Rothe	
District 6 Appointee	Lemuel Williams	
District 7 Appointee	Roy Waley	
District 8 Appointee	No One Appointed	
District 9 Appointee	No One Appointed	
District 10 Appointee	No One Appointed	

Working Group Purpose

The purpose of the Working Group, as outlined by the Austin City Council resolution, was 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 (the deadline was ultimately extended to June 14, 2019).

Working Group and Subgroup Meeting Structure and Dates

The Zilker Working Group and Subgroup members held a number of meetings from September 2018 to May 2019. The Working Group met a total of 11 times, while the Subgroups met a total of 14 times (Short term traffic solutions: 4 meetings, Polo fields: 4 meetings, Butler Landfill: 6 meetings).

The larger Zilker Working Group determined that the creation of subgroups to individually address the three items put forward in the resolution would be a more efficient means of producing results. The Subgroups discussed options, tallied votes in favor of certain recommendations, refined their approaches and finalized the manners they believed would best address the issues and concerns of the Subgroup assignments, findings, and recommendations.

After the Subgroups developed recommendations, those recommendations were presented to the larger Working Group for concurrence and submittal for final recommendations to city council.

Zilker Working Group	Subgroups		
	Short Term Traffic Solutions	Polo Fields	Butler Landfill Cap and Improvements
9/5/18	11/13/18	12/12/18	11/15/18
10/1/18	12/4/18	1/9/19	12/13/18
11/5/18	1/3/19	1/23/19	1/11/19
12/3/18	2/11/19	2/22/19	2/6/19
1/7/19			3/1/19
2/4/19			3/21/19
3/4/19			
3/25/19			
4/1/19			
5/6/19			
5/30/19			

Community Survey

Austin Parks & Recreation developed and issued a transportation survey to assist the Working Group in determining preferences of the public who utilize Zilker Park, or who would have interest in using the park. The survey was available online, with the Parks Department posting links on social media. The survey was open from March 8-22, 2019, and received over 1,000 responses.

The following questions were asked in the survey:

- If access to the park by personal vehicle was limited, what mode of transportation would you most likely use to get to Zilker Park?
- If a shuttle were provided, what factors would increase your likelihood of using it? Please rank in order of importance to you.
- Would you be more open to taking a shuttle if the shuttle stopped at multiple locations within the park?
- What additional challenges do you perceive to taking a shuttle?
- What factors would increase your likelihood of using Capital Metro buses and trains to get to the park? Please rank in order of importance.
- What additional challenges do you perceive to taking a Capital Metro bus to the park?
- What other solutions would make it easier for you to not bring your personal vehicle to Zilker Park?
- On average, how often do you visit Zilker Park?
- What areas or amenities of the park do you typically visit?
- What are the top 3 amenities you usually use during a visit to the park? (Select up to 3)
- What events at Zilker do you attend? (Check all that apply.)
- When you visit the park, who comes with you? (Check all that apply.)
- How often do you bring the following items with you to the park?
- How much time do you typically spend at the park each visit?
- In the past 2 years, have you wanted to visit Zilker Park but decided not to?
- Why did you decide not to visit?
- What mode of transportation do you use the majority of the time to get to the park?
- When you come to the park using a personal vehicle, where do you typically park? (The numbers correspond to their location on the map.)

The results of the survey were shared with all Working Group Members.