

FY 2026-2027 BUDGET QUESTION
Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT(S): Austin Parks & Recreation; Austin Police;

CBQ NO.: 116

REQUESTED BY: (District 8) Paige Ellis

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REQUEST:

Please provide more information regarding unfunded Service Enhancement APR-01 (\$1.19M ongoing funding to establish a Parks Security Division that will oversee security operations, emergency preparedness, and implementation of parkwide security audit recommendations across Parks and Recreation facilities). 1. What is the breakdown of how this funding would be used? How much would be for personnel vs equipment vs other security needs, and could the equipment be purchased rather than leased? 2. Would APR partner with APD to implement park security improvements and services? 3. Could APD Asset Forfeiture funds be used to pay for the needed security systems or other equipment? 4. Scalability/Is there a smaller ongoing amount that could be useful? 5. Would the Security Division serve parks citywide or focus on highest-need parks? 6. What would be the anticipated timeline for standing up the new Division and activating security systems in highest-need parks?

RESPONSE: Below is the responsive information for Question #3 from Austin Police Department (APD):

APD asset forfeiture funds have already been earmarked for unfunded police Service Enhancements including HALO camera replacements, replacement drones, and Meridian barricades for special events. APD will partner with APR to assist with park security improvements, but APD does not anticipate available funding to assist with the purchase of security systems or equipment.

RESPONSE: Below is the responsive information from Austin Parks and Recreation Department (APR):

The requested \$1,190,000 for ongoing funding directly implements recommendations from APR's Summer 2025 Security Audit across seven specific operational and physical safety categories:

- **Physical Security and Infrastructure \$650,000 Total**
 - System Upgrades (\$550,000)

Alarm systems, lockdown capabilities, and standardized access controls.

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) updates (\$100,000) Signage, gates, wayfinding.
- **Personnel and Staffing \$500,000 Total**
 - Temporary Security Staff (\$250,000): Dedicated safety-focused temporary coverage at recreation centers and high-activity facilities.
 - Contracted Security Guards (\$250,000): Expansion of contracted security guard hours at prioritized sites.
- **Training and Operational Supplies \$40,000 Total**

Purchasing vs. Leasing Equipment and Ongoing Justification

Physical infrastructure—such as alarm systems, locks, gates, keycards, location signage, and high-security perimeter fencing—is purchased for direct installation and permanent adoption. Specialized mobile technology, such as camera trailers, continues under operational lease contracts. While initial allocations cover hardware purchases and system rollouts, ongoing funding in subsequent years transitions toward annual software licensing, vendor maintenance contracts, hardware replacement cycles, and expanding access controls citywide.

Inter-Agency Partnership with APD and Funding Eligibility

An active inter-agency partnership with the Austin Police Department (APD) remains a core component of the APR's security strategy. This collaboration ensures coordinated incident response, automated data-sharing, joint reviews of park infrastructure, and aligned patrol support. Staff are developing this process.

Scalability and Baseline Funding

A smaller ongoing amount that would be useful. The security enhancement is designed to build upon APR's current baseline budget of \$387,410 (which funds the Security Manager position and the proposed mobile camera trailer). If full funding is unavailable, the plan can be scaled using smaller ongoing allocations to target high- priority needs individually:

- \$250,000: Expands temporary facility staff and contracted security guards at high-incident sites.
- \$250,000: Partially funds critical physical security technology and alarm installations at highest-priority facilities (scaled down from \$550K).
- \$100,000: Dedicated exclusively to basic physical CPTED upgrades (emergency signage, gates, and wayfinding).

Scope and Implementation Timeline

Immediate Impact and Long-Term Phasing Establishing a secure park system requires a phased approach that delivers immediate, visible improvements while recognizing that complete citywide transformation will take time and cannot happen overnight.

APR anticipates that the Security Manager position would lead execution across the next phases:

Year 1: Delivers immediate, tangible improvements by deploying contracted security guards, temporary staff, and mobile surveillance trailers directly to high-risk recreation centers and incident hot spots identified in the Summer 2025 Security Audit. Baseline security audits for interior facilities begin immediately.

Years 2–3: Recognizes that long-term culture shift takes time. Over Years 2 and 3, operations expand baseline audits to all Metropolitan and District parks, roll out standardized facility access controls, install permanent security systems, and embed CPTED vegetation management and security protocols across all APR operational and maintenance units citywide.