



**City Council Questions and Answers for  
Thursday, May 14, 2015**

These questions and answers are related to the  
Austin City Council meeting that will convene at 10:00 AM on  
Thursday, May 14, 2015 at Austin City Hall  
301 W. Second Street, Austin, TX



**Mayor Steve Adler**  
**Mayor Pro Tem Kathie Tovo, District 9**  
**Council Member Ora Houston, District 1**  
**Council Member Delia Garza, District 2**  
**Council Member Sabino "Pio" Renteria, District 3**  
**Council Member Gregorio Casar, District 4**  
**Council Member Ann Kitchen, District 5**  
**Council Member Don Zimmerman, District 6**  
**Council Member Leslie Pool, District 7**  
**Council Member Ellen Troxclair, District 8**  
**Council Member Sheri Gallo, District 10**

*The City Council Questions and Answers Report was derived from a need to provide City Council Members an opportunity to solicit clarifying information from City Departments as it relates to requests for council action. After a City Council Regular Meeting agenda has been published, Council Members will have the opportunity to ask questions of departments via the City Manager's Agenda Office. This process continues until 5:00 p.m. the Tuesday before the Council meeting. The final report is distributed at noon to City Council the Wednesday before the council meeting.*

## **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL**

1. Agenda Item # 4 - Approve a resolution directing the City Manager to initiate a process to cultivate native milkweed into the City's landscape portfolio at Austin City Hall, City-owned buildings, properties, preserve lands, parks, and open spaces. (Notes: SPONSOR: Council Member Leslie Pool CO 1: Mayor Pro Tem Kathie Tovo CO 2: Council Member Ann Kitchen CO 3: Council Member Gregorio Casar)
  - a. QUESTION: 1) Is there a budget or estimated cost associated with this? 2) Are there any negative ramifications with milkweed? 3) Are there other plants besides milkweed that are beneficial to butterflies that should be incorporated as well? If so, are they cheaper or more expensive than milkweed? COUNCIL MEMBER ZIMMERMAN'S OFFICE
  - b. ANSWER: 1) Not yet. The landscape services contract for City Hall includes an allowance for replacement of plants and purchase of new plants. Building Services does not yet have an estimate for cost impact to implement this City wide at City facilities. This will require more time and coordination with several other departments including the green gardening program, Parks and Libraries to analyze potential locations and scope. However, it is anticipated that opportunities to partner with Wildflower center and other organizations would be maximized to minimize costs. Cost of one gallon plant for the City Hall contract varies between \$10-\$15 installed (includes labor and plant). Estimate to incorporate native milkweed at the City Hall site is approximately \$100.00 including labor. 2) So far no negative ramifications have been identified for use of native milkweed. 3) There are other plants that are beneficial to butterflies already incorporated into the City Hall landscape which include purple lantana and verbena. Milkweed however is the only plant beneficial to the Monarch butterfly. 4) Cost would be about the same for other plants beneficial for butterflies assuming same size plant.
2. Agenda Item # 6 - Approve a resolution adopting a policy to provide City employees and their families access to Applied Behavioral Analysis benefits and directing the City Manager to incorporate Applied Behavioral Analysis benefits as part of the City employee benefits package in the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 proposed budget. (Notes: SPONSOR: Council Member Delia Garza CO 1: Mayor Pro Tem

Kathie Tovo CO 2: Council Member Ann Kitchen CO 3: Council Member Sabino "Pio" Renteria)

- a. QUESTION: 1) How many current City of Austin employees would benefit from this? 2) What is the estimated cost to the city for this? COUNCIL MEMBER ZIMMERMAN'S OFFICE
- b. ANSWER: 1) Based on information obtained from UnitedHealthcare, the city currently has 48 dependents with a medical diagnosis of autism. Of those, 18 are age 9 or below, an additional 11 are ages 10-13. Towers Watson, the city's benefits consultant assumed 13 dependents would seek Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services. 2) Towers Watson estimated 13 cases at \$50,000 per case per year or \$650,000 annually for unlimited coverage. During the Health and Human Services committee meeting on April 6th, the Human Resources Department was asked to provide cost information if the benefit were limited to \$36,000 per year for children age 10 or older. Most fully insured health plans in Texas are mandated by SB1484 to provide coverage for ABA, however can limit the benefit to \$36,000 for children age 10 or over. Towers Watson estimated to provide the limited benefit reduces the annual cost to \$550,000. The Human Resources Department along with Towers Watson has benchmarked state plans, local governmental entities and other insurance companies. All indications have shown that the cost of extending this coverage varies based on enrollment and demographics. Information that we have obtained ranges from \$10,000 to \$70,000 per child on an annual basis. The Human Resources Department is researching the plan design of 680 hours of ABA which is included in the resolution that will be brought forth on May 21st . We are still analyzing the cost implications of this request, however based on preliminary assumptions the cost could be reduced approximately 50% . Additional time is needed to analyze fully.

**END OF REPORT - ATTACHMENTS TO FOLLOW**

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