

Maurer, Jason

From: Schooler, Larry
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2015 3:32 PM
To: Maurer, Jason; Suda, Michael; Fischer, Cara
Cc: [REDACTED] Rooney, John;
[REDACTED]
Subject: summary of text input/unabridged SpeakUpAustin.org input
Attachments: events-at-austins-parks.pdf

Hi, all:

Thanks to the awesome work by our intern John Rooney, we have a summary of all 1,600+ text messages (below) for distribution to the task force. Note that there were quite a few that I intend to follow up with/reply to to get more information, and I can provide the texts in their entirety soon, as well as a more detailed analysis, but we wanted to get something to the Task Force ASAP.

I also have attached all of the posts to SpeakUpAustin.org thus far. You'll notice I was actively moderating on the site; that is, facilitating the dialogue kind of similarly to how I might in a face-to-face meeting.

Again, this is all preliminary info but I thought it would be good to share with you and the task force asap, especially since we're not scheduled to meet again after tomorrow until November 10th, which I think is the date of the public hearing/engagement meeting.

Thanks. Let me know if you have questions.

Summary of texts

When asked what significant benefit they saw to hosting major events in city parks, the most repeated answer was economic activity related to tourism. Respondents, overwhelmingly attendees of ACL and other events held at Zilker Park, often said that having the event in a park significantly improved their experience compared to similar events held indoors or at outdoor venues built exclusively for concerts or major events. They enjoyed being in nature and believed this contributed to the unique, friendly community feeling they associate with ACL and the City of Austin.

Three major themes emerged when respondents were asked about the significant challenges they saw to hosting events in parks. One theme was the damage caused to the park by both littering and wear and tear. Respondents frequently mentioned cigarette butts on the ground and other litter strewn about by fellow festival-goers, as well as the damage done to Zilker by the number of people attending the festival. Another theme was the amount of time the parks, especially Zilker, were closed to the general public during the fall, a season many respondents considered the best to use the park. A third theme was increased traffic and difficulty finding convenient parking. Respondents found it difficult to travel to, from, and around the Zilker Park and Downtown area, and struggled to find parking convenient to either traveling to the park by foot or taking alternative transit to the festival site. Additional answers that appeared many times were a lack of shaded areas and watering stations during ACL, weak cell signal, cigarette smoking, and drug use.

Respondents contributed many ideas for improvement, and several themes emerged. One was decreasing the number of tickets sold and shortening the length of not only ACL but also the amount of time Zilker is closed to the public due to major events and their associated set-up and tear-down. A common refrain was to allow fewer people into the festival to help with over-crowding and the damage done to the park. Respondents who primarily attended ACL requested additional shaded areas and drink stations. Many appreciated transit options but wanted to see even more, and suggested increasing the frequency of shuttles and making it easier to request and use car-sharing services. Two suggestions that each appeared several times were to create more family-friendly events for the increasingly young demographics of the city, as well as to incentivize recycling and proper trash disposal programs for attendees.

The three zip codes most represented by the survey were 78704, 78745, and 78759, with thirty-five, nine, and nine respondents, respectively. Zip codes with six respondents were 78701, 78702, 78703, and 78746; those with five

respondents were 78738, 78739, 78741, 78748, and 78749; those with four respondents were 78613, 78705, 78723, 78737, 78751, and 78753; the remaining respondents overwhelmingly represented one zip code, with several zip codes represented by two or three respondents.

Survey data reveals that the overwhelming majority of respondents were attendees, representing 375 of 514 responses. Residents represented 60 of the total responses, with an additional 43 responses from those who are both residents of the area and attendees of events. 24 responses were received from those who represent companies hosting events in public parks, with an additional 8 responses from those who also attend them. 4 responses were received from those who attend, live near, and plan events in public parks.