

9/7/17

Late Backup



City of Austin

Leslie Pool, Council Member
District 7

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COUNCIL MEMBER POOL BUDGET ITEMS – SUMMARY DOCUMENT

Item	Proposal	Details	Cost	Source	Strategic Outcome	Background & Recommendations
C-27	Educating Residents on Tree Preservation & Conservation	Invests in a pilot “Tree Education” position that would engage residents on the value of trees and importance of conservation.	\$73,236 (1 FTE)	Urban Forest Replenishment Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural & Learning Opportunities • Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeled on Watershed Protection Education Program
C-29	Providing Affordable Creative Space for Local Artists	Invests in the expanded hours, equipment, and technical expertise needed to utilize four city-owned cultural centers as affordable creative space for arts events, performances, rehearsals, productions, and workshops.	\$240,000	Cultural Arts Fund <i>(Proposed)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural & Learning Opportunities • Eco. Opportunity & Affordability • Government That Works for All of Us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music & Creative Ecosystem Stabilization Report Rec. 2.3.10 • PARC Strategic Plan (2017-2021), Strategic Initiative 5.4.
E-18	Developing Policy Tools to Fight Gentrification & Displacement	Invests in an interlocal agreement with the University of Texas (UT) to study patterns of gentrification and displacement in Austin, map the city according to each area’s vulnerability, and recommend policy solutions.	\$69,000	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eco. Opportunity & Affordability • Government That Works for All of Us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Res. 20170817-055
G-15	Updating EMS Software to Improve Patient Outcomes	Invests in replacing EMS’ outdated system for tracking patients’ medical records.	\$400,000	General Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Government That Works for All of Us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Safety Commission Rec. #20170807-003
H-21	Access to Playgrounds for Children with Disabilities	Invests in improvements to bring 10 city playgrounds into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).	\$1,000,000	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Safety • Government That Works for All of Us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin ADA Transition Plan • Austin Parks Foundation Rec.
H-22	Connecting Children to Nature in the Eastern Crescent	Invests in a marketing & media toolkit to promote public awareness in the Eastern Crescent of the benefits of connecting children to nature.	\$17,500	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Government That Works for All of Us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin’s “Cities Connecting Children to Nature Implementation Plan”
H-23	Access to Healthy Food in Public Schools	Establishes a grant program for public schools to help them develop & implement strategies for increasing access to healthy foods.	\$100,000	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Cultural & Learning Opportunities • Government That Works for All of Us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Policy Board Rec. 20170522-2
S-13	Community-Led Graffiti Abatement Efforts	Invests in nearly 900 kits residents can use to rapidly respond to graffiti and in marketing materials for public awareness efforts.	\$35,000	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Government That Works for All of Us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Res. 20160804-056 • Graffiti Taskforce • Austin Graffiti Blueprint Rec.



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Addressing Affordability and Displacement

Item E-18

Developing Policy Tools to Fight Gentrification & Displacement

This would fund a resolution Council passed to partner with the University of Texas on a gentrification study.

- In August 2017, Council directed the City Manager to negotiate an interlocal agreement with the University of Texas (UT) to study patterns of gentrification and displacement in Austin, map the city according to each area's vulnerability, and recommend policy solutions.¹ This item would provide \$69,000 to fund that inter-local agreement.

This study would provide a policy foundation for ongoing city efforts to address affordability and displacement.

- A 2015 analysis by *Governing* found that Austin is gentrifying at a higher rate than most other major cities: Austin ranked eighth out of the 50 largest cities in the U.S. on the share of its Census tracts that are gentrifying.²
- This item would fund a study, modeled on similar work in Portland,³ that would help move efforts to stabilize Austin's gentrifying communities forward by providing a range of recommendations and by mapping the entire city according to each area's vulnerability to displacement. This mapping tool would serve as an interdepartmental asset for city staff to use when analyzing the impact city policies would have on communities vulnerable to displacement.

Item C-29

Providing Affordable Creative Space for Local Artists

This item would make the improvements needed to offer four cultural centers as affordable creative space.

- This item would invest \$240,000 in the expanded hours, equipment, and technical expertise needed to utilize four city-owned cultural centers as affordable creative space for arts events, performances, productions, and workshops.
- It would implement these improvements at the Asian-American Resource Center, Emma S. Barrientos Mexican-American Cultural Center, Dougherty Arts Center, and George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center.
- Making the improvements needed to activate this affordable creative space is estimated to help support ten performing arts organizations.⁴

Both the creative community and city reports recommend using cultural centers as affordable creative space.

- A 2016 focus group with Austin's creative community found that providing more access to cultural centers was a high priority.⁵
- This item would implement a recommendation from Austin's Music and Creative Ecosystem Stabilization Report that the city leverage its existing facilities to help provide affordable creative space for local artists.⁶
- It would also support a strategic initiative from the Parks and Recreation Department's Strategic Plan that prioritizes leveraging the creative sector in Austin to supplement cultural programming.⁷

**Table 1. Affordable Creative Space
Budget Item**

Investment	Budget
Expanded Hours & Maintenance Costs	\$140,000
Lighting/Sound Equipment & Services	\$100,000
Total	\$240,000

Source: Parks & Recreation Dept. Staff

¹ Austin Council Resolution 20170817-055

² Mike Maciag, "Gentrification in America Report," *Governing* (February 2015).

³ Lisa Bates, "Gentrification & Displacement Study," City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (18 May 2013).

⁴ Austin Creative Alliance Estimate.

⁵ Christine Harris & John Carnwath, "Building Austin's Creative Capacity: Creative Sector Needs Assessment," WolfBrown (28 March 2016).

⁶ Music & Creative Ecosystem Stabilization Recommendations: Recommendation 2.3.10, Austin Economic Development Dept. (June 2016).

⁷ PARC Strategic Plan (2017-2021): Strategic Initiative 5.4, Austin Parks and Recreation Dept. (2 December 2016).



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Improving City Operations

Item S-13

Community-Led Graffiti Abatement Efforts

This proposal would invest in a low-dollar, high-impact approach to addressing graffiti vandalism.

- This item takes a low-dollar, high-impact approach that would invest \$35,000 in nearly 900 abatement kits that communities can use to respond rapidly to graffiti and in marketing materials the city can use to raise public awareness about graffiti regulations and abatement resources.¹

Graffiti vandalism affects quality of life – and is a problem in Austin.

- According to a U.S. Department of Justice publication, “graffiti contributes to lost revenue associated with reduced ridership on transit systems, reduced retail sales, and declines in property value.”²
- Rapidly removing graffiti is an important strategy for preventing individuals from continuing to vandalize an area, with many cities aiming to remove graffiti vandalism in one to two days.¹ In Austin, however, it has taken over two months on average to remove graffiti. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Austin Public Health Graffiti Services, FY17 (To Date)

Indicator	Figure
Requests	3,675
Percent Closed Late	67%
Response Time (Days)	71
Square Footage Cleaned	151,784

Source: Budget Question #101, FY 2018

This recommended proposal could leverage community partnerships to improve the city’s graffiti efforts.

- This item would leverage existing resources at the city and in the community to improve abatement response time.
- The Graffiti Abatement Task Force³ and subsequent Graffiti Abatement Blueprint⁴ both recommend improving community engagement efforts and leveraging existing community capacity to improve abatement services.

Item G-15

Updating EMS Software to Improve Patient Outcomes

This proposal would update Emergency Medical Services’ (EMS) software for tracking patient records.

- This would invest \$400,000 this year in replacing EMS’ outdated system for tracking patients’ medical records.
- This would be the first of six annual \$400,000 payments for this system, though future payments could be partially offset by phasing out the old system, which currently costs roughly \$115,000 per year in maintenance.

Table 2. EMS Services, FY16

Indicator	Incidents
Total Responses	131,007
Contact w/Patients	100,491
Transferred Patient	78,725

Source: Public Safety Commission Recommendation #20170807-003

EMS’ current patient records system is outdated & inefficient.

- EMS is required to input patient information – and to share that information with other medical providers to whom they transfer those patients.
- However, EMS’ current software lacks important features, making it more difficult to track health information, manage cases effectively, and integrate with other record systems.

This stakeholder-recommended proposal would improve patient outcomes and system efficiency.

- An updated system would enable EMS to improve patient recordkeeping, save time, & reduce IT maintenance costs.
- Both the Public Safety Commission and the IT Governance Board have recommended updating EMS’ software.

¹Assistant City Manager’s Office.

²Deborah Lamm Weisel, “Graffiti,” U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policies Services (2009).

³Memorandum from Shannon Jones to Mayor & Council: Staff response to Resolution No. 20160804-056 (1 November 2016).

⁴“City of Austin Anti-Graffiti Blueprint for Graffiti Success DRAFT,” The Graffiti Consultants (14 August 2017).



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Educating Residents on Austin's Natural Assets

Item C-27

Educating Residents on Tree Preservation & Conservation

This proposal would establish a position to educate residents on tree preservation and conservation.

- This proposal would create a pilot "Tree Education" position with the City Arborist that would engage residents at schools, community events, and elsewhere on the value of trees and the importance of conservation.
- This position would be modeled on a similar position in the Watershed Protection Department and would build on the City Arborist's existing communications efforts by adding outreach and engagement services in the community.

The city can fund this proposal entirely through existing resources.

- The city would fund this position entirely within existing resources in the Urban Forest Replenishment Fund.
- The Urban Forest Replenishment Fund is funded through fees that developers pay for tree mitigation; the city can use these fees to promote tree care & preservation, and urban forest conservation, among other tree-related services.

Item H-22

Connecting Children with Nature in the Eastern Crescent

This proposal would invest in a marketing and outreach effort to better connect children with nature.

- Under this proposal, the city would invest \$17,500 in building a marketing & media toolkit, including Spanish-language materials, to raise public awareness in Austin's "Eastern Crescent" of the benefits of connecting to nature.
- This proposal would implement a key part of the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC)'s plan to better connect children with the natural environment, including via a pilot program installing natural playgrounds at school parks.

This proposal would implement a key part of the city's strategic plan to better connect children with nature.

- Last year, a wide variety of government and community stakeholders completed a strategic plan to better connect children to nature in Austin, including staff from 11 city departments, Austin Independent School District, UT School of Public Health, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Dell Children's Medical Center, Westcave Preserve, YMCA of Austin, Texas Children in Nature, and the Children in Nature Collaborative of Austin.¹
- That plan found that there is "a general lack of knowledge and understanding of the benefits to children who have regular interaction with nature" and recommended a marketing and outreach campaign to address this issue.
- This year, the Austin Parks Foundation (APF) is partnering with PARC to fund ongoing efforts to implement this strategic plan. However, PARC still lacks the resources needed to implement the marketing and outreach strategy.

Research shows the importance of connecting children to nature and of parks-related marketing and outreach.

- Extensive research confirms that urban nature improves health, happiness, & mental capacity, among other things.²
- A recent RAND study found that residents used parks less often in less affluent communities – and that one of the major reasons for this disparity was a lack of marketing and outreach efforts.³
- That same RAND study found that marketing and outreach efforts were associated with an over 60 percent increase in weekly time spent on moderate or vigorous physical activity in parks.

¹ "Cities Connecting Children to Nature Implementation Plan," City of Austin (16 September 2016).

² Eric Jaffe, "The (Pretty Much Totally) Complete Health Case for Urban Nature," CityLab (20 October 2015).

³ RAND Corporation, "The First National Study of Neighborhood Parks," American Journal of Preventive Medicine (30 May 2016).



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Improving Health & Equity for Austin Children

Item H-23

Access to Healthy Food in Public Schools

This would establish a Food Policy Board-recommended program to increase healthy food access in schools.

- Under this proposal, the Office of Sustainability would provide \$100,000 in grants to local schools to help them develop and implement strategies for increasing access to healthy food, including innovative delivery methods.
- Office of Sustainability staff estimates that at this funding level, they will be able to provide roughly five grants.¹

Healthy food is vital to children's health and ability to learn.

- According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, research shows that access to healthy foods is associated with improving students' academic performance, school attendance rates, and cognitive performance.²
- However, many Austin students face food security challenges. (See Table.)

This program would help address food security issues in local schools.

- The Food Policy Board recommended this strategy as a way to help schools implement innovative food delivery methods & supplement existing needs.³
- The City of Austin currently works with the Austin Independent School District (AISD) on healthy food initiatives. This item would leverage that experience to help non-AISD schools build out their food access capacity, as well.

Table 1. Pct. Free/Reduced Lunch-Eligible Students, 2015

School District	Pct. Free/Reduced Lunch
Del Valle	84%
Manor	81%
Austin	66%
Pflugerville	55%
Round Rock	31%
Leander	22%

Source: Office of Sustainability Staff

Item H-21

Access to Playgrounds for Children with Disabilities

Table 2. ADA Project Needs (Over 10 Years)

District	Facilities/Parks ADA Needs
1	\$4.8 million
2	\$941,000
3	\$3.3 million
4	\$882,000
5	\$2 million
6	\$691,000
7	\$1.3 million
8	\$3.1 million
9	\$4.6 million
10	\$1.1 million
Trails	\$58.5 million

Source: PARD ADA Transition Plan

This proposal would make key accessibility improvements at 10 parks.

- This would provide \$1 million to the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) to serve Austin children living with disabilities & bring 10 city playgrounds into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

PARD manages a large parks system – but needs more resources to keep it accessible to residents of all abilities.

- PARD is responsible for maintaining about 300 parks, 150 playgrounds, and 220 miles of trails, many of which are not fully ADA compliant.⁴
- The city's ADA Transition Plan for parks identifies over \$80 million in projects recommended to be implemented over the next decade (See Table.)

This proposal has broad community support.

- A broad coalition of parks advocates and residents, including the Austin Parks Foundation, identified as a priority for the fiscal year 2018 budget.⁵

¹ Office of Sustainability Staff.

² "Health and Academic Achievement," U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (May 2014).

³ Food Policy Board Recommendation 20170522-2.

⁴ "Parks & Recreation Department Review Presentation," City of Austin Parks & Recreation Department (22 March 2017).

⁵ Letter to Mayor and Council from Austin Parks Foundation, et al. (28 June 2017).