



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Sara L. Hensley, CPRP, Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

DATE: April 11, 2019

SUBJECT: Zilker Working Group Recommendations for Short Term Transportation Solutions

The Zilker Park Working Group was formed following the passage of Resolution 20180628-072 on June 28, 2018. In accordance with the standard working group model, the Zilker Park Working Group is member led and receives coordination, support, and information from the Parks and Recreation, Watershed Protection and Austin Transportation Departments staff. Previous memoranda to Mayor and City Council (November 19, 2018, January 23, 2019 and February 19, 2019), provided information about the structure of the group and progress updates.

During the March 25, 2019, meeting, the Zilker Park Working Group members approved the recommendations prepared by the Short-Term Transportation Solutions subgroup. Please find attached two documents with recommendations on:

- Short-term transportation options (implementation to be considered for this summer), and
- Zilker Park master plan scope of work.

Please know that the comprehensive set of recommendations, addressing all resolution directives, is being finalized and will be submitted to Council upon completion and prior to May 1, 2019.

Should you have any questions, please contact my office at (512) 974-6717.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Elaine Hart, Deputy City Manager
Christopher Shorter, Assistant City Manager

Attachments:

- a. Short-Term Transportation Solutions Recommendations
- b. Zilker Park Master Plan Recommendations

SHORT-TERM TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

Zilker Park Working Group (ZPWG)

March 25, 2019

For further information contact:

Angela Richter, angela@savebartoncreek.org, 254-709-6085 (sub-group chair)

James Russell, j.edwardrussell@gmail.com (Full ZPWG Chair)

INTRODUCTION

This document was drafted by the Short-Term Parking and Traffic Solutions Sub-group to the Zilker Park Working Group and edited and approved by the full Zilker Park Working Group on March 25, 2019. It provides draft recommendations for Short-Term Parking and Traffic Solutions to Zilker Park. The ZPWG was created by City of Austin Resolution No. 20180628-072 on June 28, 2018.

The charge for the sub-group was to: “Evaluate immediate options and opportunities for parking outside 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.” The October 2018 deadline was extended under the request by Kimberly McNeely, Acting Director of the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) on November 19, 2018.

The sub-group consists of about a dozen members self-selected from the larger group and is supported by City of Austin staff from PARD and the Austin Transportation Department (ATD). Angela Richter was elected as Chair and Gail Rothe as Secretary. The first meeting of the sub-group was held November 13, 2018 and final meeting February 11th, 2019.

The goal is to pilot these parking and transportation projects in the Summer of 2019. In subsequent years the goal is to cover the full peak usage season which generally begins in mid-March (at Spring break).

CONCEPTS AND CONSTRAINTS GUIDING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Short-term recommendations (for Summer 2019) for a shuttle are primarily aimed at city-wide access to the park, whereas additional recommendations for a stand-alone circulator system within the park will be deferred to a longer-term planning process.
- Given the short timeline, any pilot must rely on systems/infrastructure currently in place.
- Piloting a new parking and transportation system will be an iterative project; at the outset the city should identify how and what to track to make informed adjustments, either in year one, or more likely prior to year two implementation.
- The group will rely on City staff to cost out any recommendations.
- The group will rely on ATD to investigate availability of the lots/garages along MOPAC and the possible use of parking under MOPAC.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHORT-TERM TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

1. Implement a pilot shuttle system beginning no later than Saturday, May 25, 2019 (Memorial Day weekend) and continuing through Labor Day weekend. The shuttle will run between one or more outlying areas and deliver park users to the park boundary or designated drop-off in the park. City staff may issue an RFP or build on existing contract(s). The system will have the following characteristics:

- Shuttle frequency will vary depending on week-day, week-end, and small special events that do not already have special transportation options (e.g., Summer Musicals at the Hillside Theater).
- Ideally the shuttle should be able to accommodate diverse user needs such as bringing along pets, baby strollers, coolers and other carry on gear one would expect to bring to a park.
- Ideally, the shuttle trip time should be no longer than 20 minutes.
- We recommend the internal shuttle circulation route include (but is not limited to) Columbus and Lou Neff Roads.
- Shuttle will be free; alternatively, charge a fee that includes entrance to pool or garden.
- At least one, and up to three, park and ride sites will be designated. Locations under consideration are: Berger Center; Highland Mall; Camp Mabry; new Cap Metro Westgate Transit Center; One Texas Center; Palmer Auditorium; Convention Center parking garage; and parking lots along MOPAC adjacent to the park. Krieg Field may also be considered but it was not well utilized for Trail of Lights shuttle.

2. For lots on Azie Morton Road including Umlauf sculpture garden (if desired by Umlauf), staffing resources will be dedicated to implement and to enforce paid parking at peak times. Parking revenue shall be dedicated to PARD and used within Zilker Park for mobility improvements and maintenance including trails.

3. Create partnership with nearby parking facilities, outside of the park boundaries, for use during peak days and times of year. For example, such as space under MOPAC or lots or parking garages along MOPAC close to the park, north and south of the river. The Pilot Shuttle should stop at any of these parking facilities on its way to and from the park.

4. Enhance mass transit by Piloting increased frequency of #30 Cap Metro bus line to every 15 minutes and evaluating current stops. We recommend making this change on a temporary basis, this summer to track increased ridership.

5. Encourage active transportation and dockless mobility strategies (walking, biking, e-scooters) by

- Add bicycle parking and designated dockless parking areas at nearby Cap Metro stops and select areas in the park.

- Safety of pedestrians will be the priority and access of trails and shared-use paths by electric vehicles such as e-scooters will only be allowed as emerging studies show are safe.
- Install way-finding signage around park to indicate walking and biking time/distance to points of interest (e.g. pool, gardens).
- Utilize COA approved tactical urbanism strategies to build temporary protected bike lanes on Barton Springs Road to the park from Lamar Blvd; for example, temporary paint, planter boxes, and parking stops.

6. Increase marketing of the City's other metropolitan parks in order to reduce demand on Zilker Metropolitan Park.

7. Implement a high-profile outreach campaign to city residents and visitors on methods of transportation to Zilker Park including all changes and the new opportunities. This campaign is essential to the success of the other recommendations.

Note: While these pilots are active, we recommend increasing communication and enforcement efforts in the park itself, for example by park rangers or police officers.

ZILKER PARK MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS
BY SHORT-TERM TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS SUB-GROUP

Approved by the full Zilker Park Working Group

on March 25, 2019

For further information contact:

Angela Richter, angela@savebartoncreek.org, 254-709-6085 (sub-group chair)

James Russell, j.edwardrussell@gmail.com (Full ZPWG Chair)

The Zilker Park Working Group puts forth the following recommendations to be incorporated into the Zilker Park Master Plan scope of work.

The Master Plan should study:

- Opportunities to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety, and to prioritize these active modes in the park.
- Opportunities to minimize private automobile traffic through the park, including the possible reduction of automobile traffic on Barton Springs Road during times of peak demand.
- Options for a circulator system within the park to move visitors from one area of the park to another, including a shuttle bus or expansion of the Zilker Zepher.
- A permanent shuttle system from off-site parking to the park.
- Limiting closest parking spaces to high-occupancy vehicles, families with small children, or ADA spaces. The plan should also carefully consider accessibility of these groups throughout the park.
- Offering a limited number of parking spaces that correspond to renting a PARD facility, such as a picnic area or sports court.
- Use of parking opportunities north of the river and accessible by the Mopac pedestrian bridge.
- Implementing systems such as “toll tag” upon entering/exiting parking lots; pre-purchasing of parking online; or annual parking pass to expedite entering the park.
- A new parking garage within or immediately adjacent to the park with green infrastructure features such as a green roof, paying close attention to environmental sensitivities and resulting in a net decrease in impervious cover in the park.
- Increasing the frequency of #30 Capitol Metro bus and reevaluate stop locations and improve stop comfort (benches, cover, visibility, and entries from stop to the park) within and without the park, including stops that will conveniently bring visitors to Barton Springs Pool, Umlauf Sculpture Gardens, Zilker Botanical Garden, and other areas of interest. CapMetro should advertise Zilker at stops such as the Westgate Transit Center.
- Viability of converting Andrew Zilker Rd and Lou Neff Rd to shared use paths that can be separated into ped and bike/scooter spaces.
- Re-aligning trails and shared-use paths to the best locations for convenient active transportation.

- Identify missing sidewalks, safe pedestrian crossings, and ADA accessibility issues, and propose solutions.
- Improve connectivity across Barton Springs Rd, studying the opportunity to connect the park over the road (eg road in tunnel or pedestrian bridge).
- Routes for permanent protected bike lanes to and through the park, and a plan for improved maintenance of bike lanes.
- Increasing investment in amenities of the City's other metropolitan parks in order to reduce demand on Zilker Metropolitan Park. This should include investment in the types of facilities identified as popular in recent Zilker Park and park-wide surveys.
- Implement a paid parking system for all parking spaces in the park, so there is no free parking during days and times of peak demand, to mitigate the need for more parking spaces.
- On-demand parking capacity notifications.
- Bus drop off and parking strategy.

We also ask that the City and consultants continue to involve the Zilker Park Working Group in the Zilker Park Master Planning Process and other decisions being made about Zilker Park.