



COMMISSION ON SENIORS BUDGET RECOMMENDATION

20220309-04Civ

EXPANDING PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO OLDER ADULTS

Strategic Direction: Health and Environment, Mobility, Culture and Lifelong Learning

Date: March 9, 2022

Subject: FY2023 Budget Recommendation

Motioned By: Kareithi

Seconded By: Van Sickle

Recommendation

The Commission on Seniors recommends the following budget items that will maintain and expand Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) programs and services for older adults.

- Fund three temporary 20-hr/wk drivers and one temporary dispatcher to support the increase in routes and the high demand for private rides.
- Fund an FTE Administrative Assistant position at each of the 18 PARC facilities serving the Adult 50+ Community.
- Equitable Funding for the George Washington Carver Museum.

Description of Recommendation to Council

PARC provides numerous programs that serve older adults in Austin, including congregate meals and transportation to meals and some other appointments. PARC needs additional funding and staff to ensure all older adults who want to participate are able.

- Funding three part-time designated drivers and a dispatcher for the Senior Transportation Program will ensure PARC's ability to serve the Adult 50+ Community while expanding congregate meal programs.
- Funding 18 FTE Administrative Assistants at each of the 18 PARC facilities servicing the Adult 50+ Community will ensure an equitable standard of administrative operations for each site that is consistent and the same throughout the Community Recreation Division. Funding permanent positions should reduce turnover of staff in administrative positions.
- The Carver is underfunded when compared to the Asian American Resource Center (estimated \$100,000 to \$200,000 less) and Mexican American Cultural Center (about \$400,000 less). Additional funding would be used for temporary staff, commodities, and contracts. This funding is not currently in the PARC budget.

Rationale:

Senior Transportation Program: PARC offers participants rides through the Senior Transportation Program. The program is partially funded through a grant with the Capital Area Council of Governments that provides reimbursement for rides provided to facilities that participate in the Congregate Meal Program. Pre-pandemic this program

provided daily ride routes to 8 senior and recreation centers throughout the City of Austin as well as private rides to doctor's appointments and personal errands. These routes were provided to all registered participants living within a 5-mile radius of the center. In 2019 Council approved the expansion of the congregate meal program from 8 to 10 sites. When the congregate meal program returns, PARD will be adding 2 new sites and expanding an existing site to 5 days per week. These changes improve equity in PARD meal services and were supported by the Commission on Seniors. Additional drivers and a dispatcher are needed to serve older adults who take meals at the additional sites.

Administrative Assistants: PARD offers many programs and services to the adults aged 50 and older in Austin. Demand for PARD's programs and services has increased in line with the growing population of 50+ seniors. Currently, only 2 of 18 sites within PARD have an Administrative Assistant position. Of the remaining 16 sites, 6 have 40-hr/wk Administrative Associate position with a lesser pay grade, while 8 sites have a 30-hr/wk Administrative Associate position. The remaining 2 sites have no administrative position. Additional funding would allow the 14 sites to increase their Administrative Associate positions to an Administrative Assistant position while also providing 2 sites with a new position.

Equitable Funding for Carver Museum: The Carver is a vital resource for the community, offering programs and events for people of all ages. It should be funded equitably with other cultural centers.

Vote

For: Briesemeister, Varteressian, Angel, Bauman, Bordie, De Maria Nicola, Garcia-Pittman, Kareithi, Lopez-Guerrero, Lugo, Spain, Temperley, Van Sickle

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Cagle

Attest:


Janee Briesemeister, Chair