

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD DIRECTOR'S REPORT

DATE: *July 2022*

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS:

Waterloo Park & Moody Amphitheater – Austin Energy Green Building Award Ceremony: An official plaque ceremony commemorating the park and amphitheater's 4-star rating earned through the Austin Energy Green Building program for its innovative and sustainable design and construction strategies will take place on Sunday, July 31st at 9:30 AM. The ceremony will be followed by a tour of the site's environmental features. This event is part of Waterloo Greenway's recurring Tales on the Trail series that will continue through the fall. **Districts 1 and 9**

<https://waterloogreenway.org/events/tales-on-the-trail-july-31/>



Photo of the Waterloo Park and Moody Amphitheater, courtesy of Ben Porter

PLANNING UPDATES:

Project Connect: Parks and Recreation Department (Department) staff continue to collaborate with the Project Connect, Blue Line, and Orange Line teams. Recent activities included:

- The Department is working with Austin Transit Partnership and Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) on Section 6F of the Land and Water Conservation Act and 4F of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act. The Waller Beach portion will go through a 6F conversion, which requires a 1:1 replacement of land. TPWD is discussing 6F for Auditorium Shores where the line will be subterranean.
- Per TPWD, replacement properties cannot be acquired through condemnation. The Department continues to search for replacement properties along the shores of the Colorado River, which would match the appraised value of Waller Beach. Candidate properties would either be owned by willing sellers or could be transferred to the Department through parkland dedication or from another City department. In the latter scenario, the Department would receive cash for the conversion which could be allocated to land acquisition or a project of the Department's choice.

More information can be found at the project website: <https://projectconnect.com/>

Districts: Multiple

Zilker Metropolitan Park Vision Plan: The Department and consultant team are working to create a final draft plan concept. In July, the team hosted a work session with the Austin Transportation Department and will continue discussions focused on transportation and parking options in and around Zilker Park. Additionally, the team met with researchers from the Biophilic Cities Network, an international group led by the University of Virginia, interested in the vision plan's ecological approach to restoration in an urban environment. More information including the concepts and meeting recordings may be found on the project website: <https://www.austintexas.gov/ZilkerVision>

Districts 5 and 8

305 S. Congress "Statesman" Planned Unit Development Amendment (PUD): After the initial reading on April 7, 2022 ([item 67](#)), the item is scheduled to be considered by Council on July 28th for a possible approval of second and third readings. The Austin Legal Department has drafted an Ordinance and several exhibits. The Department provided feedback, taking Council direction and Department priorities into account. **District 9**

Kincheon Branch Creek Land Acquisition: The Parks and Recreation Department has acquired an approximately 4.06-acre tract located along Kincheon Branch Creek, west of Brodie Lane at Convict Hill Road. This acquisition will function as a pocket park, trailhead, and trail connection, as well as close a gap in the Latta Branch Creek Greenbelt system -recommendations specifically identified in the Parks and Recreation Department's Council-adopted Long-Range Plan, Our Parks, Our Future. The site is gently sloped with an open field, a creek corridor, and large mature trees. This acquisition is funded through the 2018 Parks and Recreation Bond. An independent, third-party appraisal was procured to establish the fair-market valuation of the proposed acquisition. The appraisal supports the purchase price of \$775,000. The amount of the purchase price plus closing costs is not to exceed \$787,000. **District 8**

DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:

Alderbrook Pocket Park: The Department partnered with the Austin Parks Foundation and the Friends of Alderbrook to design and implement amenities for the undeveloped parkland, which include a large playground, swings, a pavilion, picnic tables, benches, a drinking fountain, tree plantings and nature play components. Funding was provided by parkland dedication fees, Austin Park Foundation's ACL Impact Grant funding, and a match by the Friends of Alderbrook Park. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on July 14 to celebrate the completion of Alderbrook Pocket Park. More information about the park may be found on the project website: <https://www.austintexas.gov/alderbrook-pocket-park-playground>

District 7



New playground equipment at Alderbrook Pocket Park

Walsh Boat Landing Restroom Renovation: The 50-plus-year-old restroom building at Walsh Boat Landing will be re-opening in early August 2022, after 3 months of closure for a major renovation that included plumbing upgrades, accessibility improvements and roof repairs. The project includes a new wall-mounted drinking fountain, new plumbing fixtures and stall partitions, LED lighting with sensor controls, hand dryers, and baby changing stations. The contractor expects to install plumbing fixtures and complete the remaining electrical work by the end of July. The final opening date will be contingent upon a substantial completion walk, trade inspections, and a final certificate of occupancy. **District 10**

Rainey Street Trailhead Project: The Rainey Street Trailhead is becoming a vital hub connecting Austin residents to both transportation and nature. Department partner, The Trail Foundation (TTF), has

developed a site plan for the space that includes improved trail connections to Butler Hike and Bike Trail, a nature play playground, sitting areas, open play lawn, a small dock, and native plantings. At the City Council meeting scheduled for July 28, the Department will seek approval for the use of the Competitive Sealed Proposal method of contracting, as authorized by Subchapter D, Chapter 2269 of the Texas Government Code, as the project delivery method that provides the best value to the City for the construction of the Rainey Street Trailhead project. Additionally, the Department will seek approval to authorize negotiation and execution of a Parkland Improvement and Maintenance Agreement with the Trail Foundation for a total contract amount not to exceed \$778,865. Should the item be approved, TTF will bid and manage the project construction with oversight from the Parks and Recreation Department. The construction is estimated to begin this fall and be completed by mid-2023. Additional information can be found on the project webpage: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/rainey-street-trailhead-park-improvements>

District 9



Site plan for the Rainey Street Trailhead Project



Rainey Street Trailhead | Nature Play Area | Schematic Design | 12.07.2021

ECOSYSTEM
DESIGN GROUP **dwg.**

Detail of the proposed nature play area, Rainey Street Trailhead

Dick Nichols District Park Amenity Improvements: The Department has worked closely with the District 8 Council Office to renovate and improve several park amenities throughout Dick Nichols District Park. The full list of improvements includes the renovation of the dolphin water feature, the renovation of the volleyball/pickleball court with a new net, the resurfacing of the basketball court, a new live oak tree, four new limestone benches, the resurfacing of the parking lot and accessibility improvements to an existing drinking fountain and throughout the parking lot. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is being tentatively planned for later this summer. The improvements were funded through District 8 funds and parkland dedication fees. **District 8**



Resurfaced basketball court and renovated water feature at Dick Nichols District Park

Kendra Page Neighborhood Park: The newest nature play space recently opened at Kendra Page Neighborhood Park. This project is a great example of the Community Activated Park Project program, as it was initiated by the surrounding community and funded by the Austin Parks Foundation Community Grant. Features include a stump jump, large climbing logs, two tree tables with movable stump seats, and a nature trail. **District 2**



Climbing logs at the newly open Kendra Page Neighborhood Park nature play space

Gus Garcia Outdoor Basketball/Pickleball court: An outdoor basketball court fence has been approved for Gus Garcia Recreation Center. The cost of the fence is \$22,769. The fence will go along the south and west sides of the court. **District 4**



Gus Garcia District Park newly built basketball court with lights

Roy Kizer Resurfacing Project: The Roy Kizer Greens resurfacing project is going very well to date. Decisions related to the re-opening date are under consideration. **District 2**

MAINTENANCE UPDATES:

Metz Pool Parking Lot: Austin Water, Watershed Protection, and Public Works recently completed storm drain and utility infrastructure improvements on Canterbury Street that required the repaving of the street. The new street pavement was at a lower elevation which resulted in the Metz Pool Parking Lot driveway no longer being accessible. As part of the mitigation for impacts to parkland, the utility team designed and constructed a new driveway into the parking lot and resurfaced the full parking lot with new striping and a ramp for handicap spaces. These improvements brought the parking lot into ADA compliance. **District 3**



New parking lot surface at Metz Pool

Zilker Metro Park Maintenance Project: The maintenance of the Stratford Drive Butler Landfill lot began on July 5, 2022. The lot was closed to the public from July 8 through July 12, 2022. Work completed during this time included the installation of a construction fence and additional gravel to mitigate ponding. On July 13, the five-acre gravel lot was reopened to the public and will remain open for the duration of the project. A three-acre portion of the lot will remain closed for regrading and revegetation until native grasses are established, anticipated by the spring of 2023 (see photo below). Other planned maintenance work includes vehicular gates to assist control of vehicular access to the cap, a pedestrian gate near Lou Neff Road, and an irrigation system to support the three re-vegetated acres. A new pump will utilize lake water for irrigation. Much of this work is expected to be completed by mid-September, and any remaining work will be completed after the ACL Music Festival. **District 8**



*Aerial view of the Butler Landfill at Zilker Metro Park.
The red outline indicates the area off-limits for use during the maintenance period.*

Mendez Recreation Center: After recent vandalism to the building as well as activity in the park, Mendez has decided to increase security via cameras. The city vendor, Johnson Controls, has delivered a quote and has performed two facility walkthroughs. A member of the maintenance asbestos team joined in the walkthrough the week of July 4th and has determined that spot checks will be performed during the camera installation as a precaution. No hot spots were identified during the walkthrough.

District 3

Conley Guerrero Senior Activity Center: Conley Guerrero had eight faucets on sinks in building 1-4 replaced. The Community Garden is also being revitalized with new beds and a new composter installed. The center received a foosball table donation which has been a big hit with the participants.

District 1



Conley Guerrero Senior Activity Center Community Garden

Lamar Senior Activity Center: Asbestos abatement in the computer lab, offices, and south hall has been completed and sheetrock has been installed. **District 9**

Dottie Jordan Facility Closure/Renovations: The Dottie Jordan Recreation Center has moved to the next phase in the bathroom renovation project which has kept the facility closed to the public since 2020 due to major plumbing failures. The building permits for the project have been approved, and a job order contractor has been assigned to the project by the Capital Contracting Office. PARD staff met with the contractor in early July, and a scope of work along with drawings are expected by the end of the month. Work is anticipated to begin in the Fall of 2022 with the building scheduled to re-open in Spring of 2023. **District 1**

South Austin Little League Field Light Replacement: The Preston Field and Weber Field that serve the South Austin Little League are in the final stages of a complete replacement of their ball field lights. This project started in July working with Musco Lighting Company that provide the following benefits: LED Lights (LED provides up to 80% reduced energy use which equals lower utility bills), Total Light Control Technology (directing lights on the field and reduced light pollution), Monitoring (Musco monitors each pole and will let us know if problems arise), Control-Link (schedule online or from an app along with 24/7 access to their control center), Warranty (25-year coverage means AE is not replacing light bulbs every other year). **District 9**



PROGRAM UPDATES:

Off-Site Pilot Parking Project for Zilker Metro Park: The Department Communications and Engagement Unit has been working to publicize the new Zilker Shuttle, which runs between Zilker Metro Park and the One Texas Center parking garage at 505 Barton Springs Road. The [press release](#) was covered by many local news outlets including the Austin American Statesman, Austin Chronicle, KUT, KXAN, Fox 7, and KVUE. The initial organic social media posts reached over 9.6K people. A [dedicated inbox](#) has been set up for the public to leave feedback. The feedback collected, total costs, and overall participation in the pilot will be reviewed to determine the feasibility of offering a similar service in the future. The shuttle will run through September 5, 2022. **Districts 5 and 8**

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/zilker-metropolitan-park>



*Busses running between Zilker Metro Park and One Texas Center on weekends.
Riders can have their parking validated by the shuttle drivers to avoid the \$10 fee.*

Additional Pools Opened: The Aquatic Division open additional pools: Dottie Jordan, Ramsey, Martin, Walnut Creek and Mabel Davis. Each pool has one scheduled closure day per week and offers lap and recreational swim. For detailed pool schedule information please visit [Pools & Splash Pads | AustinTexas.gov](#). **Districts 1, 5 and 10**

George Morales Dove Springs Recreation Center: The George Morales Dove Springs Recreation Center concluded the first session of its “Dance Time” program. 12 participants enrolled in this new program and plan to return for additional sessions that began July 14, 2022. **District 2**



Dance Time program participants held at George Morales Dove Springs Recreation Center

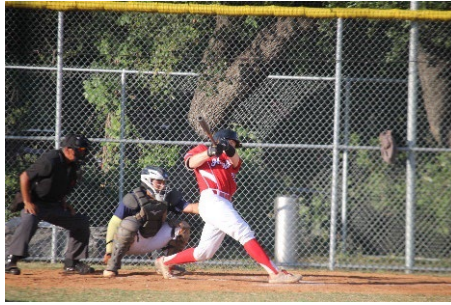
George Morales Dove Springs Recreation Center: The George Morales Dove Springs Recreation Center hosted a community town hall meeting on July 23rd from 10 am-1 pm. The meeting will be led by Council Member Vanessa Fuentes. The primary focus of this meeting will be to address community needs/concerns as it pertains to systemic impacts on minority families. **District 2**

Delores Duffie Recreation Center: Summer camp is underway and included programming to express creativity and STEM skills building (dragons2 & dragons). **District 1**



Delores Duffie Recreation Center Summer Camp Participants Activities

Parque Zaragoza Recreation Center: Parque Zaragoza league rental with the Independent Baseball League (PECOS) semi-pro baseball is in full swing. The “Austin Weirdos” are playing games Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays for the month of June and July. **District 3**



Minor League Pecos Baseball League at Parque Zaragoza Recreation Center

Givens Recreation Center This summer Givens has been hosting their first ever free Teen Summer Camp. Teens are welcomed with breakfast at 10 am and every day there is a new field trip activity. On July 29, 2022, teens were taken to Camacho Recreation Center for their first kayaking and canoeing. Givens Recreation Center also offered a summer youth basketball league. Practices are Mondays and Wednesdays from 6-8 pm, and games on Fridays. There are 472 youth registered for this program.

District 1

Mendez Recreation Center: Daily attendance at the Splash Pad (under the new sunshade) averages 60 visitors per day. Many compliments have been received on the shade provided by the new sunshade structure. The Summer Movie in the Park Series continues to be a hit. Three films have been screened so far, and attendance has ranged from 55 to 260 attendees. Sendero Health has donated pizzas for the events, and other community partners, Central Texas Master Naturalists and Cap Metro, have tables at the events. **District 3**



Pan Am Recreation Center: Pan Am Recreation center resumed its annual Hillside concert series in the month of July, hosting weekly concerts each Tuesday in the month of July. The event was recently revamped as a result of standard COVID safety practices but will resume standard operation beginning this year. **District 3**



Pan Am Hillside Concert series flyer

Pan Am Recreation center recently partnered with Brighter Bites to offer fresh produce, education related to food and nutrition and provide a cooking curriculum. Brighter Bites provides fresh produce once a week for 6 weeks to serve 50 or more unique families at each summer site. Each unique family receives two bags of produce or one box. As parents pick up participants Brighter Bites staff provide a sample of one or more of the produce items. **District 3**



Pan Am Recreation center partnership with Brighter Bites to provide fresh produce and healthy meal education to summer camp participants



Pan Am summer camps programs field trip, and activities

Land Management Program – Land Management Plan Briefings: Development of the PARD land management plan (MA 8600 NA220000002) is now well underway. This plan is a commitment made in response to the 2019 Wildfire Preparedness Audit. The scope of the plan is approximately 10,000 acres of parkland natural areas. It will include site analyses, a climate vulnerability analysis, management goals, and recommended restoration and management strategies. The overall management goal is to restore environmental health and resiliency and to provide critical ecosystem services to Austin residents.

In collaboration with the Community PARKnerships Program, the Land Management Program has participated in three briefing events to date with representatives from over 20 partner organizations.

Additional briefing events are planned throughout the remainder of the summer. Preliminary response to these briefings has been overwhelmingly positive. The plan is expected to be complete late in 2022 with details provided back to the Parks and Recreation Board early in 2023. **All Districts**

Wildfire Agreements: The Department has completed or updated cooperative agreements with six local agencies for cooperation in wildland fire management. These agreements allow the Department to participate in a regional consortium that collaborates on prescribed burn implementation, fuels mitigation, and joint training and staff development. **All Districts**

These agencies are:

- Austin Fire Department
- Austin Water
- The Nature Conservancy
- Travis County Parks
- University of Texas Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Brush Square Museums – Renovation Revelations: “Renovation Revelations” is a video series that takes a closer look at the conservation process at the O. Henry Museum.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeITMMBW0YOS1QB-xJN-Vj_yCch7Anmpt **District 9**



Brush Square Museums Renovation Revelations

Oakwood Cemetery Chapel – Museum Apprentices within the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps

(ACCC): Through the PARD ACCC program, the Museums and Cultural Programs Division is hosting two groups in a youth job training program. One group, Works in Progress, is hosted by Cidnye Stott at the Dougherty Arts Center. The other group, Museum Apprentices, is hosted at the Oakwood Cemetery Chapel. This eight week program in June and July is a paid opportunity for youth to receive job training and assist with division projects, including marketing, videography, event production, theatre production, gallery installation, and community engagement such as the PARD Juneteenth Parade float. They have participated in CPR/First Aid Training, Equity Training, Civic Engagement Training, Mental Health First Aid, and professional development. **District 1**



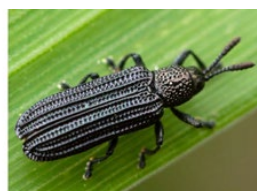
PARD Austin Civilian Conservation Corps Participants

Elisabet Ney Museum – Family Day at the Ney: The Elisabet Ney Museum hosted the last installment of Family Day at the Ney on Saturday, July 23, 2022 from 10 am to 12 pm. The education staff worked with participants to construct cardboard castles, inspired by the museum and designed by Elisabet herself. One thing to note is that each one of our bi-weekly morning Family Day events has brought in close to 100 participants! **District 9**

Date Night at Dougherty Arts Center (DAC): Date Night at the DAC: Yellow Rose Film Screening occurred on Wednesday, July 20, 2022. The event gave participants the opportunity to reflect on what Texas culture can look like when seen through the eyes of country music through the award-winning film, **Yellow Rose** (2019). In rural Texas, a Filipino teen longs to make her mark on the world of country music. When an unexpected opportunity comes her way, she must make a choice between upholding her family's traditions or leaving them all behind to pursue her lifelong aspiration. 58 people were in attendance. **District 9**



This piglet bug (*Bruchomorpha oculata*) is a new state record on iNaturalist.



This leaf beetle (*Anisostena nigrata*) is a new Travis County record on iNaturalist.



Mexican Winged Crown-Beard (*Verbesina microptera*) was documented, making it the northernmost record in iNaturalist.

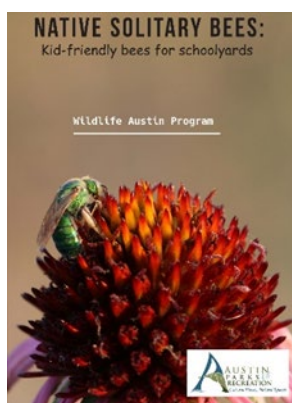


American Bumblebee (*Bombus pensylvanicus*) is listed as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Noteworthy Finds Of The Day

Wildlife Austin – Technical Guidance Document-Native Solitary Bees: Kid-Friendly Bees for

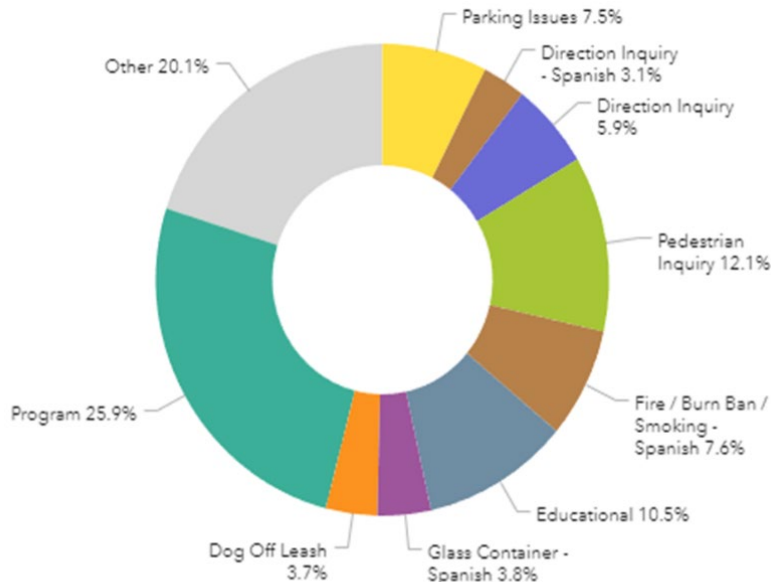
Schoolyards: To assist with the Bee City designation and to meet a requested need, the Wildlife Austin Program produced a 10-page technical guidance booklet for schools wanting to attract native bees to schoolyards to teach pollination and to observe the unique behavior of these kid-friendly bees. Native solitary bees are facing much greater conservation risks and declines than European honeybees. One native solitary bee can do the pollination work of 300 honeybees. Being “central place foragers,” native solitary bees are directly dependent upon nectar and pollen sources within a few hundred feet, making them the best model for demonstrating pollination. They are easy and inexpensive to attract and manage and require no special clothing or expertise to manage. Best of all, they have no hive to defend and are not aggressive in the least. [Link to document here](#). **All Districts**



Front Cover of Kid-Friendly Bees for Schoolyards Document

Austin Community Gardens Program: The Department Community Gardens Program partnered with Watershed Services Department (WPD), serving as a host site for WPD’s popular Earth Camp program, which reached more than 1,000 students over the course of the past school year. Earth Camp held classes at the Sustainable Food Center Teaching Garden during the 2021/2022 school year. The program will resume using the space in September 2022 and serves as an excellent example of partnership to utilize and complement available resources in each department, site host and program host. **District 1**

Park Rangers: From June 10-July 10, 2022, the Park Rangers handled daily operations including 7,334 contacts regarding Laws, Safety, Service and Education. 108 contacts were logged for Dogs Off Leash during this time frame. Since October 1, 2022, Park Rangers have had 2,190 contacts with park visitors who had their dogs off the leash to request compliance with leash laws. Patrols at Barking Springs are ongoing. Since June 18, 2022, 13 patrols have been conducted and 5 of those recorded sound over the legal limit. 202 total violations have been observed.



Breakdown of the 7,334 Park Ranger Contact By Type From June 10-July 10, 2022

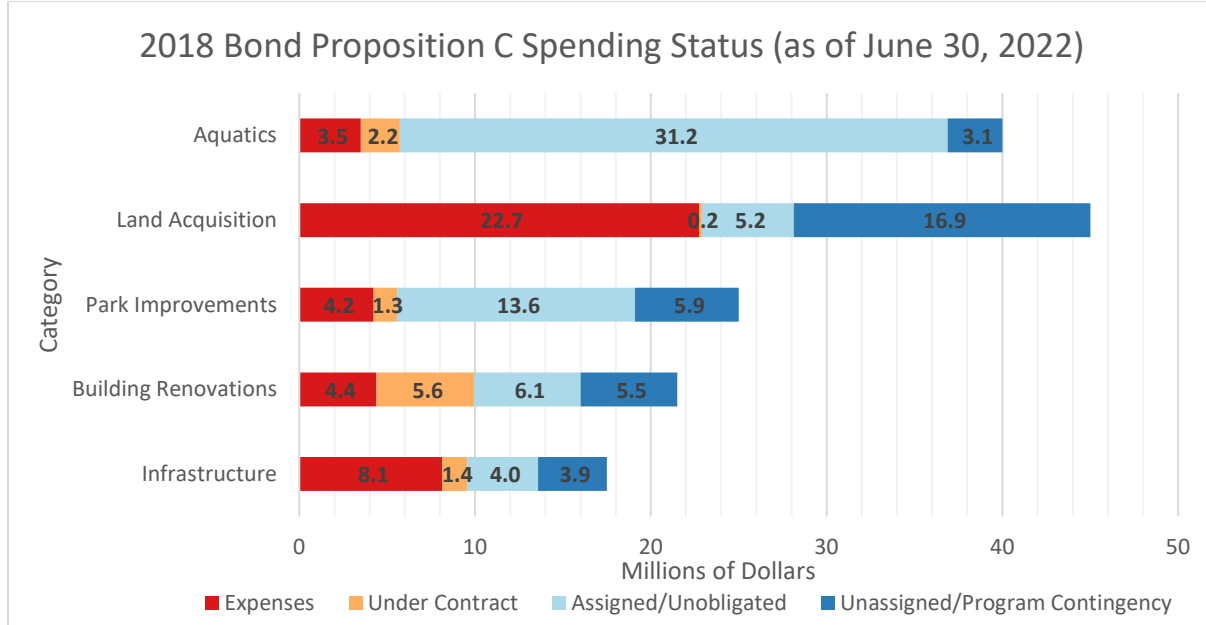
ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES:

2018 General Obligation Bond Program Update (Propositions C and B):

Proposition C: Parks and Recreation (\$149 million)

Funding from Proposition C has contributed to over 90 projects and 30 parkland acquisition efforts throughout the City of Austin. The Department has spent \$43 million of the \$149 million authorized and has a further \$10.7 million under contract. In the coming six months, the Department will hit many construction milestones in the 2018 Program:

- The [Brush Square Rehabilitation Phase I](#) (District 9) project started construction in late June
- The [Givens District Park Vision Plan Phase I Implementation](#) (District 1) started construction in mid-July
- The [Pharr Tennis Center Renovation](#) (District 9) project had its construction contract execution approved by City Council in June and construction will start in mid-August
- The Evergreen Cemetery Road Rehabilitation (District 1) project bid is in review and construction is expected to begin late summer
- The [Brownie](#) and [Highland](#) Neighborhood Park (District 4) projects will begin construction in fall 2022 if the Department receives an acceptable bid
- The [Alamo Neighborhood Park](#) (District 1), [Dottie Jordan Neighborhood Park](#) (District 1), McBeth Recreation Center (District 8), and [Northwest Recreation Center](#) (District 7) playgrounds replacements will begin construction within the next 6 months
- The [Givens](#) and [Colony Park](#) Pool (District 1) projects are in permitting and will begin construction in early calendar year 2023



Due to heavy construction cost escalation pressure, the Department continues to hold balances in the Aquatics, Building Renovations, Park Improvements, and Infrastructure categories to serve as program contingencies for ongoing work.

Proposition B: Libraries, Museums, and Cultural Centers (\$66.5 million in Department projects)

Cost escalation has caused more significant issues within Proposition B, which dedicated specific amounts to each cultural and arts facility. The Department is continuing to coordinate with Corporate Financial Services to seek alternative funding sources for these projects. Many projects will require additional funding to complete full phases as elaborated in the facility expansion plans.

2018 Bond Proposition B Spending Status (as of June 30, 2022)					
Facility	Appropriated	Under Contract	Expenses	Balance	% Spent
Asian American Resource Center	7.0	1.1	0.2	5.7	3.1%
Carver Museum, Cultural, and Genealogy Center	7.5	1.1	0.8	5.6	10.9%
Dougherty Arts Center	25.0	2.6	1.3	21.1	5.2%
Mexican American Cultural Center	27.0	2.9	2.1	22.0	7.8%
Total	66.5	7.6	4.4	54.4	6.7%

Proposition B dedicated specific amounts to four Department facilities:

- [Asian American Resource Center](#): The AARC project is in the schematic design phase and seeks to utilize the currently available funding to deliver an early phase of work that supports the future build-out of the theater building. Construction cost estimates for the full build out of the theater will be used as a basis for a future bond request.
- Carver Museum, Cultural, and Genealogy Center: 2018 funds are being used to address multiple issues at the Carver through several different subprojects. A portion of funding is supporting high priority renovations, including roof replacement, HVAC improvements and ADA site improvements. These renovations are now under construction. A second project is focusing on enhancements to the theater and associated systems. Lastly, an RFQ is in development for design services [on Phase 1 of the Facility Expansion plan](#) and will be advertised in Summer 2022.
- [Dougherty Arts Center](#): Since achieving Council approval to move forward into design and construction in spring 2021, the DAC project has progressed into the permitting and construction document phases. The current design meets all directives of City Council, but delivery of the complete facility will require significant additional funding.
- [Mexican American Cultural Center](#): The MACC project, which will deliver an expanded facility as detailed in the 2018 Facility Expansion Plan and better engage the lakefront site, is nearing completion of the Design Development phase. Updated cost estimates are forthcoming, but it is anticipated this project also requires supplemental funding.

City Manager Proposes Budget Addressing Staffing Shortage and More

(Created and last updated by [Joan Ivy](#) on July 15, 2022 at 11:00 AM

As most are aware, there is an emerging crisis in staff recruitment and retention. The Austin City Manager's Proposed Budget for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 aims to head off this dilemma to ensure City government can continue to provide high quality services, operations, and essential programs for the Austin community.

Spencer Cronk, who presented his recommendations to City Council today, July 15, proposed an across-the-board pay increase of 4 percent for civilian staff – the largest increase in more than two decades for librarians, rec center staff, utility line workers, waste collection and road repair crews, community health professionals and many more. Under Cronk's proposal, the City's living

wage – the minimum payable to any employee – would rise by 20 percent, from \$15 to \$18 per hour, with a longer-term goal to go higher, per Council’s recent direction.

The City Manager also announced that all employees who have been with the City for at least a year – including temporary and sworn public safety staff – will receive a one-time retention stipend of up to \$1,500 in their pay packets next month. Annual pay for public safety employees will continue to be determined via negotiations with trade unions.

Even with the additional investments in the City’s workforce, the proposed budget would provide the typical homeowner with a reduction of more than \$100 in the City’s portion of their annual property tax bill.

Cronk delivered his proposed budget, at the Montopolis Recreation and Community Center, against a backdrop of growing labor shortages precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, a highly competitive jobs market, and increases in living costs.

While the City has implemented several programs to help recruit and retain employees, a recent report compiled by the Financial Services Department revealed an average Citywide vacancy rate of 17 percent, with almost 1,900 non-sworn vacancies over nine months.

The impact on services has been seen in several departments: Austin Resource Recovery temporarily modified bulk and large brush collection services, Austin Animal Center temporarily reduced hours, the Parks and Recreation Department has struggled to recruit lifeguards, and Austin Public Library has been forced to end Sunday operations.

While elevated vacancy rates are not unique to the City of Austin, or even to the central Texas labor market, further action to address recruitment and retention and ease the City’s staffing shortage is regarded as critical to sustaining and improving public services over the coming year.

“In the wake of the pandemic, just like so many other organizations, our City government today faces a mission-critical challenge when it comes to maintaining our workforce and sustaining the high quality of services our residents have come to expect,” said Cronk.

“The simple truth of the matter is that we do not currently have the staff that we need to deliver the services that we must. For that reason, and others, the core feature of our budget proposal is a renewed emphasis on ensuring that, as we move into the future, we are in a position to recruit and retain the people we need to do the job that our community expects of us.”

Cronk added: “The success or failure of literally everything we aim to do as City government relies entirely on the people who work here and so, to invest in the success of our community, we must invest in the success of our employees.”

- Proposed Budget – [Snapshot](#)
- Proposed Budget – [Taxpayer Impact Assessment](#)
- Proposed Budget – [Addressing Climate Change](#)
- Proposed Budget – [Full Document](#)
- Proposed Budget – [City Manager’s Message](#)

At the time of the City Manager’s presentation, the Proposed PARD Budget contains a total request of \$7.6M and 16.75 FTEs to support General Fund operations and programming; and a request of \$436K and 6 FTEs for the Golf Enterprise operations.

Here are some upcoming key dates from the COA Budget Timeline:

CALENDAR	
<i>Jul 27 & Aug 2</i>	Public Input Meetings
<i>Aug 9 & 11</i>	Council Budget Work Sessions
<i>Aug 17-19</i>	Tax Rate Hearing and Budget Readings

Harmful Algae Bloom: PARD’s Communications and Engagement Unit is working closely with the Watershed Protection Department (WPD) and Austin Public Health to share critical information with the public about harmful algae bloom on social media and online. WPD recently printed updated signage and PARD maintenance staff will now replace old signs with the new ones at Barking Springs as well as install caution signs at other locations. Find up-to-date algae information at [AustinTexas.gov/Algae](https://austintexas.gov/Algae).

CAUTION



Enter water at your own risk



Harmful algae, bacteria, parasites and other dangers may be present in any natural water body. All of these can make humans and pets sick. Harmful algae can be fatal for dogs.

Do Not Enter If:	People and Pets:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water is warm or stagnant or you see scum, film or algae. There has been rain in the past three days. There are lots of dogs present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not drink the water. Avoid contact with algae. Rinse skin or animal fur after contact with water. Do not allow dogs to lick their fur prior to rinsing.

This water is not regularly tested for recreational use. It may be unsafe for people and pets.

If you or your animal have sudden or unexplained illness or signs of poisoning, call your doctor or veterinarian or the Texas Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

To report illness after exposure to water in either people or pets, visit [AustinTexas.gov/Algae](https://austintexas.gov/Algae) or scan the QR code. For more information, visit the website, call 3-1-1 or 512-974-2000, or use the 3-1-1 mobile app.



Updated algae information sign

PARKS BOARD FOLLOW-UP

Signage below Longhorn Dam: At the April 25th meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board, a member of the public provided comment on water releases at the Longhorn Dam. PARD Staff, in coordination with Austin Water, is in the process of creating signs which will be posted in the area around Longhorn Dam to warn people of sudden water releases. The signs are currently being translated into Spanish, Burmese and Chinese. Once the translation is complete, it should take about four weeks for these signs to be fabricated and installed. I have asked that staff include information on these signs being installed in a future Director's Report. **District 3.**

Council District Question on PARD Surveys: At the June 27th meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board, members suggested that there may be a better way of asking people to identify what Council District they live in when responding to online surveys. The Community Engagement Unit has identified some online tools which can be linked to in a survey question that allows respondents to look up their Council District by entering their address. Staff plans to include one of these tools in future surveys.

Tree Mitigation Associated with Wastewater Pipeline: PARD Forestry has met with Developmental Services Department staff and the Austin Water Project Manager. 227 trees are planned for removal as part of the installation of a wastewater pipeline that will pass under Jimmy Clay Golf Course, Roy Kizer Golf Course, Onion Creek Soccer Complex and Onion Creek Metro Park. The majority of the removals are expected to occur in the Onion Creek Metro Park, where future roadway extensions and horse trails are planned to be developed. Because the majority of the tree removals are planned to occur in the Onion Creek Metro Park where future cleared areas are planned to take place, Staff agreed payment into the Tree Mitigation Fund was the best path forward. The funds provide for mitigation will be used at the discretion of PARD Forestry for the replanting of trees. **District 2**