



March 9, 2023

Questions and Answers Report



Mayor Kirk Watson

Council Member Natasha Harper-Madison, District 1

Council Member Vanessa Fuentes, District 2

Council Member José Velásquez, District 3

Council Member Josè “Chito” Vela, District 4

Council Member Ryan Alter, District 5

Council Member Mackenzie Kelly, District 6

Council Member Leslie Pool, District 7

Council Member Paige Ellis, District 8

Council Member Zohaib “Zo” Qadri, District 9

Council Member Alison Alter, District 10

The City Council Questions and Answers Report was derived from a need to provide City Council Members an opportunity to solicit clarifying information from City Departments as it relates to requests for council action. After a City Council Regular Meeting agenda has been published, Council Members will have the opportunity to ask questions of departments via the City Manager's Agenda Office. This process continues until 5:00 p.m. the Tuesday before the Council meeting. The final report is distributed at noon to City Council the Wednesday before the council meeting.

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL

Item #6: Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract for school-based energy conservation education with AM Conservation Group, Inc., for a term of five years for a total contract amount not to exceed \$2,000,000. [Note: This solicitation was reviewed for subcontracting opportunities in accordance with City Code Chapter 2-9C (Minority Owned and Women Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program) and subcontractor goals were applied to the solicitation. The recommended contractor provided sufficient evidence of good faith efforts and the resulting contract will include 5.40% WBE participation].

COUNCIL MEMBER FUENTES'S OFFICE

1) *Which schools will participate in this energy conservation education program?*

The individual schools for this program have not yet been identified. This program is available to schools registered with the State of Texas (public, charter, and private schools), currently at the sixth-grade level, and are located in AE's service territory. There are approximately 90 schools that meet this definition, with those schools being associated with six (6) different independent school districts or private/charter schools. AE seeks to expand the program to reach as many students as possible.

The contracted vendor is responsible for outreach in the community and promoting the program and participation. Participation is based on teacher request, and any school administrator, teacher or principal can fill out a request to receive the free materials and register through the vendor hosted website.

Item #16: Approve a resolution accepting the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Policy Plan; incorporating ETOD Policy Plan tools for the stations within the boundaries of the Northeast Austin District planning process; initiating amendments to Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan to adopt elements of the ETOD Policy Plan; and initiating amendments to City Code Title 25.

COUNCIL MEMBER POOL'S OFFICE

1) *What are the benefits and obstacles to placing value-capture financial tools on the station areas as a method of achieving the maximum dollars before the planning work is completed and development begins?*

The term "value-capture" includes an array of tools ranging from regulatory incentives that capture value by allowing property owners to provide community benefits in exchange for additional entitlements to financial instruments such as tax increment finance (TIF) /tax increment reinvestment zones (TIRZ) that allow a portion of future property tax to be set aside within a geographic area to be used for a specific purpose.

If value capture tools are going to be used, it is generally beneficial to put tools in place before development occurs in order to maximize the amount of value or community benefits that can be captured as properties are developed or redeveloped in an area. The recommendation to initiate creation of a systemwide ETOD Overlay is intended to allow creation of regulatory incentives to support the provision of community benefits as development occurs and, in many cases, in advance of detailed planning. However, as described in more detail in the ETOD Policy Plan (page A124-A126) implementation of tax increment finance is more challenging.

It is highly recommended that staff be given the opportunity to more fully assess the capabilities and limitations related to TIRZs for ETOD purposes relative to overall City funding needs. Further, state law and the City's TIF policy have very specific requirements for a TIRZ, including meeting "but for" requirements, affordable housing minimums, etc. As the ETOD Policy Plan is a high-level framework, specific details for public improvement needs are currently unavailable but ultimately required to complete a more comprehensive assessment of the impact of value capture tool implementation. For a TIRZ, it is also important to ensure that it is structured in a way to hold the General Fund harmless so not to divert revenues required to support the core operations of the City.

Item #18: Authorize negotiation and execution of an interlocal agreement with Austin Community College District to provide HVAC and potentially other workforce training classes to the Austin community free of charge at the Turner-Roberts Recreation Center.

COUNCIL MEMBER VELA'S OFFICE

- 1) *What are the eligibility criteria for students who want to take these courses? What is required to apply and enroll in the course (what type of identification, is SSN required, are matriculas or passports accepted)? Would non-citizens be eligible for these courses? What about non-LPRs?*
General requirements are some English fluency. ACC does not require students to have a SSN to take classes. These classes are open to adults, regardless of legal status in the US. A government id is required but can be from any country.
- 2) *How many classes would be hosted in a year and what is the capacity for each class?*
ACC has the capacity to teach 2 cohorts a year based on course length. Each cohort may be up to 20 participants.
- 3) *Would the HVAC classes be available to non-English speakers? If not, what are the barriers to offering classes in other languages?*
Currently the HVAC program is offered in English. However, this class is 80% hands-on, so total fluency in English is not required to be successful. ACC has experimented with offering this program 100% bilingual English Spanish. We are still working through the best way to offer the class bilingually, English/Spanish, and hope to offer it in that format in the near future.
- 4) *What other Adult Education programs is ACC planning on offering? How can we work on offering additional classes in multiple languages?*
The Adult Education department will offer a support class alongside the HVAC training course. This class will support students with career aspects of the training, such as job searching techniques, resume writing, and interview skills. They will also offer language

support for non-native English speakers and test taking strategies. This is a required course for all students who receive funding for the HVAC course. This is the first partnership of this type, PARD and ACC will work to evaluate and expand this program going forward.

5) *What are the outreach plans to advertise these free courses?*

Turner Roberts Rec Center, ACC Continuing Education and ACC Adult Education along with other community partners will be collaborating to advertise this opportunity. The Department and ACC will print flyers, as well as attend in person events and use social media to present the opportunity first and foremost for the Colony Park community.



Council Question and Answer

Related To

Item #6

Meeting Date

March 9, 2023

Additional Answer Information

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