

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Weaver, Jen - BC](#); [Meiners, Josue - BC](#); [Taniguchi, Evan - BC](#); [Carroll, David - BC](#); [Whatley, Bart - BC](#); [Salinas, Jon - BC](#); [Rollason, Jessica - BC](#); [Luckens, Ben - BC](#); [Ladner, Conners - BC](#); [Anstead, Ben - BC](#); [McKinney, Marissa - BC](#)  
**Cc:** [Thomas, Deborah](#); [Morgan, Anne](#); [Corona, Nicole](#)  
**Subject:** Item 2 - Zilker Park Vision Plan - Design Commission Meeting - April 13, 2023  
**Date:** Thursday, April 13, 2023 1:34:22 PM

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Honorable Members, Jennifer Weaver, Chair, Josue Meiners, Vice Chair, Evan Taniguchi, David Carroll, Bart Whatley, Jon Salinas, Jessica Rollason, Ben Luckens, Conners Ladner, Ben Anstead, and Marissa McKinney, City of Austin Design Commission,

Please consider the following comments regarding item 2, the Zilker Park Vision Plan, on the agenda for tonight's Design Commission meeting.

Please support:

- Recommendations in the [Save Our Springs Rewilding Zilker Park](#) plan.
- Returning at least 75 acres to its natural state.
- Increasing tree canopy and protecting old-growth forests.
- Increasing and protecting wildlife habitat.
- Decreasing erosion and downslope flooding.
- Decreasing impervious hardscape and improving water quality.
- Phytoremediation of the Butler landfill.
- More natural playscapes for children to learn about and interact with nature.
- Peaceful and natural parkland for all generations, people, and income levels.
- Full public funding for the Parks and Recreation Department.
- Reducing Barton Springs Road to one lane in each direction with protected bicycle lanes and ADA compliant sidewalks on both sides of Barton Springs Road from Azie Morton Road to MoPac.
- Utilizing existing underutilized city-owned public parking garages on Barton Springs Road.
- Free and low cost shuttles to/from existing city-owned public parking garages on Barton Spring Road.
- Free and low cost shuttle service to/from Capital Metro park and ride facilities.

Please do not support:

- Large paved welcome center, massive parking garages, Lady Bird Lake Bridge, and Land Bridge.
- More concrete and more infrastructure for more and larger events.
- Further privatization, non-profitization, or commercialization.
- Replacing the Azie Morton Road playing fields with redundant playscapes.
- Moving the Disc Golf course.
- Allowing ACL/C3/Live Nation/Ticketmaster or other mega donors to effectively own the Park.
- Transferring oversight, operations, or maintenance of any portion of the Park to a nonprofit, an

umbrella nonprofit, or more than one nonprofit.

Expensive and environmentally harmful parking garages will not make Zilker Park more equitable or accessible to low-income families. They will make the Park more expensive and exclusive! Who's pushing for the parking garages? Follow the money! Entities including nonprofits that are members of the [Zilker351](#) umbrella nonprofit stand to benefit financially from donations generated from more wealthy and high-income folks attending more and larger events at the Park!

Three two-story underground parking garages will likely cost more than \$60 million to construct. The Parks and Recreation Department will be under constant pressure to hold more and larger events to draw more "paying customers" to Zilker Park to fill and pay for the expensive underground parking garages. Low-income taxpayers in Austin will be "forced" to subsidize the parking garages even if they never use them.

ACLFest, Zilker Kite Festival, Trail of Lights, Blues On The Greens, and other events at Zilker Park will offer more [Platinum VIP](#) tickets for [\\$4,750](#) or more that provide convenient secure parking in new underground parking garages for high-income and wealthy folks to enjoy chef-catered food, top-shelf cocktails, and luxury front row air-conditioned seating.

These events give ever larger donations to nonprofits including Austin Parks Foundation, The Trail Conservancy, Trail of Lights Foundation, UMLAUF Sculpture Garden + Museum, Zilker Botanical Gardens Conservancy, and Barton Springs Conservancy. These nonprofits now express support for the proposed underground parking garages and event-related infrastructure that will facilitate more and larger events at the Park.

Transferring oversight of all or part of Zilker Park to nonprofits will obstruct public transparency and accountability because nonprofits are not subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act and their meetings, deliberations, communications, and documents are not subject to the Texas Public Information Act or open records requests.

The historic Barton Springs Road Bridge is an integral part of the Zilker Park and should be consistent and congruent with the Zilker Park Vision Plan. Nevertheless, it appears that the Zilker Park Vision Plan will be substantially complete before the plan and design for the Barton Springs Road Bridge are vetted through a public review and comment process. Staff is apparently [recommending](#) replacement of the Barton Springs Road Bridge and may be [planning](#) to seek Texas Historical Commission approval this spring to demolish it!

The Zilker Park Vision Plan and Barton Springs Road Bridge plan should be developed together and vetted through a transparent and equitable public comment process that includes boards and commissions. If the Zilker Park Vision Plan is approved with massive parking garages and more vehicle parking spaces, that will establish a pretext for replacement of the Barton Springs Road Bridge with a new wider bridge that facilitates more vehicular traffic to and through Zilker Park.

To avoid potential conflict of interest, members of City Boards and Commissions that are members of or have substantial interests in nonprofits or other entities that directly benefit from events at Zilker Park should recuse themselves from discussing or voting on the Zilker Park Vision Plan and Barton Springs Road Bridge plan.

Please ask staff if the voices of any advocates and stakeholders were [turned down](#) during the public engagement process for the Zilker Park Vision Plan or Barton Springs Road Bridge plan as apparently occurred during the public engagement process for the City's transit oriented development policies.

Thank you for considering my comments!

Thank you for your service!

David King  
Austin, TX 78704

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Corona, Nicole](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Design Commission 4/13 Teleconference Speaker Sign Up  
**Date:** Thursday, April 13, 2023 6:19:27 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Thank you Ms. Corona for sharing these concerns with the commissioners.

The Vision Plan doesn't tell the full story that Austinites should be notified of like,

-Will Austin residents be notified of the construction timeline and what parts of the park will be usable when.

-Has the city considered more creative alternatives to the parking situation with creating their own Pedicab and green shuttle system. I think the public input on this would be helpful. Our creative public/community could submit ideas to the Parks Dept.

-The inner-workings of the Zilker 351 group are confusing. How much will they each get paid and where will those funds come from? I don't see this explanation on their website.

-Lastly, I mentioned to the Environmental Commission and I will repeat it here: We don't need or want another Waterloo! (Waterloo Park). Waterloo took millions and years to renovate but the result is a stage where Austinites pay high ticket prices for a park we paid for. If you think Waterloo is "kinda cool" as one of the Environmental Commissioners commented at their last meeting then GO and VISIT THAT park but leave Zilker as natural as can be so the vast wide open beautiful space in our city that we love and need.

Thank you for your attention and your service,  
Christina Valenzuela

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**From:** Corona, Nicole <Nicole.Corona@austintexas.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 13, 2023 5:13 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Design Commission 4/13 Teleconference Speaker Sign Up

**Warning: EXTERNAL SENDER, use caution when opening links or attachments.**

Hi Christina,

I hope you are well. I am sorry but unfortunately, the sign-up time for the teleconference public comment closed today at noon.

You may submit public comments to me via email if you would like and I will forward them to commissioners and upload on the Design Commission webpage.

**Kind Regards,**

**Nicole Corona**  
Administrative Specialist | Zoning and Urban Design  
City of Austin, Housing and Planning Department  
Email: [Nicole.Corona@austintexas.gov](mailto:Nicole.Corona@austintexas.gov)  
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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Corona, Nicole](#)  
**Subject:** comments on the Zilker Vision plan (meeting 4/13/23)  
**Date:** Thursday, April 13, 2023 5:27:14 PM

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Nicole,

Thanks for chatting with me today about the Zilker plan.

I'm a native Texan and local small businessman. Love Zilker and eager to see it improved intelligently.

Here's a quick summary of my comments:

- I encourage council to proceed cautiously with this plan, line item by line item, because Zilker is our heart and the city will feel the effects for generations to come.
- The welcome plaza is a big red flag. Why do we need to pour thousands of pounds of concrete to "bring focus" to green space? This looks good in a proposal and mockups but smells like misguided enthusiasm.
- The multiple LARGE playgrounds (why are they not near the picnic area?) and the sports area are also questionable. Once these are built, they will never be green again except at enormous expense.
- 
- Upset see a "historic pistol range" being put in. For safety reasons, any range must be mostly enclosed... so why should we give up any chunk of this precious park for a concrete box? Is this a planner's attempt to win approval with "redneck flair"? In an era when mass shootings are one of our biggest challenges, why are we encouraging people to bring guns to a family park?
- I like the modernizations and increased foot access/decreased car access.
- Surprised there isn't more to ease access/provide views of Barton Springs Pool, the heart of the park.
- Replacing the old theatre might be necessary but do we have to lose a massive chunk of the Great Lawn for it? Wouldn't keeping the theatre south help alleviate parking and crowding issues?
- The land bridge over Barton Springs Road is genius. Yes please.
- As with any design proposal, this plan has some good ideas and some bad. It's wise to invest in Zilker but some of the hardscape ideas here will permanently convert good flexible green space into inflexible, eco-hostile, expensive concrete that might look ugly and dated in 5 years.

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