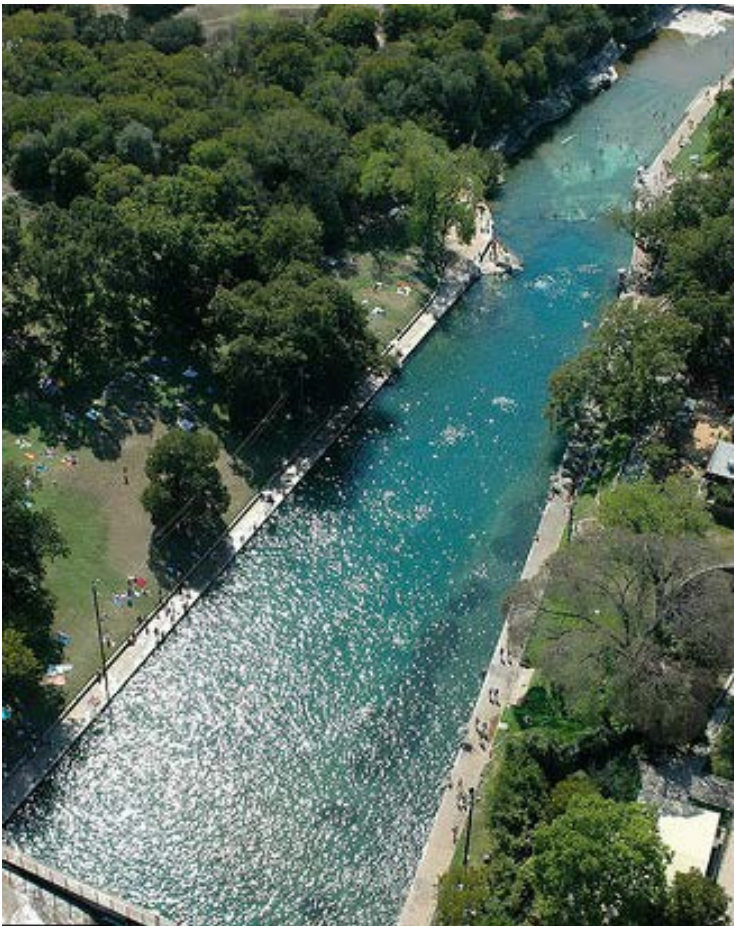


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# Zilker Park Working Group

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**JUNE 2019**

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## Introduction

### Zilker Park Working Group Final Report – June 7, 2019

The Zilker Park Working Group (ZPWG or Work Group) was created by resolution 20180628-072 approved by the City Council (Council) on June 28, 2018. The Work Group held its first meeting on September 5, 2018. The 38 members represented a variety of neighborhood associations, non-profit organizations, businesses, boards and commissions and five appointed directly by Council Members that chose to make an appointment. Each organization provided a single designated voting representative and an alternate.

As intended by Council, there were many different viewpoints expressed by the Work Group members.

The Working Group agreed to a set of “ground rules” early in the process to help guide decision-making and ensure that everyone’s voice was heard, including committing that minority reports from any individual or organization would be included in this report. Given the informal nature of a Working Group, and the large amount of people serving on it, the Working Group decided to form sub-groups of the three major issues that council asked the Working Group to look at: **Short-term Traffic Solutions** (four meetings; **Butler Landfill Cap and Improvements** (seven meetings); **Polo Fields** (four meetings). The Sub-Groups brought their recommendations to the full Working Group for debate/discussion and consideration.

The Working Group set a policy to strive for consensus, and it was exhaustively attempted. While consensus was reached on **Short-term Traffic Solutions**, we were not able to do so on the **Butler Landfill** and **Polo Field**. Following are primary and alternative recommendations for your consideration. We are also including Personal Statements from participants to help inform the Zilker Master Planning Process of the diverse issues and community values concerning the use and future programming of this, Austin’s premier open space.

James Russell  
Chairperson

Clark Hancock  
Vice Chairperson

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# Report Summary and Primary Recommendations

## Recommendations

### **Short Term Traffic Solutions – by consensus**

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 Columbus and Lou Neff (see attached map).
  - 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: Burger 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 by 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 adjacent to the park. 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 evaluate current stops.** We recommend making this change on a temporary basis, this summer to track increased ridership.

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**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 within the park, for example by park rangers or park police.

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**Primary Butler Landfill Cap and Improvements: 11 yes, 3 no, 3 abstentions**

1. As a temporary solution for parking and staging allow the existing rock to remain on the Stratford Field until the end of the master plan process.
2. City staff will develop a plan to immediately eliminate PARD junkyard (aka, the boneyard) by September 1, 2019 and the plan will be implemented as soon as possible pending funding.
3. By April 1, 2020 (or 2021 as necessary) implement a short-term solution for the Butler Land Fill prior to the Master Plan process that protects the integrity of the landfill, avoids major infrastructure expenses, and includes but is not limited to drainage and pedestrian safety issues on Stratford Drive

**Alternate Butler Landfill Cap and Improvement:**

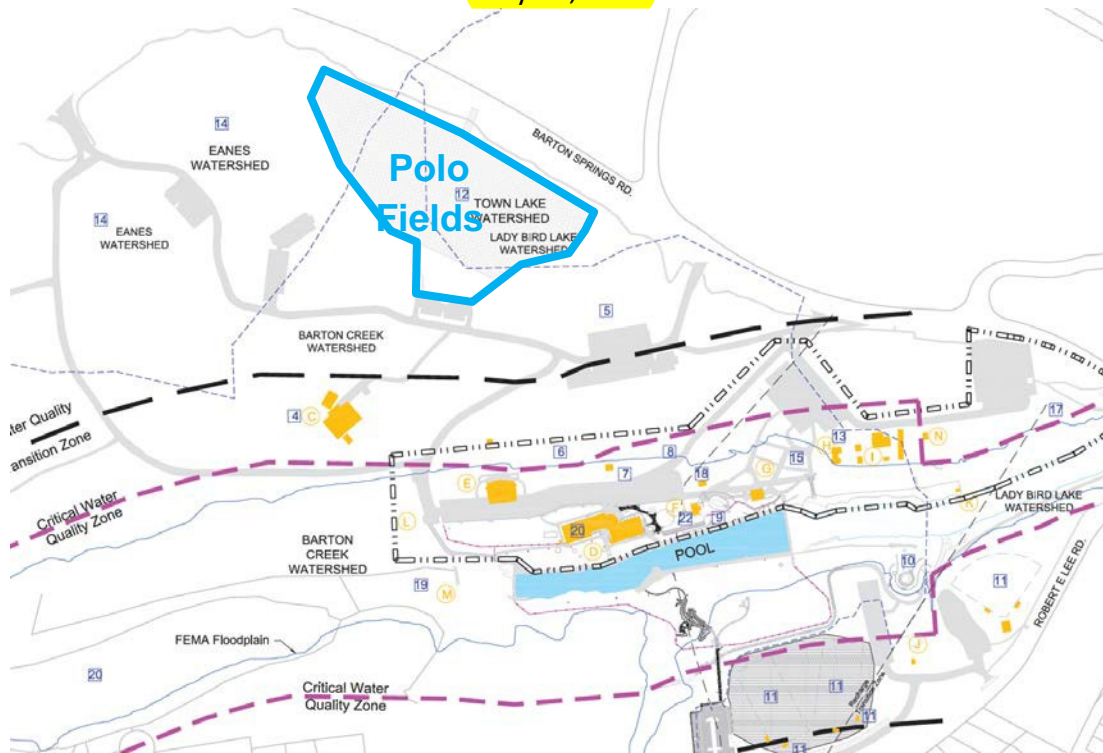
Please refer to Alternative Recommendations and Personal Statements

Primary Polo Field: 11 yes, 5 no, 1 abstention

## Zilker Park Working Group Recommendations for Permanently Removing Parking from Polo

Fields

May 30, 2019



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## I. Polo Field Introduction

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This document provides recommendations from the Zilker Park Working Group to establish a plan to permanently remove parking from the Polo Fields, based on the amended Recommendations from the Polo Fields Sub-Group (set forth below) which were approved by a vote of 11-5 at the May 31, 2019 meeting of the Zilker Park Working Group.<sup>1</sup>

**A. Directive from City Council**

On June 28, 2018, City Council directed the City Manager to form the Zilker Park Working Group to, *inter alia*, “Make recommendations to establish a plan to permanently remove parking on the Polo Fields, taking into consideration possible strategies to reduce parking demand and utilization of transportation demand management strategies.” Resolution No. 20180628-072.

On November 1, 2018, the Polo Fields Working Sub-Group was created, and currently includes the following members: Steve Barnick, Mike Cannatti, Judith Craft, Kelly Davis, Corey Evers, Mark Gentle, Gordon Kelley, Dawn Lewis, Mary Ann Neely, Mac Ragsdale, James Russell, Lindsey Sokol, and Lemuel Williams. The following city staff was assigned to assist with the sub-group work: Jennifer Stevenson, Jason Maurer, Liana Kallivoka, Kim McKnight, Rey Hernandez, and Keith Tapscott.

**B. Current Situation at the Polo Fields Overflow Parking Area**

The Polo Fields parking area provides an estimated 1,000 non-paved overflow parking spaces, roughly twice the amount of paved parking (506) in Zilker Park between Barton Creek and Barton Springs Road. Additional “non-paved parking” at Zilker Park includes Stratford Drive (600-1,000) and Lou Neff Road (200). This parking area covers approximately 7 acres of Zilker Park.

Beginning in March 2016, the City of Austin has collected parking fees during charging times for parking in the Polo Fields parking using parking station kiosks. According to city records, annual parking fees collected from overflow parking (including the Polo Fields) amounted to \$57,610 (for 11,522 cars in 2016), \$119,175 (for 23,801 cars in 2017), and \$91,130 (for 18,226 cars in 2018). Until 2019, parking revenue (total revenue minus expenditures that include administrative costs, parking enforcement costs, credit card fees, debt service, etc.) was directed to the General Fund. However, starting in FY 2019, PARD has a Parking Revenue Fund that will allow tracking of how parking revenue is spent. It is noted that pool patrons with annual passes are issued hang tags for their vehicles and do not pay for parking (exempt from enforcement).



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The Polo Fields is heavily used for overflow parking on Thursday through Sunday from March to September when the meters are operating, including during summer swim season, Zilker Botanical Garden events, Blues on the Green, Barton Springs Free Swim Day, Zilker Hillside Theater, Zilker Lodge, and Camp Sunshine events. However, the demographics are changing and use of the Polo Fields for parking is increasing on weekdays. This period coincides with the peak use season of March through September at Zilker Metropolitan Park. The Sunshine Camp intermittently uses the Polo Fields for overflow parking needs during camp season.

During the Zilker Holiday Tree Lighting, Trail of Lights and Zilker Kite Festival, the City of Austin allows the promoters of those events to collect a parking fee of up to \$15 per vehicle and retain the revenue generated from parking on the Polo Fields.

For decades, the Polo Fields area has been used for many different vehicle-related uses, including overflow parking for park uses and special events, such as Fourth of July Fireworks show, driving under the Zilker Christmas Tree at the Moon Tower, etc.

Zilker Park is a “metropolitan park” which serves citizens from the entire metropolitan area with numerous amenities, natural areas, trails, and events.

In 2018, Barton Springs Pool had record attendance of approximately 975,000 visitors, with 2019 attendance projected to exceed 1 million people.

Zilker Botanical Garden has seen annual paid attendance grow in recent years to more than 120,000 visitors in 2018, and projections are future attendance could double over the next five years. Many ZBG visitors use the Polo Fields for overflow parking, including 1,300 Austin Area Gardening Club members who park vehicles at the Polo Fields while attending meetings, shows, and sales but do not pay admission. In 2018, Zilker Botanical Garden (ZBG) discontinued the large Garden Festival in March (2-day event) which in previous years used the Polo Fields for parking. Parking fees would likely have been on the horizon for ZBG, and with the goal of becoming a self-sufficient (possibly non-profit) entity, the inability to have easy access to parking with garden access will make meeting that goal difficult. Currently, other ZBG events are smaller and use the Butler Landfill for parking at this time. The Arbor and Monarch Day joint celebration is growing. It may be likely in upcoming years that these events may require the use of the Polo Fields or Stratford/Butler Landfill area for parking.

Zilker Hillside Theater hosts free events, shows, and concerts at the outdoor theatrical venue, including Shakespeare in the Park, Zilker Theatre Productions’ Summer Musical, and The South Asian New Year. With annual attendance exceeding 45,000 park visitors, ZHT visitors use the Polo Fields for overflow parking. The largest ZHT events occur on weekend nights during the summer musical

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(Thursday-Sunday between July 4th and mid-August), and bring up to 2,000 visitors to the park on a peak nights (Friday, Saturday and the final show on Sunday). While there are other park visitors parking at the Polo Fields on musical nights, theatre patrons account for over 600 vehicles on peak nights.

The Austin Kite Festival and Trail of Lights events are city sponsored community events which operate at Zilker Park pursuant to a contract with the City of Austin which provides for parking access at the Polo Fields. The entrance and parking fees are determined by the City Fee Schedule. This decision was made by City Council when the non-profit partners took over the management responsibilities and there was significant interest in maintaining a city cap on fees collected for parking versus allowing other rates to be set. Accordingly, both events use parking fees from the Polo Fields parking to fund these community-wide events, with proceeds being directed to non-profit foundations running the events.

With annual Kite Festival attendance of approximately 35K park visitors, the Austin Kite Festival charges \$10/car (when not cancelled due to weather).

With annual Trail of Lights attendance of approximately 400K park visitors over 14 days, the Trail of Lights charges \$15/car (when not cancelled due to weather).

The Polo Fields area is heavily compacted from substantial vehicle parking use throughout the year, with soil compression effectively meeting “impervious cover” levels of permeability. The Polo Fields area is located partly in the Barton Creek Watershed, partly in the Lady Bird Lake Watershed, and partly in the Eanes Watershed, but is located outside of the Water Quality Transition Zone for the Barton Creek Watershed.

The use of the Polo Fields area for overflow parking may violate the pollution prevention and limitations on impervious cover required per LD Section 25-8-514 for the portions of the Polo Fields that are within the Barton Springs Zone Watershed Regulation Area.

With the topography of the Polo Fields area, surface flow drains primarily into Lady Bird Lake and Barton Creek, with runoff into the Barton Creek Critical Water Quality Zone that flows down to the paved parking lot in front of the Bathhouse and drains, untreated, into Barton Creek downstream of the lower dam.

The use of landscape areas of the park for parking and pedestrian circulation has resulted in extensive environmental degradation, most specifically within the critical root zones of trees in the park. Using this area for parking prevents the public from using the Polo Fields as parkland.

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The lack of coordination between pedestrian and vehicular amenities within the park has resulted in the development of ad-hoc trails across vegetated areas.

There is no regular program of maintenance (aeration) and supplemental irrigation in the Polo Fields overflow parking to offset compaction and run-off problems.

From the standpoint of visitor parking convenience to the Zilker Park facilities and events which attract the most “regular” visitors (Barton Springs Pool, Zilker Hillside Theater), the Polo Fields parking area is more conveniently located than the Butler Landfill Cap. However, this parking convenience factor does not apply for certain special events that occur during only specified times, such as ACL Music Festival, Trail of Lights events, and Zilker Kite Festival.

Parking on unimproved areas with soil and vegetation on either the Polo Field or Stratford Yard has the potential to adversely affect water quality for Barton Springs, Barton Creek and Lady Bird Lake. Without proper permitting, both parking areas are operating illegally and do not comply with existing environmental regulations. The preferred environmental alternative would be to eliminate parking on both locations. However, based on feedback from stakeholders, eliminating the temporary parking in these areas present economic and logistical challenges to existing park users, which require additional study. The below recommendations are meant to present temporary options, without making a definitive judgment on the permanent use of either area. A potentially improved, permitted parking area on the Butler Landfill would be preferable over an unimproved parking area on the Polo Field.

In 2016 the Parkland Events Task Force issued a final report and recommendation to “Develop a parking and traffic solution for parks that would reduce usage of green space parking, such as the Polo Fields at Zilker Park.”

Phasing out Polo Fields parking for episodic community events within a year or two will impact the financial viability and/ or affordability of these events that have been in Zilker Park for decades. A much better approach would be to address the daily use of the polo fields by phasing that out over five or six years and giving the events that time to figure out a strategic plan to remove their parking in totality by the same deadline but not scaling it back year over year. At the end of the six years, the events and the city as their partner, will have either figured it out or will have to make operational decisions to change their financial and operational models. All events are not created equal and the impact will affect them very differently.

#### **C. Goals, Challenges and Constraints with Permanently Removing Polo Fields Parking**

Goals: removing Polo Fields Parking, retaining and expanding greenspace for recreational use by public, protecting trees, vegetation, and environmentally

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sensitive areas, meeting existing and future needs of park users, events and programs, and identifying/implementing alternate parking and/or transportation solutions that will be efficient and convenient for visitors to Zilker Park.

Challenges: Balancing competing park use and needs, including reducing and/or controlling traffic and parking; limiting impervious cover; meeting existing and future needs of park users, events and programs; finding alternate parking solutions; minimizing impact on neighborhood from reducing parking at Zilker Park, and overlap with work of other sub-groups. It is reasonable to anticipate public opposition from some park users to any plan to remove Polo Fields parking that does not also provide corresponding parking and/or transportation arrangements that are convenient, affordable and accessible to the public. Some solutions (e.g., higher parking fees) can adversely impact considerations of equity and access, particularly with respect to community members who do not live in vicinity of Zilker Park or who have limited financial resources.

Constraints: The Zilker Park area is subject to City, State, and Federal regulations including, but not limited to, those pertaining to the protected habitat within the Barton Creek Critical Water Quality Zone, the existing historical resources, the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone, the heritage trees existing within the area, the SOS Ordinance, and the current Building and Land Development Codes. Regulatory constraints specific to the Polo Fields include:

1. Barton Creek Watershed, Eanes Creek Watershed, and Lady Bird Lake Watershed.
2. Water Quality protections from SOS Ordinance for the Barton Creek Watershed portion, including LDC Section 25-8-514 for the portions of the Polo Fields that are within the Barton Springs Zone Watershed Regulation Area.
3. City of Austin requirements for Water Supply Suburban zone portion of Polo Fields.
4. Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone protections.
5. Applicable National Historic District protections for the Zilker Park Historic District.
6. City of Austin Tree Ordinance.
7. The most recent Site Development Permit applicable to the park (SPC-2012-0104D).

## **II. Polo Fields Recommendations**

### **A. Recommendation for Phased Reduction of Polo Fields Parking**

The Polo Fields Sub-Group (PFSG) worked to find a consensus recommendation for removing Polo Fields parking over the long term which provided allowances to accommodate the replacement of lost parking during the transition. On the one hand, the Polo Fields Sub-Group ***unanimously supports*** “reducing available Polo Fields

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parking area in phases over time.” On the other hand, the Polo Fields Sub-Group ***unanimously opposes*** recommending “a phased removal of Polo Fields parking without providing corresponding convenient, affordable and accessible parking and/or transportation arrangements to replace the number of parking spaces removed from the Polo Fields.”

In the middle of these two positions, the recommendation for a phased removal of parking that received the most support from the Zilker Park Working Group (ZPWG) was the following plan: In support of consensus recommendation to remove Polo Fields parking over the long term, the Zilker Park Working Group recommends a phased removal of Polo Fields parking in the near term using the following schedule:

- Year 1 (2019): Continue Polo Fields overflow parking, but begin on-site and social media education campaign on community benefits and plan to reduce/eliminate Polo Fields parking.
- Year 2 (2020): Reduce size of Polo Fields overflow parking area by 30% by May 1, 2020. This reduction in parking will be strictly enforced without exceptions for special events or daily overflow parking needs.
- Year 3 (2021): Reduce size of Polo Fields overflow parking area by 60% by May 1, 2021 after securing an equivalent number of viable, preferably offsite parking alternatives to the reduced parking that will accommodate the displaced parking and that are similar to the displaced parking in affordability, convenience, and usability.
- Years 4 (2022): Close Polo Fields overflow parking area by May 1, 2022 after securing an equivalent number of viable, preferably offsite parking alternatives to the reduced parking that will accommodate the displaced parking and that are similar to the displaced parking in affordability, convenience, and usability.

With each phased reduction in parking, the Polo Fields are to be restored to match existing adjacent non-parking areas following each phased reduction, and the city will extend the education campaign on community benefits of eliminating Polo Fields parking.

## **B. Recommended Strategies To Reduce Parking Demand**

The Zilker Park Working Group recommends the following strategies to reduce parking demand at the Polo Fields parking area:

- 1) Improve enforcement for Polo Fields parking to mitigate the need for parking on the Polo Field.
- 2) Reducing available Polo Fields parking area in phases over time.
- 3) Restricting Polo Fields parking uses to specific calendar dates or events (namely, Blues on the Green, Zilker Hillside Theater, Zilker Tree Lighting, Trail of Lights, Zilker Kite Festival, Zilker Botanical Garden Spring Event), provided that event organizers are required to make remediation/repair measures (e.g., turf

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replacement, aeration, etc.) until such time as the Zilker Master Plan parking and traffic recommendations are completed/implemented.

- 4) Identifying short-term alternative parking options, such as:
  - a) proposed parking under MoPac pursuant to terms of Multiple Use Agreement between City and Texas Department of Transportation dated October/November, 2000,
  - b) parking on Butler Landfill area on west/upstream side of MoPac, and
  - c) parking at Austin High.
- 5) Identifying short-term alternative parking options based on proposed improvements to Stratford Landfill Area or adjustments thereto, such as reducing the size of the improvements area to create an extended natural or “green field” area along Lady Bird Lake or near the Great Lawn. Possible locations for smaller improvements area include placing grass pavers along Stratford Road (to extend existing road surface for staging/parking) or close to MoPac bridge (for access convenience to ZBG, trail users, Nature and Science Center).
- 6) Exploring long-term alternative parking options outside of Zilker Park, such as parking at existing parking lots (e.g., Barton Oaks, Barton Creek Mall) and/or investing in properties and parking structures adjacent or in proximity to Zilker Park for new parking options to reduce the need for parking pressure in the park.
- 7) Identifying long-term alternative parking options in Zilker Park, such as parking improvements at Azie Morton along the south side of Barton Springs Pool (to reduce impervious cover and improve water quality while maintaining or reducing parking capacity), Stratford/Butler Landfill area, Lou Neff Road, etc.

### **C. Recommended Transportation Demand Management Strategies**

The Zilker Park Working Group recommends the following transportation demand strategies for reducing parking at the Polo Fields parking area:

- 1) Improving alternative transportation access to Zilker Park with additional/separated bike lanes, bus/rail shuttle service, pedestrian crossing improvements, Butler Trail connectivity improvements, etc.
- 2) Improving rideshare and scooter access to Zilker Park.
- 3) Public education campaign at Zilker Park/Polo Fields on available transportation options and associated benefits to health, environment, etc.
- 4) Expand Zilker Zephyr (or similar transportation option) to connect to downtown area.
- 5) Investigate possible use of hotel occupancy tax funding for tourist transportation systems under Texas Tax Code § 351.110(a) (“a municipality may use the revenue derived from the tax imposed under this chapter for a

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transportation system to transport tourists from hotels in and near the municipality to ... (4) tourist attractions in or near the municipality”).

- 6) Investigate strategies used by other cities to address parking and traffic concerns at city parks and greenspace include:
  - a) Promoting active transportation options with separated bike and pedestrian trails and trail grades (Millenium Park - Chicago, Central Park - New York, Katy Trail - Dallas).
- 7) Upon closure of Polo Field, limestone blocks or other aesthetic and environmentally suitable parking barriers should be positioned around Polo Fields to prevent vehicle access to Polo Field.
- 8) To inform decision-making process, park stakeholders should be surveyed to identify specific parking needs in terms of time and amount and potential challenges or impact from removing parking.
- 9) In evaluating potential alternative parking/transportation solutions to replace the current/historical Polo Fields parking uses, consideration should be given to the financial and environmental feasibility of an underground parking structure with a “green” roof in any suitable location (e.g., near MoPac at the Polo Field, Pistol Range, or Butler Landfill areas) along the lines of the underground parking facilities at Millenium Park in Chicago. See, [Downtown Chicago's Millennium Garages Home to the Largest Green Rooftop in the World](#).

**D. Education Strategies for Changing Public Behavior and Attitudes About Parking at Zilker Park and/or Using Alternative Transportation Options**

The Zilker Park Working Group recommends the following public education strategies at Zilker Park/Polo Fields on the benefits of reducing/removing Polo Fields parking:

- 1) Use Spring/Summer 2019 to educate park visitors about upcoming closure of Polo Fields parking.
- 2) Provide Zilker Park parking status information to public with electronic billboards, website, and social media platforms.
- 3) Include signage at Polo Fields during transition time notifying public of future closure of Polo Fields parking and identified parking alternatives.
- 4) Promote public awareness of other metropolitan parks and amenities (such as alternative pools, disc golf courses, garden areas, trails, etc.) to reduce demand/usage of Zilker Park.
- 5) Encourage PARD to create similar amenities at other district and metro parks (such as pools, disc golf courses, garden areas, trails, etc.) to reduce demand/usage of Zilker Park)

**III. Zilker Park Master Plan - Information and Opportunities for Consideration**

The Zilker Park Working Group recommends the following information and opportunities for consideration in connection the scoping of the Zilker Park Master Plan process:



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- A. The Zilker Park Master Plan process should proceed without delay, and should include evaluation of environmental and visitor convenience impacts from permanently reducing and/or eliminating Polo Fields parking in favor of identified alternate parking and/or transportation solutions that will be efficient and convenient for visitors to Zilker Park.
  - B. In evaluating potential alternative parking/transportation solutions to replace the current/historical Polo Fields parking uses, the Master Plan process should consider an underground parking structure with a “green” roof in any suitable location (e.g., near MoPac at the Polo Field, Pistol Range, or Butler Landfill areas) along the lines of the underground parking facilities at Millennium Park in Chicago. See, [Downtown Chicago's Millennium Garages Home to the Largest Green Rooftop in the World](#). Such a solution may include consideration of a public-private partnership to provide at least partial funding for construction/operation, including the successes and failures of other cities. [The Largest Underground Parking Lots In America Have New Landlords](#).
  - C. The Zilker Park Master Plan process should evaluate and recommend appropriate uses, improvements, and benefits for the Polo Fields area by replacing the parking uses, including but not limited to:
    - 1) Extending and/or connecting existing water lines to irrigate the Polo Fields.
    - 2) Creating soccer or other sport fields in the area.
    - 3) Creating a dog park in the area.
    - 4) Enhancing landscaping and adding trees in the area.
    - 5) Adding water quality treatment features to the area.
    - 6) Locating a Zilker Park Visitor Welcome/Education Center in keeping with the recommendations from the [Zilker Park Bathhouse Zone Feasibility Study](#).
  - D. In evaluating long term parking/transportation solutions for the Polo Fields and Zilker Park as a whole, the Master Plan process should consider a public-private partnership to manage parking through the entirety of Zilker Park with a view to potentially providing a single (underground) parking facility which replaces the existing paved and overflow parking areas so that existing impervious cover for park roadways and paved parking areas can be reduced by removing or reducing paved parking areas, removing portions of existing roads, and/or reducing the width of existing roads.
  - E. The Zilker Park Master Plan process should evaluate long term parking/transportation solutions for Zilker Park as a whole by first taking into account the location, final design, and visitor traffic requirements for the Zilker Park Visitor Welcome/Education Center in keeping with the recommendations from the Barton Springs Pool Master Plan, the [Zilker Park Bathhouse Zone Feasibility Study](#), and other city priorities.
  - F. The Zilker Park Master Plan RFQ should be structured to provide a mechanism to allow for accelerated projects to be approved to begin design work early in the master planning process, thereby preventing the need to wait for three years (or more) for the Zilker Park Master Plan to be completed before initiating master plan projects.



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# Short Term and 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](mailto:angela@savebartoncreek.org), 254-709-6085 (sub-group chair)

James Russell, [j.edwardrussell@gmail.com](mailto: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 (PARC) 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 PARC 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 11<sup>th</sup>, 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.

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## 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 Azle 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.

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**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](mailto:angela@savebartoncreek.org), 254-709-6085 (sub-group chair)

James Russell, [j.edwardrussell@gmail.com](mailto: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.



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# Alternative Recommendations

## **JOINT STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF BARTON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, ZILKER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, SAVE OUR SPRINGS ALLIANCE, CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 7 AND CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 5**

### **RELATING TO THE USE OF ZILKER METROPOLITAN PARK STRATFORD DRIVE-BUTLER LANDFILL AND POLO FIELDS**

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#### **Background**

The undersigned individuals, in our representative capacities, respectfully submit this Joint Statement and Recommendations to the Mayor and City Council. We actively participated as duly appointed, voting members of the *Zilker Park Working Group* (ZPWG) established pursuant to City Council Resolution 20180628-072.

The ZPWG failed in its essential mission of finding a consensus plan for the future use of the Stratford Drive-Butler Landfill area (Butler Landfill) and Polo Fields. Despite our efforts to contribute to and clarify the recommendations in the main section of the Zilker Park Working Group Final Report (ZPWG Final Report), that document does not fully or accurately convey our unified position on certain key issues assigned to the ZPWG by the Mayor and Council.

#### **Recommendations for Immediate Action by the Mayor and Council**

In the absence of action by City leadership, we are concerned that the ZPWG Final Report will do little more than serve notice that the key controversies that bogged down the ZPWG are being postponed to the master planning process.

The lesson learned over the nearly nine months of meetings and deliberations by the group and its sub-groups is that in order to make any real and lasting progress toward the resolution of these difficult issues, the Mayor and Council must make hard choices, set firm timelines and establish clear expectations that are reflective of the public's consistent demand for parks that are a natural experience in environmentally protected settings and that are **not** highly developed, overprogrammed, semi-privatized parking lots or staging areas.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, we recommend that the Mayor and Council take four immediate steps to express its intention to protect approximately 20 acres of Zilker Park that are currently used in an unauthorized manner that violates environmental regulations designed to protect this parkland:

1. Adopt the Environmental Commission's unanimous recommendation dated June 20, 2018 (Resolution 20180620 007a, attached as Exhibit 1), to **deny** the so-called "Atkins Plan" redevelopment of the Stratford Drive-Butler Landfill sponsored by PARD, C3 Presents and the Austin Parks Foundation;

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<sup>1</sup> See recent article in Austin American Statesman: <https://www.statesman.com/news/20190501/quit-putting-concrete-in-parks-austinites-weigh-in-ahead-of-10-year-plan>

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2. Adopt a maximum 4-year timeline for the master plan process to deliver a plan that restores the Stratford Drive-Butler Landfill area to permanent open, useable green space;
  3. Adopt a similar maximum 4-year target date for the master plan process to provide a plan for the elimination of **all** parking from the Polo Fields, including overflow park use and parking for special events. Unless all unauthorized parking is eliminated, this parkland cannot be revegetated, irrigated and reprogrammed for recreational use;
  4. Adopt the set of consensus recommendations of the ZPWG related to both short-term transportation solutions and clearing the six-acre area of the Stratford Drive-Butler Landfill known as the “boneyard” (area west of MoPac) by removing the collection of rubbish, surplus equipment, and dumpsters.

If the City takes these four actions before the selection of the main consultant for the master planning process, the expectations of that critically important process will be focused toward delivering a realistic, park centric, environmentally sound plan rather than being yet another platform for an extended re-hashing of the controversial “Atkins Plan” for Butler Landfill and the equally controversial “parking lot swap” that would move Polo Field parking onto Butler Landfill.

#### **Recommendations for Medium and Long-Term Action**

In addition, we recommend that the Mayor and Council establish a set of “Guiding Principles” and other specific measurable goals that will direct PARD’s medium term actions for the management of Zilker Park as well as through the Zilker Park master planning process as follows:

1. Guiding Principle-PARD should preserve and protect Zilker Park as an irreplaceable public asset to be operated primarily as open space for present and future generations;
2. Guiding Principle-All special event uses of Zilker Park should meet the highest standards of environmental ethics and sustainability and provide utilization of parking and transportation alternatives, compatibility with community values, and opportunities for immediate and direct community input to resolve questions and concerns;
3. Guiding Principle-The Zilker Park Master Plan should establish a viable, actionable plan that minimizes vehicular traffic in and through the park and surrounding neighborhoods by identifying a range of alternative, affordable transportation and parking strategies for park patrons;
4. Guiding Principle-Direct the City Manager to assure that all consultants hired or assigned to the Zilker Park master planning process are free of conflicts of interest with any organization that generates revenue from or has contracts with the City of Austin relating to events held or operations conducted in Zilker Park and the Butler Hike and Bike Trail;
5. Authorize PARD and the Austin Transportation Department to expend revenue generated by parking fees in Zilker Park for the rental of off-site parking and shuttle services to serve Zilker Park and related public education programs;

- 
6. Direct PARD to remove the “temporary” and non-compliant placement of the gravel on the Landfill and revegetate the area no later than summer of 2020 in accordance with the long-standing demand from City of Austin Watershed Protection Department; beyond 2020 and prior to completion of the Master Plan, find an alternative method to protect the surface of the landfill if used for staging or parking;
  7. Direct PARD to begin immediate implementation of the 2016 Parkland Events Task Force recommendation to establish a more equitable distribution of opportunities for special events in parks across the Austin area that will also provide alternative sites for events now occurring at over-utilized urban parks. Direct PARD to assure that affected neighborhoods have a formal role in the decisions about and planning for events at nearby parks;
  8. Direct PARD to establish higher standards of transparency in its planning, operation, and expenditures relating to Zilker Park to allow direct public access to a broader range of information in anticipation of the Zilker Park master planning process;
  9. Direct appropriate staff to create a publicly available web-based repository for all documents relating to the Zilker Park master planning process, including copies of contracts with consultants, public surveys, list of stakeholders, results of interviews with stakeholders, and searchable survey result files; and
  10. Assure the public that the Zilker Park master planning process will not be unfairly controlled by special interests that seek to monetize this parkland.

#### **We Do Not Support Several Key Recommendations in the ZPWG Final Report**

While many individuals, including the working group Chair, Vice-Chair and sub-group leaders, contributed many hours of work and made good faith efforts to allow the members a full and fair opportunity to express various opinions during the meetings, many of the ZPWG Final Report recommendations relating to the Stratford Drive-Butler Landfill Plan and Polo Fields simply miss the mark.

The core recommendation of the ZPWG Final Report for the Butler Landfill is to leave the multi-acre expanse of gravel on the Butler Landfill for an undefined period of time. This recommendation is directly contrary to the long-standing directive from the Watershed Protection Department that C3 remove the existing rock and gravel from the Landfill and revegetate the area to protect the cover of the landfill (see Exhibit 2). Nor does this recommendation address the issue of parkland being transformed into parking lots, a concern we expressed in 2019 to the Parks and Recreation Board and the Environmental Commission, which led to the formation of this Working Group. This “do nothing” approach of the ZPWG Final Report assures that the controversies surrounding the Butler Landfill will continue unresolved.

Unstated in the ZPWG Final Report is the fact that the controversial “Atkins Plan” did not garner sufficient support among the group to even come to a vote. It is time for the Mayor and Council to end the community’s long simmering anxiety concerning this plan to turn 7.5 lake-front acres of Zilker Park into a bed of ballast stone by explicitly rejecting that plan, allowing the community to move on to other solutions.



The ZPWG Final Report provisions relating to the Polo Fields attempted to address not just the Polo Field parking, but also includes various findings and conclusions as to the use of Butler Landfill and transportation options. The Polo Field report was presented to the ZPWG for deliberation during the last hour of the special-called final meeting of the ZPWG on May 30<sup>th</sup> and was met with confusion and disagreement over its wording.

The full Polo Field sub-group report (attachment to the ZPWG Final Report) contains multiple ambiguities and misleading or incorrect “facts,” as well as conflicting, controversial suppositions that appear to us to be an attempt to support the swap of parking on Polo Fields for a development of a permanent parking lot on Butler Landfill, a proposition that we vigorously oppose. In our deliberations, an oft-repeated statement was that the Polo Field was more environmentally sensitive than the Butler Landfill, and although it appears there is not enough evidence to support that statement, the environmental regulations are extensive for both (see Exhibit 3).

### **Conclusion**

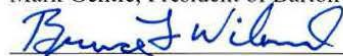
Ultimately, it is up to the Mayor and Council to direct and fund the planning and execution of strategies that will protect Zilker Park for future generations. This is a critical point in time to plan for moving the community away from the use of private passenger automobiles (consistent with the 2019 Austin Strategic Mobility Plan) as the primary means of access to Zilker Park.

Zilker Park is currently being used in ways that are not only unsustainable, particularly during peak times and special events, but illegal under the City’s own regulations. Immediate steps are required by our City’s leadership to reassure the public that this incredibly valuable asset will remain a symbol of the core values of this community.

Respectfully Submitted,



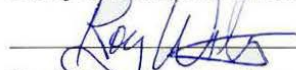
Mark Gentle, President of Barton Hills Neighborhood Association



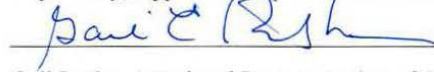
Bruce Wiland, Treasurer of Zilker Neighborhood Association



Bobby Levinski, Staff Attorney, Save Our Springs Alliance



Roy Waley, Appointed Representative of City Council District 7



Gail Rothe, Appointed Representative of City Council District 5

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## **EXHIBIT 1**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION RESOLUTION**



## **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MOTION 20180620 007a**

**Date:** June 20, 2018

**Subject:** Zilker Park – Stratford Drive landfill maintenance, staging and temporary parking area

**Motion by:** Linda Guerrero

**Seconded by:** Mary Ann Neely

### **RATIONALE:**

**WHEREAS**, parking and staging challenges have placed excessive strain on a large portion of the seven acre Zilker Park - Butler capped landfill; and

**WHEREAS**, usage as a festival and event grounds has contributed to environmental problems; and

**WHEREAS**, environmental concerns that currently exist, such as water quality issues, erosion, dust, and exposure to the decomposing landfill need to be addressed; and

**WHEREAS**, the Environmental Commission oversees the review of policies that relate to improvement and protection of the Colorado River, parkland, and land use planning; and

**WHEREAS**, the Environmental Commission's purpose is to oversee the protection and integrity of the natural environment, protect and preserve public trees, assure safety, welfare, and quality of life for all citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, the Parkland Events Task Force recommended eliminating use of green space parking such as the polo field at Zilker Park; and

**WHEREAS**, the residents of Austin need more open space and parkland in the urban core to provide quality of life; and

**WHEREAS**, the potential stabilization of the Stratford Drive Zilker Park - Butler landfill cap for the proposed project lacks long term solutions for resolving the parking and staging, soil, landfill condition concerns, drainage and erosion issues, and superior design; and

**WHEREAS**, there is lack of data from the existing three monitoring wells, community notification and public process, and inconsistent information regarding proposed solutions to the multi-faceted project.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Environmental Commission recommends denial of the Stratford Drive Zilker Park - Butler landfill redevelopment project as currently proposed.

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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Environmental Commission recommends that any proposed project moves forward only after the following solutions have been addressed and resolved prior to any activity on the Stratford Drive Zilker Park - Butler landfill area:

- Secure money for a Zilker Park Master Plan within two years, have a contract for master planning within three years, and complete the Master Plan within five years. The elements of the Master Plan would include:
  - Conducting a comprehensive study to access parking and mass transportation needs
  - Provide a transparent community outreach plan to solicit and incorporate public input and feedback
  - Propose options and estimates for revegetation and restoring the landfill into a safe, usable, and open green space within six years.
- Find alternate parking areas to use for scheduled events and for the Zilker Botanical Gardens and the Austin Nature and Science Center.
- Clearly differentiate between the three separate project issues:
  1. Traffic and parking
  2. Deterioration of the landfill cap
  3. Rehabilitation of the polo fields.
- Require C3 to find alternative parking for all large trucks and trailered vehicles, and to eliminate all heavy loads on the Stratford Drive Zilker Park - Butler landfill site.
- Secure money to rehabilitate the polo fields with a timeline demonstrating each of the stages.
- Provide a detailed assessment of how the proposed improvements comply with the maximum impervious cover allowed within the primary and secondary Waterfront Overlay.
- Ensure compliance with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality requirements for the landfill cap.

**VOTE 9-0**

For: B. Smith, Creel, Thompson, Neely, H. Smith, Guerrero, Gordon, Coyne, and Maceo

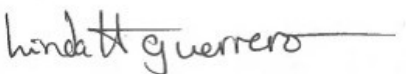
Against: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Absent: Perales

Approved By:



Linda Guerrero, Environmental Commission Chair

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## **EXHIBIT 2**

### **CITY OF AUSTIN EMAIL AND DRAFT MEMO RELATING TO GRAVEL REMOVAL FROM BUTLER LANDFILL**

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**Esquivel, Joan**

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**From:** Lesniak, Chuck  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 04, 2016 2:35 PM  
**To:** Arnold, Tony [PARD]  
**Cc:** Stump, Marty; Kallivoka, Liana [PARD]; Mike Walker [REDACTED]; Sokol, Lindsey; Robinson, Elizabeth [Beth]; McKown, OB  
**Subject:** RE: Zilker Parking Lot

Tony,  
Beth and I discussed the project again. Our opinion is that under a short timeline it is maintenance, not development, so no development permit (general or otherwise) is required. However, for us to consider it maintenance it needs to be temporary protection of the existing vegetation and landfill cap. We don't feel that having it there for 5 months is temporary. To be considered maintenance the gravel needs to be removed within 2 weeks after the last weekend of ACL and revegetation/irrigation installed per the standard revegetation criteria. If the gravel needs to be there longer, we would consider it development and the project would need to be covered by the General Permit and reviewed by OB and his staff or a regular site plan (it's too big an area for a site plan exemption).

Lastly, so that everyone is clear and understands the conditions to do the work we would like something in writing from a PARL Assistant Director and from C3, if they are going to be responsible for any portion of the project, laying out the plan and timeline and agreeing to abide by it.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Chuck Lesniak, Environmental Officer  
Watershed Protection Department

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**From:** Arnold, Tony [PARD]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 4, 2016 9:22 AM  
**To:** Lesniak, Chuck  
**Cc:** Stump, Marty; Kallivoka, Liana; Mike Walker [REDACTED]; Lindsey Sokol; Robinson, Elizabeth [Beth]; McKown, OB  
**Subject:** RE: Zilker Parking Lot

Thank you sir, again my apologies, I had been so focused on getting this done for ACL, I failed to mention the time frame. I will wait to hear from you.

---

**From:** Lesniak, Chuck  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 04, 2016 9:09 AM  
**To:** Arnold, Tony [PARD] <Tony.Arnold2@austintexas.gov>  
**Cc:** Stump, Marty <Marty.Stump@austintexas.gov>; Kallivoka, Liana <Liana.Kallivoka@austintexas.gov>; Mike Walker [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>; Lindsey Sokol <[REDACTED]>; Robinson, Elizabeth [Beth] <Elizabeth.Robinson@austintexas.gov>; McKown, OB <OB.McKown@austintexas.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Zilker Parking Lot

Tony,  
That changes things for me. Let me discuss with Beth and we'll get back to you. Please don't proceed with any work until we talk. Thanks,

Chuck

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**From:** Arnold, Tony [PARD]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 4, 2016 8:35 AM  
**To:** Lesniak, Chuck  
**Cc:** Stump, Marty; Kallivoka, Liana; Mike Walker [REDACTED]; Lindsey Sokol; Robinson, Elizabeth [Beth]; McKown, OB  
**Subject:** Re: Zilker Parking Lot

My apologies for not clarifying, TOL overlaps with ACL making it difficult to do the removal. I am hoping you can agree that we have the gravel removed by Jan 15. That would be approx 107 days.

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 3, 2016, at 4:10 PM, Lesniak, Chuck <[chuck.lesniak@austintexas.gov](mailto:chuck.lesniak@austintexas.gov)> wrote:

Tony,  
Beth and I understood that the gravel would come out after ACL, not after TOL. That's a much longer time frame that we're not comfortable with. With that change, we're good with what you wrote up.  
Thanks,  
  
Chuck

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**From:** Arnold, Tony [PARD]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 3, 2016 2:11 PM  
**To:** Stump, Marty; Kallivoka, Liana; Mike Walker [REDACTED] Lindsey Sokol  
**Cc:** Lesniak, Chuck; Robinson, Elizabeth [Beth]; McKown, OB  
**Subject:** Zilker Parking Lot

All,

Good Afternoon, I met with Beth and Chuck Yesterday afternoon and they have both agreed that this can move forward in the smaller section of land as we had discussed in our latest meeting. There are a couple of caveat's that I agree with as we move forward:

1. I will prepare a letter to TCEQ indicating what we are doing and why to keep them in the loop.
2. I have agreed that we will place 6 inches  $\pm$  1" of clean Gravel (Ballast) in the gradation provide by C-3.
3. The gravel will be removed upon exit of Trail of Lights (TOL) and the area impacted vegetated and a Temp irrigation system placed to water in seeding.
4. C-3 will need to install mulch sock along the upper slope of the existing swale along the trail and at the entrance of the pipe passing under the trail to collect any fines from the graveled or unraveled area during operations and removed after TOL.
5. WE agreed in the meeting that any work beyond this level will need a full sigh plan moving forward.

Beth or Chuck, please include anything I may have missed here.

Mike and Lindsey please provide a couple of times and dates that will work for you to meet and determine the best approach to move forward.



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**Esquivel, Joan**

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**From:** Hernandez, Reynaldo  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 12, 2017 5:43 PM  
**To:** Lesniak, Chuck; Robinson, Elizabeth [Beth]; Vaclavik, Charles; Arnold, Tony [PARD]; Linseisen, Andrew  
**Cc:** Kallivoka, Liana [PARD]  
**Subject:** Stratford Lane - C3 Improvements  
**Attachments:** memo\_Stratford Lane 12-12-2017.doc

All,

Attached is a draft memo to be addressed to C3 regarding the proposed improvements just north of Stratford Lane. Recall, that C3 is utilizing the existing landfill cap for the purposes of parking and staging for the various events held at Zilker Park. PARD, WPD and DSD has been working diligently with C3 to achieve removal of the existing gravel with code and regulatory compliant surface coverage for well over a year. The purpose of the memo is to request compliance of C3 on the agreement reached by all parties to have the existing gravel removed by end of January 2018.

Please review and provide edits as necessary.

Thanks

Rey

**Reynaldo Hernandez Jr, PLA**  
**Parks and Recreation Department PARK DEVELOPMENT**  
919 W. 28 ½ Street, Austin Texas 78705  
512-974-9464





## MEMORANDUM

TO:

FROM: Kimberly McNeeley, Interim Director  
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

DATE:

SUBJECT: Stratford Lane: Parking and Staging Area Improvements

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) has been working closely with C3 Events (C3) to address the concerns and requirements expressed by the City of Austin Watershed Protection Department (WPD) in the coordination and execution of designing and implementing a 'cap' to the existing landfill plot adjacent to Stratford Lane at Zilker Park. The current condition exists based on needs identified by C3 for use of this area as staging and parking for numerous Zilker Park events such as Austin City Limits.

In the summer of 2016, C3 placed 'gravel' above the existing landfill cap without meeting City of Austin and State of Texas codes and regulations inclusive of required permits. In mid-January of 2017, representatives of PARC, WPD and the Development Services Department (DSD) met with C3 to offer support and advice on identifying key issues and design considerations for the replacement of the gravel over the landfill cap with the general understanding that the existent gravel would be removed from this area prior to Austin City Limit festival held in September of 2017. The condition and material of the existing 'cap' does not meet with regulations and codes of the City of Austin and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) of the State of Texas for intended uses. Issues and concerns related to drainage and water quality need to be addressed in order for utilization as parking and or 'staging' area. PARC and WPD have diligently and closely collaborated with C3 to outline the project schedule inclusive of completing a design that addresses city and state code compliance, permitting timeframe and a construction timeline. PARC and WPD provided dedicated staff in assisting C3 to meet the project goals and schedule including the engagement of the DSD to directly assist C3 in completing the project within the established and agreed upon schedule. To assist C3 on the complexities of the project, early in 2017, WPD and PARC provided an extension on removing the gravel till January of 2018.

As of December 1, 2017, C3 and project consultants, have not completed all of the required phases to receive a Site Development Permit (SDP) through DSD. The required SDP would allow for removal of the existent gravel and re-vegetation of site inclusive of water quality improvements and compliance with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) codes and regulations that apply and as agreed upon by C3. PARC, WPD and DSD do acknowledge the complexity of issues and constraints that have been encountered and addressed by C3 throughout the project development. At this time,

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however, the current project schedule outlines that the submittal of the Completeness Check to DSD occurred on November 27, 2017. (See attachment). Response from DSD on the Completeness Check is anticipated to be received on December 11, 2017. The current schedule received from C3 also indicates that the SDP will be achieved in late April of 2018. The anticipated construction time frame is estimated at just under four (4) months after bidding and contract award. Based on this schedule construction of improvements will primarily take place between June and September of 2018.

Based upon the current status of the design, permitting and projected construction time frame, PARD is requesting that C3 comply with the original agreement. The agreement establishes removal of the gravel from the landfill site per specifications which include re-grading and re-vegetation of the site. Care must be taken during removal to minimize damage to the landfill cap and winter seed mix and temporary irrigation will need to be installed to revegetate this area. PARD would allow for storage of the removed gravel at a location west of Mopac in the PARD stockpile area for potential reuse at a later date. PARD is requesting that this work be completed by the next major event at Zilker Park which has been identified as the Austin Kite Festival held in mid-March.

It is the intent of PARD, WPD and DSD to continue supporting C3 in completing the process of obtaining the SDP to replace the existing gravel cap. This will ensure that the area is compliant with current City of Austin and TCEQ codes and regulations. In the interim, PARD and WPD will also continue to provide staff support to C3 per the original intent of the agreement.

If you should have any questions please contact me at 512-974-9464.

Cc: Liana Kallivoka PHD, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation Department  
Chuck Lesniak, Watershed Protection Department  
Andre Linseisen, Assistant Director, Development Services Department  
Elizabeth Robinson, Managing Engineer, Development Services Department  
Tony Arnold, Project Manager, PARD

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## **EXHIBIT 3**

### **COMPARISON OF REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR BUTLER LANDFILL AND POLOFIELDS**

## COMPARISON OF REGULATORY AREAS

	Code Definition	Polo Field	Butler Landfill
Zilker Primary Waterfront Setback Area	25-2-745(B)	no	yes
Zilker Secondary Waterfront Setback Area	25-2-745(C)	no	yes
Critical Water Quality Zone	25-8-92	no	yes
Water Quality Transition Zone	25-8-93	no	no
Water Supply Suburban Regulatory Area	25-8-2(D)(10)	yes	yes
Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone	25-8-2(D)(5)	yes	yes
Recharge Verification Zone	25-8-2(C)	yes	yes
Barton Creek Watershed (see note A)	25-8-2(D)(2)	no	no
Lady Bird Lake Watershed (see note B)	not defined	yes	yes
Eanes Creek Watershed	not defined	yes	no
Barton Springs Zone Regulatory Area (see note C)	25-8-2(D)(1)	yes?	no?
TCEQ Closed Municipal Solid Waste Landfills	30 TAC 330.951-964	no	yes

Note A: The Barton Creek Watershed as shown on City GIS maps technically conflicts with the definition in the code. The definition in the code defines the watershed as "the land area that drains to Barton Creek." The code does not exclude the portion of the watershed that drains to the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake. However, a rational argument can be made that the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake is really a part of the Lady Bird Lake watershed rather than the Barton Creek Watershed. The City GIS maps do include a portion of the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake in the Lady Bird Lake Watershed, but unfortunately, the City GIS maps do not include all of the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake in the Lady Bird Lake Watershed. Instead, the City GIS maps place the lower portion of the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake in the Lady Bird Lake Watershed and the upper portion of the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake in the Barton Creek Watershed. According to Chris Herrington in WPD, this watershed dividing line "was selected historically to be located at the confluence of the Old Mill Springs outfall and Barton Creek as being representative of the last major discharge point of the Barton Springs Segment of the Edwards Aquifer." However, this definition of the dividing line is arbitrary, is not defined in the City code, and has no technical justification from a surface watershed standpoint. The Barton Creek Watershed as used in this table is based on the main Barton Springs Dam as being the dividing line between the Barton Creek Watershed and the Lady Bird Lake Watershed.

Note B: Although the code does not specifically define the Lady Bird Lake Watershed, the normal pool elevation of Lady Bird Lake is 828.6 feet. The watershed should include all areas draining into the lake at this elevation including the tributary arms of Lady Bird Lake. The Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake extends up to the downstream face of the main (lower) Barton Springs Pool dam, based on the City of Austin 2012 2-foot contour elevation lines and Sheet 7 of Site Plan for Barton Springs Pool Phase I (SPL-SPC-99-0028C).

Note C: The Barton Springs Zone is defined as "the Barton Creek Watershed and all watersheds that contribute recharge to Barton Springs." The surface runoff from the Polo Field does not flow to Barton Springs. Rather, it flows to the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake below the Barton Springs Pool. Although City GIS maps show a portion of the Polo Field to be in the Barton Springs Zone, the Polo Field is only in the Barton Springs Zone if one believes that the groundwater underneath the Polo Field contributes recharge to Barton Springs and does not flow instead toward Lady Bird Lake. There were no scientific studies located which demonstrate that the groundwater in this area recharges to Barton Springs. Conversely, if some of the groundwater below the Butler Landfill recharges to Barton Springs, it would be considered to be in the Barton Springs Zone.

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# Personal and Position Statements



June 5, 2019

## OFFICIAL POSITION STATEMENT

*For Inclusion in the Zilker Park Working Group Final Report*

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### Summary

Zilker Park has a mobility problem, not a parking problem. By enacting the recommendations of the Short-Term Transportation Solutions Sub-Group, the City Council can significantly enhance mobility and access to, from and within Zilker Park, without paving a single, additional parking space. We can solve this problem without pavement.

### Background

In the Spring of 2018, the Save Our Springs Alliance ("SOS") was notified by the Parks Department that the organizers of Austin City Limits filed a site plan to pave a new staging area and parking lot ("New Parking Lot") on several acres of parkland, within Zilker Park, located between Stratford Drive and Lady Bird Lake (the "Stratford Yard"). While we agree that the Stratford Yard is in need of significant investment, we disagree with the previous direction towards paving the lot and, instead, believe that the **Stratford Yard should be restored as functional, family-friendly greenspace.**

Based on these concerns, SOS immediately raised issue with the proposed parking lot with the Parks Board and Environmental Commission, and both commissions rejected the parking lot plans. The Austin City Council then directed the City Manager to form the Zilker Park Working Group (the "Working Group") so that stakeholders could address short- and long-term challenges related to the transportation to, from and within Zilker Park.

The report to which this statement will be attached is the product of that Working Group, and we are grateful for being included in its development. Unfortunately, as you will see in the report, the group could not reach a consensus on the continued use of the Stratford Yard. Nonetheless, the Working Group made **several unanimously supported recommendations related to short-term transportation solutions, which we hope that the Austin City Council will act upon immediately.** These recommendations include: (i) implementing a shuttle system to deliver people to/from the park, without the need for additional parking spaces; (ii) increasing the frequency and visibility of CapMetro Route 30, which already connects park users to the newly constructed Westgate Transit Center; and/or (iii) encouraging active transportation and dockless mobility strategies.

Because the Working Group was not able to reach a true consensus around the use of the Stratford Yard, members of the group were invited to submit comments that would be attached to the report. We appreciate this opportunity and submit this document to serve as our official position statement.

### The Preferred Environmental Solution: Remove the Illegal Parking

Zilker Park currently contains two areas where "overflow" parking has been expanded in recent years. First, the area south of Barton Springs Road and to the west of Barton Springs Pool, generally known as the "Polo Fields", was opened up as overflow parking for events and on weekends. The scale and frequency of the parking in this area has caused considerable damage to the turf, making this area inhospitable to recreational use, even when it is not being used for parking. And, more recently, ACL



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dumped a layer of rocks on the Stratford Yard to weatherproof the area for their staging purposes. Because the rocks were left in place after the event, the area started to be used for parking year-round, without restriction.

It is important to acknowledge that the parking on both of these areas is unpermitted and, therefore, violates the City Code (including applicable environmental regulations). Were these areas owned as private property, the parking would likely already have been cited by code enforcement, and the landowner would have been forced to terminate the parking use.

Additionally, neither area is an ideal location for parking. Both of these areas present unique environmental challenges, and given their close proximity to Barton Springs, Barton Creek and Lady Bird Lake, the continued use of parking on these areas without proper controls threatens the water quality of these important natural resources and the City's future drinking water supply.

When the New Parking Lot on the Stratford Yard was proposed, it was suggested that the proposed pavement was intended to stabilize "the cap" for the Butler Landfill, which is buried below the Stratford Yard and extends west across Mopac to the area known as the "Boneyard". However, the plans did nothing to address the exposed areas of the landfill on the Boneyard and a significant fact was lost in this conversation: **the accelerated risk of deterioration to the landfill cap results from the increased use of the Stratford Yard for parking and staging**. The fundamental problem is how the area is being used.

In response to questions from the Working Group, the City of Austin's Environmental Officer made clear throughout the process—and as reflected in the report—that the preferred environmental solution for both Stratford Yard and the Polo Fields is to cease the parking use on these areas and restore them as green space. This statement is also consistent with prior studies commissioned by the City of Austin for how best to manage the use of the area above the landfill.

Environmental concerns are not driving (*pun intended*) the desire for a new parking lot. Such comments amount to greenwashing. Rather, the desire for a new parking lot is one that is economic in nature, not environmental. As explained by their respective members on the Working Group, (i) ACL wants a paved staging area to support their expanded event footprint; and (ii) the Zilker Botanical Gardens want access to 500+ parking spaces to support their goal to host larger events, including weddings. Both of these goals while perhaps economically beneficial, lead to more pavement, more parking and more pollution in Zilker Park.

The two frames for this conversation—environmental vs. economic—made the debate at the Working Group level problematic (if not impossible). While half of the group desired to reduce parking for environmental purposes, the other half was firmly rooted in increasing parking to support the expansion of existing uses.

For those of us on the Working Group that desire to terminate the illegal parking, we focused on presenting options that could bring more people to Zilker Park, without the need of a car. We believe that

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the above-referenced organizations would benefit from options that provide their customers easier access to the park, through the use of a shuttle or other public transit options.

### **Don't Move Cars; Move People**

At a time when our City is rewriting its land development code to reduce or eliminate parking requirements, it makes little sense to be engaged in a separate effort to expand surface parking in Austin's most iconic urban park.

**Zilker Park is the perfect candidate for investments in active transportation solutions, parking demand management, and public transit options.** It is centrally located. It is easily accessible bus, bike and foot. It is the convergence of two of Austin's largest trail systems. And, as pointed out during the soccer debate last year, it is within minutes of thousands of underutilized parking spaces, especially on weekends, when park demand is highest.

The Short-Term Transportation Solutions Working Group recommended a series of actions that could provide and enhance transportation options available to park users that do not necessitate parking a car inside the park. These include: (i) the implementation of a shuttle route to deliver park users to/from off-site parking; (ii) increasing the frequency of CapMetro Route 30, which connects to the newly constructed Westgate Transit Center; (iii) improving parking demand management strategies; and (iv) enhancing active transportation by installing more bike racks, repairing/improving the bike lanes and using wayfinding signs on the trails to help park users navigate on foot.

These recommendations would not remove any permitted parking within the Zilker Park; they are intended to mitigate the need for new parking. Spaces would still be available for park users who need to drive. That said, those spaces can be managed better through pricing strategies and prioritization to ensure we are addressing residents' needs rather than feeding Austin's parking addiction. For example, parking rates could vary depending on demand and/or parking spaces could be reserved for families with children or for the Botanical Gardens when events are ongoing.

Put simply, **the default solution to build more parking whenever demand increases needed to end with the 20th century.** It's time that the City of Austin to practice what it preaches and solve this problem without more pavement.

Let's put our minds (and our feet) to work by improving mobility in a way that doesn't rely on taking away green space to store cars. Let's promote active transportation; let's get public transit moving; and let's prioritize enhancing green space rather than taking it away.

SOS signed onto a joint letter with the Working Group representatives of the Zilker Neighborhood Association, Barton Hills Neighborhood Association, District 5, and the Sierra Club, with alternative recommendations that augment and supplement the overall report. We support those alternatives described therein. For questions related to our position or more information, please contact SOS Attorney Bobby Levinski at [bobby@sosalliance.org](mailto:bobby@sosalliance.org).

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## Personal Statement-Judith Craft

**Zilker Park Working Group was given the task of recommending a plan to remove parking from the Polo Fields as soon as possible.**

As a part time employee of Zilker Botanical Garden for the past 11 years, I've seen the number of visitors increase each year, nearing 120,000 for the current FY. In 2012, I became a part of what has become Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy and currently serve on their board. I have held a board position for 10 years on one of the 33 garden clubs boards, and am a member of two other clubs within the (501c 3) Austin Area Garden Council, whom I represent in this working group.

Remembering when the polo fields were not parking but parkland enjoyed by everyone day-to-day, I gladly joined the working group to support the goal of removing parking from the polo fields. I hope City Council will acknowledge the need for a replacement parking option for the 1,000 plus cars bringing families, pets, picnic supplies and sports gear to Zilker Metropolitan Park every weekend and holiday when the weather is beautiful, and all spring and summer.

Butler Landfill has been an ugly scar along the river for the entire 43 years I have been visiting Zilker and often parking there. I thought the working group was going to look at designs that would make the landfill site safe for future generations, address the rainwater runoff problem from the botanical garden, accommodate ACL staging needs, provide lighting and sidewalks for safety, and a better parking surface for everyday use. 30 years ago those pavers with diamond shaped holes were installed for our driveway at home much like Symphony Square and Waterloo Park. Grass and other plants to grow in the holes, it is green and has to be mowed, but it is never watered except by Mother Nature.

People going to the botanical garden, the science & nature center, the volleyball courts, the soccer leagues, the ultimate Frisbee players, the dog walkers, sandcastle builders, the hike & bike trail users, and visitors who just want to spread a blanket and enjoy the great lawn park there regularly. When the polo fields are closed, the landfill acres could accommodate most of those cars on a tastefully designed but functional option; not the concrete surface of mall parking lots.

The Trail Foundation representative talked about a new and tastefully done entry point to the Butler Hike & Bike Trail from the landfill parking area. The master gardener in me envisions a platform with covered seating and tasteful landscaping near the wetlands to watch the sunrise or the full moon rise over the city skyline, something I have done many times in the past.

Respectfully submitted by Judith Craft



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# Personal Statement-Bruce Wiland

## **PERSONAL STATEMENT OF BRUCE WILAND, REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE ZILKER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

### **RELATING TO THE ZILKER PARK WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS AND STATEMENTS**

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I am the representative to the Zilker Park Working Group (ZPWG) for the Zilker Neighborhood Association. Because I was unable to support some of the statements and recommendations in the ZPWG Final Report, I joined with the Barton Hills Association, the Save Our Springs Alliance, the City Council District 7 representative, and the City Council District 5 representative in signing the Joint Statement and Recommendations provided as an alternative.

The recommendations for the Polo Fields and Butler Landfill in the ZPWG Final Report were being crafted orally just a few minutes before being voted on in the meetings. As a result, it was not always easy to fully understand the implications of the final language in some of the recommendations when there were only a few moments to reflect upon it.

Testimony at the Environmental Commission hearings from me and others opposing the permit to turn the Butler Landfill site into a permanent parking lot and staging area is what ultimately led to the ZPWG being formed. My reasons for opposing this parking lot and staging area have not changed. Because of the timeframe, I became resigned to the reality that the rock surface would have to remain in place for one more year until after the 2019 ACL Music Festival. I supported a motion to this effect, but the motion failed. I cannot support Butler Landfill recommendation #1 in the ZPWG Final Report that allows the existing rock to remain on the field until the end of the master plan project which could be years. This rock surface parking lot and staging area is in violation of the code and should be removed as soon as possible. Additionally, while I believe that the integrity of the landfill needs to be protected, I am concerned that the language in recommendation #3 which includes the phrases “*protects the integrity of the landfill*” and “*includes but is not limited to*” could be construed to allow even more rock to be placed over the Butler Landfill site. I do support drainage improvements which could prevent erosion of the landfill cover and improvements to pedestrian safety, but not other solutions if they further decrease the green open space. The best way to protect the integrity of the landfill is to keep it as green open space and not allow parking and staging activities over it.

I support the phased reduction of Polo Field parking and the goal to secure offsite parking alternatives, but not if it simply moves the parking to the Butler Landfill site. I worry that the word “*preferably*” is an out that will be used to justify moving the Polo Field parking to the Butler Landfill site if offsite parking alternatives are not found.

Finally, there are a number of statements and references in the final report and in backup materials provided to the group that I believe are ambiguous, misleading, or incorrect, even if some of them are based on statements made by City staff. These should be examined as they may influence future decision-making:

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- 1) There are a number of references to the potential for water quality impacts on Barton Creek and Barton Springs from parking at the Polo Fields because the Polo Fields are shown to be partly in the Barton Creek Watershed based on City GIS maps. This is misleading and one must be clear on exactly what it means. The Barton Creek Watershed as shown on City GIS maps technically conflicts with the definition in the code. The definition in the code defines the watershed as *"the land area that drains to Barton Creek,"* and the code does not exclude the portion of the land that drains to the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake. However, there is a strong hydrologic argument that the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake is actually a part of the Lady Bird Lake Watershed rather than the Barton Creek Watershed. Although the code does not specifically define the Lady Bird Lake Watershed, the normal pool elevation of Lady Bird Lake is 828.6 feet. The Lady Bird Lake Watershed should include all areas draining into the lake at this elevation including the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake which extends up to the downstream face of the main (lower) Barton Springs Pool dam.

The City GIS maps do include a portion of the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake in the Lady Bird Lake Watershed, but unfortunately, the City GIS maps do not include all of the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake in the Lady Bird Lake Watershed. Instead, the City GIS maps place the lower portion of the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake in the Lady Bird Lake Watershed and the upper portion of the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake in the Barton Creek Watershed. According to Chris Herrington in WPD, this watershed dividing line *"was selected historically to be located at the confluence of the Old Mill Springs outfall and Barton Creek as being representative of the last major discharge point of the Barton Springs Segment of the Edwards Aquifer."* However, this definition of the dividing line is arbitrary, is not defined in the City code, and has no technical justification from a surface watershed standpoint.

The surface runoff from the Polo Field does not flow to Barton Springs. Rather, it flows to the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake which is below the Barton Springs Pool. Infiltration of surface water into the groundwater underneath the Polo Field could possibly contribute some recharge to Barton Springs but only if it flows in the direction of Barton Springs. There were no scientific studies located which demonstrate that the groundwater in this area recharges to Barton Springs. When evaluating the environmental impacts of runoff from the Polo Fields, one should recognize that the impacts are to the Barton Creek Arm of Lady Bird Lake and not to Barton Springs, and decisions should be made with this in mind.

- 2) The statement that *"a potentially improved, permitted parking area on the Butler Landfill would be preferable over an unimproved parking area on the Polo Field"* is an opinion that has not been fully justified. A permitted parking area on the Butler Landfill would require replacing an existing wetlands area with an engineered water quality pond and hoping that buried landfill material is not unearthed in the process. One could argue that this is not the preferable option. It would be preferable to remove parking from both areas, whether they are improved or unimproved.

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- 3) The statement that *“use of landscape areas of the park for parking and pedestrian circulation has resulted in extensive environmental degradation, most specifically within the critical root zones of trees in the park”* has been true for many areas of the park. However, the area of the Polo Field where parking is currently allowed is devoid of trees. Using this argument to imply that the Polo Fields are more environmentally sensitive than the Butler Landfill is specious.
  - 4) The ZPWG never received a complete and accurate list of parking spaces currently available in Zilker Park. Here are just a few examples of the locations of spaces and lots (paved and unpaved) for which the number of spaces were not provided: under MoPac, McBeth Recreation Center, Sunshine Camp, South Zilker off of Azie Morton Rd, Austin Science and Nature Center, Botanical Gardens, Rowing Club, Zilker Clubhouse. In addition, the 200 spaces along Lou Neff Road which are referred to as *“non-paved parking”* are parallel parking spaces and are on the paved surface of Lou Neff Road. They are not unpaved. A complete and accurate inventory of parking spaces needs to be provided for any analysis of the parking situation.
  - 6) There are a number of places where the Butler Landfill cover is referred to as the Butler Landfill Cap. The soil cover over the Butler Landfill was placed there before landfill closure regulations were adopted and does not meet the current criteria necessary to be called a “cap.” The type of soil used and how it was placed (e.g., compaction) do not meet the regulatory requirements that would allow it to be called a “cap.”
  - 7) PARD has claimed that Stratford Drive is a park road and not a street right-of-way. Rob Stillar with Austin Transportation Department confirmed to Council Member Ann Kitchen’s office that Stratford Drive is a street right-of-way and not a park road. Some of the code requirements (e.g., impervious cover calculations) are dependent upon whether Stratford Drive is a street right-of-way, and the correct designation needs to be used.
  - 8) Historically, there were 7 monitoring wells installed by the City within the boundary of the Butler Landfill. Records indicate that four of them were plugged in accordance with State regulations. Three of them are presumably unplugged. The City’s Water Protection Department stated that *“If the wells were not plugged, that could provide a pathway for water to infiltrate into the fill material or for landfill gas to exit from the fill material.”* WPD further stated that *“There are no plans currently to locate and plug the monitoring wells if they were not previously plugged.”* These unplugged monitoring wells should be located and plugged in accordance with State regulations.

Respectfully submitted,



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Bruce L. Wiland

June 5, 2019

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# Personal Statement- Clark Hancock

## Personal Statement

Clark Hancock  
President and Designated Alternate of Save Barton Creek Association  
Vice-chair ZPWG

The value of urban open space such as Zilker Park can be viewed through multiple facets. First and most fundamental is its importance to the natural systems and greater-than-human community that are essential to a dynamic green infrastructure and form the foundation of what makes any place special. Second is its cultural significance in terms of history, community identity, and aesthetics. Third is as a place for recreational and other human activities. Priority must be set to minimize environmental degradation by human activity both historic and current, celebrate community identity, enable future generations the ability to connect with their diverse natural and cultural heritage, and provide flexible and defined activity space.

Effective planning and comprehensive management regarding the long-term environmental, cultural, and recreational value of Zilker Park have been hampered by ad-hoc, parochial, and reactionary approach to management. Sadly, this was evident in how and why the ZPWG was established. We, as a community, must approach planning for the future of Zilker Park in a holistic manner. Hopefully, the Master Planning process currently being initiated will be such an effort. I view the work done by ZPWG and the resulting primary and alternate recommendations plus participants personal statements as a good first-step, but until we begin to see fruits from that comprehensive planning process it is absolutely necessary that we minimize activities that will continue to degrade this special place or create obstacles for creative solutions. As such, I fully endorse the Alternate Recommendations submitted by the Zilker and Barton Hills neighborhood Associations.

We must be careful not to get stuck in the mind-set that past and current use and use patterns are sacrosanct but recognize that they may have to change to preserve the value of Austin's premier open-space. We are currently dealing with a landscape that was formed by decisions made in the past when Austin was very different. In the late 1800s when the area that is now Zilker Park was mostly agricultural and industrial, the population of Austin was 15,000. In the 1920s, when the land was designated a public park and the road system through the Park that we are still using was built, Austin's population was 35,000. In 1946, after the Great Depression and the end of World War II, when the current Barton Springs Bathhouse was constructed, Austin's population was about 102,000. In 1962, the Zilker Botanical Gardens were established and Austin's population was 200,000. In 1975, when the MoPac bridge was constructed and Zilker Park was bisected by the highway, Austin's population was 302,000. In 1988, with the last major new construction project in the Park completed and the Austin Nature & Science Center moved to its current location, Austin's population was 460,000 and the Greater Austin area population was 845,000. In 2002, when the ACL Music festival first graced what is now known as the Great Lawn, Austin's population was 680,000 with the Greater Austin Area pushing 1.3 million. Today, the population the Greater Austin Area is over 2 million and continues to grow. I share the above to emphasize that we are now living in a very different urban environment from that when Zilker was developed. We must preserve, share, and celebrate all the legacy of those that came before so

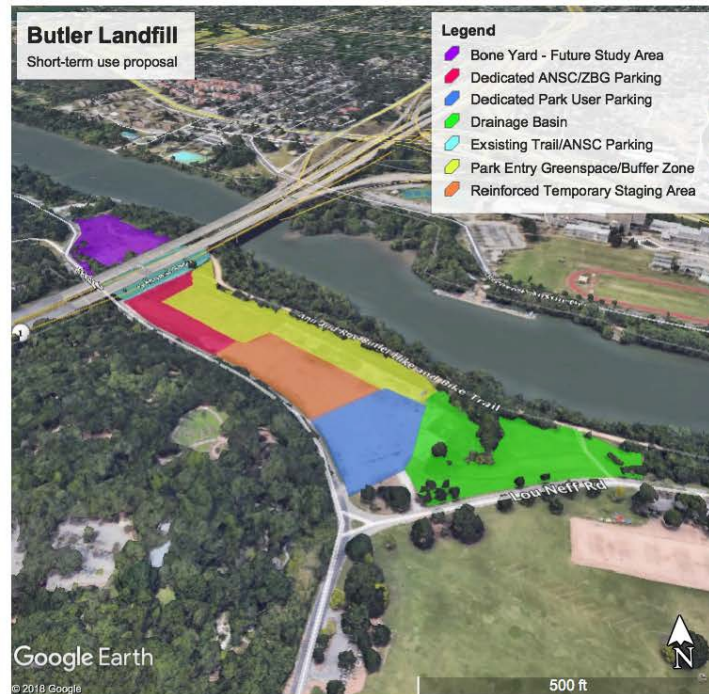


future generations can understand the significance of Zilker both as part of an essential ecosystem and as a touchstone to our City's past but we must plan for a future in which we do not exceed the carrying capacity of Zilker and love it to death. We must protect the environmental significance of this place and the quality of the user experience. Balancing the demands on this space with those underlying principles is a challenge and I hope that the Master Planning process will be successful. Forward thinking initiatives such as the City's Local Mobility Program and Sustainability Office provide reason for hope but only time will tell.

### Butler Landfill Observations and Short-term Suggestions

The following were suggestions provided to the ZPWG Butler Land-fill sub-group and are shared here only as information for the Master Planning process:

Considering that there will be a Master Planning Process that will look at the diverse issues related to future programming of Zilker Park and that current use patterns will need time to be altered, I am suggesting the following short-term recommendations. The horizon for this suggested use pattern is 3 to 5 years, giving time for the Master Plan process and for alternatives to existing use to be implemented. My thinking is that: drainage issues must be addressed sooner rather than later; current parking demands by regular park users including visitors to ANSC, ZBG, the Hike and Bike Trail and Volleyball Court area need to be addressed; controls should be put in place to minimize damage to the area caused by heavy equipment use. Below is a site map illustrating the various area designations.



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1. Current plans to improve the drainage from the site should be undertaken with the caveat that the end result will emulate the existing natural appearance. This area should also be off-limits to any special events support activities (Drainage Basin)
  2. Formalized and pedestrian friendly parking area for users of the NW area of the Great Lawn including the Volleyball Courts. (Dedicated Park User Parking)
  3. An area set aside for temporary reinforcement to allow staging of heavy equipment for special events. It is recommended that the Master Plan process look for alternatives for this type of activity in the future so this area can be returned to alternative uses. (Reinforced Temporary Staging Area)
  4. Dedicated parking for ANSC and ZBG baseline parking. Baseline should be considered daily non-peak operation. This will be necessary not just for existing use patterns but when TxDot will close parking underneath MoPac for their construction activities. (Dedicated ANSC/ZBG Parking)
  5. **One aspect of this area that has not been addressed is its role as a portal for those entering the Park from the MoPac Pedestrian Bridge. This can be addressed by providing pedestrian access corridors and also restrict the impact of vehicle activity on the more sensitive areas of the landfill cap. (Park Entry Greenspace/Buffer Zone)**
  6. Underneath Mopac is currently the ANSC and Hike & Bike Trail parking. (Existing Trail/ANSC Parking)
  7. The western part of the Landfill is currently being used as a Park Operations “Bone Yard”. It is recommended that the Master Plan process consider this area for a parking structure removing the need for parking on the southern section of the landfill. It is also suggested that the remaining part of this northern area be considered for other activities such as a meditative walk or the like. (Bone Yard – Future Study Area)



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## Additional Documentation

Additional material related to the Zilker Park Working Group report can be found at the following link: <ftp://ftp.austintexas.gov/PARDPlanningCIP/ZPWG/>