



PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD RECOMMENDATION 20231127-2

Date: November 27, 2023

Subject: Gus Garcia Special Use Senior Facility

Motioned By: Kathryn Flowers

Seconded By: Pedro Villalobos

Recommendation

City of Austin Parks and Recreation Board recommends to Austin City Council that they include funds in the FY24-25 budget to fund a Senior Activity Center serving District 4 and nearby northern districts, to be located north of 183, and that the property where Gus Garcia Recreation Center currently resides be investigated a high potential possible location.

Rationale:

Whereas, the population of the City of Austin that is currently over age 65 is 8% of the city's population and growing;

Whereas, the City of Austin's seniors are economically and socially vulnerably, with 29% living alone, 15% receiving food stamps, and 19% having a household income of less than \$20,000 annually;

Whereas, the current distribution of Neighborhood Centers, Recreation Centers and Senior Activity Centers run by the City of Austin is heavily skewed toward Central and South Austin, with only one center north of US Highway 183 (Gus Garcia Recreation Center);

Whereas, a 2017 City of Austin Office of the City Auditor report found that Neighborhood Centers may not be providing services to all residents who need them, and specifically recommended that accessibility was a concern;

Whereas, Gus Garcia Recreation Center sits at the intersection of three council districts – the site is located in District 4 and bordered by Districts 1 and 7;

Whereas, within these 3 districts, there are more than 23,000 seniors 65 or older, of which over 4,000 (17%) are living alone;

Whereas, within District 4 alone, 74% of the total population are low/moderate income and 32% are immigrants;

Whereas, Gus Garcia Recreation Center is serving a wide-range of individuals over a vast geographic area due to it being the singular City site north of 183, with increasing participation in hosted programs over the past 5 years;

Whereas, demand for programming at Gus Garcia Recreation Center for all ages (youth, teen, adult, and seniors) far outpaces the supply of physical space available;

Whereas, exercise, social connections, healthy meals, and community engagement have all been proven to provide significant long-term physical and mental health benefits for seniors;

Whereas, the City of Austin already owns significant land at the Gus Garcia Recreation Center site;

Whereas, the results of a needs assessment and gap analysis from Parks and Recreation Department staff is forthcoming regarding senior and recreation centers that supports the addition of a senior center in North or Northeast Austin in the near-term future;

Whereas, the nearest Senior Activity Center to District 4 is located in 78705;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Board (PARB) recommends to Austin City Council that they prioritize a Bond election to include a Senior Activity Center serving District 4 and nearby northern districts, to be located north of 183, and that the property where Gus Garcia Recreation Center currently resides be investigated as a high potential possible location. PARB also recommends that improvements to Gus Garcia Recreation Center be prioritized and budgeted for in the interim for FY24-25, with the goal of addressing overcrowding at the earliest possible opportunity.

Vote The motion to recommend to Austin City Council that they prioritize a Bond election to include a Senior Activity Center serving District 4 and nearby northern districts, to be located north of 183, and that the property where Gus Garcia Recreation Center currently resides be investigated as a high potential possible location. PARB also recommends that improvements to Gus Garcia Recreation Center be prioritized and budgeted for in the interim for FY24-25, with the goal of addressing overcrowding at the earliest possible opportunity was approved on Vice Chair Flowers' motion, Chair Villalobos' second on a 9-0 vote. Board Members Hugman and Taylor absent.

For: Stephanie Bazan, Lane Becker, Kathryn Flowers, Jennifer Franklin, Julie Hayes, Nicole Merritt, Shelby Orme, Holly Reed, Pedro Villalobos.

Against: None.

Abstain: None

Absent: Lisa Hugman, Kim Taylor.

Attest: Tim Dombeck, Board and Council Liaison, Parks and Recreation Department

Tim Dombeck
