



**JOINT INCLUSION COMMITTEE (JIC)
RECOMMENDATION 20240327-002
AUSTIN BOARD AND COMMISSION BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER
Strategic Direction: Government that works for all**

Date: March 27, 2024

Subject: AUSTIN BOARD AND COMMISSION BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS
TRACKER Strategic Direction: Government that works for all

Motioned by: Commissioner Richard Bondi

Seconded by: Commissioner Serita Fontanesi

Recommendation

Austin City Council approves the creation of and regularly updates of a publicly available, digital budget recommendation tracker for each fiscal year. This tracker will include a summary of each budget recommendation for that fiscal year from all of the boards and commissions, along with the status (submitted, in review, etc), and final outcome (edits, rejected, accepted, etc). The tracker can be as simple as an excel spreadsheet and as robust as the Texas Legislature Online Bill Lookup.

Background and Rationale

Every year Austin Boards and Commissions make budget recommendations to the city council based on commission priorities, community needs, and council goals. Commissioners spend countless hours meeting with council members, city departments, community members, and subject matter experts to craft well-informed and intentional recommendations. While board members and commissioners can follow up with council members for budget recommendations, this is not a sustainable method for update. Additionally, while the approved budget is publicly available and there are various reports shared each fiscal year about the progress various boards and commissions are making, there is no clear and central location for community members, or even commissioners to stay up to date on budget recommendations.

Creating a publicly available, digital budget recommendation tracker will not only create more transparency across boards and commissions, the community, and council, it will also create a reference point for future budget processes. Board and commissions will be able to bring more efficiency to their budget recommendation process by having an easily accessible resource

available to review past recommendations. This tracker will also help retain institutional knowledge as board and commission members transition from year to year. As liaisons between the city and the community board and commission members will be able to easily direct community members to the tracker when questions related to the budget process and recommendation statuses arise.

The goal of Austin's boards and commissions is to create a space for community members to engage with the council and the city to make our city even better. By providing funding and resources to develop a budget recommendation tracker City Council can increase the transparency of and engagement with the city's boards and commissions recommendation process, and therefore reaffirming its commitment to a government that works for all.

WHEREAS, the City of Austin's Boards and Commissions is tasked with making annual budget recommendations to city council; and

WHEREAS, there is currently not a central, easily accessible, publicly available repository for board and commission budget recommendations; and

WHEREAS, there is currently not a central, easily accessible, publicly available way to track the status of board and commission recommendations within a fiscal year, or year over year; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin's Boards and Commissions serve as a liaison between city government and community members, using community guidance to inform council budget recommendations, and council budget decisions to educate community members on council priorities; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin's Boards and Commissions experience term limits, transitions in leadership as well as membership, and changing priorities, all of which lead to a loss in institutional knowledge; and

WHEREAS, Austin is the state capitol, home of the state's legislature, many of the legislature's staff, and local as well as state policy advocates; and

WHEREAS, it is reasonable that our city has the talent, skills, and resources necessary to develop a board and commission recommendation budget tracker; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Joint Inclusion Committee unanimously voted at its regularly called October meeting to support a council recommendation for the funding and staffing of a digital, user friendly, publicly available board and commission budget

recommendation tracker.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this digital tracker can be as simple as a regularly updated excel spreadsheet on the board and commission’s website, and as robust as the Texas Legislature Online Bill Lookup website dependent on available funding and staff capacity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this digital tracker will be a resource for budget recommendations for each fiscal year, starting with the FY2024 budget cycle.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this digital tracker will provide a brief summary of each recommendation with a link to the full recommendation, status update of where in the budget processes it is (submitted, under review by council, etc), and a final outcome (accepted, rejected, modified, etc), including any revised versions of the original recommendation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this digital tracker will be a tool to increase transparency and engagement in the budget process amongst boards and commissions, city council, and the communities across Austin, furthering a shared goal of government that works for all.

Vote: 9-0

For: Commissioners Richard Bondi, Sonny Sin, Rebecca Austen, Melissa Ortega, Morgan Davis, Serita Fontanesi, Amanda Afifi, Charles Curry, and Jennifer Powell

Against: None.

Abstain: None

Absent: Leonor Vargas or Eliza Gordon (Early Childhood Council)

Attest:  _____

Alejandra Mireles
Staff Liaison to the Joint Inclusion Committee, Equity Office