



PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD RECOMMENDATION 20240327-3

Date: March 27, 2024

Subject: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Recommendation

Motioned By: Lane Becker

Seconded By: Nicole Merritt

Recommendation

The Parks and Recreation Board recommends to the Austin City Council:

1. The allocation of sufficient additional funding on top of any proposed PARD FY2025 Budget to begin the process of addressing the under resourcing of recreation centers and senior centers, both in programming and physical capacity, including:
 - a. Continuation of existing staff study and proposal of a potential bond for capital improvement projects identified as high priority for investment in the forthcoming PARD - Recreation and Senior Center Facility Assessment & Gap Analysis report. Potential priorities include but are not limited to: shade structures, increased headcount for PARD staff to run programming, additional recreational and/or senior facility space in areas identified as high need, and an expansion in adaptive services. (~\$80,000, potentially in existing staff time)
 - b. Additional part-time and/or hourly staff to accommodate more children during summer camps at facilities where space has been identified and expansion is possible, to total no fewer than 5 FTE (\$150,000)

2. The allocation of additional funding on top of any proposed PARD FY2025 Budget to address the following needs outlined in the Climate Equity Plan:
 - a. **Carbon Neutral Public Lands** (Climate Equity Plan Goal 4)
 - i. The installation of efficient automated/drip irrigation on PARD property with native trees and landscaping, with priority near underserved communities with lower access to nature in East Austin, using reclaimed water wherever practical (\$250,000)
 - ii. Additional annual funding to be allocated for the maintenance of existing installations and irrigation systems (\$150,000)
 - iii. A full-time Program Manager positions (1 FTE) to be created and funded to plan land management projects and identify and apply for funding to implement them (\$150,000)

3. The allocation of additional funding to the appropriate department to address the following needs outlined in the Climate Equity Plan:
 - a. **Converting Impervious Cover to Functional Green** (Climate Equity Plan Goal 4)
 - i. Audit of City-owned non-functional or unnecessary impervious cover, including surface-level parking lots, and develop a plan to convert an ambitious percentage of these to functional green uses as soon as practical (\$200,000)

- b. **No Mow Signage** (Climate Equity Plan Goal 4)
 - i. Permanent signage to show city land is not being neglected but rather managed for wildlife. Signage should be prioritized in low income and BIPOC neighborhoods, be bilingual, and include visuals when possible (\$75,000)
4. The allocation of additional funding on top of any proposed PARD FY2025 Budget to address funding for fourteen additional full-time employees for the PARD Ground Maintenance Team in order to align with the same level of service that PARD had in Fiscal Year 2014
5. The allocation of additional funding to increase the minimum wage for hourly employees and to allocate money the budget for a cost of living adjustment no less than 4% for salaried employees

Rationale

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Board Budget Working Group met over the course of several months, taking into account both Board member and resident input, as well as input from City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) staff, and provided the Parks and Recreation Board with its unanimous recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Board notes that no finalized PARC FY 2025 Operating Budget is yet available, and as of now no Under Resourced Service Expectations are being solicited by PARC during this process;

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Board recognizes the demand for Parks and Recreation facilities, maintenance, programming, and safety measures will continue to grow significantly during the 2025 fiscal year, as it has the past several years;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Climate Equity Plan contains numerous goals for 2030 for which action must begin to be taken in order to achieve the goal of being a truly climate resilient city;

WHEREAS, a forthcoming City of Austin PARC - Recreation and Senior Center Facility Assessment & Gap Analysis report reiterates the significant need for increased recreation center and senior center programming, facilities, and resources in order to meet already existing demand, and even moreso to address future growth in demand;

WHEREAS, summer camps hosted by City of Austin PARC regularly fill up in a matter of minutes, indicating a significant gap between community demand for affordable summer programming and existing supply at PARC;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Joint Sustainability Commission issued [Recommendation 20240228-014](#), containing support for the Climate Equity Plan related recommendations listed below within their own recommendation;

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Board strongly believes the City should strive to meet the needs of residents today while also strongly supporting a climate resilient future for the City of Austin;

THEREFORE, The Parks and Recreation Board recommends to the Austin City Council:

1. The allocation of sufficient additional funding on top of any proposed PARC FY2025 Budget to begin the process of addressing the under resourcing of recreation centers and senior centers, both in programming and physical capacity, including:

- a. Continuation of existing staff study and proposal of a potential bond for capital improvement projects identified as high priority for investment in the forthcoming PARD - Recreation and Senior Center Facility Assessment & Gap Analysis report. Potential priorities include but are not limited to: shade structures, increased headcount for PARD staff to run programming, additional recreational and/or senior facility space in areas identified as high need, and an expansion in adaptive services. (~\$80,000, potentially in existing staff time)
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Vote This motion was approved on Board Member Becker’s motion, Board Member Merritt’s second on an 8-0 vote with one vacancy. Vice Chair Flowers recused from this item due to a conflict of interest and left the dais. Board Member Bazan absent.

For: Pedro Villalobos, Lane Becker, Jennifer Franklin, Julie Hayes, Nicole Merritt, Shelby Orme, Holly Reed, Kim Taylor.

Against: None.

Abstain: Kathryn Flowers.

Absent: Stephanie Bazan

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

Tim Dombeck
