





## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and City Council Members

**THROUGH:** Veronica Briseño, Assistant City Manager 

**FROM:** Sylvania Holt-Rabb, Director, Economic Development Department 

**DATE:** December 6, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Interactive Digital Kiosks for the City of Austin

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The City Manager's Office is working with departments to identify requirements for a digital kiosk pilot program. A primary kiosk function will be to display digital content, which can include a wide variety of public information. They may cover a range of information and curated content that provide direct public benefits to targeted members of the traveling public, like transit riders and visitors, and to a broad public user base. The City will pursue solicitations from qualified Respondents who will provide specialized services to install, operate, and maintain digital community kiosks within the Austin Downtown and possibly other high pedestrian activity areas.

A working group has been assembled with Economic Development (EDD) as lead, Transportation and Public Works, Financial Services, Capital Delivery Services, and Law departments to review the feasibility of placing these in the right of way. The team will identify code updates and the process to vet and review pilot locations identified by the Respondent, including permitting requirements before a request for proposal (RFP) is released.

### Background

This memo provides background and establishes the purpose and need to deploy interactive digital kiosks. The City shall review the public benefits presented by Respondents to ensure and demonstrate that kiosks:

- a) provide meaningful public benefit to residents, businesses, and visitors,
- b) are an acceptable use of public right-of-way,
- c) will not impair the free and safe flow of people walking, cycling, rolling, riding transit, driving, etc. and
- d) It has the potential to generate public revenue for reinvesting in economic development purposes.

## **Purpose and Need**

Austin recently [climbed into the top 10 largest cities in the U.S.](#) This scale of growth offers substantial opportunity for our downtown community while also challenging our infrastructure, environment, and quality of life. The City is committed to embracing and addressing these challenges through the thoughtful adoption of strategies and technology. Advances in technology and the harnessing of data can help us build a better city by creating new systems for how we interact with our environment and each other. Following the same mission as the Downtown Austin Alliance, we strive to create, preserve, and enhance the vibe, vitality, and value of downtown Austin for everyone. Interactive digital kiosks offer an opportunity to further promote collaboration and communication within our Downtown community and utilize technology to improve and enhance the experience of our residents, workers, businesses, and visitors.

## **Public Benefits**

The kiosks will include hyper-local information on wayfinding, public transit, bicycles, events, and jobs, will serve as Wi-Fi hotspots, have air quality and pedestrian sensors, and can provide emergency communications. The kiosks will be primarily located on sidewalks and other public areas as ultimately approved by the City of Austin. The kiosks, at a minimum, are intended to serve the following public purposes:

1. Wayfinding - provides directions to civic and cultural institutions and surrounding amenities.
2. Transit information – central location for transit routes and schedule options, as well as provides a connection to, and information about, CapMetro or other ride-share and mode-share forms of transportation.
3. Government information & accessibility - public information and emergency messaging dissemination point and a welcoming and inclusive technological experience for the Downtown community, including residents, workers, and visitors.
4. Vibrancy and beautify streetscape – promote placemaking in Downtown by promoting Austin Special Events and other public events and programming.
5. Smart city infrastructure – augment the City’s smart city infrastructure by collecting useful data and analytics on user interactions affording the City with insight into user sentiment and preferences.

Given the community’s decision to invest heavily in transit, kiosk installations immediately support the distribution of real-time transit information, stop/route details, and related transit service updates. This information provides a direct benefit to existing and potential transit riders, enhances overall transit reliability, and potentially improves (reduces) transit waiting times. Incorporation of kiosks as a transit facility amenity may also help to enhance the quality, comfort, access, and ease-of-use associated with transit services, which in turn may support an increase in overall transit ridership.

## **Location & Quantity**

The Manager proposes the kiosks primarily within the boundaries of the Downtown Austin area, identified in Figure A. Exact locations and quantities are to be determined and vetted by the qualified Respondent with rationale for placement. Respondent will coordinate with the City on choices of sites for kiosks.

Kiosk siting and location guidance, operating parameters, and the review and approval processes will be defined by the City to ensure consistent and appropriate installations. Kiosk locations will ultimately be approved by the City of Austin.

**Schedule or Next Steps**

A project team has been assigned to work with the Economic Development Department in support of the City's vision to introduce kiosks in Austin that will provide information that enhances the community's vitality. The solicitation is being drafted for a zero-dollar contract and is anticipated to be published by the beginning of 2025. Respondents will then be evaluated, and staff's recommendation shall be sent to the Council mid-year 2025. We will move expeditiously to achieve the implementation, including collaboration with City departments, Downtown Austin Alliance, CapMetro, and other stakeholders. The council should expect several requests for action as we move forward with the proposed implementation.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Anthony Segura, Economic Development Department Deputy Director, at [Anthony.Segura@austintexas.gov](mailto:Anthony.Segura@austintexas.gov) or 512-974-3187.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
CMO Executive Team  
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