

City of Austin  
 Planning Commission Meeting Backup: May 12, 2026  
 Item Number: 24

## FY2026-2027 Capital Improvement Recommendations

### **Item:** 24

### **Description:** FY2026-2027 Capital Improvement Recommendations

**Background:** Required by City Charter, Article X. Planning, Section 4. The Planning Commission – Powers and Duties:

“The Planning Commission shall: (4) Submit annually to the city manager, not less than 90 days prior to the beginning of the budget year, a list of recommended capital improvements, which in the opinion of the commission are necessary or desirable to implement the adopted comprehensive plan or element or portion thereof during the forthcoming five-year period.”

**Summary of Item:** These capital improvements are intended to further the City’s long-term vision and aspiration of being a “*beacon of sustainability, social equity and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all*” (Imagine Austin Vision, p.2).

Imagine Austin has eight Priority Programs that provide the structure and direction to implement the plan’s policies and actions:

- ❖ Invest in a compact and connected Austin
- ❖ Sustainably manage our water resources
- ❖ Continue to grow Austin’s economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses
- ❖ Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city
- ❖ Grow and invest in Austin’s creative economy
- ❖ Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin
- ❖ Create a Healthy Austin Program
- ❖ Revise Austin’s development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city

This List of Recommendations is organized by these eight Priority Programs. In the lists below, items with an asterisk (\*) are substantially the same as proposed in the [FY 25-26 Capital Improvement Memo of Recommendations](#) and remain relevant today.

### **Invest in a Compact and Connected Austin**

- Implement the [Austin Strategic Mobility Plan \(ASMP\)](#). \*
- Align investments with the updated *Bicycle Plan, Urban Trails Plan, Sidewalks, Crossings, and Shared Streets Plan*, Transit Enhancement Infrastructure Report (TEIR), and Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Report. \*
- Continue to deliver Mobility Bond improvements funded in 2016, 2018, and 2020, as identified in the *2026 Local Mobility Annual Plan*. \*

- Expand the amount of Vision Zero safety improvements to address the disproportionate share of people of color among severe crash victims in Austin. \*
- Prioritize capital renewal and maintenance of infrastructure that supports our mobility goals. \*
- Focus capital improvements and maintenance of infrastructure within areas that are intended to be compact and connected, such as *Imagine Austin* Activity Centers & Activity Corridors and Equitable Transit-Oriented Development station areas. \*

### **Sustainably manage our water resources**

- Review the city's resilience to extreme weather events and other impacts of climate change to ensure the safety of city residents, ensure the reliability of electric, water, and other critical infrastructure, and identify long-range capital improvements to improve resiliency in an equitable manner. \*
- Support implementation of Austin's [Water Forward Plan](#) strategies, including:
  - Enhancements to the City's centralized reclaimed water system to meet growing non-drinking water demands in the future.
  - Infrastructure enhancing Austin Water's current water loss reduction program - focusing on leak response, leak detection through tried and tested techniques, pilot testing emerging leak detection technologies, and, through its Renewing Austin program, repairing and replacing water mains. \*
- Support implementation of Austin Watershed Protection's strategies to reduce the impacts of flooding, erosion, and water pollution and improve drainage infrastructure. Implement projects and programs to enhance community resilience, reduce impacts of flooding and erosion, and improve water quality and environmental health.

### **Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses**

- Support the implementation of capital improvements recommended by the [Austin Public Library Comprehensive Strategic + Facilities Plan](#). \*
- Align with the *Citywide Strategic Plan* by promoting a resilient local economy that prioritizes small and BIPOC-owned businesses through defined programs and services that enable upward economic mobility. \*
- Support the recommendations outlined in the [2022 Disparity Study](#) to ensure programmatic enhancements are carried out in line with *Imagine Austin*. \*
- Promote access and equity on City procurement opportunities, by providing more supportive services to small, minority-owned, women-owned, and disadvantaged businesses. \*
- Prioritize and advance capital improvement projects within City-led redevelopment projects, as directed in [Council Resolution No. 20220324-056](#) regarding the Colony Park Sustainable Community. \*
- Sustainably invest in the Infrastructure Academy, the first-of-its-kind public-private partnership designed to connect local residents to high-demand, high-wage careers in mobility and infrastructure—Austin's fastest-growing sector. \*
- Enhance resources for strategic investments under the [City of Austin's Chapter 380 Economic Development Policy](#), which is intended to deliver affordable creative space and innovative financing tools for public infrastructure needs to attract development and industry. \*

- Support the implementation of community-recommended capital improvements identified in recognized *Economic and Cultural District Strategic Plans*: \*

Aldrich at Mueller Street District	<a href="#">East 12<sup>th</sup> Street District</a>	<a href="#">East Cesar Chavez District</a>
North Lamar International District	<a href="#">South Congress District</a>	South First Street District
<a href="#">Red River Cultural District</a>	African American Cultural Heritage District (In Progress)	5 <sup>th</sup> Street Mexican American Cultural District (In Progress)

- Invest in the Commercial Stabilization Program to support the equitable delivery of capital improvement enhancements, such as street banners, custom street signs, bike racks, and landscape improvements, and other placemaking projects in recognized Economic and Cultural Districts. \*
- Provide dedicated Economic Development Wayfinding funds for pedestrian and vehicular directional and informational signage to important historical, cultural and economic sites for residents and tourists in designated cultural districts including the African American Cultural Heritage District, 5<sup>th</sup> Street Mexican American Cultural District, and Red River Cultural District. \*
- Increase the percent of participants reporting an increase in earnings as a result of participation in a City-sponsored workforce development program or service.
- Support the implementation of the Cultural District Funding Model that includes recommended strategies for capital investment into cultural district spaces, supporting organizational stability, marketing, cultural preservation, economic development, and place-enhancement to designated cultural districts.
- Identify and support land acquisition, site development, sidewalk, street, utilities, and other needs for the long-term resilience of the Del Valle Food Co-op in the Del Valle area of East Austin, as identified in the *Austin Community-Owned Food Retail Initiative*.

**Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city**

- Properly evaluate the impacts of capital investments to ensure the equitable mitigation of environmental risks across the city. \*
- Invest in green infrastructure that creates or enhances Austin’s network of natural lands and other open spaces. Examples include stream and shoreline restoration, the construction of trails and green streets, open space acquisition, park improvements, community agriculture, and green stormwater retrofits. \*
- Integrate nature into the city by supporting, maintaining, and expanding parks and our urban trail network. \*
- Support implementation of Austin Watershed Protection’s strategies to enhance community resilience, reduce impacts of flooding and erosion, and improve water quality and environmental health.

**Grow and invest in Austin’s creative economy**

- **George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center**  
Provide full funding of approximately \$57 million to support both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center. Phase 1 includes completion of design and full construction, estimated at \$17 million. Phase 2, which

- expands the facility and its community impact, is estimated at approximately \$40 million. \*
- **Asian American Resource Center – Performing Arts Center (Phase 2)**  
Fully fund Phase 2 of the Performing Arts Center at the Asian American Resource Center. With schematic design complete, construction is estimated at approximately \$46 million. Additional investment is needed to move forward and support this creative and cultural space. \*
  - **Equitable Cultural and Community Infrastructure Investment**  
Prioritize equitable investment in the maintenance, renovation, and replacement of existing facilities, while also supporting the development of new recreation centers, senior centers, activity centers, and administrative buildings in underserved areas. \*
  - **Art in Public Places Vision Plan & Study**  
Allocate funding to create a citywide *Art in Public Places Vision Plan and Study*, ensuring alignment with the goals of *Imagine Austin* and future citywide planning efforts, including both programmatic growth and necessary infrastructure improvements.
  - **Rally Austin Creative Space & Legacy Projects**  
Support Rally Austin’s creative space and legacy initiatives, including the establishment of an acquisition fund to provide bridge and construction funding for capital projects that advance arts and cultural infrastructure.
  - **Montopolis Negro School – Vision Planning and Development**  
Fund vision planning and future renovation of the Montopolis Negro School in alignment with City Council direction to explore its use as a community-centered historical and cultural museum. Provide funding for both design and construction to realize its future.

### **Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin**

- Continue to fund and expand Tenant Stabilization programs for direct investment in families at risk of displacement due to unaffordability, as these programs directly increase housing stability and economic prosperity. \*
- Prioritize future infrastructure investments that support the City of Austin’s goals of anti-displacement, ending homelessness, social mobility, affordable housing (especially for households at or below 30% Median Family Income), housing in high opportunity areas, and housing with access to quality transit, using the *Opportunity Mapping Index*. These investments include long-term income-restricted housing development, funding local community development corporations, and land banking for deeply affordable housing. \*
- Support the rehabilitation of rental properties and the new development of affordable housing on land purchased by the Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) as part of the strategic land banking recommendation outlined in the [Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint \(ASHB\)](#). \*
- Coordinate the City of Austin’s capital infrastructure investments with AHFC’s capital expenditures such as land acquisition, development assistance, and the repositioning of publicly owned land for affordable housing. \*
- Continue to support the development of homes under the Austin Community Land Trust and other local community land trusts to provide long-term homeownership opportunities to Austinites earning 80% or less of the Median Family Income. \*

- Provide funding for infrastructure in low-income areas undergoing planning processes, such as the Northeast Planning District and Grove Riverside, while integrating with displacement mitigation planning processes. \*
- Provide additional funding for current anti-displacement efforts, including the land acquisition, financing affordable housing development, and community-initiated solutions associated with Project Connect. \*
- Continue to support programs that help existing homeowners maintain and remain in their homes such as the Home Repair Program and the Displacement Prevention Navigator Program. \*
- Provide gap financing to incentivize developers to provide units at the deepest affordability levels possible. \*
- Redevelop and improve AHFC's existing inventory, including ongoing investment in maintenance and utility efficiency. \*
- Expand capital and service funding to meet the needs for Emergency Shelter, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Rapid Rehousing projects. Also support additional needs identified by Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations and the City Manager in response to [Resolution No. 20250130-083](#). \*

### **Create a Healthy Austin Program**

- Invest strategically in capital projects that advance a healthier, more resilient Austin by aligning funding with priority program goals, objectives, and action items. The Healthy Austin Program will expand opportunities for physical activity through improvements to active transportation infrastructure and trail systems, including more shade to increase walkability year round; increase equitable access to basic needs and services, including food access and preventative health care; and enhance opportunities for recreation by co-locating Austin Public Health (APH) neighborhood centers with Austin Parks and Recreation (APR) facilities to create stronger, more integrated community hubs. \*
- Prioritize capital investments that protect public health and safety and address the ongoing need for capital renewal, including rehabilitation, restoration, and modernization of existing facilities and assets. Preventive maintenance and timely repair must be funded consistently and equitably to reduce premature asset failures, ensure acceptable levels of service across all communities, and avoid significantly higher replacement costs in the future. \*
- Given the increase in severe weather events and climate-related impacts, additional capital funding is needed to harden critical public infrastructure – particularly Austin Public Library (APL), APH, and APR facilities that serve as neighborhood anchors, emergency shelters, and warming and cooling centers. To strengthen these sites and enhance the city's capacity to protect residents during emergencies and maintain continuity of essential services, investments should be made to:
  - Conduct comprehensive assessments of facility conditions, including the structural integrity, efficiency, and functionality of HVAC systems. These assessments will inform the development of recommendations, prioritized improvement lists, and phased timelines for remediation to ensure facilities remain safe, reliable, and operational during extreme conditions.
  - Implement repairs, rehabilitation, and upgrades to all relevant facilities, including the acquisition and installation of backup power systems, energy efficiency enhancements, and building hardening measures. These

improvements—combined with resilient design standards—will help ensure that Austin’s public facilities remain accessible, safe, and operational, supporting a healthier and more resilient community. \*

- Invest in a comprehensive data modernization initiative to strengthen Austin Public Health’s (APH) capacity to collect, integrate, analyze, and operationalize public health data. This capital project will upgrade outdated systems, consolidate fragmented data platforms, and support the implementation of secure, interoperable technologies that enable real time data sharing across APH programs and key city, county, and state partners. Modernized systems will enhance APH’s ability to identify emerging health trends, support evidence-based decision making, and improve service delivery at neighborhood centers and other community-facing facilities. Capital investments will include cloud-based infrastructure, upgraded servers and network hardware, enhanced cybersecurity protection, improved data storage and backup systems, and tools that support public-facing dashboards and analytics. These improvements will increase operational efficiency, strengthen emergency response capabilities, and provide equitable, timely, and actionable health information to better serve Austin’s diverse communities.

### **Revise Austin’s development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city**

- Austin Planning staff is coordinating with Council to prioritize code updates and, at this time, based on current efforts, do not require CIP funding. However, an update of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, *Imagine Austin*, is necessary to guide equitable land use regulations. \*

### **Other Recommendations and Considerations**

The following recommendation, though it does not fall under a specific Priority Program, is relevant across all programs and for the effective implementation of *Imagine Austin*.

- Invest in data infrastructure to support regularly updated implementation progress tracking for *Imagine Austin*. \*

**Staff Recommendation:** Recommended

### **Board and Commission Actions:**

- Planning Commission Discussion and Action: May 12, 2026
- Submit to the city manager, no later than May 31, 2026, the list of recommended capital improvements, which in the opinion of the commission are necessary or desirable to implement the adopted comprehensive plan or element or portion thereof during the forthcoming five-year period.

**Council Action:** N/A

**Sponsor Department:** Austin Planning

**City Staff:** Christopher Crain, [Christopher.Crain@austintexas.gov](mailto:Christopher.Crain@austintexas.gov), (512) 974-8041  
Chris Ryerson, [Chris.Ryerson@austintexas.gov](mailto:Chris.Ryerson@austintexas.gov), (512) 978-1422