



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor and Council Members

**From:** Ken Snipes, Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

**Date:** February 27, 2024

**Subject:** **April 8, 2024 Total Eclipse Experience Resolution No. 20231102-023**

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On November 2, 2023, City Council passed [Resolution 20231102-023](#), which directed the City Manager to create and execute a plan to support a positive, safe, and inclusive experience for viewing the total eclipse on April 8, 2024. This memorandum provides an update in the areas of sharing information, accessibility for experiencing the eclipse, safety for all, and fostering celebration around this unique and rare phenomenon.

The City and regional partners have embedded lessons learned from the October 2023 annular solar eclipse into planning resulting in a robust posture for the City and region to provide communications and a safe experience for locals and the many expected visitors to the region.

### INFORMATION

[ReadyCentralTexas.org/Eclipse](https://ReadyCentralTexas.org/Eclipse) was launched by Homeland Security Emergency Management (HSEM) on the Ready Central Texas website which shares regional information about the eclipse. HSEM will host a regional press conference in early April to promote awareness and emphasize public safety considerations. In addition, City departments and partner organizations will share educational and safety information on social media and cross promote events throughout the City and region. All key information will be available in English, Spanish and other languages as directed by the City's Language Access Plan. While the City will take every opportunity to promote digitally and through in person outreach, Warn Central Texas, the regional emergency alert system, will *not* be used to promote eclipse information because that is not an approved use of the system.

HSEM has prioritized information sharing between City departments and with partner agencies. The department is also leading coordination with internal agencies including hosting operational coordination calls to identify available resources and address known gaps before the eclipse event. Similarly, HSEM and Travis County Office of Emergency Management (TCOEM) are coordinating with external agencies, including the Capital Area Trauma Regional Advisory Council (CATRAC), Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG), and Texas

Department of Transportation (TXDot). These efforts are to ensure coordination of road safety, transportation to medical facilities, and managing general transportation impacts throughout the region.

The City of Austin Human Resources Department (HRD) is taking the lead on communications to City employees including information about participating and how to view the eclipse safely.

## **ACCESS**

City parks will be open normal hours and available to visitors, however, due to anticipated increases in traffic the City encourages community members to view the eclipse at a location near their home, work, or school.

During the eclipse event, park rules will be in place. As a reminder, the City of Austin prohibits camping in municipal parks with the exception of Emma Long Metropolitan Park. To learn more and book a campsite, please visit [Emma Long Metropolitan Park webpage](#).

HSEM, the Austin Convention Center Department (ACCD) and the Economic Development Department (EDD), continue to coordinate with Visit Austin and the hospitality industry to gauge hotel occupancy and the volume of anticipated visitors during the event. As of January 2024, the average occupancy rate is 70% in downtown Austin for the early April timeframe. For context, the occupancy rate during Spring Festival season typically averages 80-85%. The City anticipates the eclipse will produce similar visitor numbers as the Spring Festival Season. Visit Austin continues to update their eclipse [landing page](#).

Visit Austin receives monthly updates from hotel partners regarding occupancy estimates. Visit Austin's partners at Expedia Group are reporting that Future Stay Hotel Bookings for April 5-8 have increased by 42% since last reported by the team in late October. Austin is ranked #2 out of all destinations in hotel room night bookings for April 5-8. Currently, the hotel average daily rate is expected to be 29% higher than the same time last year and VRBO's average daily rate is 53% higher.

The Austin Center for Events (ACE) is monitoring and coordinating eclipse activities. As of January 2024, ACE has not received any permit applications for eclipse related events.

## **SAFETY**

Information about how to safely view the eclipse is available at [ReadyCentralTexas.org/Eclipse](#) in multiple languages, including information about best suited eclipse glasses. Beginning March 11, PARD will begin distributing 10,000 free eclipse glasses at the Austin Nature & Science Center, recreation centers, and senior centers. Austin Public Library (APL) will also distribute eclipse glasses at branches on a first-come, first-serve basis starting Thursday, April 4. In addition, APL will host do it yourself eclipse viewer/pinhole projector programs at four library branches.

To ensure speed of response for public safety, 911 Emergency Communications will increase staffing throughout the weekend starting Friday, April 6 through the morning of Tuesday, April 9 to handle additional call load. Additionally, Austin Fire Department (AFD) and Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Service (ATCEMS) are prepared to increase staffing and support the Emergency Operations Center as needed. Austin Police Department (APD) Patrol has authorized 100% staffing and will authorize overtime from April 5 through April 9 to handle additional or increased needs.

Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (AUS) does not anticipate operational impacts due to the eclipse but APD is authorizing 100% staffing from April 5 through April 9 to respond to increased visitor traffic.

HSEM and TCOEM will continue to coordinate with Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), TXDoT, CAPCOG and other regional partners to ensure seamless coordination and communication before and during the event, including a Situational Assessment Team monitoring conditions at the Emergency Operation Center (EOC).

Taking key lessons from other cities eclipse event experiences additional proactive work is occurring. To mitigate possible impacts to communication systems or cellular towers. The Travis County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (TCARES) team will be positioned throughout the line of totality to provide back-up radio support in the region. Additionally, the City will continue using diverse sources of information to predict total attendance and to forecast potential impacts to infrastructure.

## CELEBRATION

Neighborhoods interested in planning safe and informative eclipse-related events can submit a [permit application](#) for Neighborhood Block Parties or Living Street activations to the Transportation and Public Works Special Events team.

The City of Austin is hosting the following events:

Date	Location	Event Description
February 7	Willie Mae Kirk Library	Adult craft: Constellation Watercolor
February 10	Austin Nature and Science Center	Planetarium show
February 10	Howson Library	Pop-up planetarium
February 24	Austin Nature and Science Center	Planetarium show
March 2	Austin Nature and Science Center	Planetarium show
March 2	Southeast Library	Pop-up planetarium
March 2	Milwood Library	Adult craft: Constellation Embroidery
March 8	Twin Oaks Library	Adult craft: Constellation Watercolor
March 16	Windsor Park Library	Pop-up planetarium
March 23	University Hills Library	Pop-up planetarium

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Event Description</b>
March 23	Austin Nature and Science Center	Planetarium show
March 25	Old Quarry Library	Adult craft: Constellation Embroidery
March 30	Ruiz Library	Pop-up planetarium
March 30	Austin Nature and Science Center	Planetarium show
April 2	Oak Hill Library	Pop-up planetarium
April 5	Willie Mae Kirk Library	Pop-up planetarium
April 6	Old Quarry Library	Pop-up planetarium
April 6	Milwood Library	Pop-up planetarium
April 6	Austin Nature and Science Center	Planetarium show, small-scale replica of Mars Rover, NASA courses
April 7	Austin Nature and Science Center	Planetarium show, small-scale replica of Mars Rover, NASA courses
April 7	Ruiz Library	Adult craft: Space Opera Embroidery
April 8	Connelly G. Guerrero	Live stream of eclipse with light-sound device for the visually impaired to experience the eclipse
April 8	Yarborough Library	Adult craft: Constellation Embroidery
April 8	Zilker Botanical Gardens	Free entry
April 8	North Village Library	Watch party
April 8	Menchaca Library	Watch party
April 8	Windsor Park Library	Watch party
April 8	Old Quarry Library	Watch party
April 8	Oak Hill Library	Watch party
April 8	Pleasant Hill Library	Watch party
April 8	Cepeda Library	Watch party
April 8	Willie Mae Kirk Library	Watch party
April 8	Twin Oaks Library	Watch party
April 8	Central Library	Watch party
April 8	Butler Park at Town Lake Metro Long Center	Watch party

Should you have questions or want additional information please contact me directly.

Cc: Jesús Garza, Interim City Manager  
CMO Executive Team