



May 20, 2018

Hon. Steve Adler, Mayor,  
Hon. Kathie Tovo, Mayor Pro Tem,  
Members of Council,  
Spencer Cronk, City Manager,  
Kimberly McNeeley, Acting Parks & Recreation Dept. Director, and  
Mike Personette, Watershed Protection Dept. Director

Re: Request to halt immediately the rush to pave a giant parking lot in Zilker Park

Dear Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, Members of Council, Mssrs. Cronk and Personette,  
and Ms. McNeeley:

Save Our Springs Alliance respectfully requests that each of you take immediate action to halt the rush to pave a giant parking lot in Zilker Park.

The project goes in the wrong direction. It would convert scarce central city, lake front park land into a permanent parking lot. (There's a song about this stuff.) While the need for temporary, auxiliary parking during major events is recognized, the City should be demanding prompt restoration of these temporary parking areas back to usable park land, just as it does with the ACL concert grounds.

This project has flown below radar. There is no council direction to pave Zilker Park with a giant parking lot. To the extent policy direction exists, it is to reduce parking, not expand it. The limited information on the project from the Parks Department and C3 Presents or reported in the press has been misleading and grossly inadequate.

The [Statesman reported](#) that the "improvements consist of laying gravel over a portion of the field, making it usable on more days." The truth is that it will pave over pretty much all of the field (much more than has been temporarily covered with rocks) with crushed granite or concrete and will render the area unusable as park land for all 365 days per year. The [Austin Business Journal's story map](#) compounds the misinformation by incorrectly showing the project located west of Mopac; the text repeats the misleading information found in the Statesman. Both stories appear to be based on a press release from C3 Presents and the Austin Parks Foundation.

PARD materials refer to the "Stratford Road Redevelopment Project," a name that is intentionally vague with no reference to either Zilker Park or a giant parking lot. (An echo of PARD materials referring to the proposal for a private soccer stadium on top of Butler Shores park land as "the Toomey Road" site.) As proposed, it would pave over a large swath of the western end of Zilker Park, between the lake and the botanical gardens. The area proposed for parking is much larger than the area that currently has a rock

*Austin's water watchdog since 1992*

---

905-A West Oltorf Street · Austin · Texas · 78704 · 512-477-2320 · [SOSAlliance.org](http://SOSAlliance.org)

covering used as a temporary parking area. As proposed, it would convert what has been temporary parking in a beautiful green field into a permanent parking lot unsuitable for any kind of play or park use.

The PARD prepared "Fact Sheet" on the project, attached to this letter, continues with more misleading and inadequate information. The first paragraph of the Fact Sheet asserts that the purpose of the project is to "reduce" parking in the park, when, of course, it will do the exact opposite. After making this claim, it then immediately admits that it only has the "potential" to reduce parking in the polo field area south of Barton Springs Road.

Discussions with PARD officials confirm that there is no actual commitment to halt or reduce parking within Zilker Park south of Barton Springs Road at this time. They confirmed that there is no policy direction from council on the proposal. Zilker Theatre and other interest groups who would be affected by halting or reducing temporary parking south of Barton Springs Road have not been consulted. No parking or access plan for Zilker Park currently exists that would support the parking lot proposal, and thus there has been zero public input process on the proposal.

In a stunning lack of candor, the "Fact Sheet" never states that the project is a parking lot.

It never says how much park land will be converted to permanent parking for cars, trucks and equipment. Nothing on how many parking spaces that will be provided or how many will be paid, metered parking; Also unaddressed: obvious questions about general ugliness, blowing dust, urban heat island effects, absence of community engagement, compliance or non-compliance with City water quality and drainage standards (including, for example, required setbacks from Lady Bird Lake) and others. SOS has requested information on the pending permitting at TCEQ and the City, but that information has not yet been provided.

The slide presentation for Tuesday night's Parks Board meeting indicates that the timeline for the project is to begin construction next month and be completed in September. SOS respectfully submits that ACL can go forward another year with temporary parking, and should be challenged immediately to withdraw the pending proposal in favor of a standard procedure of restoring temporary parking promptly back to park land so that it is in fact "usable" all year around.

If the permanent parking proposal is not scrapped entirely, then there should be a comprehensive park access and planning study undertaken before any Zilker park land is converted to a parking lot. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Bunch". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bill Bunch

Cc: Sara Hensley, Acting Asst. City Manager

Joe Pantalione, Acting Asst. City Manager