



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Kimberly A. McNeeley, CPRP, Acting Director,
Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) 

DATE: June 22, 2018

SUBJECT: Stratford Drive Redevelopment in Zilker Park

As you are well aware, PARD, in partnership with the Austin Parks Foundation and C3 Presents, proposed to address the existing conditions at the Butler Landfill site on Stratford Drive in Zilker Park to improve both environmental and operational issues. The most current use of the Butler Landfill site has been to provide a staging area for numerous events held at Zilker Park and, on occasion, event parking. The events primarily include Austin City Limits, the Kite Festival, and the Trail of Lights. This area is also utilized by the adjacent Zilker Botanical Garden and the Austin Nature and Science Center for their seasonal special events overflow parking.

Currently, the above stated uses of the Stratford Drive space exist in addition to the historical utilization of the Polo Fields (parkland on the south side of Barton Springs Road) for overflow parking. These two uses, when combined, essentially render two park spaces unavailable for park patron use. PARD has been working closely with the Watershed Protection Department and the Development Services Department to address the current deteriorating conditions of the Butler Landfill, improve the environmental quality of the parks spaces, and increase overall park use.

On June 6, PARD presented to the Environmental Commission and received constructive feedback from both commissioners and community members. The feedback was multidimensional covering a wide-range of topics associated with environmental issues, park usage philosophies, strategic traffic analysis, and open space opportunities. With this feedback in mind, PARD met with small working groups of the Environmental Commission members to more closely consider and examine the proposed plan. This work resulted in a better technical understanding of the plan. As such, on June 20, PARD presented to the Environmental Commission a second time. PARD was again able to receive additional constructive feedback from both community members and Commissioners.

PARD believes the proposed project has the potential to address a number of immediate maintenance and operational issues. However, in consideration of the feedback, PARD believes the best course of action is to place the Stratford Drive/Butler Landfill proposal on hold indefinitely. This decision will allow PARD to work more inclusively to address the multi-layered set of issues associated with Zilker Park, including but not limited to:

- completing a master plan for Zilker Park;
- performing an internal analysis and study of traffic, parking and connectivity issues;
- exploring shuttle system/ride share opportunities;
- assessing the removal of parking from the Polo Fields; and
- evaluating landfill cap maintenance and remediation options.

This new direction will take a considerable amount of time. While the above work is being completed, the functional operations at Zilker Park will, for the most part, remain substantially the same. At an appropriate time in the future, it is PARD's intention to return to the applicable Boards and Commissions, as well as City Council offices, to present a comprehensive strategy to address the many needs of Zilker Park as outlined above.

cc: **Spencer Cronk, City Manager**
Sara Hensley, Interim Assistant City Manager
Joe Pantalion, Interim Assistant City Manager
Rodney Gonzales, Director, Development Services Department
Mike Personett, Acting Director, Watershed Protection Department