

SHORT-TERM TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

Zilker Park Working Group (ZPWG)

March 25, 2019

For further information contact:

Angela Richter, angela@savebartoncreek.org, 254-709-6085 (sub-group chair)

James Russell, j.edwardrussell@gmail.com (Full ZPWG Chair)

INTRODUCTION

This document was drafted by the Short-Term Parking and Traffic Solutions Sub-group to the Zilker Park Working Group and edited and approved by the full Zilker Park Working Group on March 25, 2019. It provides draft recommendations for Short-Term Parking and Traffic Solutions to Zilker Park. The ZPWG was created by City of Austin Resolution No. 20180628-072 on June 28, 2018.

The charge for the sub-group was to: “Evaluate immediate options and opportunities for parking outside the park area and strategies for reducing traffic in Zilker Metropolitan Park and at surrounding amenities with a goal of piloting options by October 2018.” The October 2018 deadline was extended under the request by Kimberly McNeely, Acting Director of the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) on November 19, 2018.

The sub-group consists of about a dozen members self-selected from the larger group and is supported by City of Austin staff from PARC and the Austin Transportation Department (ATD). Angela Richter was elected as Chair and Gail Rothe as Secretary. The first meeting of the sub-group was held November 13, 2018 and final meeting February 11th, 2019.

The goal is to pilot these parking and transportation projects in the Summer of 2019. In subsequent years the goal is to cover the full peak usage season which generally begins in mid-March (at Spring break).

CONCEPTS AND CONSTRAINTS GUIDING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Short-term recommendations (for Summer 2019) for a shuttle are primarily aimed at city-wide access to the park, whereas additional recommendations for a stand-alone circulator system within the park will be deferred to a longer-term planning process.
- Given the short timeline, any pilot must rely on systems/infrastructure currently in place.
- Piloting a new parking and transportation system will be an iterative project; at the outset the city should identify how and what to track to make informed adjustments, either in year one, or more likely prior to year two implementation.
- The group will rely on City staff to cost out any recommendations.
- The group will rely on ATD to investigate availability of the lots/garages along MOPAC and the possible use of parking under MOPAC.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHORT-TERM TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

1. Implement a pilot shuttle system beginning no later than Saturday, May 25, 2019 (Memorial Day weekend) and continuing through Labor Day weekend. The shuttle will run between one or more outlying areas and deliver park users to the park boundary or designated drop-off in the park. City staff may issue an RFP or build on existing contract(s). The system will have the following characteristics:

- Shuttle frequency will vary depending on week-day, week-end, and small special events that do not already have special transportation options (e.g., Summer Musicals at the Hillside Theater).
- Ideally the shuttle should be able to accommodate diverse user needs such as bringing along pets, baby strollers, coolers and other carry on gear one would expect to bring to a park.
- Ideally, the shuttle trip time should be no longer than 20 minutes.
- We recommend the internal shuttle circulation route include (but is not limited to) Columbus and Lou Neff Roads.
- Shuttle will be free; alternatively, charge a fee that includes entrance to pool or garden.
- At least one, and up to three, park and ride sites will be designated. Locations under consideration are: Berger Center; Highland Mall; Camp Mabry; new Cap Metro Westgate Transit Center; One Texas Center; Palmer Auditorium; Convention Center parking garage; and parking lots along MOPAC adjacent to the park. Krieg Field may also be considered but it was not well utilized for Trail of Lights shuttle.

2. For lots on Azie Morton Road including Umlauf sculpture garden (if desired by Umlauf), staffing resources will be dedicated to implement and to enforce paid parking at peak times. Parking revenue shall be dedicated to PARD and used within Zilker Park for mobility improvements and maintenance including trails.

3. Create partnership with nearby parking facilities, outside of the park boundaries, for use during peak days and times of year. For example, such as space under MOPAC or lots or parking garages along MOPAC close to the park, north and south of the river. The Pilot Shuttle should stop at any of these parking facilities on its way to and from the park.

4. Enhance mass transit by Piloting increased frequency of #30 Cap Metro bus line to every 15 minutes and evaluating current stops. We recommend making this change on a temporary basis, this summer to track increased ridership.

5. Encourage active transportation and dockless mobility strategies (walking, biking, e-scooters) by

- Add bicycle parking and designated dockless parking areas at nearby Cap Metro stops and select areas in the park.

- Safety of pedestrians will be the priority and access of trails and shared-use paths by electric vehicles such as e-scooters will only be allowed as emerging studies show are safe.
- Install way-finding signage around park to indicate walking and biking time/distance to points of interest (e.g. pool, gardens).
- Utilize COA approved tactical urbanism strategies to build temporary protected bike lanes on Barton Springs Road to the park from Lamar Blvd; for example, temporary paint, planter boxes, and parking stops.

6. Increase marketing of the City's other metropolitan parks in order to reduce demand on Zilker Metropolitan Park.

7. Implement a high-profile outreach campaign to city residents and visitors on methods of transportation to Zilker Park including all changes and the new opportunities. This campaign is essential to the success of the other recommendations.

Note: While these pilots are active, we recommend increasing communication and enforcement efforts in the park itself, for example by park rangers or police officers.