

Zilker Neighborhood Association

zilkerneighborhood@gmail.com
2009 Arpdale ♦ Austin, TX 78704 ♦ 512-447-7681

May 21, 2018

To: Kimberly McNeeley, Acting Director, Austin Parks and Recreation Department,
and to members of the Parks Board, Environmental Commission, and Planning Commission,
and to Mayor Adler and City Council members

Regarding the proposed Stratford Drive Redevelopment Project, the Executive Committee of the Zilker Neighborhood Association has the following request and comments:

1. ZNA requests copies of the documents that the proposed project was based on: the Atkins Engineering report and the full design document, including detailed drawings for the parking lot and water quality control structure. After review of these documents ZNA may revise or add to the following comments.
2. Based on the backup documents to the Parks and Recreation Board May 22 agenda, ZNA understands that one of the seven issues identified at the site is caused by driving and parking on the site. If this is correct, then one solution to this issue is to eliminate driving and parking on the site.
3. After reviewing the features of the proposed solution to address the seven identified issues, **ZNA agrees** with the first 5 features, namely: (i) Capture and piping offsite drainage across the cap. (ii) Re-grading the underlying cap materials to create a self-draining surface. (iii) Removal of existing trees and re-planting new trees in appropriate and carefully selected places. (iv) Removal of the wetland and replacement with a double lined water quality pond, which will provide a greater water quality benefit than the wetland. (v) Replacement of and appropriately sizing the outlet pipe to minimize erosion and trail over topping. **ZNA does not agree** with the final feature listed: (vi) Topping the cap with a stable layer of crushed stone, which will minimize cap erosion, avoid future disturbance of the cap and allow operation in most weather conditions.
4. Given that the City is pushing to reduce single-occupancy vehicles and encourage use of mass transit, it seems irresponsible to create a new permanent parking lot in Zilker Park that will encourage and facilitate the use of single-occupancy vehicles in the park.
5. Austin needs more open green space and parkland in the urban core, and this proposal will create a huge parking lot on a large section of the park that could be converted to safe and open green space.
6. A comprehensive parking study is needed for Zilker Park with policy guidance from the City Council.

7. While the Parkland Events Taskforce recommended that parking on the Polo Field be prohibited, it did not recommend more parking lots be added. The Taskforce also recommended that transit strategies be implemented to encourage more park visitors to arrive by foot, bicycle, or shuttle.
8. The proposed parking lot will facilitate more intensive use of Zilker Park during large events and will be used to justify larger crowds and more vendors.
9. The Barton Creek bridge should be updated to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access to the park. It should not be widened to facilitate more vehicles (cars, buses, etc.) or increased vehicular speed.
10. Pedestrian access to the park from the Zilker neighborhood should be facilitated by installing: (1) Sidewalks on Barton Blvd between Sunset Drive and Barton Springs Road. (2) A pedestrian hybrid beacon at the pedestrian crossing at Barton Blvd and Barton Springs Road. (3) A pedestrian hybrid beacon at the pedestrian crossing at Lund Street and Azie Morton Road (formally Robert E. Lee Road).
11. Following the release of the Atkins Engineering report and other documents, a transparent and deliberative public process should be followed to facilitate meaningful public review and input on the proposal.

To summarize, the primary concerns of the Zilker Neighborhood Association are maintaining the integrity of the landfill cap and the preservation of urban parkland.

Thank you for your consideration.
Gail Rothe, Chair, ZNA Parks and Environment Committee