

SUMMARY OF THE ZILKER PARK WORKING GROUP

TIMELINE:

June 28, 2018: Working Group created by City of Austin Resolution No. 20180628072. Comprised of 38 members.

September 5, 2018 - June 13, 2019: Working Group met 10 times. Three sub-groups met a total of 15 times.

May 30, 2019: Vote taken on final recommendations.

June 14, 2019: Final recommendations submitted to Council by PARD.

July 29, 2019: City Council has taken no action to-date.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ZILKER PARK WORKING GROUP

Short-Term Parking and Traffic

Goal: Evaluate immediate options for parking outside the Park and reducing traffic inside the Park.

Recommendations:

1. Implement a pilot shuttle system for summer 2019.
2. Implement and enforce paid parking at peak times for lots on Azie Morton Road.
3. Partner with nearby parking facilities, outside park boundaries, for use during peak days.
4. Increase frequency of #30 Cap Metro bus line to every 15 minutes and evaluate current stops.¹
5. Encourage active transportation and dockless mobility strategies (walking, biking, e-scooters).
6. Increase marketing of the City's other metropolitan parks to reduce demand on Zilker Park.
7. Implement outreach campaign on various methods of transportation to Zilker Park.

Polo Fields

Goal: Remove parking on the Polo Fields, with strategies to reduce parking demand.

Recommendations:

1. Phase reduction of parking that accommodates the replacement of lost parking.
2. Improve parking enforcement.
3. Restrict parking uses to specific calendar dates or events.
4. Identify alternative parking options, both short-term and long-term.
5. Implement Transportation Demand Management Strategies, such as additional/separated bike lanes, bus/rail shuttle service, pedestrian crossing improvements, Butler Trail connectivity improvements; rideshare and scooter access; and public education campaign.

Butler Landfill/Stratford Drive

Goal: Determine viability of proposed improvements and make recommendations to fortify landfill cap.

Recommendations: City staff will:

1. Allow existing rock to remain on the Stratford Field until the end of the Master Plan process.
2. Develop a plan by Sept. 1, 2019 to clear the PARD junkyard (aka, the boneyard) and implement ASAP.
3. By April 1, 2020 (or 2021 as necessary) implement a short-term solution for the Butler Landfill prior to the Master Plan process that protects the integrity of the landfill, avoids major infrastructure expenses, and includes but is not limited to drainage and pedestrian safety issues on Stratford Drive.

NEXT STEPS

1. Council Action. If the City Council should decide to act on the ZPWG recommendations, a resolution will be developed providing clear policy direction to the City Manager. To date (July 29, 2019), Council has not directed the City Manager to implement any specific aspect of the Zilker Park Working Group report.

2. Zilker Park Master Plan. City staff have identified initial funding to develop a Master Plan for Zilker Metropolitan Park. The planning process may be initiated by the end of 2019. All three Sub-Groups, in addition to the near-term recommendations (above) also made recommendations for the scoping of the Master Plan process. The Working Group left many of the most difficult decisions to be resolved in the Master Plan.

¹ New this summer (2019): you can get \$2 off admission to Barton Springs or Zilker Botanical Garden when you take Route 30 to Zilker Park. In addition, PARD is working on a pilot to increase bus service on weekends (Sat and Sun) and July 4th holiday.

JOINT STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF BHNA, ZNA, SOS, CD5, AND CD7

Guiding Principles

1. PARD should preserve and protect Zilker Park as an irreplaceable public asset to be operated primarily as open space for present and future generations;
2. All special event uses of Zilker Park should meet the highest standards of environmental ethics and sustainability and provide utilization of parking and transportation alternatives, compatibility with community values, and opportunities for immediate and direct community input to resolve questions and concerns;
3. The Zilker Park Master Plan should establish a viable, actionable plan that minimizes vehicular traffic in and through the park and surrounding neighborhoods by identifying a range of alternative, affordable transportation and parking strategies for park patrons;
4. Direct the City Manager to assure that all consultants hired or assigned to the Zilker Park Master Plan process are free of conflicts of interest with any organization that generates revenue from or has contracts with the City of Austin relating to events held or operations conducted in Zilker Park and the Butler Hike and Bike Trail;

Recommendations for Action by the Mayor and Council

1. Adopt the Environmental Commission's June 20, 2018 unanimous recommendation (Resolution No. 20180620 007a), to deny the so-called "Atkins Plan" redevelopment of the Stratford Drive-Butler Landfill sponsored by PARD, C3 Presents and the Austin Parks Foundation;
2. Adopt a maximum 4-year timeline for the Master Plan process to deliver a plan that restores the Stratford Drive-Butler Landfill area to permanent open, useable green space;
3. Adopt a similar maximum 4-year target date for the Master Plan process to provide a plan for the elimination of all parking from the Polo Fields, including overflow park use and parking for special events.
4. Adopt the set of consensus recommendations of the ZPWG related to both short-term transportation solutions and clearing the six-acre area of the Stratford Drive-Butler Landfill known as the "boneyard" (area west of MoPac) by removing the collection of rubbish, surplus equipment, and dumpsters.
5. Authorize PARD and the Austin Transportation Department to expend revenue generated by parking fees in Zilker Park for the rental of off-site parking and shuttle services to serve Zilker Park and related public education programs;
6. Direct PARD to remove the "temporary" and non-compliant placement of the gravel on the Landfill and revegetate the area no later than summer of 2020 and find an alternative method to protect the surface of the landfill if used for staging or parking;
7. Direct PARD to begin immediate implementation of the 2016 Parkland Events Task Force recommendation to establish a more equitable distribution of opportunities for special events in parks across the Austin area that will also provide alternative sites for events now occurring at over-utilized urban parks.
8. Direct PARD to establish higher standards of transparency in its planning, operation, and expenditures relating to Zilker Park and assure the public that the Zilker Park master planning process will not be unfairly controlled by special interests that seek to monetize this parkland.

ZNA Webpage on Zilker Park Working Group: <http://zilkerneighborhood.org/zpwg.shtml>

ZNA Webpage on Proposed Zilker Park Stratford Project: <http://zilkerneighborhood.org/zilker-stratford.shtml>