



MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair Alter and Members of the Climate, Water, Environment, and Parks Committee

THROUGH: Stephanie Hayden-Howard, LMSW, Assistant City Manager

FROM: Jesús Aguirre, MBA, CPRE, Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

DATE: July 25, 2025

SUBJECT: **Staff Update on Additional Park Funding Sources (Resolution No. 20241121-072)**

This memorandum was previously distributed to Mayor and City Council on July 23, 2025. There are no changes to this committee copy.

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the implementation of [Resolution No. 20241121-072](#) which directed the City Manager to convene a team of City staff that may include members from Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD), Austin Financial Services, Austin City Attorney's Office, and assistance from external consultants with expertise in park system funding, to explore additional funding sources for parks management, land acquisition, amenities, facilities, and maintenance. A [website](#) has been published to inform the public of the project.

Background and Project Scope

PARD engaged two consulting firms experienced in parks funding and operations; [PFM Group Consulting](#) (PFM) and [Trust for Public Land](#) (TPL) to generate a report exploring the financial value of parks, the needs and challenges of funding parks, a comparison of how leading cities fund parks, and a list of funding methods utilized.

The scope of the project included three phases. Phase 1 incorporated research into comparable parks and recreation departments, within Texas and nationally, to determine best practices related to Department funding and operations. Phase 2 analyzed gaps in PARD's funding, quantified the economic benefits of parks and recreation, and identified funding opportunities. Phase 3 developed recommendations regarding potential short and long term revenue sources for consideration, to support PARD's parks management, land acquisition, amenities, facilities, and maintenance.

Consultant Executive Summary and Report

An [executive summary](#) of the consultant's full report outlines the project phases in more detail and provides a list of short and long-term funding options for PARD. The consultant's [full funding method report](#) for the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department is also available.

Benefits of Parks & Community Questionnaire Report

Austin's parks and recreation system provides numerous and substantial community benefits. Recreational opportunities generate tax dollars for Austin by increasing tourism, creating jobs, and increasing property values. Additionally, PARD's work provides environmental and ecosystem benefits through reducing air pollution, mitigating stormwater, and increasing climate resiliency, further reducing healthcare costs, decreasing city spending, and increasing property tax opportunities. The physical and mental health benefits of parks and recreation spaces and programming are also numerous, and our overall work is essential to all communities. National Recreation and Parks Association ([NRPA](#)) provides an overview of many of these benefits.

According to the community questionnaire distributed in the spring of 2025 as part of the additional park funding exploration, 91% of respondents support more funding for Austin parks, pools, and facilities. A report outlining the results of the full questionnaire can be found [here](#).

Additional Council Resolution Deliverables

Several other deliverables identified in the Resolution are available below, including:

- [Citywide land assets and amenities report](#)
- [Parkland Dedication Fund Report](#)
- [Park Partnership Report](#)
- [Maintenance and staffing report update](#)

Next Steps

PARD will provide the next update on the remaining deliverable in the resolution which directs working with Travis County, and other regional partners to explore the feasibility of creating a regional park management, acquisition, and maintenance strategy by February 2026. This will include conversations regarding state legislation for a Park District.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jesús Aguirre, Director, Austin Parks and Recreation Department, at JesusS.Aguirre@austintexas.gov or (512) 974-6717, or Liana Kallivoka, Assistant Director, Austin Parks and Recreation Department, at Liana.Kallivoka@austintexas.gov or (512) 974-9455.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Erika Brady, City Clerk
Corrie Stokes, City Auditor
Mary Jane Grubb, Municipal Court Clerk
Judge Sherry Statman, Municipal Court
CMO Executive Team
Department Directors