



Boards and Commissions Review

Audit and Finance Committee | October 15, 2025

Jess Ferrari, City Manager's Office

Stephanie Hall, City Clerk's Office

Resolution 20241212-133



Directs the City Manager and City Clerk to report to Audit & Finance Committee

1. Notify and solicit feedback of all bodies listed in Appendix A. – **Completed.**
2. Develop a sunset review process of governance bodies that would allow regular and staggered consideration of each body's current scope and duties. – **In Process.**
3. Draft Ordinance for single section of the City Code that clearly establishes the responsibilities of Council appointments to intergovernmental bodies. – **Completed. Ordinance 20250911-007 was approved by Council on September 11, 2025.**
4. Develop a single website that publicly archives recommendations to the Mayor and Council from boards and commissions, similar to the searchable database for memos to Mayor and Council. – **Completed.**
5. Review translation services needs of governance bodies, including but not limited to the Commission on Immigrant Affairs, and to offer recommendations for supporting these services as a part of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget. – **Completed. Updated guidance on providing Language Access support for boards and commissions was issued in August 2025.**

Pilot Program

Boards and Commissions Review Framework

Pilot Framework Purpose

The purpose of this pilot review was to test the draft framework with select bodies. The pilot was conducted over a two-month period and included the following predetermined steps:

1. Identifying Boards or Commissions for Review
2. Legal and Regulatory Considerations
3. Boards & Commissions Self-Evaluation
4. Public and Stakeholder Input
5. Evaluation of Boards or Commissions
6. Initial Recommendation
7. Final Recommendation and Action



Pilot Framework Review

The pilot framework was applied to the following:

- Four commissions identified from Appendix A:
 - Airport Advisory Commission
 - Technology Commission
 - Economic Prosperity Commission
 - MBE/WBE and Small Business Enterprise Procurement Program Advisory Committee

- All bodies noted as “inactive” from Appendix A:
 - Project Connect: Central Corridor Advisory Group
 - Austin Local Solar Advisory Committee
 - Airport Boulevard Advisory Group
 - Austin-Travis County EMS Advisory Board
 - Lone Star Rail District
 - Mobility Transformation Advisory Council
 - Regional Affordability Committee
 - Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition
 - Austin Regeneration Fund Board of Directors
 - Austin Industrial Development Corporation

Dive into the Report

Cover page summarizes the history and intent of the report



Boards & Commissions Report

Technology Commission

October 15, 2025



[Resolution 20241212-133](#) directed the City Manager, in coordination with the City Clerk's Office, to establish a sunset review process for governance bodies, enabling regular and staggered evaluations of their scope and duties. An initial framework update was presented to the Audit and Finance Committee on February 19, 2025, after which the Committee instructed staff to finalize a consistent and transparent review model. A proposed framework was formally introduced on July 16, 2025, and the Committee approved a pilot implementation, requesting preliminary findings by October 15, 2025.

This report summarizes the pilot's results, including an overview of the body under review, legal considerations, self-evaluations by members and staff liaisons, community feedback, and an initial staff recommendation.

Dive into the Report

Executive Summary detailing the objective, what we found, and an initial recommendation



Executive Summary

Objective

To conduct an evaluation of the scope and duties of the Technology Commission using a predetermined multi-step framework.

What We Found

In its capacity to review and make recommendations to the City Council on technology and telecommunication issues, including equity, access, performance, affordability, and allocation of resources, the Commission met routinely in 2025. They made seven formal recommendations that they identified as closely aligned to the Commission's core mission.

The Commission held public hearings on August 13 and September 10, 2025, to solicit feedback from the public and community stakeholders regarding the usefulness and relevance of the Technology Commission's stated purposes and duties and its success in fulfilling those purposes and duties. They had a total of eight members of the public register to provide feedback in person. Several speakers were former commissioners sharing historical perspectives on the Commission. Additionally, there were leaders from technology nonprofits and advocacy groups who provided expert testimony, reinforcing alignment with the 2023 Digital Needs Assessment. The Chair noted this "participation underscores the Commission's unique role in connecting City policy, community priorities, and technology equity."

The Technology Commission does not have any legal mandates or statutory obligations that would prevent modifications or changes in the purpose and function of the body.

What We Recommend

The Technology Commission routinely meets, maintains membership, and acts in accordance with their Council directives and bylaws. We recommend the Commission continue as directed.



Dive into the Report

Board or Commission Mandate including membership roster and meeting dates



Technology Commission Mandate

§ 2-1-107 - The Commission shall advise the City Council regarding issues that include: (1) community technology; (2) telecommunications services; (3) new sources of funding for access television projects; (4) new sources of funding for community technology projects; (5) allocation of annual financial support; (6) digital equity issues; (7) broadband development access; (8) digital skills; (9) internet affordability and accessibility; (10) the evaluation of the performance of access television contractors and other community technology contractors, including development of criteria to be used for evaluations; and (11) inform facilities and services that are including the City web site, its technologies.

(D) The Commission shall consider include: (1) the performance community technology contractors, cable, telecommunications, and other technology needs, and and other emerging technologies.

(E) The Commission shall provide services, community technology including: (1) promoting public access television programming identifying community technology defining innovative program problems; (3) enabling and telecommunications policy a collecting community input on topics relevant to this Commission.

(F) The Commission shall serve relating to the provision of services and community technology recommendations from other City departments, and forward.

(G) The Commission does not regarding any cable television issue, and the Commission shall

Technology Commission Mandate (continued)

(H) The Commission shall support the City's Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs) in the following ways: (1) advise City staff on the selection and approval of volunteer grant review panelists to evaluate and score GTOPs applications; (2) appoint Commission members to serve as non-voting (ex-officio) members of grant review panels as needed to provide guidance and leadership to review panelists and to support the process of GTOPs protests; (3) appoint Commission members to serve as voting grant review panelists upon request of City staff; and (4) advise staff on the final allocation of GTOPs awards.

Membership Roster

Member Name	Appointed by	Term Expires
Brian AM Williams	Natasha Harper-Madison	02/28/2027
Thomas Rice	Ryan Alter	02/28/2027
Ibiye Anga	Zohaib Qadri	02/28/2027
Carina Moncivais	José Velásquez	02/28/2027
Nicholas Eastwood	Paige Ellis	02/28/2027
Keith Pena-Villa	Kirk Watson	02/28/2029
Milena Pribic	Marc Duchon	02/28/2029
Steven Apodaca	Vanessa Fuentes	02/28/2029
Benjamin L. Combee	Mike Siegel	02/28/2029
Suzanne Heritage	José Vela	02/28/2029
Rachel Frock	Krista Laine	02/28/2029

2025 Meeting Dates

January 8, 2025
February 12, 2025
March 5, 2025
April 9, 2025 - Canceled due to lack of quorum
April 30, 2025 - Special Called
May 14, 2025
June 11, 2025
July 9, 2025
August 13, 2025
September 10, 2025
October 8, 2025
November 12, 2025 - Scheduled

Technology Commission

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Technology Commission

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Dive into the Report

Legal and Regulatory Considerations

Legal and Regulatory Consideration

Legal Review

The Technology Commission does not have any legal mandates or statutory obligations that must be addressed prior to its continuation, modification, or sunset. Other than potential amendments to City code §2-1-107 should changes be made, there are no laws that necessitate the continuation of the board or commission.

Modifying or sunseting the Technology Commission would not violate any local, federal, or state law.

Dive into the Report

Self-evaluation from Commission



Self-evaluation from Commission

The Technology Commission was asked to evaluate how the Commission's yearly actions aligned with its directives; reference Appendix A for questions and responses.

Commission's Self-evaluation

"All recommendations... focus on improving city infrastructure, funding capacity, access, equity, and emerging technologies"

"...they only failed to meet quorum once during the reporting period, and a Special Called meeting was scheduled two weeks later."

Compliance:	The Commission's actions throughout the year complied with City Council directives and bylaws.
Recommendations:	The Commission's recommendations for August 10, 2025: Recommendation Recommendation Recommendation Recommendation Recommendation 1 pending recommendation
Recommendations closely aligned to the body's mission:	All recommendations closely aligned to the body's mission.
Context for recommendations:	All recommendations aligned with the City's Needs Assessment, infrastructure, and emerging technologies.
Redundancy:	The Commission's actions overlap with other city departments.
Need to update bylaws:	The Commission is currently reviewing the bylaws.
Commission member engagement:	9 on a scale of 1 to 10.
Community engagement:	8 on a scale of 1 to 10.
Context for ratings:	The Commission's ratings are based on the fact that they only failed to meet quorum once during the reporting period, and a Special Called meeting was scheduled two weeks later.

Self-evaluation from Commission

Commission's Self-evaluation (continued)

"The number of individual speakers are currently low but anticipate an increase as policy issues related to emerging technologies evolve."

Context for ratings (continued):

The community engagement score is due to the community looking to the Commission for leadership on AI-specific bills that passed in Texas. Five community organizations participated in the August Community Impact hearing with less than a week's notice. The number of individual speakers are currently low but anticipate an increase as policy issues related to emerging technologies evolve. Partners are actively involved through the Grants for Technology Opportunities Programs (GTOPs) and the Digital Empowerment Community of Austin (DECA).

Gaps:

The Commission does not perceive any gaps in important policies that are not currently covered by a board or commission.

Dive into the Report

Evaluation from Commission’s Staff and Executive Liaisons

Evaluation from Commission's Liaison

The Technology Commission's liaison was asked to evaluate how the Commission's yearly actions aligned with its directives; reference Appendix B for questions and responses.

Staff Liaison's Evaluation

Submitted by Austin
Economic Development

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Compliance: | The Commission's actions and recommendations throughout the year complied with City Council directives and bylaws. |
| Redundancy: | The liaison report that no entity's role and work overlaps with that of the Technology Commission. |
| City resources: | City resources are being used efficiently to support the Technology Commission. |

Dive into the Report

Public and Stakeholder Input

Public and Stakeholder Input

The Technology Commission was asked to hold a public hearing to gather feedback on the relevance of its stated duties and how effectively it fulfills them. Appendix C contains copies of presentations provided by members of the public who offered feedback.

Public Input

Through its meeting agendas, the Technology Commission consistently invites members of the public to address the Commission at the beginning of each of its meetings. As many as 10 speakers are allowed up to three minutes to address concerns not posted on the agenda, and must register to speak no later than noon the day before the meeting. Additionally, as required by the Texas Open Meetings Act, the Commission allows any member of the public to address items on the agenda. At the majority of meetings, the public did not take up the invitation, but there were a couple of notable exceptions.

At its August and September community impact hearings, former commissioners shared historical perspective, and leaders from technology non-profits and advocacy groups provided testimony that reinforced alignment with the 2023 Digital Needs Assessment.

From the September 10, 2025 Meeting:

In addition to its regular call for public speakers, this meeting's agenda included an item to "Hold a public hearing to solicit feedback from the public and community stakeholders regarding the usefulness and relevance of the Technology Commission's stated purposes and duties and its success in fulfilling those purposes and duties." Three speakers address the Commission to discuss their perceived necessity of the body to the City:

- Malcolm Yeatts - Former Technology Commission Appointee
- Sumit DasGupta - Former Technology Commission Appointee
- Kevin Welch - CEO of EFF-Austin

From the August 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes:

A public hearing was held to hear feedback from the public and community stakeholders regarding the usefulness and relevance of the Technology Commission. Speakers included:

- Gabriela Kane Guardia - CEO of Latinitas Inc
- Nehemiah Pitts III - Previous Chair of the Technology Commission
- Michael Ward Jr and Michael Brown - CEO and Program Director of Universal Tech Movement
- Liani Lye - CEO of Open Austin
- Jasmin Vargas - CEO of Austin Free-Net

Dive into the Report

Appendix including raw data from self evaluation and any public input



Appendix A: Data - Self-evaluation from Commission

1. Name of Board or Commission *

Technology Commission

2. Have the board or commission's actions throughout the year complied with City Council directives and bylaws? This should address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.

Yes

No

3. How many recommendations did your board or commission approve? *

7 - between period of 7/1/24 - 8/7/25

4. Please list the recommendation numbers. *

Recommendation 20240710-006, Recommendation 2025 recommendation number5, Recommendation 20250503

5. Which recommendations are closely aligned to the mission statement?
For example, 20250729-001: Organizing and financially enhancing the quality of life of the City's African American community.
All are closely aligned to the commission's core mission, communications for Commissions Article 2: (1) Informa including the City website, Internet services and open go shall support the City's Grant for Technology Opportunit grant review panels to evaluate and score GTOs appl panels as needed to provide guidance and leadership to as voting grant review panels upon request of city use for Affordable Device Distribution Repair Program (2) is approaches to those needs and problems; Recommendation for Digital Skills Training Recommendation 20250503-01 the city council regarding issues that include (1) commu (4) new sources of funding for community technology pr access; (8) digital skills; (9) Internet affordability and acc

6. Which recommendations are adjacent to the mission statement?
For example, 20250729-004: Setting aside funds to fund holders including African Americans.
N/A

7. Please share any further context that could support the recommendations.
All items are covered within our bylaws and completed in focused on improving city infrastructure, funding capac

8. Is there another body that overlaps with the recommendations?

Yes

No

Technology Commission

Appendix C: Public Feedback Presentations

Technology Commission Public Hearing - August 13, 2025

Speaker: Nehemiah Pitts III

Principal - Shining Light Consulting

Chairman (May 2019 - April 2024)

strict 1 Commissioner (April 2016 - April 2024)

BW

ission—formerly the Community Technology & Telecommunications -was renamed to clarify its scope, but its mission to serve the public nity engagement must remain unchanged. The Commission's future is ng leadership, clear vision, and the support of City staff, Council, re City Clerk's office, it can thrive and help deliver on the FY 2025–26 t priorities in homelessness prevention, housing, public safety, public infrastructure, and equity.

gy Commission Achievements (2016–2024)

ng Impacts

Ps funding to \$400K; equitable awards.

mendations for:

ibility-focused City website update and refresh with multilingual support.

j for local public broadcasting at Austin Public.

d Community Technology programs from the 2016 Digital Inclusion ic Plan and new initiatives under the current living plan.

& City of Austin 2023 Broadband–Digital Equity Needs Assessment: hops, co-designed engagement strategies, and partnerships with 19 ost community circles—resulting in increased trust, expanded resources, ment support for hundreds of residents.

regional Digital Inclusion ecosystem to ILLA funding opportunities,).

Nehemiah Pitts III - Technology Commission Public Hearing - August 13, 2025 = Page 1

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What We Learned



1. The condensed timeframe of the pilot made it challenging to conduct a thorough review of the bodies for the commission and staff.
2. Considerable staff support was required to compile the reports.
3. Very little public and stakeholder input was provided on average across the evaluations.
4. While the commissions and staff/executive liaisons reported on how the body aligned with their current mandate, it's unclear if the mandate itself needs revisions.
5. Determining the relevancy of a board or commission requires subject matter expertise.

Recommend Changes to the Framework

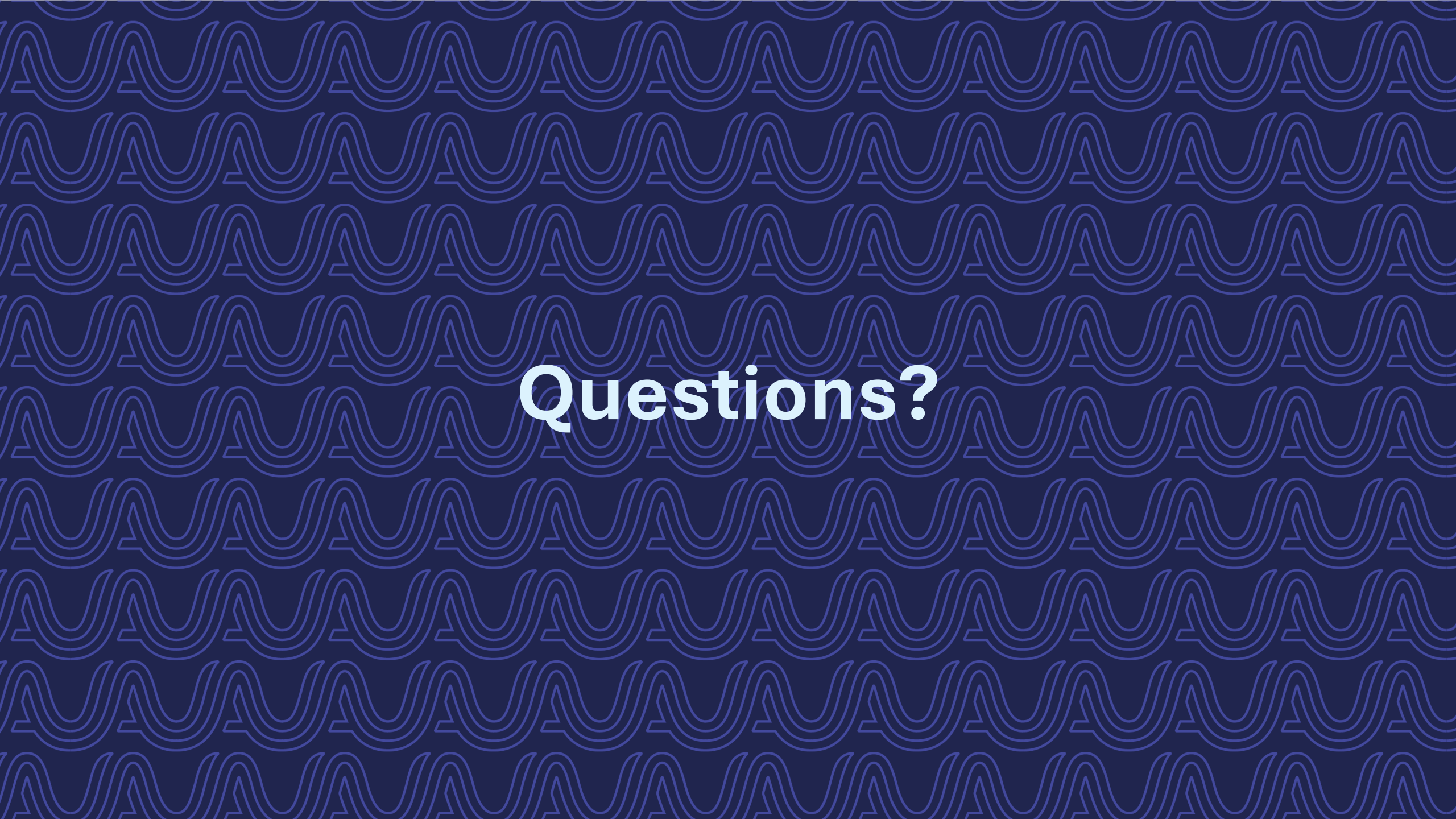


1. Identify review teams comprised of city and council staff with knowledge related to the scope or policy area being reviewed to provide the initial evaluation.
2. Work with Austin Communications and Engagement to expand options for public input throughout the review.
3. The review process should span approximately six months, starting at the beginning of the calendar year with a deadline by the end of July.
4. Staff will then compile a report for each board or commission by the end of August.
5. The designated review team will provide an initial evaluation of the report.
6. The report and initial evaluation will be presented to the Audit and Finance Committee annually in Q4.

Next Steps



1. Adjust the framework to address opportunities discovered during the pilot.
2. Determine a review schedule of boards and commissions, creating groupings by subject matter and policy area.
3. Outline staff resources needed to manage the expanded annual review process.
4. Return to Audit and Finance to present a review schedule



Questions?