

Introduction - About Me

I am an ordinary citizen living in North Austin. I am originally from Odessa, TX. I moved here at 17 to start school at the University of Texas.

I am now 34 and have lived in Austin for half of my life where I raise chickens and my 2 sons with my amazing husband!

Introduction - About this Proposal

There has been much debate about the PSV deal before the city.

Many of the people in our community had other ideas for McKalla, but weren't necessarily being heard.

Instead of solely sharing my ideas with people in the world of social media; I decided to collect opinions and input from those in the community and put together a proposal as my effort to see something happen at McKalla that is consistent with the voices in the community who would also like to see something greater for McKalla.



**A community proposal for a culture rich space
that can truly *unite the community.***

Mission Statement:

To establish a park space dedicated to celebrating and preserving the culture of our amazing city. To have an innovative, sustainably developed green space; and to protect the unique environmental features on the property while making them accessible for the community to enjoy and appreciate. To maximize the community benefit a piece of city owned land in a prime location, can offer. To create a private/public partnership.

Vision:

- ✦ To have a **park that embodies** the beautiful aspects of the **culture** of the City of Austin in Austin's "Second Downtown."
- ✦ To add a **MetroRail Station** to the property at 10414 McKalla Place, and connect the Red Line Trail to serve the area.
- ✦ To **protect the environmentally sensitive areas** on the property and minimize the strain on The Little Walnut Creek Watershed.
- ✦ To establish a **food trailer court** that helps incubate emerging food truck businesses.
- ✦ To incorporate necessary **affordable housing**
- ✦ To create a precious **community asset** through a private/public partnership.

Values:

- ✦ Culture
- ✦ Quality of Life
- ✦ Green Space
- ✦ Increase in Connectivity and Mobility
- ✦ Affordable Housing
- ✦ Civic Pride
- ✦ **Community Input**

Please note:

Money is not on this list. This is a community proposal put forth through volunteer hours.

Parks

There are numerous benefits to parks in the city limits and countless studies to support the argument for those benefits including:

- ▼ **Economic**
- ▼ Safety
- ▼ Community Engagement
- ▼ Green Infrastructure
- ▼ Education

Culture

“If we want to save what is special about the spirit and soul of this city, then we need to act”

--Austin Mayor Steve Adler

“The next term is going to be fighting to defend Austin and our culture and our values”

--Austin Mayor Steve Adler

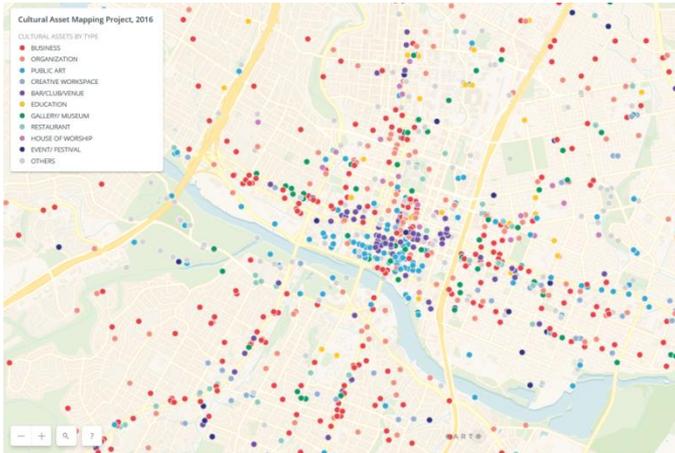
**Let's not wait for the next term.
Let's do this now.**

Culture

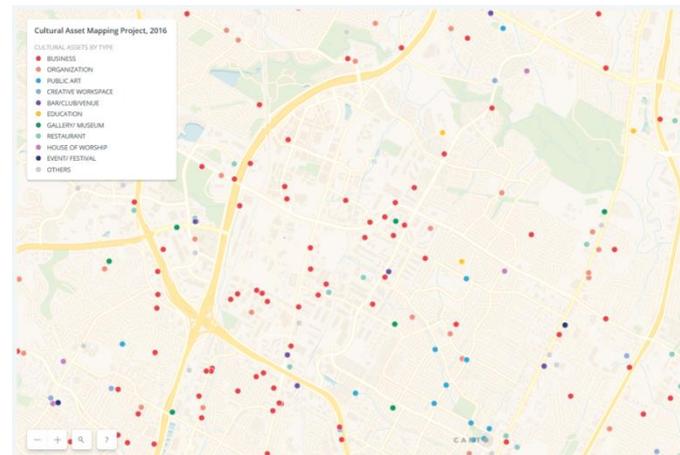
As the city's "Second Downtown," North Austin is lacking in art and cultural assets. Most downtown areas in bigger cities feature lots of public art and attractions. The city's own 2016 Cultural Asset Mapping Project shows a huge disparity between downtown and North Austin.

Culture

Downtown



North Austin “2nd Downtown”



Culture – Zero Waste

Previously, any person, resident or tourist who visited a grocery store in Austin quickly became aware of our city's ban on single use plastic bags. As we lose that element of our identity, we ought to compensate in other ways. What better way to do that than to create a public space dedicated to the 3 R's: **Recycle, Reduce, Reuse.**



Culture – Zero Waste

Repurposed & Recycled Materials

Foster the Zero Waste mentality in older and younger generations alike, with repurposed and recycled materials used to develop the park.

Milk Crate Pavilion
New York, NY



Culture – Zero Waste

Repurposed & Recycled Materials

Commission local artists and/or ecologically focused engineers to design some of the park elements.

Recycled Tire Art
Chakaia Booker



Culture – Zero Waste

Repurposed & Recycled Materials



Lions Park Playscape from steel drums – Greensboro, Alabama

Culture – Zero Waste

Repurposed & Recycled Materials



Wine Bottle Building



Playscape with recycled materials

Culture – Zero Waste

Using proudly up-cycled and re-cycled materials to build art sculptures, bathroom structures, pavilions, and other elements would:

-  Inspire park visitors
-  Divert materials from the city's waste stream
-  Strengthen our **Zero Waste** identity
-  Create a space for artists and creatives
-  Help **Keep Austin Weird**
-  Make McKalla an interesting and unique space to visit

Culture – Live Music

As we lose a lot of our downtown music venues due to development and rising rents, a space for local artists to play would help us maintain our identity as the **Live Music Capital of the World.**



Culture – Live Music

Outdoor Stages & Pavilions

Proposed are multiple outdoor stages available on a **first come first serve basis, but also available for reservation.** The performance spaces could work in coordination with the city's **Artist Access Program**



Culture – Live Music

Outdoor Stages & Pavilions

In keeping with the theme of our **zero waste culture**, the stages and/or amphitheaters could be made with **reclaimed/recycled materials**.



Culture – Live Music

Outdoor Stages & Pavillions

There are many different styles and designs for amphitheaters and performance space.

Since there is **no imminent deadline** for a park, there would be ample time to make decisions and gather more **public input**.



Culture – Food Trailers

Food Trucks and Outdoor Eateries

Food trucks are a big part of the culinary culture of Austin, but the stringent permit process makes it hard for startups.



Proposed is a space with water and electric hook ups for new food trailers to operate on city property with more lenient regulations. There would be a time limit set on how many days a certain business could remain at that site to allow other businesses the opportunity to test their concepts as well.

This would not only be a benefit for aspiring chefs and entrepreneurs, but it would provide affordable, walkable dining options for nearby residents, park visitors, and MetroRail patrons.

Culture – Food Trailers

Food Trucks and Outdoor Eateries

Lenient regulations ≠ red tape free
Restaurateurs would still be required to meet basic food safety guidelines.

As an exchange for providing more lenient regulation, the businesses could agree to keeping their meals under a certain price point to make their menu more affordable for the occupants of the affordable housing and for park goers in general.

This would serve more as an incubator rather than an opportunity to make money, but it would also serve as a chance for the business to raise capital or credits towards local permitting costs.

Should this program prove successful, a small commissary space could be built later on which would allow the rotating food trucks to prepare their food on site, and perhaps serve as a space for non-profits to hold events.



This would be an excellent opportunity for the city to provide support for LOCAL businesses.

Culture – Cultural Arts

Arts dedicated to different cultures

Because of the diverse culture of the city, to encourage **inclusivity** of the park, proposed is the solicitation of artwork from the community representing multiple cultures.



Culture – Cultural Arts

Arts dedicated to different cultures

In addition to ethnic cultures, art dedicated to some of Austin's vocational cultures would appeal and honor some of the local industries and their employees.



Recycled Circuit board Art
Palo Alto, CA



Pots & Pans Skull

Connectivity – MetroRail

McKalla Station

A decent **park and ride** is needed in this area. IBM's Broadmoor station is being built to suit their needs, but the regular users of public transit and the residents of the proposed and soon to be built housing developments in the area would also be well served by a MetroRail station at McKalla.



Connectivity – Red Line Trail

McKalla Station

Routing the soon to be built, Red Line Trail through McKalla would be an excellent feature to increase connectivity and accessibility.



Community – Dogs

Off Leash Dog Run

Near the Red Line Trail, a fenced in area for an off leash dog space could be provided. This would serve residents as well as dog walking trail users.

As dogs outnumber children now in some of our neighborhoods, this would be a fantastic amenity. Separating dogs from the rest of the park would also help make the park a safer place.

This would be a great community benefit for many of Austin’s “skin parents” of “fur babies.”



Community – Dogs

Off Leash Dog Run

In line with the vision of using repurposed materials throughout the park, the fence surrounding the dog run could also be made of reclaimed materials.



Community – Outdoor Play

Great Lawn/Open Space

Benefits of having managed lawns include:

Noise Abatement, Temperature Modification, Water Purification and Conservation, Water Protectors, and more.



Valkenberg Park - Breda, Netherlands

Community – Outdoor Play

Great Lawn/Open Space

Open space is really a blank canvas for park goers to do the activity of their choosing and would be a great amenity.



Community – Outdoor Play

Great Lawn/Open Space

Exercise and physical activity are important. Having a **space for the children living in the nearby apartments** to fly kites, simply run around in, or partake in pick-up games would offer exercise and a greater sense of community.



Community – Outdoor Play

Great Lawn/Open Space

Open space would also open up an opportunity to **host small festivals** and/or cultural celebrations.



Community – Plaza

For Farmers' Markets and Artisan/Craft Fairs

As an added feature of the park, proposed is a plaza space with minimal impervious cover to host artisan/craft fairs and farmers' markets.



Nature Preserve

“We can't keep letting our city's floodwaters go inadequately managed, washing away lives and homes and costing our city hundreds of millions of dollars and untold misery for primarily lower-income residents.”

--Austin Mayor Steve Adler

Solid points, Mayor!
Let's protect our watershed!

Nature Preserve – Mitigate Flooding

One main objective of this proposal is to preserve the environmentally sensitive areas and reduce the strain on our watershed. As the head of the Little Walnut Creek Watershed, minimizing the impervious cover at McKalla is critical.

A park would provide a great deal of permeable cover and allow water to stay on property vs. flowing downstream and straining the watershed.

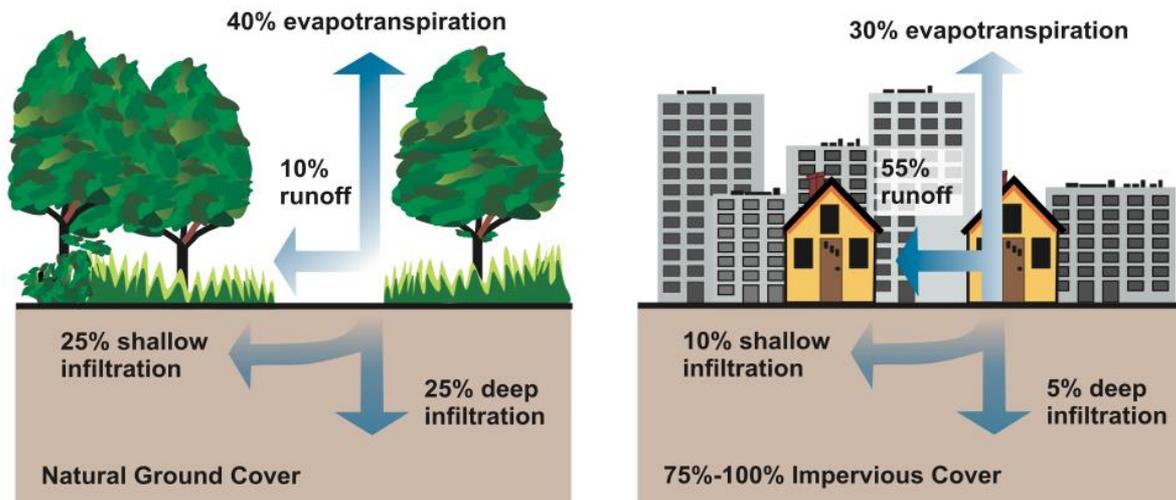
We do NOT want a North
Austin Onion Creek!



Onion Creek – 2013

Nature Preserve – Mitigate Flooding

Converting the headwaters for Little Walnut Creek through development would force downstream water channels into narrower corridors. This accelerates watershed hydrologic response to storm events and this increases the need in some cases for alternative means of flood control. Loss of this natural water retention space would result in more severe and damaging flooding.



Relationship between impervious cover and surface runoff. Impervious cover in a watershed results in increased surface runoff. As little as 10 percent impervious cover in a watershed can result in stream degradation.

Nature Preserve – Mitigate Flooding

Wetlands play a number of roles:

- water purification
- water storage
- processing of carbon and other nutrients
- support of plants and animals

Wetlands are considered the most biologically diverse of all ecosystems.

Wetlands perform two important functions in relation to climate change. They have mitigation effects through their ability to sink carbon, converting a greenhouse gas to solid plant material through photosynthesis.

While the classification of the area in question being considered a “wetland” is still debatable, there is no question that there is unique biodiversity located at McKalla. We ought to tread lightly and conduct a full environmental analysis before developing over the space. Allowing for the area in question to remain untouched would allow for the area to be studied so we can find out what is really going on.

Let’s not move forward with something detrimental that cannot be undone.

Nature Preserve – Education

As an element of the park, **trails around the area with unique biodiversity** could be incorporated to make them more accessible for the public to appreciate the unusual flora and fauna found in the space such as the Scissortail Flycatcher (bird), the sycamore trees, cattails, willows, and cottonwoods.

Because so many plant and animal species are unique to the area, this would be an excellent **educational resource** for our community and a beautiful location for field trips for nearby schools. This would be an a fantastic asset for the **COA's Connecting Children to Nature plan**.

Allowing the public access to such a beautiful space would allow scholars to study the area and find out what the implications are of it's existence.



Affordable Housing

It is no secret that as a city, we find ourselves in the midst of an affordability crisis.

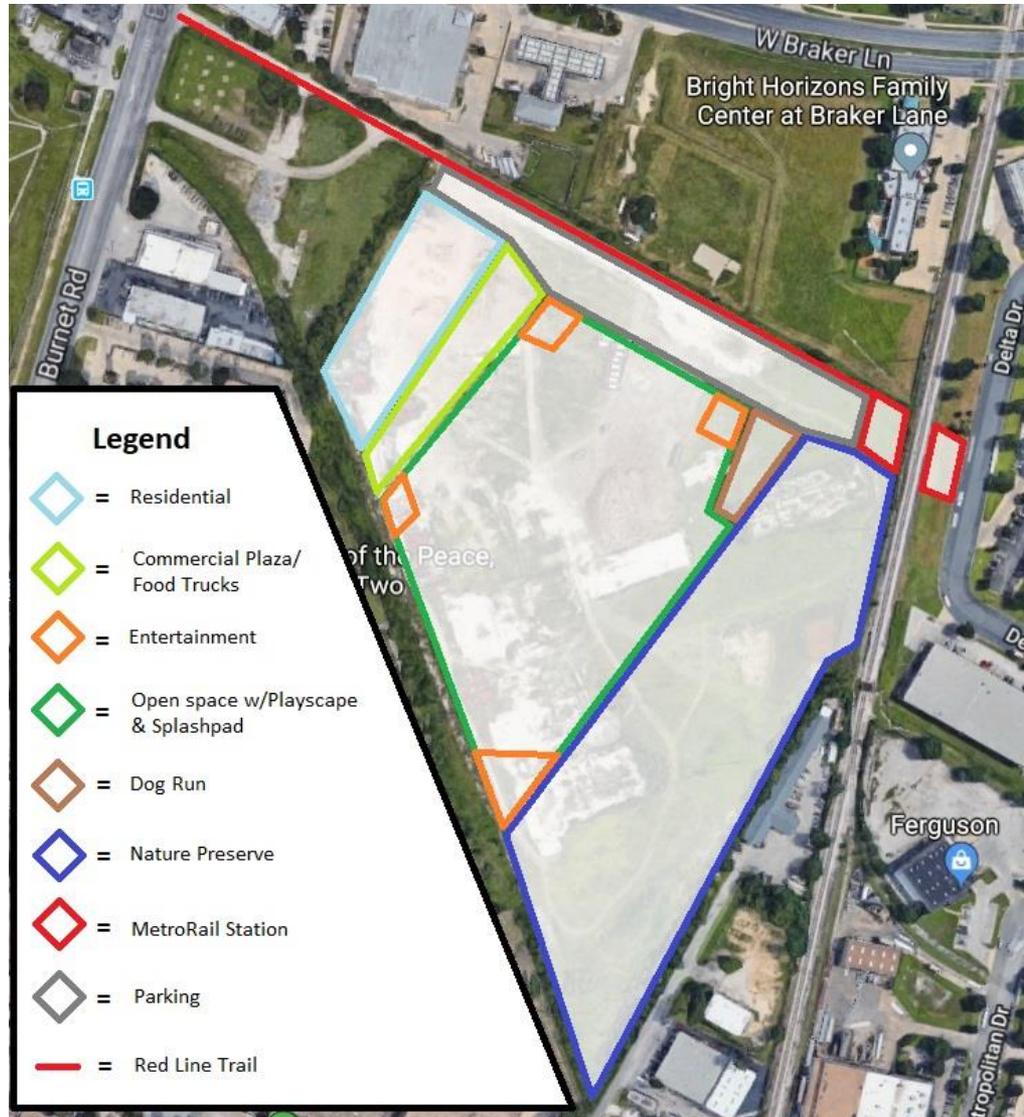
Housing is a right and working class citizens and families deserve to be near employers and amenities. Having affordable housing in the proximity to the North Burnet Gateway employers and near mass transit is critical to our community.



Affordable Housing

Proposed is the **allotment of 3 acres** for an experienced developer to build a small footprint structure or structures to easily accommodate **a mix of housing from affordable housing at different income levels, to senior housing, to live/work housing.** 3 Acres is ample room to include *over* 130 units of affordable housing.

Conceptual



Funding – Revenue

Because this park has many features that can be rented, this proposed park holds the potential to bring in a steady revenue stream. Some of those potential revenue streams include:

- ✦ Renting out for events/festivals
- ✦ Taxes and/or rent on residential section
- ✦ Stage Reservations
- ✦ Pavilion Rentals
- ✦ Farmers Market/Artisan Booth Fees
- ✦ Food Truck Fees
- ✦ Charge for Parking (not necessary, but the lay of the land would make this easy)

Additionally, because parks **increase values** of properties nearby, this park would appreciate property values, thus enable the city to **collect more in taxes** on the neighboring residential properties.

Funding the Project

The idea behind forming a **public/private** partnership is such that the city will not have to foot the bill for the entire project.

Set forth in this proposal are several different funding model examples that could be used for this project to supplement any monies from the **Parkland Dedication Fund or state/federal grants** this park might qualify for.

One thing to keep in mind when looking at these funding models, is that aside from the residential section of this proposal (which would be contracted out), there is minimal development in terms of structures.

Additionally, because many of the features will be using reclaimed materials, any structures (such as the pavilions, stages, fences, etc.) could potentially **cost considerably less** than they would if using traditional materials.

Valuable public assets DO NOT have to cost millions!

Funding – Models

Some different funding model ideas:

Donor Based – One excellent example is in Round Rock. The Play for All park cost the city a total of \$600,000. The rest was generously donated by the community, and the park in turn is a wonderful advertising platform for those generous donors. NOTE: \$600k is LESS than the city has already spent on the PSV deal which we still have nothing to show for. **This is possible.** We have some wonderful local businesses here. I imagine some of the ones who have been around for a long time, wouldn't mind being a part of such a project that is helping restore a little of the old Austin charm.

Public-Public Partnership – this is an element of a bigger funding model where building a park would not necessarily JUST fall into the parks/rec budget, but could collaborate with other departments such as the WPD. For instance, instead of building a retention pond, the two departments could collaborate budgets and opt for a park with maximum permeable cover.

Green Financing – This is a relatively newer funding strategy considered to be a type of impact investing. Green financing is structured as bonds to fund green infrastructure that is becoming more commonplace in municipal development. The idea is that through investing in green infrastructure, the return is measured based on how well that infrastructure works in terms of desired outcome.

Self Sustaining – This would be more for once the park is built and revenue streams are in place. Because there would be residences on property, a deal could be worked out with the residential developer/property manager for a **maintenance** crew/person gets a discounted or free rent rate in exchange for labor. Having maintenance on site would mean less money spent on travel for city vehicles, and less money in labor.

Funding – Lower Cost

Because this site is surrounded by future residences and existing offices, this is an excellent opportunity to create a greater sense of community and pride, while gaining in sweat equity. Initiating volunteer groups with supervisory oversight, to assemble some of the elements of the park **in phases** would do just that.

Community volunteers could not only help with offset some of the labor cost associated with construction, but they could help gather materials for various recycled elements.

Example: if an installation is to be made of recycled water hoses, volunteers could drive around neighborhoods based on the bulk collection schedule and collect said hoses. Or put up ads on craigslist or social media requesting such materials.

When people feel invested in the community, they care more about the community, creating a greater sense of **civic pride**.

Conclusion

Parks provide countless benefits to the community and the economy alike. As a city, we ought to **protect our green space and our culture** and think about what would truly benefit the community. I urge you to please consider this community proposal.



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Special thanks to the voices of our community!