



AUSTIN PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021



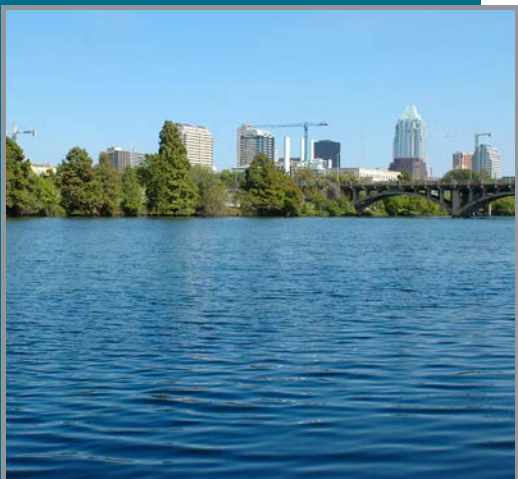
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Letter from the Director



December 2, 2016

Dear Austinites,

The City of Austin's Parks and Recreation Department is proud to provide you with our Strategic Plan, 2017 – 2021. The Strategic Plan holds the mission, vision, and values of our Department, and will serve as our guiding document for moving forward with a commitment to continuous departmental improvement.

Our parks, pools, trails, golf courses, recreational programming and other services are central to Austin's identity and key ingredients to the quality of life that makes living here so special. However, the tremendous changes occurring within our metropolitan area due to recent record population growth affect our capacity to meet our mission...Inspire Austin to learn, play, protect, and connect by creating diverse programs and experiences in sustainable natural spaces and public places. For Austin to remain among the most livable cities in the country, we must find ways to not just maintain what we have, but to advance our park system to meet the needs of our growing community.

The Strategic Plan, 2017 – 2021 offers a progressive framework for the provision of services, striking a balance between young and old, tradition and innovation, and the needs of one versus the needs of many. It also reinforces the expectation that we will meet national excellence standards set forth by the Commission for the Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) as we did in both 2007 and 2012. Moreover, our Strategic Plan, 2017 – 2021 emphasizes stronger partnerships between the City of Austin and private organizations, volunteers and community groups to efficiently support public spaces, parklands, and recreational opportunities for all of our residents.

Finally, using the Strategic Plan, 2017 – 2021 as both template and rudder, we will collaborate with stakeholders across the community to develop additional and enhanced parks, recreational facilities and cultural programs to meet the needs of our vibrant, growing and diverse population – and to keep them accessible, affordable and relevant to those who need them most.

I encourage you to get out and enjoy the many wonderful parks and amenities Austin has to offer. An active lifestyle — no matter your age or ability — is critical to quality of life.

Get out and play!

Sara L. Hensley, CPRP, Director Austin Parks and Recreation Department

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CITY OF AUSTIN PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT AT-A-GLANCE

Community Recreation

Recreation Centers	20
Computer Labs	14
After School Participants	17,604
Therapeutic Rec Centers	1

History, Arts, & Nature Centers

Museums	4
Arts & Cultural Centers	4
Nature Centers	3
Nature Based Programs	200



20,236 Acres of Greenspace

Miscellaneous

Parks	300
Miles of Trail	227
Off-Leash Dog Areas	12
Stages and Amphitheaters	10
Golf Courses	6
Disc Golf Courses	5
Community/Senior Gardens	26
Nationally Known Special Events	10
Workforce FTEs	714
Cemeteries	5
Event Venues	7

Playgrounds

Playground Facilities	147
Swing Structures	125
Playground Structures	139



Aquatics

Pools	35
Splashpads	11
Swim Programs	45
Life Guards	750



Athletics

Baseball Fields	35
Tennis Courts	124
Basketball Courts	76
X-Treme Sports Facilities	10



Public/Private Partnerships

PARD-YMCA North
 Boathouses
 Umlauf Museum & Sculpture Garden
 Barton Springs Conservancy
 Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy



Mayfield Gardens
 Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex
 Zilker Zephyr Train
 Onion Creek Metropolitan Park Dist.

Austin Parks Foundation
 Trails Foundation
 Trail of Lights
 Waller Creek Conservancy
 Goodnight Ranch Development





INTRODUCTION

As Austinites, we take great pride in our parks.

Our parks provide us with beautiful backdrops for leisure and recreation activities, contact with nature, and fellowship with family and friends. It's through these opportunities that our parks enrich our community's public health, economic vitality and social services. The parks are an integral part of our heritage and have provided a venue for watershed events from the desegregation of Lions Golf Course, rallies for civil and women's rights at Woolridge Square, the activism for the protection of Barton Springs, to the many concerts and festivals in Zilker Park and Auditorium Shores that have helped establish our reputation as the Live Music Capital of the World. The parks have provided the stage for some of our most important community shaping events. As such, the Parks and Recreation Department takes great pride in rising to the challenges of preserving our past, providing superior stewardship over our present, and developing our future parks system.

With this Strategic Plan, the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) is taking definitive steps towards realizing a vision where it can continue to be an innovative leader in parks and recreation services. Through PARD's efforts, the City of Austin will have more inclusive, sustainable, and equitably distributed parklands, facilities, programs and amenities.

This Strategic Plan provides a road map to ensure specific services and products are delivered. This road map allows an organization to:

- Ensure that PARD leadership, staff, and Austin residents know where the Department is headed and how they are going to get there;
- Make Informed short- and long-range decisions that support the organization's mission; and
- Develop collaborative and innovative strategies to move the organization forward, focused on its purpose and goals.

Strategic planning empowers the Parks and Recreation Department to focus on its core mission and to prioritize its efforts to be effective and efficient in achieving its goals. The Strategic Plan's action strategies and tasks ensure each PARD division works in specific and measurable ways to fulfill the agency mission. PARD has taken a critical internal review of our organization and identified a strategic direction for the future as an innovative leader in parks and recreation experiences.

HOW TO READ THE STRATEGIC PLAN DOCUMENT

This strategic plan document is the result of data gathering and a stakeholder input process that included a review of industry best practices, city demographics, economic and technology trends, and Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) specific statistics and financial information. This document serves to articulate the goals the Department will work to achieve over the next five years.

Vision, Mission, Values

The vision, mission and value statements as defined below, provide the framework for the Strategic Plan. These statements are not set in stone and can be refined or changed over time to ensure they continue to meet the community's needs.

Vision. The vision statement reflects the desired future state which PAR seeks to attain. Vision statements inspire, energize, and create a mental picture of a community's aspirations.

Mission. The mission statement states PAR's fundamental purpose. It helps employees share a sense of purpose, guide where they focus their energies, and sets expectations. It describes what PAR will do today to make the City a better place tomorrow.

Values. Value statements represent the qualities of PAR's highest priorities and beliefs. They reflect how the PAR values its community, internal work environment, and employees.

Goals, Strategic Initiatives, Action Strategies, and Tasks

The plan is structured from a general department-wide level to a detailed level. Strategic initiatives and action strategies describe higher level objectives whereas tasks outline very specific action steps.

G **Goals** are areas where PAR will focus over the five-year planning period. The Plan's goals are complementary and support the overall vision and mission. There are five goals in PAR's Strategic Plan. (Labeled I-V)

SI **Strategic Initiatives** are specific topics within each goal that PAR will focus on to achieve that particular goal. Each Goal has at least one strategic initiative under it. (Labeled A to F)

AS **Action Strategies** are specific steps that PAR will take to accomplish the strategic initiatives and goals. Action strategies follow strategic initiatives. (Numbered 1 to 5)

T **Tasks** are detailed assignments within action strategies that explain in further detail how PAR will accomplish the actions and initiatives. (Numbered i through v)

IMAGINE AUSTIN

The Imagine Austin Plan is the City's comprehensive plan. In the development of our Strategic Plan, 2017-2021, we carefully considered the future of our parks system through the lens of our Imagine Austin Plan's six core principles.

VISION

The Parks and Recreation Department will be an innovative leader in parks and recreation experiences.

MISSION

Inspire Austin to learn, play, protect and connect by creating diverse programs and experiences in sustainable natural spaces and public places

VALUES

Lifelong Recreational Opportunities

We promote lifelong recreation, cultural, environmental and educational opportunities for Austin's diverse communities.

Inclusion

We strive to reflect diversity, equity and inclusion in all of our programs and services.

Health and Wellness

We contribute to Austin's health and wellness by providing safe and accessible parks, facilities and programs.

Sustainability

We work to improve environmental and recreational functions and improve the connection between people and the environment.

Accountability

We commit to being professionally accountable to our customers, to our partners, to one another and to ourselves.

Collaboration

We seek to strengthen partnerships between the City of Austin, private organizations, volunteers and community groups to efficiently provide recreational opportunities to our residents.

Customer Service

We provide a world class parks system through exceptional customer service and stewardship.

GOAL I

Implement Comprehensive Communication Strategies

Strategic Initiative

- 1.1 Develop a singular, organization-wide approach for public input and community engagement
- 1.2 Develop effective tools for targeted public outreach
- 1.3 Enhance and optimize internal communication

GOAL III

Protect Austin's Parkland and Facilities for Our Future Generations

Strategic Initiative

- 3.1 Design and maintain environmentally sustainable parks and facilities
- 3.2 Establish and implement best practices to preserve assets and facilities
- 3.3 Respond to Austin's water and energy conservation needs through integrated regional strategies

GOAL V

Diversify Funding Strategies for Austin Parks and Recreation Services

Strategic Initiative

- 5.1 Institute a department-wide cost recovery culture and plan
- 5.2 Cultivate partnerships to enhance service delivery and operations
- 5.3 Leverage inter-jurisdictional shared land use and capital planning projects to achieve Department goals
- 5.4 Leverage Austin's creative economy to supplement cultural, historical, and environmental programming

GOAL II

Provide Accessible, Diverse, Inclusive, and Innovative Programs and Services

Strategic Initiative

- 2.1 Review and report parkland gaps and appropriate use on an annual basis to our stakeholders
- 2.2 Prioritize land development proposals and related projects to address parkland, amenities and program gaps
- 2.3 Evaluate the distribution of programs across the city
- 2.4 Adopt a comprehensive and cooperative approach to identifying community needs and service gaps
- 2.5 Meet ADA Requirements

GOAL IV

Achieve and Maintain a Standard of Excellence for Park Systems

Strategic Initiative

- 4.1 Provide safe parks and facilities
- 4.2 Deliver excellent customer service
- 4.3 Automate administrative and operational tasks to improve efficiency
- 4.4 Attain national industry standards for parks and recreation programs and services

IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The City of Austin understands that it takes a variety of perspectives to create an inclusive and robust experience for our residents. The Parks and Recreation Department values citizen feedback and will continue to create opportunities to have an open and continuous dialogue with stakeholders regarding the quality of our parks, programs and services. Over the next five years, we will strengthen our outreach efforts and revise our internal systems and protocols to enhance our service delivery models and effectively meet the needs of our community.



SI 1.1 DEVELOP A SINGULAR, ORGANIZATION-WIDE APPROACH FOR PUBLIC INPUT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

AS ACTION STRATEGY 1.1.1

IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN (CEP)

- T** 1.1.1.1 Create a cross functional work team for input and guidance to implement a department-wide policy within Community Engagement Plan (CEP).
- T** 1.1.1.2 Create and implement a "request form process" for marketing and community engagement support services.
- T** 1.1.1.3 Develop and implement a process for review and approving community engagement plans for projects and programs.
- T** 1.1.1.4 Enforce department-wide training for employees responsible for facilitating community engagement.
- T** 1.1.1.5 Develop comprehensive stakeholder database.

SI 1.2 DEVELOP EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR TARGETED PUBLIC OUTREACH

AS ACTION STRATEGY 1.2.1

IDENTIFY POPULATIONS CURRENTLY NOT SERVED BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

- T** 1.2.1.1 Complete Cities Connecting Children to Nature Grant to identify targeted zip codes with limited access to nature.
- T** 1.2.1.2 Conduct a comprehensive citizen survey annually.
- T** 1.2.1.3 Add terms to contracts requiring self reporting on participants, volunteers, visitors and other data regarding use of PARD facilities, lands, or programs by third parties.
- T** 1.2.1.4 Create a report on park user data through an analysis of participant data in RecTrac, demographics in parkland deficient area, City demographic and census data and other data regarding use of PARD facilities, lands, or programs by third parties.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 1.2.2

CUSTOMIZE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND STRATEGIES TO REACH TARGET POPULATIONS

- T** 1.2.2.1 Pilot outreach tools to immigrant community through advertising on buses and direct mail to zip codes with predominant immigrant community.
- T** 1.2.2.2 Facilitate meetings to connect with community ethnic leaders to assist in recruiting their constituency to PARD program and services.
- T** 1.2.2.3 Provide a series of classes targeted to teens that will culminate in a paid internship.
- T** 1.2.2.4 Standardize translation of printed materials.
- T** 1.2.2.5 Implement an annual stakeholder open house.

QUICK FACT

FY15 PARD conducted over 36 community engagement projects incorporating over 70 public meetings.



IMAGINE AUSTIN

THINK CREATIVELY AND WORK TOGETHER CORE PRINCIPLE

SI 1.2 DEVELOP EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR TARGETED PUBLIC OUTREACH

AS ACTION STRATEGY 1.2.3

CREATE MARKETING PLANS FOR PARD SERVICES TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC METHODS TO REACH UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

- T 1.2.3.1 Provide resources, analysis, data and research to Divisions to assist in Market Plan development.
- T 1.2.3.2 Prioritize marketing needs for each division based on scale and scope.
- T 1.2.3.3 Identify new sources of funds to implement marketing plans.
- T 1.2.3.4 Implement ongoing department-wide outreach campaigns.
- T 1.2.3.5 Provide a course in TRAIN for Division, Sites, Program level staff for a do-it-yourself template for a Marketing Plan.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 1.2.4

EVALUATE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO ASSESS WHETHER THEY MEET THE NEEDS OF THE TARGETED POPULATIONS

- T 1.2.4.1 Evaluate identified program offerings for final program outcomes that meet needs of targeted population on annual basis.
- T 1.2.4.2 Conduct a five-year analysis on trends and patterns found in core services and programs annually to determine if the Department is meeting needs of targeted population.

SI 1.3 ENHANCE AND OPTIMIZE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

AS ACTION STRATEGY

IMPLEMENT STAFF PROTOCOLS AND STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- T 1.3.1.1 Task a work group to review current strategies and make recommendations for improvement.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 1.3.2

IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT TECHNOLOGIES TO MODERNIZE AND IMPROVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- T 1.3.2.1 Identify gaps in current communications technology to form solutions to improve document storage, reduce paperwork, and provide organized and open access to information.
- T 1.3.2.2 Procure and implement technology solutions to improve document storage, reduce paperwork, and provide organized and open access to information.
- T 1.3.2.3 Provide staff training for use of new technologies to ensure mission critical competencies with desired outcomes protocols to ensure implementation of strategies.

PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE, DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE, AND INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department is committed to contributing to the health and vitality of all Austinites by developing leadership opportunities for youth, promoting health and wellness, and fostering community engagement throughout the city. We acknowledge Austin's rapid population growth and will work with the community to expand our reach by addressing service and access gaps within the PARD system including architectural, geographic and economic barriers. We recognize that if we want to achieve optimal access and usage of the park system, then we must engage in systematic practices to assess, prioritize, plan and remove barriers to the quality services that PARD provides and the community desires.



SI 2.1 REVIEW AND REPORT PARKLAND GAPS AND APPROPRIATE USE ON AN ANNUAL BASIS TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

AS ACTION STRATEGY 2.1.1

CONDUCT GEOGRAPHIC GAP ANALYSIS OF PARKS AND PARK AMENITIES

- T** 2.1.1.1 Evaluate and report to stakeholders on percent of land in parkland deficient.
- T** 2.1.1.2 Update Long Range Plan for Land, Facilities and Programs.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 2.1.2

IMPLEMENT A FINANCIAL MODEL & STRATEGIES FOR THE URBAN INFILL PARK IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- T** 2.1.2.1 Design and develop three infill pocket parks on AISD property.
- T** 2.1.2.2 Secure funding for additional school pocket parks development.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 2.1.3

FORMALIZE AND ADOPT CRITERIA TO DETERMINE APPROPRIATENESS AND USE OF ACQUIRED OR DONATED PARKLANDS

- T** 2.1.3.1 Adopt the Parkland Dedication Operating Procedure and enter into the Building the Criteria Manual.

SI 2.2 PRIORITIZE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND RELATED PROJECTS TO ADDRESS PARKLAND, AMENITIES AND PROGRAM GAPS

AS ACTION STRATEGY 2.2.1

CONDUCT A GEOGRAPHIC GAP ANALYSIS AND USE ASSESSMENT OF PARD FACILITIES

- T** 2.2.1.1 Identify resources needed to do an annual facility assessment.
- T** 2.2.1.2 Perform facility assessment resulting in a system for prioritizing the repair, replacement or closure of facilities.
- T** 2.2.1.3 Report facility assessment results to internal and external stakeholders.
- T** 2.2.1.4 Coordinate facility assessment findings with asset management team.
- T** 2.2.1.5 Analysis of patron usage and facilities operations to optimize facility usage and resources.

SI 2.3 EVALUATE THE DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAMS ACROSS THE CITY

AS ACTION STRATEGY 2.3.1

CONDUCT GAP ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMMING

- T** 2.3.3.1 Create a GIS database of programs by location, type and service delivery method.
- T** 2.3.3.2 Analyze GIS database of programs to determine gaps.
- T** 2.3.3.3 Develop an action plan to fill programming gap priorities including funding strategies.
- T** 2.3.3.4 Improve mechanisms for reach target populations.



IMAGINE AUSTIN

PROVIDE PATHS TO PROSPERITY FOR ALL CORE PRINCIPLE

SI 2.3 EVALUATE THE DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAMS ACROSS THE CITY

AS ACTION STRATEGY 2.3.2

DETERMINE BARRIERS TO PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

- T 2.3.2.1 Assess the program pricing structure for affordability by conducting a user survey.
- T 2.3.2.2 Send community recreation newsletters to surrounding neighborhood social networks (Yahoo groups and Next Door).
- T 2.3.2.3 Update the geospatial analysis component of market study of comparative programs.
- T 2.3.2.4 Review PARD rules and regulations to determine barriers to program participation
- T 2.3.2.5 Map public transportation routes and alternative transportation infrastructure (B.G. sidewalks PARD facilities).

AS ACTION STRATEGY 2.3.3

INCREASE PARTICIPATION OF TARGETED DEMOGRAPHICS

- T 2.3.3.1 Evaluate current audiences and target markets.
- T 2.3.3.2 Leverage Austin's creative economy to provide programming.
- T 2.3.3.3 Establish supported criteria for sunseting of programs.
- T 2.3.3.4 Improve mechanisms for outreach to markets identified in the previous task.

SI 2.4 ADOPT A COMPREHENSIVE AND COOPERATIVE APPROACH TO IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY NEEDS AND SERVICE GAPS

AS ACTION STRATEGY 2.4.1

DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO ENSURE QUALITY COMPLETION OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND RELEVANT CITY PROJECTS

- T 2.4.1.1 Identify potential partners with whom to work collaboratively on specific, relevant capital improvement and city projects.

SI 2.5 MEET ADA REQUIREMENTS

AS ACTION STRATEGY 2.5.1

COMPLETE AND IMPLEMENT ADA TRANSITION PLAN TO DEVELOP COMPLIANCE STANDARDS TO MEET LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL ACCESSIBILITY LAWS

- T 2.5.1.1 Complete ADA Transition Plan.
- T 2.5.1.2 Seek resources to carry out ADA Transition Plan and budget accordingly.
- T 2.5.1.3 Hire ADA Coordinator to oversee execution of ADA transition plan.
- T 2.5.1.4 Execute ADA Transition Plan. Phased to ensure orderly and timely compliance with ADA standards.

PROTECT AUSTIN'S PARKLAND AND FACILITIES FOR OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS

As Austin looks into the future, we face constrained resources and the impacts of climate change. We are committed to protecting our natural resources in order to enhance Austin's future. The Parks and Recreation Department will improve the sustainability of our parkland and facilities for future generations by proactively implementing green practices. We will strengthen our green infrastructure by designing and maintaining environmentally-friendly parkland and park amenities. The Parks and Recreation Department will respond to Austin's emergent water and energy issues by preserving our natural ecosystems through conservation practices department and city wide.



SI 3.1 DESIGN AND MAINTAIN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE PARKS AND FACILITIES

AS ACTION STRATEGY 3.1.1

ENCOURAGE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP THROUGH COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- T** 3.1.1.1 Develop strategies to educate and encourage community members to use parkland responsibly.
- T** 3.1.1.2 Implement Pollinator Habitat Management Initiative.
- T** 3.1.1.3 Close out Cities Connecting Children to Nature grant.
- T** 3.1.1.4 Implement initiatives: Leave No Trace and Recreate Responsibly.
- T** 3.1.1.5 Adopt priorities of the Wildlife Austin Initiative.
- T** 3.1.1.6 Maintain golf courses according to best management practices.
- T** 3.1.1.7 Provide outdoor, nature-based education to promote environmental stewardship within all Council Districts.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 3.1.2

CREATE AN INTERNAL WORK GROUP FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE MAINTENANCE PRACTICES AND DESIGN

- T** 3.1.2.1 Inventory and assess PARD current sustainability practices.
- T** 3.1.2.2 Research and identify best management practices for green infrastructure maintenance and operations.
- T** 3.1.2.3 Evaluate financial impact of proposed best practice strategies.
- T** 3.1.2.4 Develop & adopt policies and procedures that support best practices.
- T** 3.1.2.5 Train all staff on adopted sustainability practices.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 3.1.3

CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR ALL PRESERVES AND GREENBELTS

- T** 3.1.3.1 Implement a training program for natural resources through green practices.
- T** 3.1.3.2 Develop a wildfire mitigation plan.
- T** 3.1.3.3 Develop a management plan for self-sustaining wildlife habitats.
- T** 3.1.3.4 Develop and adopt a land management plan.
- T** 3.1.3.5 Train staff on land, wildlife habitat & wildfire mitigation management plans.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 3.1.4

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STRATEGIC PLANTING PLAN TO ADDRESS GAPS IN SPECIES OR ADDRESS OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- T** 3.1.4.1 Inventory flora and invasive species.
- T** 3.1.4.2 Perform gap analysis of parkland describing diversity, density and quality of trees.
- T** 3.1.4.3 Determine the gaps in species.
- T** 3.1.4.4 Create plan for managing and mitigating gaps in species.
- T** 3.1.4.5 Implementation of planting plan.

IMAGINE AUSTIN CORE PRINCIPLE

MANAGE WATER, ENERGY AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE SUSTAINABLY

SI 3.2 ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICES TO PRESERVE ASSETS AND FACILITIES

AS ACTION STRATEGY 3.2.1

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN TO ENSURE CONTINUED SAFE AND RELIABLE PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

- T 3.2.1.1 Identify staff needed to coordinate and implement asset management across the City and Department.
- T 3.2.1.2 Develop asset management reporting systems that identify needs with costs to implement the needs.
- T 3.2.1.3 Create a procedure for developing the asset management system including the addition of information such as: asset installation date, materials, and other information.
- T 3.2.1.4 Full implementation of the asset management plan.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 3.2.2

PRESERVE HISTORICAL FACILITIES THROUGH BEST PRACTICES

- T 3.2.2.1 Develop maintenance practices and procedures for the preservation of historical facilities.
- T 3.2.2.2 Identify and inventory historical facilities.
- T 3.2.2.3 Incorporate historic assets maintenance policy/procedures into Micromain system.

SI 3.3 RESPOND TO AUSTIN'S WATER AND ENERGY CONSERVATION NEEDS THROUGH INTEGRATED REGIONAL STRATEGIES

AS ACTION STRATEGY 3.3.1

RESEARCH AND ADOPT BEST PRACTICES FOR WATER AND ENERGY MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

- T 3.3.1.1 Partner with the Office of Sustainability to assess water and electric usage and develop strategies to reduce and conserve.
- T 3.3.1.2 Participate in the city-wide task force on water conservation.
- T 3.3.1.3 Create a "Conservation Manager" position within the Department to oversee all irrigation and facility-based water and energy.
- T 3.3.1.4 Complete digitization of existing irrigation systems and potable water meter and site verify condition.
- T 3.3.1.5 Digitize electric meters site verify users of feeds.



QUICK FACT

In 2015, Parks and Recreation Department staff and neighborhood volunteers planted 10,199 trees on public property.

ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR PARK SYSTEMS

Austin is nationally recognized for its exceptional parks, live music, festivals, theatre and creative art forms. We work collectively to make our city the most livable, connected and prosperous in the nation. Moreover, we achieve standards of excellence through providing safe and accessible parks and facilities, delivering excellent customer service and adopting national best practices in our service delivery and business models. PARD will realize a world-class park system by taking a data driven approach to management, improving organizational efficiency and meeting and exceeding national standards outlined by the parks and recreation industry.



SI 4.1 PROVIDE SAFE PARKS AND FACILITIES

AS ACTION STRATEGY 4.1.1

ACHIEVE NATIONAL INDUSTRY STANDARDS FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, SAFETY, AND SECURITY FUNCTIONS

- T** 4.1.1.1 Update Facilities Manual Operating Procedures.
- T** 4.1.1.2 Amend agreements to ensure clear roles for all parties for emergency management during special events.
- T** 4.1.1.3 Track required review of SOP facilities manual.
- T** 4.1.1.4 Compare Federal Emergency Management Agency national standards (FEMA) to industry standards for Forestry, Aquatics, Golf, Facility Maintenance, Programming and Capital Improvement & Development.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 4.1.2

ENSURE CITIZENS OF ALL ABILITIES CAN PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES WITHIN AN ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT

- T** 4.1.2.1 Complete ADA Transition Plan.
- T** 4.1.2.2 Ensure all staff receive inclusion and accessibility training.

SI 4.2 DELIVER EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

AS ACTION STRATEGY 4.2.1

TRANSFORM DEPARTMENT MECHANISMS TO SUPPORT INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

- T** 4.2.1.1 Determine best mechanisms to deliver customer service internally and externally
- T** 4.2.1.2 Acquire funding to create and implement technical solutions to allow citizens timely access to Department program information and services.
- T** 4.2.1.3 Provide public WiFi connectivity at key Department facilities.
- T** 4.2.1.4 Create PARD "digital device apps" that have registration capabilities (e.g.: golf tee-sheet integration).
- T** 4.2.1.5 Acquire and train staff to utilize current technology (e.g.: digital device applications).
- T** 4.2.1.6 Roll out - to the public - the PARD digital device app and conduct a survey to determine effectiveness.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 4.2.2

IMPLEMENT A CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY BASED ON DEPARTMENT'S SERVICES

- T** 4.2.2.1 Develop PARD standards that align with City's customer service standards.
- T** 4.2.2.2 Create customer service training - department-wide - specialized by work groups.
- T** 4.2.2.3 Develop criteria and train staff to resolve customer service issues.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 4.2.3

ENSURE CITIZENS OF ALL ABILITIES HAVE ACCESS TO AND CAN SAFELY PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY OF AUSTIN'S CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVE

- T** 4.2.3.1 Customer Service work team to complete City-wide customer service initiative training.
- T** 4.2.3.2 Hire more inclusion aids and increase usage of City-wide master agreement for interpreters.
- T** 4.2.3.3 Develop a Department Language Access Plan.

IMAGINE AUSTIN

INTEGRATE NATURE INTO THE CITY CORE PRINCIPLE

SI 4.3 AUTOMATE ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL TASKS TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

AS ACTION STRATEGY 4.3.1

MODERNIZE TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT KEY DEPARTMENT BUSINESS INITIATIVES

- T 4.3.1.1 Plan and initiate project(s) to convert to paperless documentation.
- T 4.3.1.2 Implement Cemetery Information Management System (CIMS).
- T 4.3.1.3 Implement GIS-based asset management/work order system.
- T 4.3.1.4 Extend Greater Austin Area Telecommunications Network (GAATN) service to major Department facilities.
- T 4.3.1.5 Install credit card machines at all paid site facilities.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 4.3.2

CREATE DATA-DRIVEN TOOLS FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPING LAND,

- T 4.3.2.1 Develop Department data warehouse.
- T 4.3.2.2 Develop data-driven dashboards and scorecards.
- T 4.3.2.3 Implement SD Scorecard/PASS Database.

SI 4.4 ATTAIN NATIONAL INDUSTRY STANDARDS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

AS ACTION STRATEGY 4.4.1

ACHIEVE ACCREDITATION THROUGH COMMISSION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES IN 2017

- T 4.4.1.1 Complete Self-Assessment Narrative for re-accreditation.
- T 4.4.1.2 Create a CAPRA Accreditation Standards Compliance Report FY2018 to provide status of compliance for all standards.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 4.4.2

IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE THE PARKSCORE RATING ISSUED BY THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

- T 4.4.2.1 Create internal workgroup to develop a phased plan with recommendations for improving the TPL ParkScore rating.
- T 4.4.2.2 Implement strategies to improve the annual TPL ParkScore rating.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 4.4.3

COLLECT, MEASURE AND TRACK DEPARTMENTAL PROGRESS FOR ATTAINING INDUSTRY STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES

- T 4.4.3.1 Identify and collect industry standards and best practices.
- T 4.2.3.2 Evaluate PARD standards and best practices against industry standards and best practices to determine and identify gaps.
- T 4.4.3.1 Perform a funding gap analysis for attaining industry standards and practices.

DIVERSIFY FUNDING STRATEGIES FOR AUSTIN PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

The challenge of finite fiscal resources and a rapidly growing population requires the Department to seek creative and innovative solutions to fund our extensive park system. Austin's spirit of creativity and sense of community position our Department to meet these challenges and harness the collective energy of our community through partnerships and collaboration. PARD will identify additional funding mechanisms to achieve sustainable service models through data-driven analysis that support program outcomes and fill gaps between increased demand for services and parkland assets due to population growth and cultural changes.



SI 5.1 INSTITUTE A DEPARTMENT-WIDE COST RECOVERY CULTURE AND PLAN

AS ACTION STRATEGY 5.1.1

ASSESS CURRENT FEE STRUCTURE AND ESTABLISH CRITERIA FOR SETTING FEES DEPARTMENT-WIDE

- T** 5.1.1.1 Complete SDScorecard and PASS database to calculate total direct and indirect costs for service delivery.
- T** 5.1.1.2 Communicate cost recovery expectations based on service area categories and level of service criteria.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 5.1.2

INSTITUTE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES TO CLOSE FUNDING GAPS

- T** 5.1.2.1 Analyze five years of historic budget data to identify funding gaps.
- T** 5.1.2.2 Establish a decision making process for addressing unmet needs in the budget process.
- T** 5.1.2.3 Coordinate development of budgets to close funding gaps.

SI 5.2 CULTIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE SERVICE DELIVERY AND OPERATIONS

AS ACTION STRATEGY 5.2.1

IDENTIFY BARRIERS TO INCREASING SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

- T** 5.2.1.1 Create a workgroup to identify current barriers and potential solutions to partnerships.
- T** 5.2.1.2 Compare "like" cities that retain partnerships and their policies/systems as well as the benefits received.
- T** 5.2.1.3 Standardize the Department's agreements to expedite the partnering process.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 5.2.2

TAKE A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO IDENTIFYING, SOLICITING AND ENTERING INTO PARTNERSHIPS

- T** 5.2.2.1 Identify opportunities for partnership.
- T** 5.2.2.2 Update inventory of existing partnerships.
- T** 5.2.2.3 Develop specific strategies for different partnership types (public/public, public/private, community initiated).
- T** 5.2.2.4 Develop evaluation criteria for partnerships to measure benefits.
- T** 5.2.2.5 Apply evaluation criteria to all existing partnerships to assess benefits.

QUICK FACT

The PARD online registration and payment system, activated in 2014, processed 11,302 transactions for over \$1.1 million in FY15.



IMAGINE AUSTIN

DEVELOP AS AN AFFORDABLE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY

CORE PRINCIPLE

SI 5.3 LEVERAGE INTER-JURISDICTIONAL SHARED LAND USE AND CAPITAL PLANNING PROJECTS TO ACHIEVE DEPARTMENT GOALS

ACTION STRATEGY 5.3.1

VERIFY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL PARTIES TO ENSURE EQUITABLE COST DISTRIBUTION AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

- T 5.3.1.1 Inventory inter-jurisdictional/inter-agency shared land use and capital planning project agreements.
- T 5.3.1.2 Evaluate inter-jurisdictional/inter-agency shared land use and capital planning projects to identify inequitable cost distribution and resource allocation.
- T 5.3.1.3 Standardize contractual agreements for public private and inter-agency agreements.

AS ACTION STRATEGY 5.3.2

DESIGN A SYSTEM TO COORDINATE CURRENT AND FUTURE INTER-AGENCY LAND USE, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT, PROGRAMMING, AND OPERATIONAL EFFORTS

- T 5.3.2.1 Create a report that includes a review of existing inter-agency agreements, planning and acquisition, capital programming needs, operational costs, best practices and recommendations for a system.
- T 5.3.2.2 Vet system with interagency workgroup/ stakeholders to review processes.

SI 5.4 LEVERAGE AUSTIN'S CREATIVE ECONOMY TO SUPPLEMENT CULTURAL, HISTORICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMING

AS ACTION STRATEGY 5.4.1

DEVELOP SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO CULTIVATING AND RECRUITING PROGRAMMING PARTNERS FROM THE COMMUNITY

- T 5.4.1.1 Develop a database of potential cultural, historical, and environmental programming partners (Hill Country Conservancy, Travis Audubon, etc.).
- T 5.4.1.2 Research and determine applicable business and legal considerations and constraints related to potential partnerships.



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Appendix A: Demographic & Budget Information

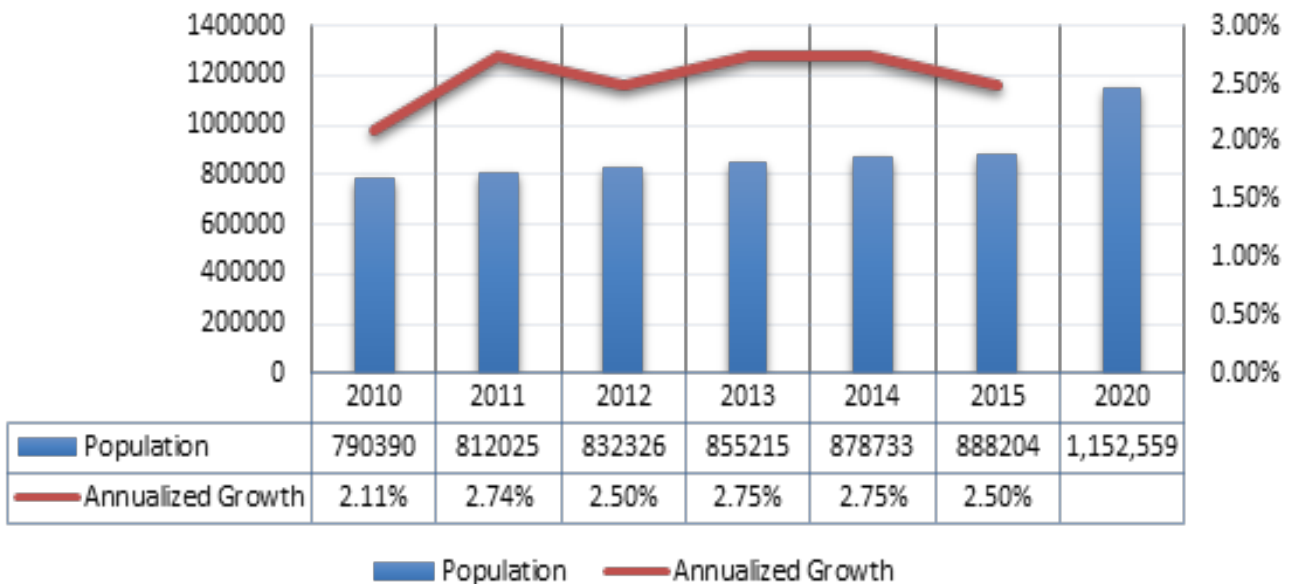
GRAPHIC 1. CITY OF AUSTIN POPULATION GROWTH 2010-2020
(PROJECTED)

AUSTIN OVERVIEW

A city's parks and recreational system directly reflects what city residents value. The City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) operates a rich, extensive, diverse set of parks, programs, facilities and services. Many things influence the services and amenities a community's parks and recreation system provides including the community demographic, population trends and available funding. This section provides a high level overview of some of those trends affecting PAR as well as a brief description of PAR's funding.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Austin has been cited by Forbes Magazine as the country's "next biggest boomtown". It is the third fastest growing city in the U.S. By 2020, the city's population is expected to exceed 1,000,000 residents. Needless to say, this growth will have an impact on PAR's existing resources and programs as well as on the demand for new parks and programs.

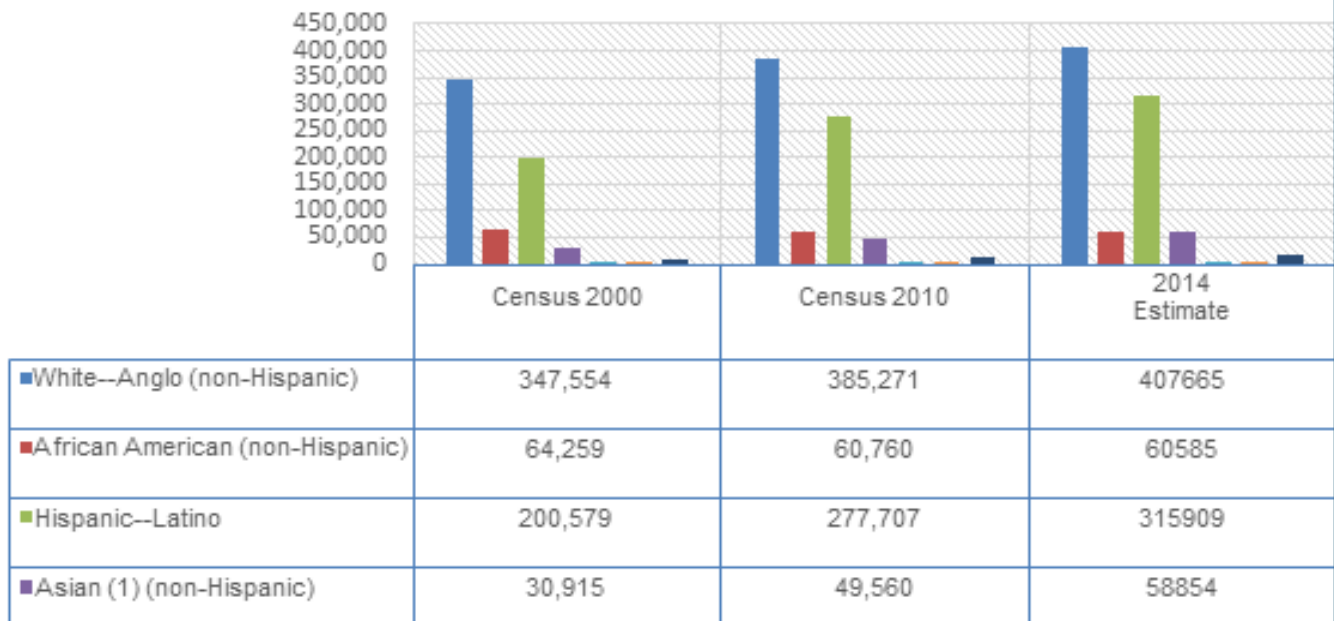


Source: City Demographer, City of Austin Planning and Zoning Department, June 2015



The City has also seen significant geographic and population shifts. The White-Anglo and African American populations are decreasing as a percentage of the total population within Austin. Many families and seniors have moved outside Austin's urban core to areas where fewer parks and amenities exist. While Austin's Asian population has almost doubled since 2000, in terms of growth, the Hispanic-Latino population continues to outpace other ethnic populations.

Austin's Racial and Ethnic Change 2000-2014



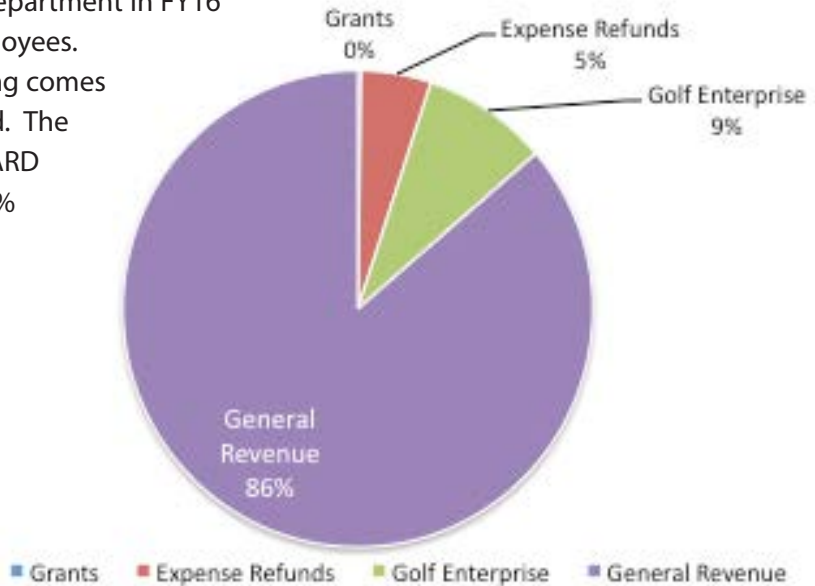
Source: City Demographer, City of Austin Planning and Zoning Department, June 2015

PARD SOURCES OF FUNDS SUMMARY 2015 - 16

PARD FUNDING

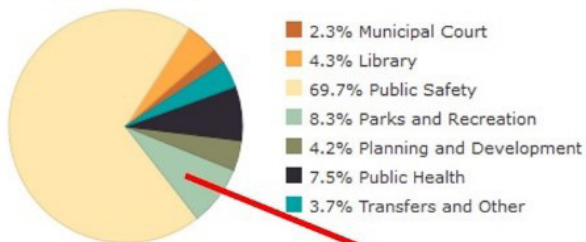
As a percent of the City of Austin's budget, the Department's share increased from 7.5 percent in FY2014 to 8.3 percent in FY2015. The PARD operating budget in FY15 was slightly less than \$75 million dollars. The City of Austin budgeted \$85.3 million for the department in FY16 and approximately 687.75 full time employees.

The majority of the Department's funding comes from the City's General Revenue Fund. The next largest source of revenue for PARD is its Golf Enterprise. More than 82 % of the Department's funding is spent on programs and parks' operations and maintenance. The graphic below shows the Department as a percent of city funding and how the appropriated funds are spent.



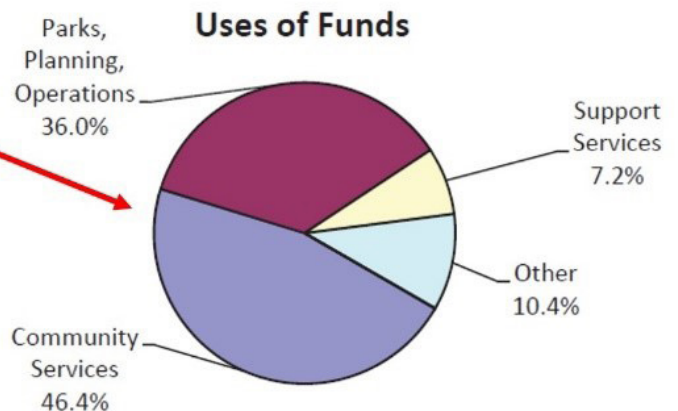
City of Austin Budget

2014 - 2015
(\$854.01 million)



Parks and Recreation Department

Uses of Funds



Source: 2014/15 Austin, Texas Approved Budget, Volume 1

Source: 2014/15 Austin, Texas Approved Budget, Volume 1

CITY OF AUSTIN MISSION, VISION & PRIDE VALUES

In developing its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, PARD carefully considered the City of Austin's mission, vision, and values to ensure that the PARD Plan aligns with the City's values.

The Austin City Manager's Office developed the City of Austin's mission and vision. The City's adopted mission statement is:

To make Austin the best-managed city in the country.

The vision statement the city adopted is:

To make Austin the city everyone's talking about—so others will look to us for best-practices, innovation and inspiration.

Austin also espouses a set of values that create the word PRIDE. The city's value statements follow:

Partner—we will partner with one another and with our community to provide the recreational, cultural and outdoor experiences for the Austin community.

Responsibility & Accountability—we take responsibility for achieving results and hold ourselves accountable for our actions.

Innovation & Sustainability—we actively seek out good ideas that have a lasting, positive impact on our work, our community, and our environment.

Diversity & Inclusion—we recognize and respect a variety of perspectives, experiences, and approaches that will help us achieve our organizational goals.

Ethics & Integrity—our action will maintain the trust and confidence of the public and the best service.

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Appendix B: Strategic Planning Process

OVERVIEW

The Parks and Recreation Department, through the Austin Parks Foundation, hired RH2 Consulting, a local management and public policy firm, to assist with the strategic planning process. The strategic planning process consisted of five key phases all of which were designed to support the agency’s plan development. During this process, the goal was to cast as broad a net as possible to ensure maximum stakeholder participation. Following is a brief timeline, activity summary and key findings or results.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TIMELINE		
PHASES	SPECIFIC ACTIVITY	TIMELINE
Learning		
Phase 1	Key Document and Data Review	January 2015
Stakehold Engagement		
Phase 2	Key Informant Interviews	February and March 2015
Phase 3	Focus Groups	April 2015
Phase 4	Electronic Surveys	May 2015
Plan Development		
Phase 5	PARD Strategic Planning Retreat	July 2015
Phase 6	PARD Division Strategic Planning Work Sessions	August-September 2015

KEY DOCUMENT AND DATA REVIEW

This phase provided the RH2 team with a solid understanding of the "as is" situation at the department. RH2 reviewed PARD’s annual reports including the department’s business; long range; asset management; climate protection; and capital improvement plans as well as yearly staff feedback; accreditation standards submissions; website materials; and other relevant departmental documents. Further, the consultants examined strategic plans from over 15 parks and recreation departments across the country and national association materials for benchmarking purposes and to identify industry best practices.

RH2 collected and reviewed data on PARD’s revenue sources, parks acreage, playground, pool and facilities condition, staffing patterns, and facility and program usage. The consultants also studied city population, economic and demographic trends.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

During the second phase of RH2's work and the first step in stakeholder engagement, RH2 interviewed key informants that includes the Executive Leadership Team. The interview guide posed 11 questions regarding the leadership's view of the department's current mission and vision statements, the public perception of the Department, the department's greatest challenges and accomplishments, and where they saw the Department heading. A list of those interviewed included:

KEY INFORMANT LIST	
Name	Position
Sara Hensley	Director
Kim McNeeley	Assistant Director
Cora Wright	Assistant Director
John Nixon	Communications & Marketing Manager
Robert Sopronyi	Organization Development Specialist

FOCUS GROUPS

Stakeholder engagement consisted of 12 focus groups with 112 PARD full-time employees or about 20 percent of the department's full-time employees. Focus group participants had a wide range of experience with the department; ranging from 3 months to 30 years. The average length of service was a little over 9 years. Field staff from various divisions within the Department comprised 8 of the 12 focus groups, while four (4) were comprised of mid-level managers from different divisions. Focus groups helped assess the alignment between upper management, division directors, program managers, and line staff.

ELECTRONIC SURVEYS – INTERNAL AND COMMUNITY

RH2 sought to further analyze staff alignment with the community through two electronic surveys – one with internal PARD staff and one with the Austin community. The internal survey was taken by 269 PARD employees or more than 40 percent of PARD's workforce and 470 Austin community members participated in the external survey.

PARD RESPONDENTS

RH2 asked Department employees (internal respondents) to identify in what division they worked. RH2 aggregated some of the smaller divisions like Administration and Support Services to protect respondent's identities. Every division had employees who responded to the survey. The greatest percentage of the responses came from Grounds Maintenance and Community Services followed by Administrative and Support Services and Nature-Based Programs. The survey also asked how long the respondent had been a PARD employee. Again, responses were distributed across response choices with the greatest percentage of respondents having been employed at PARD over 10 years.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY RESPONDENTS

Similarly, RH2 asked community respondents about their zip code and how long they had lived in Austin. Community members from 44 Austin area zip codes responded to the survey. Twenty-one (21) zip codes accounted for 94 percent of the total with zip codes 78757, 78731, and 78704 accounting for about 40 percent of the responses. More than 57 percent of the community members responding to the survey had lived in Austin and surrounding areas more than 20 years. Another 19 percent had lived in Austin more than 10 years.

RH2 designed the survey questions to validate or “triangulate” the responses given during PARD key informant interviews and focus groups.

Comparison of Community and PARD Priorities		
Most Critical Challenges/Trends	PARD Employees	Community Members
Keeping Up With Population Growth	1	4
Ensuring Parks Property & Facilities Are Safe	N/A	2
Fixing or Replacing Aging Facilities	2	1
Equitable Distribution of Services/Programs within each City Council District	4	3
Offering Competitive Wages So There Are Enough Seasonal Workers for Pools and Summer Programs	6	5
Replacing Workers Who Will Retire Soon	7	6
Upgrading or Acquiring Technology to Improve Registration or Parks Processes	5	7
New City Council Structure	3	N/A

Source: Survey Monkey Survey, RH2 Consulting, May and June 2015

Please Note: PARD employees were not asked about park safety as this is always a priority, and the public was not asked about the new council structure as this was an internal City of Austin issue.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

PARD executive leadership, Division Managers, and division leadership participated in a one-day strategic planning retreat where participants drafted mission and vision statements, goals and strategic initiatives. RH2 provided participants with a pre-reading document that included the following:

1. City of Austin trends and demographic information
2. PARD's current mission statement and vision statement
3. Examples of mission and vision statements from other parks and recreation agencies and the City of Austin
4. Findings from internal interviews with PARD senior executives, 12 internal PARD focus groups, and internal and community e-survey results

DIVISION LEVEL WORK SESSIONS

Following the strategic planning retreat, RH2 conducted two half-day work sessions with PARD leadership and Division Managers. During these sessions, participants developed action strategies and tasks for each of the goal-strategic initiative sets developed at the strategic planning retreat.

KEEPING THE STRATEGIC PLAN CURRENT

A strategic plan is a living document, one that should be updated annually to reflect circumstances at that moment. Before the plan is updated each year, the work groups, planning staff and external stakeholders will, at a minimum, complete the following tasks:

- Review internal documents including the budget, long range and capital improvement plans
- Review data collected on customer satisfaction, program enrollment, facility usage
- Engage internal and external stakeholders in the review of the previous year's strategic plan goals, strategic initiatives and the department's progress in meeting goals of the plan.
- Hold a retreat with the Executive Leadership Team and departmental managers to review the department's current strategic direction and progress toward reaching the previous year's goals
- Create an annual strategic plan update incorporating internal and external stakeholder input, relevant budgetary or other impacts that require a change in strategic direction
- Develop internal and external communication messages and delivery mechanisms concerning the strategic plan progress



AUSTIN PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021

***INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP IN PARKS AND
RECREATION EXPERIENCES***

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