



## Zilker Park Vision Plan

### Resolution of the Zilker Neighborhood Association

March 20 2023

**Whereas** Zilker Park is an irreplaceable natural area that includes Barton Springs, Eliza Springs, Zenobia Springs, and Upper Springs; Barton Creek, Eanes Creek, and other small creeks; a mix of open and forested green spaces; as well as Lady Bird Lake, and

**Whereas** Austin residents have repeatedly expressed their desire for more natural parks to help address mental and physical health and do not want their parks “paved over,” as documented in the 2019 “Our Parks, Our Future Long Range Plan” ([austintexas.gov/page/our-parks-our-future-long-range-plan](https://austintexas.gov/page/our-parks-our-future-long-range-plan)), and

**Whereas** the City of Austin has presented a 2/27/23 draft of the Zilker Metropolitan Park Vision Plan (Vision Plan) to set the direction of the park for the next 50 years, and

**Whereas** the public engagement for the Vision Plan was and is deeply flawed, relying on incomprehensible survey design with no meaningful equity component, largely ignoring what data was collected, and instead relying disproportionately on input from commercial and non-profit organizations looking to increase their revenue streams, with the design team misleading the press and hiding commercial influence, including that of ACL/Ticketmaster, and

**Whereas**, ACL/Ticketmaster has grown the music festival from 25,000 attendees to up to 450,000 per year, which damages the Park, and closes it for an unacceptable length of time, and

**Whereas** two competing visions for the park have emerged; one expensive, development-heavy and parking-focused and another that is cost-effective, nature-based, climate-forward and focused on fixing known problems, but only one of the visions was presented to the public by the consultants, and

**Whereas** the “Rewild Zilker” working group (Zilker Neighborhood Association’s Parks and Environment committee, members from Barton Hills NA, Bouldin Creek NA, Save Our Springs, Sierra Club, and Master Naturalists) proposed a nature-based alternative vision in the report “Rewilding Zilker Park” by landscape ecologist Elizabeth McGreevy, and have issued a set of detailed recommendations available at [rewildzilker.org](https://rewildzilker.org), and

**Whereas** The City of Austin PARD does not have, nor should it spend, upwards of \$200M that the current draft Vision Plan would require at the expense of other City Parks, even if that money comes from commercial interests and their donors, and

**Whereas** the City of Austin is often not able to adequately fund BASIC SERVICES in parks throughout the City, including swimming pools/ lifeguards, park rangers, public safety, restrooms, parking enforcement, trash collection, repairs, and maintenance, therefore

**Be it resolved** that Zilker Neighborhood Association recommends the following general actions be taken by the Austin City Council with regards to the Zilker Metropolitan Park Vision Plan:

**1. FULLY SUPPORT EQUITY AND CLIMATE GOALS BY FUNDING BIKE/PED/TRANSIT AND FREE SHUTTLES**

Adopt and immediately fund the truly forward-thinking internal and external transit, bike, and pedestrian elements proposed in the February 2023 draft Vision Plan. In a 50-year plan, in the context of Project Connect, in the age of climate threats, new alternatives are required to get people from every quadrant of the city to and from Zilker Park. Rethink the “Barton Springs Road diet” as presented and seek other/additional ways to reduce traffic hazards through the Park. Due to fiscal and equity concerns we cannot support the building of multiple bridges, especially the bridge over Lady Bird Lake and the land bridge.

**2. SUPPORT REWILDING OVER ECOLOGICAL UPLIFT**

Replace 75% of the “ecological uplift” in the Vision Plan with “Rewilding”. Ecological uplift is man-made landscaping requiring construction and maintenance, while Rewilding is a natural process that follows nature’s lead resulting in robust natural habitats that are better for water protection, erosion, climate mitigation, shade, wildlife and people. Rewilding is one-half to one-sixth the cost of uplift.

**3. REJECT EXPENSIVE UNNECESSARY PARKING GARAGES; PROVIDE GREEN SURFACE PARKING**

Adopt NO new parking garages, costing upwards of \$20 Million each. Maintain roughly the same number of legal parking spaces using green parking. Green parking technology is less expensive, better for water protection, climate mitigation, and shade. Green surface parking is easier to remove than parking garages, should a less car dependent future occur in the 50-year time frame of the Vision Plan. [montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/9735/Green-Sustainable-Parking-Guide-2\\_10\\_2016-Web?bidId=](http://montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/9735/Green-Sustainable-Parking-Guide-2_10_2016-Web?bidId=)

**4. REJECT FURTHER PRIVITIZATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION**

Remove the “Umbrella” non-profit proposal from the Vision Plan and keep PARD in charge of the park. Fully fund PARD and require they provide sustainable management and adequate oversight. Everyday users of Zilker Park should have the greatest influence over the Vision Plan, not those who make money from the park (for profit or non-profit.)

**5. ADDRESS THE SCALE AND SCOPE OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS and DECARBONIZE LARGE EVENTS**

Require a complete environmental and climate impact analysis of any major construction projects that are proposed in the final Vision Plan. This should include the climate costs of construction, operation, and impacts on traffic volumes. Require large events including ACL/Ticketmaster to work with environmental groups and the City to decarbonize and green up its footprint dramatically or begin to identify or develop an alternative Austin venue.