

2018 COUNCIL GOALS

1. PROVIDE AUSTIN RESIDENTS QUALITY CITY SERVICES THAT RECOGNIZE EMPLOYEES ARE CRITICAL TO PROGRAMS AND ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS TO DELIVER ON PUBLIC PRIORITIES.

- Competitive wages and an internally consistent pay plan ensures we pay city employees equally according to their job responsibilities while competing in a rapidly changing employment landscape. The City will conduct a compensation and classification study and provide appropriate budgetary considerations which will provide recommendations to keep and retain valued staff so that Austin residents can continue to rely on professional service for years to come.
- With increased projects and grant awards to deliver on community requests the fundamental reality exists of tracking payments, reporting and ensuring compliance. Council will evaluate providing resources for a part-time project assistant for financial accounting of projects so that full-time staff can account for their core responsibilities.
- Transition planning is often difficult in an organization which prides itself in being a lean operation. The Parks and Recreation Department exemplifies this fact while recognizing a continued interest in expanding program. Exchanging the leadership skills and knowledge to subsequent employees can happen if strategic goals of accomplishing new programs and increasing the marketing of existing programs happens together while enhancing the quality of life through increased programming for Austin residents. The Council will evaluate the opportunity to increase programming by hiring a Facilities Supervisor.

2. MAKE AUSTIN A LEADER IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROWTH WHILE FOCUSING ON ADDING QUALITY PAYING JOBS AND TAX BASE ENHANCEMENT.

- Housing continues to be a leading challenge to business growth and many other community indicators of prosperity. As a result Council will build on our past efforts and develop a financial incentives package based on desired construction features as produced in the schematic design which identify the financial gap. Financial contributions should be explored from employers which move the projects from concept to reality as well as positioning TIF and other financial development tools to advance needed multi-family housing development.
- With lending challenges and building material cost fluctuations developers of multifamily projects depend on securing a site quickly. With focus on utilizing existing infrastructure and capturing an urban design depends on having a site ready

for development. Council will build a reserve fund for a more proactive acquisition of property for redevelopment.

- In working with the DCA's sister association, Austin Community Growth Ventures, explore the possibility of developing an incubator to advance commercialization efforts from the Hormel Institute and possibly other business opportunities.
- Zoning regulations are at the basic infrastructure level of economic development. Austin has not had a comprehensive update to the zoning code for forty years and lacking this review can stymie economic development and place Austin at a competitive disadvantage for private investment. Council will evaluate the inclusion of a budgetary item for zoning updates as well as extra-territorial considerations.

3. MAKE AUSTIN AN ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY THAT VALUES PUBLIC PROGRAMS/AMENITIES AND PROTECTION OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES THAT ULTIMATELY ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE.

- Funding park improvements can be costly and anticipating these improvements in a systematic way is important to deliver contemporary amenities while doing so within a limited budget. Updating and compiling a Parks and Facility Master Implementation plan as well as seeking the designation appropriate parks as regionally significant and thereby eligible for Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails funding will provide effective planning tool and bring additional resources to the table to accomplish community goals for recreation.
- The Jay C. Hormel Nature Center has grown to a new level with the new impressive interpretative center. Raising the former interpretative building provides an opportunity for Council to develop, with funding partners, a natural play area to pay tribute to the years of education conducted at that facility.
- Assess current public recreation opportunities adapting to the changing needs and trends for youth and adults, allowing us to offer different or expanded programing for our residents to ensure recreation needs are met.
- The Austin Public Library has a long history of being a trusted resource for Austin residents and their staff will leverage their social capital and increase community engagement by increasing programing by 100 percent with particular focus on underserved groups while strengthening existing programing.
- Hotspot utilization continues to be a significant draw at the Austin Public Library. Efforts to help narrow the digital divide are important and the Council will continue to work with other community entities to advance doubling the amount of hotspots for Austin residents.

- We anticipate Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will move forward with Austin's wastewater treatment plant permit renewal in the coming year. Focus must rely on cost effective alternatives while protecting our valuable water resources. The ongoing facilities plan will serve as the basis for any new improvements within the Capital Improvement Plan, but Council will ensure new regulations from the MPCA permit will not place an undue burden on residents and area businesses.
- As the wastewater treatment plant permit renewal moves forward residents and business are helping to build a pool of funds for these pending infrastructure improvements to pay our appropriate share. Further efforts will work to reduce the inflow and infiltration into the collection system over a six-ten year period by performing in home sump pump inspections as well as line and manhole inspections to help limit further costly implications for our constituents.
- Continue development of the City of Austin flood mitigation program including scattered site acquisition and structural projects such as the Turtle Creek levee project, Cedar River Phase 1, Lions Park and WWTP projects.

4. A COMMUNITY DEPENDS ON THE PROTECTION OF ITS TAX BASE AND PRESERVING EXISTING HOUSING AND IMPROVE LIVABILITY IN AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOODS A PRIORITY.

- Protection of Austin's tax base is the foundational component of local government and its ability to function. Council will adopt a rental housing ordinance with affirmative inspections that will take important steps forward in protecting tax our base, insure basic life, health and safety measures, protect neighborhoods from problematic tenants, reward responsible landlords and defend tenants from poor living conditions.
- With the lack of new housing starts a systematic approach is needed to protect our existing housing stock. Opportunities for a more proactive approach to code enforcement, which doesn't rely on complaints only, vacant home registration and neighborhood revitalization efforts will be explored.
- Ongoing update of subdivision ordinance to reflect changes in, and correct inconsistencies with, current development trends.
- As an inclusive community for all our residents we will work to develop a prioritized and financially responsible plan to meet the Americans with Disability Act access ramp requirements. Building upon our inventory assessment we will conduct a public process with impacted constituencies to meet our goal of providing street designs that meet our needs for those constituents with disabilities.