

Montopolis Recreation & Community Center Project Bond Development History

The Montopolis Recreation and Community Center as a joint-use facility is aligned with Imagine Austin priorities as well as policy recommendations the Bond Election Advisory Task Force (BEATF) provided to City Council. The joint-use facility was part of a public vetting process to develop the 2012 Bond Program, with numerous opportunities for public input and engagement. Each Task Force and Task Force Committee meeting was posted per the City’s formal public meeting notice process with back-up items provided online. Audio recordings of the meetings were made available online within days after the meeting.

On June 26, 2012, the Bond Election Advisory Task Force presented a Recommendations Report to City Council, which included five general policy recommendations. Among those was the following recommendation:

“We recommend the Austin City Council and staff more aggressively explore options for shared-use facilities among different City departments as well as with Travis County, Austin Independent School District, and other school districts in the city limits of Austin.”

Bond Election Advisory Task Force Members

Jennifer Kim	Terry Mitchell	Jeb Boyt*	Jennifer McPhail
Frank Fernandez	Celia Israel	Leslie Pool*	Heather Way
Linda Guerrero*	Tom Spencer	Don Baylor, Jr.*	Craig Enoch
Rodney Ahart	Griffin Davis*	Alfonso Hernandez*	

*Member of the Parks and Open Space Committee

PROJECT BOND DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

In 2011, City Manager Marc Ott toured the Montopolis neighborhood with community leaders and discussed the Montopolis Neighborhood Park and their desire for a new recreation facility in this location. The City’s Park and Recreation Department (PAR) also conducted a feasibility study to inform the Department on the overall health of the facility. The study confirmed that the structure had numerous issues and a new facility needed to be constructed. This study informed PAR’s Needs Assessment for the 2012 Bond development process.

Bond Election Advisory Task Force and the BEATF Parks & Open Space Committee

Feb. 16, 2012: Staff presented the Needs Assessment Projects and Programs Report to the BEATF. The report contained \$1.5 billion in identified capital improvement needs. HHSD identified a need of \$8.45 million for a neighborhood center to serve the Southeast Austin community and PAR identified a \$9

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million need for construction of a new Montopolis facility for the “removal and replacement of the existing recreation center in Montopolis Park with a new community center jointly developed with the Health and Human Services Department, including associated park improvements.”

Feb. 22, March 8, March 21, and April 4, 2012: The BEATF Parks and Open Space Committee held meetings to receive an overview of Parks and Recreation Department items in the Needs Assessment Projects and Programs Report. The Committee discussed projects, programs and their potential prioritization approach. They then created a draft list of proposed funding for each project in the Committee’s portfolio and continued to discuss recommendations on projects and programs for future bond funding. The Committee and staff identified synergy between the proposed PARD Montopolis project and a separate Health and Human Service facility and staff was asked to present additional information on a joint-use facility to the BEATF Parks and Open Space Committee.

April 17, 2012: Staff provided a presentation to the Bond Election Advisory Task Force Parks and Open Space Committee about the proposed joint-use Montopolis facility with both recreational and health and human services elements. Staff estimated the capital cost for the joint-use facility to be \$15.5 million for design and construction. The Committee voted unanimously to increase funding for the Montopolis project to \$15.5 million from \$9 million. The benefits of the co-developed/joint-use facility include the ability to leverage funds and the potential to achieve cost savings in design and construction as well as operations and maintenance of the facility. Additionally, the community will have access to services at one location. City management and staff supported the Committee’s recommendation.

April 18, 2012: The Parks and Open Space Committee of the Bond Election Advisory Task Force unanimously approved parks and recreation projects to be included in the BEATF proposed 2012 Bond package.

Division of Proposed Funding for Propositions

- The original Needs Assessment, PARD identified \$9 million was needed for construction of a new Montopolis facility and HHSD identified a need of \$8.45 million for a neighborhood center.
- After the BEATF and staff identified synergy between the proposed PARD Montopolis project and a separate Health and Human Service facility needed in the same area, staff was asked to re-evaluate the current services and desired services that would be provided at a joint-use facility.
- After re-evaluation and identification of shared aspects of the proposed facility, such as roofing, HVAC and restrooms, staff estimated the capital needs at \$15.5 million for planning, design and construction of a new joint-use facility. The City uses industry standards for project budget estimating, taking into account local factors.

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- The division of proposed funding between two propositions—with \$11.78 million in needed funding for the recreation center portion of the facility and \$3.72 million for the health services portion—was based on legal counsel and was coordinated with the Attorney General’s office.

Summary of Council Discussion

Council discussed the City Manager, Staff and BEATF bond package recommendations at six work sessions or Council meetings (listed below). The concept of the joint-use Montopolis facility was specifically discussed and explained. A presentation with the proposed division of the \$15.5 million between the PARD and HHSD portions of the project was included as backup. Council also held a public hearing on the proposed 2012 Bond projects on Aug. 2.

- **June 26, 2012:** The Task Force, City Manager and staff presented several bond packages of varying sizes to City Council. In all but one of those bond packages, \$15.5 million was allocated to the Montopolis facility for design and construction. The joint-use facility was specifically discussed and explained.
<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-council/2012/20120626-wrk.htm> (Item B1)
- **Aug. 2, 2012:** City Council held a public hearing on the proposed bond packages.
<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-council/2012/20120802-reg.htm> (Item117)
- **Aug. 7, 2012:** City Council discusses 2012 Bond proposals and staff explains the concept behind the combined facility and the need for the full \$15.5 million to deliver the programming envisioned by staff based on community needs.
<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-council/2012/20120807-wrk.htm> (Item B1)
- **Aug. 14, 2012:** City staff posts presentation with information on Montopolis facility and suggested allocation of funding for HHSD and PARD on City Council Meeting site (PARD/HHS proposed division of \$15.5M, submitted in backup materials.)
<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-council/2012/20120814-wrk.htm> (Item B4)
- **Aug. 15, 2012:** City Council discusses 2012 Bond proposals and Kymberley Maddox responds to question about Montopolis facility, clarifying the difference between the proposed joint-use Montopolis facility and the proposed parking lot expansion at the Montopolis Clinic.
<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-council/2012/20120815-wrk.htm> (Item 5)
- **Aug. 16, 2012:** City Council discusses 2012 Bond proposals.
<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-council/2012/20120816-reg.htm> (Item13)
- **Aug. 17, 2012:** City Council unanimously approved placing \$385 million in bonds across seven propositions on the Nov. 6, 2012, ballot. The propositions would fund different kinds of improvements because projects paid for with voter-approved bonds must fulfill the public purpose of the proposition.

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Proposition 14 for Parks and Recreations projects would allocate \$11.78 million to the Montopolis facility. Proposition 17 for Health and Human Services projects would allocate \$3.72 million to the Montopolis facility for a total of \$15.5 million.

<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-council/2012/20120817-spec.htm> (Item 2)

Summary of Public Information

The City created and distributed more than 16,500 copies of the 2012 Bond Election Voter Information Brochure to central points of community activity including City libraries, health clinics and recreation centers as well as many Austin grocery stores. The City's website also included 2012 Bond election and Bond development materials for viewing and downloading. In addition, citizens could learn about the bond proposals in various other ways. Those include:

- Neighborhood associations and other organizations were able to request presentations. Staff presented at an Austin Neighborhoods Council meeting on Sept. 19, 2012 and the Rosedale Neighborhood Association on Oct. 29, 2012.
- Presentations were also given to professional associations and community groups by request, including the Community Action Network, the American Institute of Architects Austin and the American Society of Civil Engineers.
- The Montopolis project was included in media coverage of the bond propositions, including newspaper articles and reports aired on television stations.
- A Public Service Announcement about the bond proposals ran regularly on Channel 6 and was available online.
- The City provided a hotline that people could call to get information about the bond proposals and leave messages that would be returned by City staff.