



Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and Council Members,

Our organizations and memberships strongly encourage you to vote NO on Item 42 at this week's City Council meeting.

This item expands a parkland dedication program with little oversight and no transparency to apply to commercial, industrial, and office developments—a new fee on businesses big and small in our city.

It was placed on the Council agenda with no discussion or collaboration with stakeholders and no input from the community members who actually dedicate parkland and contribute to the parkland dedication fund. Additionally, the proposed resolution provides no information regarding the desired result or goal of the proposed change or what other factors, such as affordability, equity, or accessibility should be considered, improved, or balanced while developing the changes to the parkland dedication requirements.

The Parks and Recreation Department estimated in October 2021 that their residential fee increase would allow them to take in about \$30-40 million dollars this fiscal year alone. This fee is placed on the back of Austin residents moving into new developments, largely in the Eastern Crescent, without a promise that the money will be used to help build parks in their vicinity.

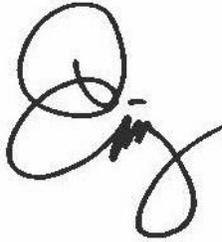
Additionally, it is unclear if this item is even legal under Texas Supreme Court and US Supreme Court rulings. Placing staff in a position to put forward a legally-suspect item without empowering them to evaluate its legality first puts the City at legal risk and could potentially cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands in legal fees fighting a future ordinance.

Austin is in an affordability crisis. This item would not reduce the amount of money that renters and new homeowners pay for parks to be built in this city—this new fee is in addition to a massive fee increase on residential properties that was implemented last fall. There is no provision that a commercial fee would be tied to a reduction in the fee for residential developments, and without a requirement from Council that such a reduction be a consideration in this process, we cannot support this item.

With the lack of engagement before putting forth this item, lack of provision for a relief in residential fees, and a lack of conviction that this item is legal, our organizations cannot support Item 42, and we encourage you to vote No on Thursday.

We welcome future discussion of how to improve the parkland dedication ordinance through a thorough and transparent stakeholder process.

Thank you,



Emily Blair, CAE  
Executive Vice President  
Austin Apartment Association



Dewitt Peart  
President and CEO  
Downtown Austin Alliance



Dianne Bangle  
CEO  
Real Estate Council of Austin