

Austin Transportation Department Director
Sent via Email: Robert.Spiller@austintexas.gov

July 14, 2020

Re: Opposition of the Integrated Parking Pilot Program
Demand to Close the Hill of Life Trailhead

Dear Director Spiller:

We are in receipt of the Austin Transportation Department's (the "**Department**") proposed Integrated Parking Pilot Program (the "**Pilot Program**") for the Woods of Westlake residential neighborhood (the "**Residential Neighborhood**"). While we appreciate the Department's efforts to finally address public safety issues the Residential Neighborhood has grappled with for years, the Pilot Program is inconsistent with what members of the Traffic Task Force were told by South Area Transportation Engineer Alison Mills and serves to further injure the residents for which it is allegedly intended to help.

First, we understand that as part of the Pilot Program all individuals visiting residents of the Residential Neighborhood (each an "**Invited Guest**") are prohibited from parking in the street unless they pay a fee to the City of Austin (the "**City**"). These Invited Guests are to be treated similar to the Hill of Life Greenbelt Trailhead (the "**City Park**") parkgoers even though they are in the Residential Neighborhood by invitation of the residents that pay taxes to live there. This pay-to-visit rule would apply to service providers, family members, caretakers, and anyone else who, in any other neighborhood, would be welcomed without conditions. Expecting Invited Guests to park in the residents' personal driveways is imprudent and inequitable as not all driveways are large enough to accommodate multiple vehicles and many residents must park their personal vehicles in their personal driveways. By requiring residents to surrender the use of their driveways, the City is essentially exercising eminent domain over Austin residents who are already suffering by paying the expense of hosting an ill-maintained City Park in their small Residential Neighborhood.

Second, while the Program allows residents to obtain a free Digital Resident Parking Zone permit during the term of the Program, the "Post-Pilot Goals" make clear that residents would be required to eventually purchase a permit to park in their own Residential Neighborhood. Candidly, the residents might be willing to support this additional monetary obligation if the Residential Neighborhood was to transition exclusively to residential-only parking with temporary permits for Invited Guests. But the City is asking the residents to pay to park in their own Residential Neighborhood while forcing Invited Guests to park in their driveways and reserving street parking for City Park visitors. This is simply unacceptable and, once again, highlights the disparate treatment the Residential Neighborhood residents are forced to face because of the presence of the City Park.

Third, in both our May 20th and June 16th letters, as well as in our conversations with Ms. Mills and Director McNeely, we made clear that, with the exception of Scottish Woods Trail, the Residential Neighborhood streets are simply too narrow to accommodate residents' vehicles,

Invited Guests' vehicles, and City Park parkgoers' vehicles. Currently, cars within the Residential Neighborhood have to pull over in residents' driveways to allow other cars to pass due to the amount of traffic and the width of the streets. This unsafe and often blind navigation system also impacts emergency vehicles and mail trucks. And yet, following the Pilot Program, the City has made clear that it intends to expand pay-to-park areas to other Residential Neighborhood streets beyond Scottish Woods Trail. This extension is completely contrary to the Pilot Program's stated goal of "mitigating increased levels of parking on resident streets" and appears to only benefit the City and its financial bottom line.

To be clear, it is the Residential Neighborhood's expectation that the City will close the City Park and establish an alternative, safer greenbelt entrance in an area that can accommodate a parking lot, restrooms, and other critical park infrastructure. We will continue to actively fight and advocate for this solution which is in the best interest of the Residential Neighborhood residents and the City Park parkgoers. Until such time as that can be achieved, if the City moves forward with short-term transportation and recreational tests, the following must be incorporated into any such pilot or post-pilot program:

- 1. Invited Guests must be able to park on the Residential Neighborhood streets at no cost;
- 2. Residential Neighborhood residents must be able to park on the Residential Neighborhood streets at no cost; and
- 3. Pay-to-park on-street parking must be limited to certain areas of Scottish Woods Trail with all other Residential Neighborhood streets designated as resident-permit parking only.

Having the Residential Neighborhood serve as the host of the City Park was never intended to be a permanent solution, and the unintended consequences of keeping it open have spiraled out of control. The City is expecting the Residential Neighborhood to manage the mounting issues, but we will no longer take on that responsibility on the City's behalf. Instead of closing the City Park, the City is proposing transportation solutions that are intended to add additional burden to the Residential Neighborhood and its residents. **The terms of the Pilot Program are unacceptable, and we unequivocally oppose these plans.** It is our hope that the City and Department will work with the Residential Neighborhood on any other proposed solutions and listen to its residents' concerns and requests. We appreciate that the Department is starting to give attention to this matter and, as we have done in all of our correspondence with the City, we welcome a meeting to discuss next steps with the appropriate parties.

Respectfully,

THE WOODS OF WESTLAKE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
THE WOODS OF WESTLAKE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION TRAFFIC TASK FORCE MEMBERS:

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- Representing Scottish Woods Trail:* Ms. Courtney Dickey esq. and Mr. Dhurvish Shah
- Representing Camp Craft Road:* Dr. Sonia Krishna
- Representing Surrey Hill Drive:* Ms. Ellen Troxclair, Mr. Anil Mahendra and Mr. Rob Johnson
- Representing Shannon Oaks Trail:* Ms. Kate McGrath, Ms. Christie Schultz, Ms. Kazmira

Representing Scottish Woods Cove: Pedonesi, Dr. Judy Leavell and Mr. John Gump
Representing Barclay Court: Ms. Sue Morton
Representing Wild Briar Pass: Ms. Jennifer Ramberg
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