

2018 City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name	Alexander Strenger
What's your favorite park in Austin? Why?	Zilker Park is my favorite park in Austin due to the proximity to Barton Springs and assortment of outdoor activities available to the public.
Ensuring equitable access to quality parks for all Austinites is a key priority for Austin Parks Foundation. How might you work as a decision-maker for both your district and the city as a whole to move the needle on equitable access to quality parks?	Expanding our bus routes is a huge step towards ensuring that people have equitable access to quality parks. Last year the City of Austin cut service to an assortment of bus stops in east Austin (specifically low income areas) making it increasingly more difficult for individuals and families to have access to the services they need. As Mayor, I propose expanding our bus routes and making sure that they run consistently in all areas of Austin. Furthermore, we need to increase the accessibility and frequency of Metro Access so that elderly and disabled individuals have equal access to our city's parks.
The City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department faces \$125 million in deferred maintenance each year, ranging from playground maintenance and aquatics needs to mowing and servicing trash and recycling receptacles. What would be your strategy for addressing this need?	We as a City need to re-prioritize our spending for the sake of the people in Austin. Instead of financing "Trumpian" business deals like the Major League Soccer Stadium, where PSV pays 0 property taxes and only a fraction of the value in rent, we could have utilized that money to help finance our Parks Department (among other necessary services that the people desperately need).
Austin Parks Foundation is continuously involved in community engagement to ensure that our projects and work align with community values and needs. What is your philosophy on community engagement, and how would you engage with the community to ensure that their needs around parks and open space are appropriately addressed?	I strongly believe that community engagement is a core component of our thriving parks departments. I believe that events like clothes drives, back to school nights, and pub crawls are integral parts towards raising money and generating support for our parks departments. I am a strong proponent of tutoring centers for children, sports leagues for people of all ages, and group fitness classes for the elderly. When I get elected I plan on holding bi-annual forums as well as collecting survey data in order to determine whether or not the needs around our parks are adequately addressed.
What do you believe the role of private partners should be in maintaining and improving public parks? What actions would you take to strengthen and improve public-private partnerships?	I am of the firm belief that private business need to pay their share of property taxes in order to build here in Austin and part of that tax revenue goes to funding our Parks Department.

Parkland dedication fees are one mechanism by which the city funds park acquisition and improvements. What is your stance on parkland dedication fees, and are you in favor of maintaining them during the Land Development Code updating process?

I support parkland dedication fees provided that they adequately fund and lead to the creation of new parks (especially in park deficient areas) here in Austin. That being said, it is far more important that (if environmentally feasible) private developers build and dedicate parkland to the public vs paying a fee. I do however, fully support a fee if the property is on land unsuitable for park use.

Do you consider parks an important community asset? Why?

Absolutely. Parks departments provide green spaces, outdoor activities, athletic events, and a sense of community to all people regardless of race, sex, gender, creed, religion, or national origin. The support that they offer to both children and the elderly is an essential service towards maintaining a healthy Austin.
