



City of Austin

Ora Houston, Council Member District 1

301 W. 2nd St., Austin, TX 78701
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Questions and Answers from Town Hall Meeting – April 18, 2015 – Economic Development

- **Cameron Rd. Just South of 290 not completed/finished. Bike lane uneven...are there plans to refinish – better streets = better economics.**

Public Works Department - We have two locations– 6307 Cameron Road and 12049 Cameron Road. These repairs are standard AWU utility cuts. When AWU has to perform work (that requires digging up the street) AWU will complete a temporary repair to the street and then contracts Public Works to complete the permanent repairs to the street. A crew will check the location to ensure the temporary repair is still in good condition and then complete any temporary repairs that are needed to make the area safe.

Permanent repairs to the location are scheduled to be completed in about 8 weeks from May 15th, pending weather conditions. Please call 3-1-1 for any additional questions or updates about road projects going on in your area.

- **Address gentrification in East Austin. (Property taxes, noise pollution)**

Council Member Houston's office - The Travis County Appraisal District appraises property according to values in proximity. For example, if one house in your neighborhood sells for \$400,000, then the value of a home priced at \$168,000 goes up. This exacerbates the movement of people unable to keep up with rising valuations and taxes of their homes. There are ways to protest valuations. That's our current system, and is current state law. However, the rise in value for properties in proximity is a guideline set by the US professional Appraisal Practice textbook. It is a market-ideology based system.

Regarding noise pollution, it is an issue that continues to grow due to the dense growth within proximity to home owners and neighborhoods. This is due to the desire for people to inhabit and set up small businesses as close as possible to the urban core, which has expanded beyond just downtown. The most important thing is to continue notifying 3-1-1 and police of noise disturbances as ordinances are currently In place.

- **What can be done to actively engage the community in a planning process to promote economic development, rather than, just relying on city directives?**

Council Member Houston's office – It is imperative that the community organize and be a part of the conversation. The aim of economic development is to improve people's lives in regards to financial growth, education, health, and opportunities. In order to achieve change the community wants, the community can be part of the process to shape city directives. Participating on boards, commission, community task forces, groups and other government discussion activities helps the Council and Mayor have a clear picture of the community vision.



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- **How do you think economic development will change perception and assumptions of our northeast Austin and east Austin communities? What does the city intend to do about building the capacity of our Colony Park/Lakeside Residents? Is there a plan?**

Council Member Houston's office - Perceptions and assumptions are sometimes deep-rooted pre-judgements and are largely personal. Council can steer economic development, but economic development is driven by private investment and community action. As far as economic capacity, there will be jobs and amenities coming with some of these developments. Currently, a plan in place is the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative.

- **There was a resolution made by previous council to find the money necessary to develop the Colony Park Masterplan. Where are we today on getting answers from the resolution directive to the city manager?**

City Manager's office - City staff from multiple departments are continuing to work through the directives outlined in this resolution. Staff from the City's Finance department has taken the lead, with multiple other departments contributing their time and efforts, including Neighborhood Housing and Community Development, Economic Development, Watershed Protection, Real Estate Services, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Capital Planning and Transportation. While staff is working to have this process completed by the end of the summer, Financial Services staff anticipates an update to be provided in May. Parks & Recreation Dept. - We believe that this is pertaining to the overall Colony Park Master plan that was just completed by Neighborhood Housing and Community Development. I am checking to see if there was any additional direction from the previous Council in regards to another master plan.

- **With the new toll road on 183 how will that affect the businesses that now exist?**

Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority - We have been working with the businesses along 183 South throughout the entire project development process to date and will continue to do so through construction. Access to businesses during construction is high on our priority list of activities to monitor and we will provide information often to the impacted businesses and neighborhoods. We will have a Community Outreach team assigned to the project to do just that.

- **Could we revisit the request for proposal that was sent out for Walter E. Long Park Golf Course? Can't we be more creative in creating RFP's for trickle up not trickledown economics? We have potential opportunity for skill point and other trickle up projects on the park land, maybe training in building trades by building cabins for oversight rental?**

Parks & Recreation Dept. - Yes, the Council could absolutely ask that we go back out with another RFP, (Request For Proposal, or RFQ, Request For Qualifications), for other project proposals. The time line



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would be approximately 9-12 months from start to finish with the RFP process. The first effort we undertook was a Request For Qualifications.

- **Proposed Golf Course Development – How much land is the city providing and what is the market value? The proposed creation of 35 jobs, are they permanent and what is the annual gross income?**

The total land area, as a part of the RFQ is 735. However, the developer only intends to utilize approximately 400-500 acres. Real Estate is working on a fair market value for the land and we should have that out to Council no later than a week. The 35 jobs is for the first course ranging in similar incomes to our current golf operations—\$35,000 to \$90,000., per year. The second course would be an additional 15 jobs for a total of 50 overall.

- **How can you help educate individuals who not understand the process of disputing property taxes?**

Call the Travis Central Appraisal District at (512) 834-9317 and request to speak to someone regarding the process of disputing property taxes. You can also visit the page on their website regarding the disputing process: <http://www.traviscad.org/arb.html>. The Travis Central Appraisal District is currently not hosting any kind of workshops.

