

January 18, 2011
(Approved by Commissioners Court)

Charter
2011 Travis County Citizens Bond Advisory Committee

This Citizens Bond Advisory Committee shall be composed of 15 members, 3 appointed by each of the 5 Commissioners Court members. The committee will establish their own operating procedures (with the guidance of this charter) and elect their own Chairperson. All meetings will be open to the public. The role of the Committee shall be the following:

1. Establish a democratic, inclusive process to study a bond program that ensures the confidence and trust of the Travis County voters. It is a fundamental expectation of the Commissioners Court in relation to the Committee that the elements of this Charter should only be implemented by the Committee or its appointed subcommittees in a public forum. This effort should be at stated meeting times, properly called, and at which all the members of the Committee or subcommittee are given an opportunity to attend. Private communication with parties who may financially benefit from the design, construction, or implementation of a candidate bond project is prohibited and must be reported.
2. Review information from Travis County staff regarding county roles and authorities, previous bond programs, the current needs for improved or additional facilities, related maintenance and operating costs for each project, and the financial capacity of the County to assume bond debt.
3. Review demographic trends and other relevant studies to determine the impact of population growth patterns on County facilities.
4. Identify the fundamentally critical needs for Travis County capital projects including county roads and State Farm-to-Market Roads, sidewalks, bikeways, trails, parks, open space, storm water drainage, and necessary county facilities in the context of the financial impact on taxpayers along with programmatic impact and community benefits.
5. Review pertinent information and identify issues regarding how a new civil and family justice center and other necessary county facilities can be coordinated with economic development efforts, planning processes, and other redevelopment projects in the central business district.
6. Determine if project proposals meet appropriate tests for inclusion in a bond program with an affordable financial scope as will be established by Commissioners Court and are coordinated with other civic efforts. Appropriate tests shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - Optimize limited bond funding and maximize the value received for the outlay of taxpayer dollars by using creative, innovative, or heretofore unused financing vehicles or techniques and achieving economies of scale and other public benefits by partnering with public and private entities.
 - All projects should be based upon need, have a significant scale and outcome, and an expected 20-year design life or better
 - All projects must be able to be completed within seven years of the bond election.
 - All projects must be consistent with County adopted plans and policies
 - All projects must demonstrate value and affordability and should include a fiscal impact analysis of their associated operating and maintenance costs in order to inform the voting public, and an analysis of the implications of not building the capital improvements.

- All candidate projects should consider joint use with other jurisdictions and due consideration should be given to overlapping debt.
 - All projects should reflect Travis County's statutory responsibilities and include serious consideration of citizens' previously voiced needs.
7. Conduct public meetings throughout Travis County from the beginning to the end of the Committee process to receive public input on proposed needs and related impacts.
 8. In order to avoid any perception of a conflict of interest, no Committee member may bid on a County capital project or benefit financially from any project under consideration.
 9. Advise the Travis County Commissioners Court on the need for a bond election and the prospects for conducting a successful election in November, 2011. If a bond program is warranted, advise the Court on the overall scope of a bond package, recommend a prioritized list of projects and report on the fiscal impacts to the County and to local jurisdictions. The Committee is asked to provide an initial status report to the Commissioners Court within two months after their first meeting and then every 6 to 8 weeks thereafter, with a final report due no later than August 2, 2011