Group Challenge:
Analyzing the City of Austin and Where It Spends It's $$$

Pull up the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for the City of Austin. This is the guide drafted by the Austin City Council for bonds, projects and the spending plan for the city for the foreseeable future.

From the CIP: "What is a capital improvement project and why is it important?"

A capital improvement project is any major improvement or expansion of City facilities or infrastructure. Infrastructure includes the basic physical structures, systems, and facilities necessary to provide services to residents and for the City's community and economic functions. Examples include sidewalks, streets, fire stations, and water and sewer systems. Infrastructure impacts the public health, safety, and quality of life for Austin residents and decisions made to invest in projects are important because they are generally large in scope and cost, and the assets they create will likely be used for decades. Capital improvement projects may include new construction and/or renovation of recreation centers and libraries, acquisition of parkland, repaving of streets, replacement of water and wastewater lines, provision of power for residents, urban trails, creek restoration, and the purchase of new fleet vehicles and information technology networks. Collectively, these projects are referred to as the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). CIP projects are varied, so some may require years of planning and construction while other may be completed in a shorter timeframe.
*Source: City of Austin Capital Improvement Plan

With your group, select ONE category/department of the CIP that you would like to learn more about from the table of contents (page 5-6), to get an idea about some of the budget spending that the City of Austin has planned. You must pick an item that another group has not (first come first serve). You will look at the role of the department in the city and some of the main expenditures it has requested the city to spend money on in its 2017 budget.

CIP Departments/Choices

Animal Services (page 31)
Austin Convention Center (page 39)
Austin Energy (page 51)
Austin Public Library (page 59)
Austin Resource Recovery (page 75)
Austin Transportation (page 87)
Austin Water Utility (page 115)
Aviation (page 205)
Building Services (page 245)
Communications and Technology Management (page 257)
Development Services Dept (page 277)
Economic Development (page 287)

Emergency Medical Services (page 301)
Fire (page 309)
Fleet Services (page 321)
Health and Human Services (page 333)
Municipal Court (page 341)
Neighborhood Housing & Community Development (page 349)
Parks and Recreation (page 367)
Planning and Zoning (page 467)
Police (page 479)
Public Works (page 493)
Watershed Protection (page 537)

Collaborative Poster/Drawing Instructions:

On your poster (or google drawing), you will need to include the following information in short phrases or summaries (in your own words):

- What are the main goals of the department in general?
- What are the expenditures that this department would like to have the city pay for in the 2017 year?
- What benefits will this provide people in the city of Austin?
- How much money will this require the City of Austin to spend?
- Is it the amount requested more or less money than in previous years?
- What money has the city already spent to make improvements for this department in recent years?

You will also need to include the following:

- A catchy slogan for what your department wants to improve
- A simple bulleted list of the expenditures requested
- An image of what service one or more of the expenditures will provide to the city (with labels and a caption of how it will affect residents of Austin)
- 2 symbols of the main goals of the department
- 2 bolded words that clearly demonstrate why your department is important
- A graph to show comparisons between expenditures requested and given in previous years.

After you research, become an expert on your department and create your visual, be prepared to share your findings with your peers.