

## *Strategic Research Associates, LLC*

**DATE:** Thursday, May 24, 2018  
**FROM:** Strategic Research Associates, LLC  
**TO:** Susan Spataro  
**SUBJECT:** MLS to Austin

A poll of registered voters in Austin, Texas finds that Austin voters are wholly against many key facets of the current plan to sell or lease public land to Crew ownership, despite displaying a tentatively positive disposition towards the relocation of the Crew to Austin. Austin voters are reluctant to sell public land in the first place, but expect that land to be sold or leased at fair market value, ownership to pay property taxes as well as the costs of infrastructure projects associated with the stadium, and the City of Austin to receive revenues from any events held at the stadium.

The following are key findings from a survey of 600 registered voters in Austin, Texas. The survey carries a margin of error of +/-4.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. It was conducted between May 21-23, 2018 via an online sample recruited to approximate the registered voter population of Austin, TX. Final results are weighted to match the age, gender, and racial characteristics of Austin, TX based on data provided by Texas Demographic Center and The University of Texas, San Antonio.

### **Key Findings**

- **Austin voters don't think the City Council should give Crew ownership public land.** A plurality of voters (43 percent) think that Crew ownership should buy private land to build a stadium, with only 19 percent saying that the Austin City Council should sell public land to Crew ownership.
- **Austin voters don't believe that Crew ownership should receive a favorable deal for public land.** 83 percent of Austin voters believe that the City Council, if it is to sell or lease land to Crew ownership, should do so at fair market value.
- **If the Austin City Council chooses to sell or lease public land to Crew ownership for below market value:**
  - 87 percent of Austin voters say that **Crew ownership should have to pay property taxes.**
  - 84 percent of Austin voters say that **the City of Austin should receive at least some of the revenue from events held at the stadium.**
- **Austin voters don't believe taxpayers should foot the bill for infrastructure changes benefiting Crew ownership.** 83 percent say that Crew ownership should pay for changes to local infrastructure, including rerouting local roads and the relocation of a Capital MetroRail station in addition to other infrastructure costs.
- **Austin voters reject any reliance on parking in neighborhoods surrounding the stadium.** 93 percent of Austin voters say that the stadium should provide enough parking for events.

Q1. How much have you heard about the potential relocation of the Columbus Crew, a Major League Soccer franchise, to Austin, TX in 2019?

- |                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| 1. A lot          | 19% |
| 2. Some           | 45  |
| 3. Not very much  | 17  |
| 4. Nothing at all | 19  |

Q2. **[ASK IF Q1 != 4]** Based on what you have heard, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the relocation of the Columbus Crew from Columbus, Ohio to Austin, Texas?

- |                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. Favorable             | 55% |
| 2. Unfavorable           | 21  |
| 3. Don't know/No opinion | 24  |

Q3. If the Columbus Crew move to Austin, would you personally attend games?

- |                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. Definitely yes        | 12% |
| 2. Probably yes          | 26  |
| 3. Might or might not    | 24  |
| 4. Probably no           | 19  |
| 5. Definitely no         | 15  |
| 6. Don't know / not sure |     |

Q4. In your opinion, should the Austin City Council sell land to the owners of the Columbus Crew to build a new stadium, should they lease public land to the owners of the Columbus Crew to build a new stadium, or should the owners of the Columbus Crew have to buy private land to build a new stadium?

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. Austin City Council should sell public land to Columbus Crew owners  | 19% |
| 2. Austin City Council should lease public land to Columbus Crew owners | 38  |
| 3. Columbus Crew owners should buy private land                         | 43  |

Q4A. If the Austin City Council sells or leases land to the owners of the Columbus Crew, is it okay to offer the land for below market value, or should the city receive fair market value for the land?

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. Austin City Council can sell/lease public land for below market value | 17% |
| 2. Austin City Council should sell/lease public land for market value    | 83  |

As you may know, the ownership group of the Columbus Crew has offered to pay for the cost of building a soccer specific Stadium on publicly owned land at McKalla Place in North Austin near the Domain if the Austin City Council provides the owners with this land.

Q5. If the Austin City Council sells or leases public land for below market value to the owners of the Columbus Crew to build a soccer specific stadium, should the owners have to pay property taxes or not?

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. Owners should have to pay property taxes     | 87% |
| 2. Owners should not have to pay property taxes | 13  |

Q6. If the Austin City Council sells or leases public land for below market value to the owners of the Columbus Crew to build a soccer specific stadium, do you think the City of Austin should receive...

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. None of the revenue from events held at the stadium | 16% |
| 2. Some of the revenue from events held at the stadium | 84  |

Q7. If the Austin City Council sells or leases public land for below market value to the owners of the Columbus Crew to build a soccer specific stadium, should the proposed stadium include enough parking for all event attendees, or can the stadium rely on local parking in the surrounding neighborhoods? **[RANDOMIZE 1-2]**

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. Stadium should provide enough parking                          | 93% |
| 2. Stadium can rely on local parking in surrounding neighborhoods | 7   |

Q8. The current plan for the proposed stadium site include major changes to local infrastructure, including rerouting local roads and the relocation of a Capital MetroRail station in addition to other costs. Who should pay for these infrastructure changes? **[RANDOMIZE 1-2]**

- |                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| 1. Austin taxpayers | 17% |
| 2. Team ownership   | 83  |

Q9. In order to assess the impact of a stadium on the Austin community, the Austin City Council has requested that the City Manager undertake a study to determine the economic, environmental, and traffic impacts on the city and the surrounding communities. Who should pay for this study? **[RANDOMIZE 1-2]**

- |                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| 1. Austin taxpayers | 30% |
| 2. Team ownership   | 70  |

Q10. If the Columbus Crew move to Austin, would you expect the economic benefits to be...

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. Concentrated among a few              | 44% |
| 2. Spread out among the Austin community | 56  |

Q11. Do you think a Major League Soccer franchise will succeed in Austin, or do you think it will fail?

- |                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Will definitely succeed | 18% |
| 2. Will probably succeed   | 46  |
| 3. Will probably fail      | 14  |
| 4. Will definitely fail    | 3   |
| 5. Don't know/No opinion   | 18  |

*We have just a few more items for statistical purposes.*

AGEG.

1. 18-29	24%
2. 30-44	32
3. 45-64	32
4. 65+	12

EDUC. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

1. Less than high school	1%
2. High school	10
3. Some college	29
4. 2-year degree	8
5. 4-year degree	31
6. Post-graduate degree (MA, LLD, PhD)	22

INCOME. What was your total household income for 2017?

1. Less than \$15,000	4%
2. \$15,000 - less than \$25,000	8
3. \$25,000 - less than \$40,000	14
4. \$40,000 - less than \$75,000	29
5. \$75,000- less than \$150,000	33
6. \$150,000 or more	9
7. Prefer not to say	3

RACE. Would you say that you are...

1. White/Anglo	57%
2. African American	7
3. Hispanic	29
4. Other	7

GENDER. What is your gender?

1. Male	48%
2. Female	52