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*Remarks Delivered by Mayor Pro Tem Sheryl Cole
Wednesday, November 30, 2011*

Let's Move Austin Forward – Together

Crowd a blueprint for Austin's future. Different types of people, different ages, different income levels, different neighborhoods, different races, different passions, but committed to Austin.

I know about your commitment to Austin because I have seen you work to champion the restoration of Waller Creek. I see people with whom I've worked to improve our parks, our neighborhood, and our libraries. People such as Nelson Linder committed to Police accountability and Mary Arnold who many consider as the mother of Austin's environmental movement.

We have a Great City. But, providence didn't bring us all here today to simply celebrate how Great we are.

Unlike some political speeches where you get dessert for dinner, I am here to remind you about our vegetables.

Austin is experiencing what we're seeing nationally — a decline of trust in government.

This crowd represents a microcosm of our entire City and you know the importance of transparent, collaborative government. A government you trust.

Austin faces some serious challenges. And we cannot address these challenges without community-wide responses — and we can't do that unless we've earned and honored the voters' trust.

Too often we as a Council have been overly focused with counting to 4, forgetting there are more than 7 people who share this city, who breathe this air, who drive these roads, who send their kids to Austin schools.

It's time to change that.

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Our challenges are coming from two fronts and feeding two fears: the first is growth.

As a great city we attract new people and we also have a city of young people who are having babies. After all, 2/3rds of our growth comes from new births right here.

But, another problem is that state and federal politicians are giving less funds to local governments and appear to care more about the next election, not the next generation. And local governments are getting left with the tab. And so every day at City Hall, we must manage less and fewer resources to provide for more and more people.

If you add 10 minutes to a person's commute — that's 20 minutes a day, 20 minutes less to get kids to soccer, band, and dance practice. Not to mention make sure they do their homework, have something for dinner, and take a bath all while someone at the office won't stop sending emails and texts about work.

Then, volunteering at your place or worship or going to a PTA meeting or neighborhood association meeting looks like one more "thing to do" that you just can't do.

And that's the real threat — the weakening of our bonds as community that serves as the foundation of trust and that brings us together to solve the problems that must be solved.

The second challenge we face is an economic one.

Austin is changing. We are a city of opportunity but that there is a disparity in opportunities. We ignore this at our own peril.

Our teen pregnancy is no better than the rest of the state and our high school dropout rate that is near the state average.

Education is the number 1 determinate of income. Lack of income not only impacts those that don't have it-it impacts us all. W/o an ever-increasing tax base we can't afford to clean our water and have safe neighborhoods

Some people ask if this is the proper role for the City. I say it's the proper for role for everybody.

I'm not talking about overstepping our authority — but, we can't say to the schools fend for yourselves.

And that is why I am here today to say my work is not done. I am seeking re-election to Place 6 to bring our community together to tackle tough issues such as growth and economic security.

As you can see, I'm not talking about me as a council member and what I have done. I'm not talking about us as a council and what we have done. I'm talking about Austin and what it was, what it is, and what we can become.

In 1839 Edwin Waller (first mayor of Austin) defined the City as existing between the banks of Waller Creek and Shoal Creek. In 1893 with the damming of the Colorado River led to the creation of Lady Bird Lake and our park system. We're here today at the Carver Museum, in the heart of the of the traditional African American community that became so after the adoption of the 1928 Austin Tomorrow plan isolating African Americans to a small portion of East Austin. Behind us is Kealing Middle School, the original Anderson High School that served African Americans in the days of segregation.

Today, African Americans live throughout our community. We are currently considering a Charter Amendment that would change our system of government to include Districts. In that process, we must not dilute African American voting strength.

However, it's time to bury the concept of a Gentle**MAN** *agreement*. A first class City does not relegate any group to a particular "PLACE". I am running for re-election to City Council, but know that I'm not always going to keep "my place."

I want to foster an open conversation about the proposed change in government that allows people to express their concerns ... but in the end focuses not on how any one group holds on to power, but about how we share power.

That's how we overcame the fear surrounding Texas Relays and showed the world what an inclusive city we can be. That's how we turned the Waller Creek revitalization into reality, a project that will create 1400 jobs and further improving Austin's position as a destination city.

That's how we'll continue to move Austin forward with the Capitol Complex reconstruction ... the revitalization of the E. 11th and 12th Street corridors ... and with the creation of a Life Science Center on Waller Creek.

With more dialogue, more openness, and more collaboration we build more trust. And with more trust, more things are possible.

We are stepping into a new era of inclusion for our City, and right here – look to your right and to your left – the people standing next to you, is the roadmap for how we move forward together.

Thank you.