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PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD DIRECTOR'S REPORT

DATE: *May 2020*

MASTER PLAN UPDATES:

John Treviño Jr. Metro Park at Morrison Ranch Master Plan: The draft master plan for the John Treviño Jr. Metro Park has been completed. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and public meeting restrictions, the presentations of the master plan to Boards and Commissions have been delayed. The park plan is tentatively scheduled to go before the Design Commission for a briefing, the Environmental Commission for action, and to the Parks and Recreation Board in June 2020. The draft master plan and additional information can be found at the project's website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/JohnTrevinoMetroPark>.

George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center Phase II Master Plan: The Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) held the Master Plan Kickoff Meeting in March. In mid-April, the consultant met with Carver staff to gather input and insight on the facility and its usage. The [SpeakUp Austin!](#) survey for the Carver Master Planning process went live on April 23 and the planning team hosted the first small group meeting virtually on May 4 with plans for future virtual small group meetings in the coming months. Additional information can be found at the project's website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/CarverATXplanning>.

Zilker Metro Park Master Plan: A request for qualifications (RFQ) was issued on March 2 to consultant teams to lead the master planning process for Zilker Metro Park. Consultant submittals were due on May 6 and the City received 16 proposals. Following the review of the proposals, PARC anticipates bringing a recommended consultant to City Council for approval in late summer 2020 and to begin the community planning and engagement process in late 2020/early 2021.

Walter E. Long Metro Park Master Plan: The Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park Master Plan remains on hold until further notice and is ready to be presented to City Council. The draft master plan and additional information can be found at the project's website: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/walter-e-long-park-master-plan>.

Land Development Code Rewrite: The LDC leadership team has met with less frequency over the past few weeks. The team will continue to meet and coordinate with the City's Legal Department and the City Manager's office in the coming weeks to determine a path forward for the LDC Revision.

DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:

Alliance Children’s Garden: Construction of the Alliance Children’s Garden has been completed; however, the construction fencing, which prevents access to the playground, will remain in place until the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted and playgrounds re-open. The children’s garden is divided into four thematic rooms that reflect Austin’s unique culture and environment, including: the hill country garden, the skyline garden, the art and culture garden, and the rock and slide valley garden. Though the garden rooms feature traditional play pieces, most play amenities are integrated into the landscape and are unlike any other play opportunities offered in Austin.



The project is funded through the Town Lake Venue Fund. In November 1998, Austin voters approved a motor vehicle rental tax to fund development of the Palmer Events Center Venue that included the development of the Alliance Children’s Garden. Some elements in the park were also funded through Austin Parks Foundation and the Urban Forestry Grant. Additional information can be found at the project’s website: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/alliance-childrens-garden>. The Alliance Children’s Garden is in Council District 9.

Liz Carpenter Fountain: In September 2019, PARD began a renovation project to fully restore the functionality of the iconic Liz Carpenter Fountain and splash pad at Butler Park. Repairs to the splash pad were needed to address pipe breaks, flooding and electrical component maintenance issues. Previous upgrades were completed in 2010. The project focused on bringing the electrical equipment above grade and replacing unserviceable spray nozzles of the water feature.



All upgrade work was completed in early May, however, upon running the fountain at full capacity a leak below the deck of the splashpad was detected. PARD is working with the contractor to repair the leak and fountain repairs will continue through June 2020. The construction fence will remain in place until the repairs are complete and restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic are lifted. The project is funded through the Town Lake Venue Fund that was used to fund the development of the Palmer Events Center and includes the Liz Carpenter Fountain. The project is in Council District 9.

Montopolis Recreation and Community Center: The Montopolis Recreation and Community Center construction project is ongoing and on track for a full completion by the end of July. Flintco Construction continues to follow all Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines to ensure staff are safe. Elevator installation, signage, outdoor furniture and specialties, rain garden and landscaping are on schedule to be completed this month.



Evergreen Cemetery: Cemetery Operations is currently working with surveyors to plat 0.53 acre of existing area that were never platted at Evergreen Cemetery.

Urban Forestry Tree Inventory: PARD Urban Forestry has been able to take advantage of social distancing procedures by spreading out to complete more of the parks' tree inventory project, which aims to ultimately map all trees on actively managed parkland. Since March, our field staff has collected tree data from Zilker Park, including Barton Springs and Zilker Botanical Garden, Dove Springs, Dick Nichols, Bartholomew, Adams-Hemphill, Big Stacy, Little Stacy, and Blunn Creek Greenbelt.

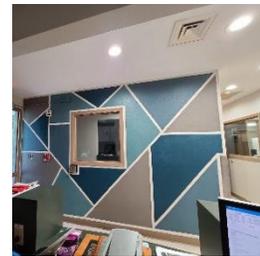
MAINTENANCE UPDATES:

Aquatics: Aquatic maintenance in collaboration with the Public Works Department is investigating possible structural issues with the Beverly Sheffield Northwest Pool pump room. A substantial walkthrough of the new Rosewood Pool restroom was performed by PARD Aquatics and other City staff on May 15. Lastly, a pressure-reducing valve was installed on Govalle’s Swimming Pool main line on May 8.

Temporary staff working for the Aquatic Division have continued to be a vital asset to the division’s operations. Currently, these staff are assisting the maintenance team in preparing aquatic facilities by painting, cleaning office and storage areas, removing leaves and power washing. It is the division’s goal to have all facilities prepared so once we can be operational, we can start training our staff and easily transition to our summer season with minimal interruption. Any pools that have been filled with water are being regularly cleaned and maintained.

Deep Eddy Pool: A new alarm system has been installed at Deep Eddy. Staff has worked to replace a trough drain and do concrete repair work in the seating gallery.

Dottie Jordan Recreation Center: Facility improvements for adaptive programming have been ongoing with anticipated completion by the end of May. Other completed improvements to the building include the following: completion of Multipurpose Room floor replacement/upgrade; painting of the front desk area (photo to right) and other areas of the building and addition of an extra door to the storage closet.



Alamo Recreation Center: Alamo back bathroom remodel is complete.

Zilker Botanical Garden Facility Improvements: Plumbing was replaced in the outdoor restrooms, making use of the closure period to implement this major repair, which involved trenching across the parking lot.



Austin Nature & Science Center Facility Improvements: The Austin Nature & Science Center (ANSC) is taking advantage of the facility closure to work on Austin Parks Foundation-funded projects that would have impacted visitors and participants. The projects include installation of lighting along the entry trail and automatic gates on Nature Center Drive.

Camacho Activity Center Facility Improvements: Camacho maintenance week improvements were completed including replacing all HVAC units.

Urban Forestry Structural Pruning Sweep: PARD Urban Forestry is getting close to finishing its first official proactive structural pruning sweep of recently planted trees. Structurally pruning young trees will ensure that they grow into the strongest form possible to endure extreme weather conditions and remain in the landscape for as long as possible.

PROGRAM/EVENT UPDATES:

Golf Operations: All golf courses, excluding Hancock, continue modified operations. Hancock is continuing 7-day a week pay station (walking only) operations. Modified operations include increased spacing of tee times, limiting groups to four players, single rider golf carts (excluding same household and traveling together), limiting food and beverage sales to packaged and to-go menu and closing all gathering areas. While the golf courses have been very busy with play, revenue generation is below normal due to single rider carts, no pro shop merchandise sales, minimal food and beverage concession and spacing of groups.

Aquatics Training: The Aquatics Division currently has approximately 156 staff who have registered for a virtual training session. For the first eight classes, the division had 72 staff register and 49 staff pass online content and attend our virtual sessions. Many staff who did not finish virtual sessions have transferred to later courses due to scheduling conflicts and shifting school/family schedules and priorities. When appropriate, staff who have completed all virtual sessions will spend one day practicing and testing skills to complete their certification. Additionally, we will continue virtual in-service trainings and professional development trainings for City of Austin lifeguards utilizing Microsoft Teams. Topics recently covered include pool maintenance, facility checks, and presentations about swim lesson programming. The Aquatic Division currently has a total of 27 cashiers and 234 lifeguards for the 2020 season. In addition, lifeguards are working in coordination with the Park Rangers to monitor the spillway of Barton Springs and surrounding park areas to support social distancing.

Asian American Resource Center Digital Town Hall: The AARC worked with the City's Equity Office to organize a digital townhall on Anti-Asian Racism and the importance of solidarity and community. Speakers included several community leaders and Mayor Steve Adler.

<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/asian-american-resource-center>



Park Monitors: PARD created a Park Monitor role to help monitor areas with high usage during the COVID-. Monitors are sharing social distancing messaging with support from Park Rangers. This role also provides job opportunities for temporary staff that are being impacted by closed facilities or changes due to COVID-19. Park Monitors are supporting entry processes at three parks that were transitioned to reservation only. PARD transitioned the following three parks to reservation only on May 14th:

- Commons Ford Ranch Metropolitan Park
- Emma Long Metropolitan Park
- Walter E. Long Park

Park Rangers: Park Rangers successfully shifted to online programming featuring videos on safety, birding, and nature. Highlights include videos on how to know when a park is busy following the “know before you go” principle, a summary of lesser known parks and virtual hikes.



From April 1-May 15, Park Rangers handled daily operations including more than 16,814 contacts regarding laws, safety, service and education; 12,329 of those contacts focused directly related to COVID-19 operations for social distancing, park amenity closure and trail

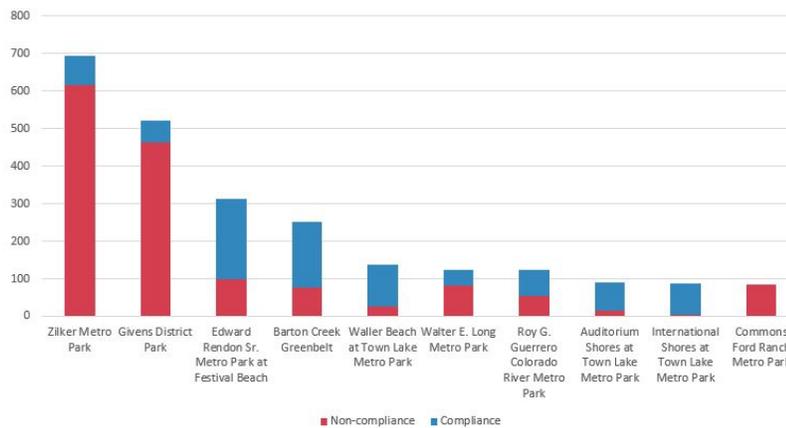
directional compliance; 819 contacts were logged for dogs off-leash during this time frame. Since October 2019, Park Rangers have had contacts with 3,469 park visitors who had their dogs off the leash.

COVID Related Contacts: 12,329

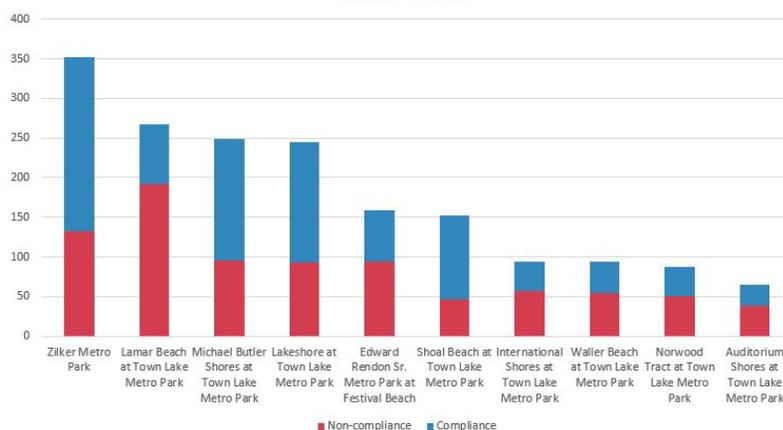
- Social distancing compliance: 1,518
- Social distancing non-compliance: 1,963
- Park amenity closure compliance: 4,056
- Park amenity closure non-compliance: 2,835
- Directional compliance: 987
- Directional non-compliance: 970

COVID-19 Contact Graphs by Location

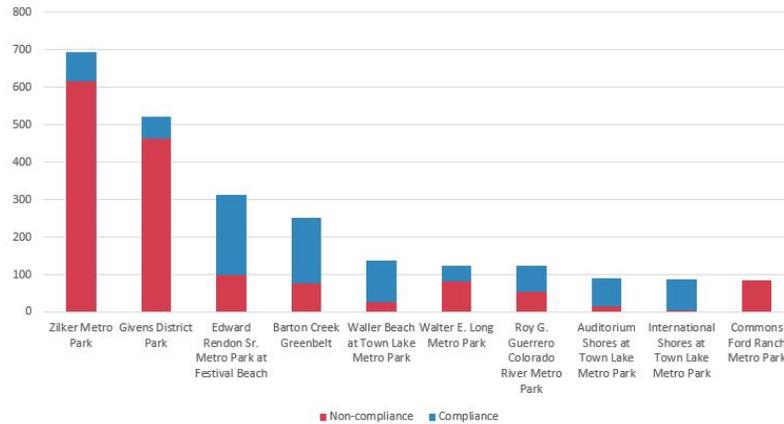
Social Distancing Contacts by Location
April 1 - May 15



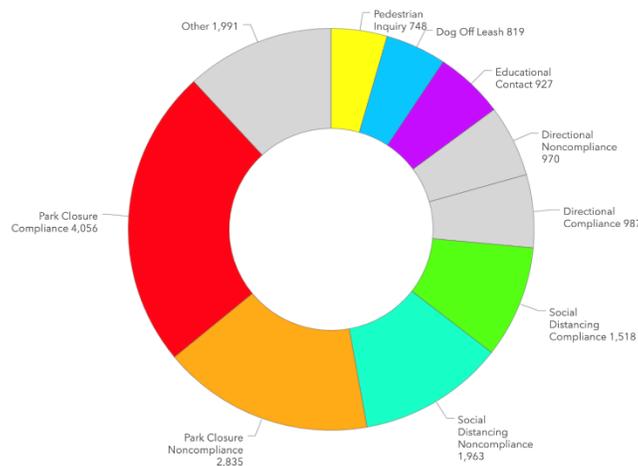
Directional Contacts by Location
April 1 - May 15



Social Distancing Contacts by Location
April 1 - May 15



Overall Contact Breakdown:



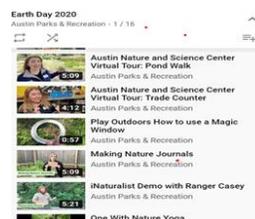
COVID-19 Programming

- **Totally Cool Totally Art:** Art Projects and DIYs:
 - <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/totally-cool-totally-art>
 - [Mask Making with Clint](#)
 - [Storytelling with Grey](#)
 - [Sneaker Painting with Tori](#)
- **McBeth Therapeutic Recreation Center: McBeth Connect YouTube Channel:**
 - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaOV4r5u89_EjXPZMbdC6eg/featured
 - [Oreo Challenge with Miranda \(and family\)](#)
 - [Cooking with John - Easy Personal Pizzas](#)
- **Roving Leader Program:** The Roving Leaders Program has maintained contact with all Spring 2020 teen participants since the beginning of COVID-19 in March. Staff conduct weekly welfare checks that include homework assistance, available resource information as well as program and news updates. In addition, Roving Leaders provide weekly online programming sessions where staff have been able to engage with participants in a community setting, leading



activities such as in-home scavenger hunts, team building exercises and current event challenges to encourage socializing while still social distancing.

- **Gus Garcia Recreation Center:** In partnership with the North area recreation centers, Gus Garcia is offering virtual programming to participants. The online content provides a variety of activities including games, fitness challenges, arts and craft and cooking activities that can be done at home.
- **50th Anniversary of Earth Day Celebration:** PARD collaborated to create a virtual Earth Day Tool Kit. The kit included activities, projects, and crafts specifically developed to help connect children and families to nature.
<https://www.youtube.com/user/AustinParksAndRec/videos>.
- **Austin Nature and Science Center:** Austin Nature and Science Center led four virtual school programs that allowed school aged participants to meet animals and discover the prehistoric animals in the Dino Pit. Nature’s Way Preschool led 28 virtual classes in which all 73 enrolled participants learned about gardening, native animals and shared story time with their teachers.
- **Zilker Botanical Garden:** Staff have developed new options for online and interpretive programming. Virtual tours of each garden are being added, with the virtual tour of the Hartman Prehistoric Garden now available. Activity guides provide inspiration for at home nature exploration, while short looping videos called “Moments of Peace” feature locations in the garden to provide a peaceful experience.
- **Camacho Activity Center:** Each week, Camacho Activity Center offers virtual nature challenges, Two Wheel Tips (focused on bike care and maintenance) and Family Film Fridays (a movie from our youth film archives for families to enjoy together).
- **Elisabet Ney Museum: Online Tours:** The Ney’s online offerings continue to grow, featuring tours of Elisabet Ney’s work, the second floor of the building and the tower, the Spring Landscape in bloom and our special exhibition. The main tour has been seen over 350 times on YouTube. The Ney also offers several art demonstrations for family activities and text-based tours, one in Spanish, available for online visitors.
- **ESB Mexican American Cultural Center Desde La Sala:** The ESB MACC’s new digital program “Desde la Sala” is a series of live streaming performances by some of the Center’s favorite artists from their living room! Performances are scheduled for every other Saturday from 7-9 pm starting on May 30. Catch the live stream on the ESB MACC’s Facebook page: facebook.com/AustinESBMACC and PARD’s YouTube channel: youtube.com/user/AustinParksAndRec.
- **Brush Square Museums: Get to Know Texas:** Staff have been busy developing new content for the website and social media. New curriculum in the education section includes our “Get to Know Texas” series written by Katie Bender of Brush Square. These fun and educational articles highlight some of the colorful Texans that have shaped our past and influenced our future.
<https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Susanna%20Dickinson.pdf>.



- **George Washington Carver Museum & Cultural Center Small Black Museum | Episode 1 | Legacy! Legacy! Legacy! | Featuring Stephanie L. Lang:** On May 1, the Carver Museum & Cultural Center launched Small Black Museum, a podcast dedicated to the dynamic exchange of ideas about art and society through the history of Austin's Black community. In episode 1, Stephanie L. Lang, founder of RECLAIM, sits down with curator, Carre Adams, to discuss her family that has lived in Austin since the 1800s as well as the historic freedmen's community of Clarksville. The podcast is streaming on Soundcloud and Apple Podcast.
- **Dougherty Arts Center: Art Is Everywhere:** The *Art Is Everywhere* interactive map was launched in early May. Featuring over 80 pins depicting local public art, the Google map uses crowdsourcing to identify and showcase art in local neighborhoods. From hidden gems to public art installations, including sculptures, murals, and street art, this map has everything needed to enjoy the free art that exists in every district in Austin. Explore, get tips on how to use the map, submit new pins to add, and leave comments. Photo Information: Artist: Eric Eley; 2019 Photo Credit: Jeremy Green
https://sites.google.com/view/artiseverywheremap/home?authuser=0&fbclid=IwAR0cnnYxr3YCqH0VUeRjWh_Nw6WMBvZmzJroZFBnGfcq7ySqGASgqJY2G2M.



COVID-19 Food Access Partnerships:

- **Brighter Bites/Dimarie:** Fresh food box drive through distributions for families beginning May 20 at Gus Garcia on Wednesdays at 10am, Givens on Thursdays at 9am and Turner-Roberts on Fridays at 10am; 1,728 boxes weekly divided between the locations (576 boxes) until funding is depleted.
- **Central Texas Food Bank (CTFB) Youth Summer Meals:** CTFB is finalizing citywide distribution locations which will include two to four PARD recreation centers. The program is scheduled to begin June 8; youth will receive seven breakfasts and seven lunches, intended for consumption each day of the week.
- **CTFB Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP):** Gus Garcia Recreation Center is currently working with the CTFB to provide the CSFP to over 100 seniors impacted by recent COVID - 19 restrictions. With the help of CTFB and community recreation staff, a drive-through food drop off was created to allow seniors to stay in their vehicles while they receive their monthly box of non-perishable foods supplies. Deliveries are scheduled for the fourth Thursday of each month from 10am - 12pm.
<https://www.centraltexasfoodbank.org/get-help/help-seniors>.
- **Meals on Wheels (MOW):** Gus Garcia continues to partner with MOW to serve our seniors by providing meal packages of daily food during the COVID-19 crisis. Meals distributions are conducted every Monday onsite in the parking lot by drive through from 10am – 2pm. The weekly meal program will help provide seniors affected by this pandemic with 5 days' worth of meals. The program has continued to distribute over 100 meals each Monday. <https://www.mealsonwheelscentraltexas.org/>.



COVID-19 Controlled Shower Access: Barton Springs, Bartholomew and Springwoods Pools, Austin Recreation Center and Gus Garcia Recreation Center continue to operate shower hours for persons experiencing homelessness. These locations are open for bathroom and shower use Monday through

Saturday from 10am - 3pm. <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/accessing-resources-during-covid-19>.

Northwest, Parque Zaragoza and Dittmar Recreation Centers Event Camp: Northwest, Parque Zaragoza and Dittmar continue to host Event Camps for the children of essential City of Austin employees. The camps offer childcare from 7am-6pm, Monday through Friday.

South Austin Recreation Center: South Austin Recreation Center has added two new program specialists to their team – Teresa Lucas and Koby Garick. Koby has transferred from the Aquatics Division, having served as a Program Specialist in support of the Barton Springs and Deep Eddy pools. Teresa previously managed a gym facility in Cedar Park. We are elated to have them join our team!

George Morales Dove Springs Recreation Center (GMDSRC): Renovation projects are continuing at the recreation center. In addition to those projects and keeping the center clean and disinfected, staff are also constantly monitoring park grounds and equipment to ensure patrons' compliance with social distancing and other health and safety requirements. Planning for summer and fall activities is ongoing and virtual programming efforts have resulted in several instructional videos being posted on YouTube for GMDSRC participants' enjoyment. Many staff have taken advantage of opportunities offsite to help with various efforts including the Event Camp at Dittmar, helping to distribute food at the El Buen Samaritano Farmers Market and assisting with parks monitoring.

Parque Zaragoza Neighborhood Group Recognizes PARD!: On Cinco de Mayo, the newly formed Amigos de Parque Zaragoza group, recognized this year's Unsung Heroes. The award went to PARD staff, who since March 19th, have been caring for City of Austin essential worker's children at the Parque Zaragoza Recreation Center, Northwest Recreation Center, and Dittmar Recreation Center. Co-founder, Jen Massing Harris, Amigos de Parque Zaragoza, stated, "While many of us have done our part to shelter in place, these full-time and temporary PARD employees have stepped up to calls for action beyond what is in their original job descriptions."



Old Bakery & Emporium: Staff at the Old Bakery & Emporium (OBE) have been busy updating and redesigning the website and social media, focusing on consignors and artists in the gallery. Staff will be working on a new marketing strategy to improve the visibility of the OBE.

Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy: The Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy applied for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Cares grant in the amount of \$29,984.98. If funded, the six-month grant will support staff and technology to develop a digital walking tour with interpretation.

Land Management and Wildlife Austin: PARD is working with the Office of Sustainability and other City Departments in updating Austin's Community Climate Plan. A draft of the plan is expected in summer 2020.

Austin Community Gardens Program: To help boost local food production during this time of food insecurity, community gardens on City-owned land were offered supplemental resources including vegetable plants (eight gardens), seeds (11 gardens), compost and mulch (five gardens). In addition, the Community Gardens Program also partnered with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service to help distribute vegetable seeds intended for the East Austin Garden Fair, which was cancelled.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES:

Land Management Plan: PARD’s new land management team is working on drafting a request for proposals (RFP) for selecting a vendor to create a land management plan that will guide the management of the Austin Nature Preserves system and other parkland natural areas to sustainably and resiliently provide vital ecosystem services to Austin and its residents, now and in the coming decades. The plan will include a site analysis, climate vulnerability analysis, refine land management goals, provide recommendations for implementation to meet land management goals and recommend biological monitoring to measure change. It is anticipated that the process to secure a vendor is expected to take 6 to 8 months.

FY 2021 Budget Development: PARD submitted its FY 2021 Proposed Budget submission on Friday, May 8. The proposed budget submission contained requests totaling an additional \$2.7M in funding and 5 FTEs. Here are upcoming key dates from the COA Budget Timeline:

CALENDAR	
<i>Jul 13</i>	<i>Proposed Budget Presentation to Council</i>
<i>Jul 23, Jul 30</i>	<i>Budget hearings</i>
<i>Jul 28, Aug 4</i>	<i>Council Budget Work Sessions</i>
<i>Aug 12</i>	<i>Tax Rate Hearing and Budget Readings</i>

COVID-19 Cost Tracking and Reporting: The COVID-19 event has been officially declared as a national disaster by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). PARD Finance is working closely with the City’s Homeland Security and Emergency Management Office (HESM) in a city-wide effort to track and report costs in the effort to be reimbursed by FEMA through its Public Assistance program. As of the end of April, PARD has incurred costs of approximately \$400,000 relating to the COVID-19 events.

Senior Congregate Meal Services Amendment: PARD has initiated an amendment to its contract with the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) to increase the number of sites receiving congregate meal services; to increase the number of service days at Dove Springs Recreation Center (from 2 days to 5 days) and to increase budget to accommodate proposed changes and a 5% rate increase. Presentations will be made to the Contacts and Concessions Committee and Parks and Recreation Board in June. This item is expected to go to Council in July.

Town Lake Concession Solicitations: The Texas Rowing Center concessionaire contract expired on May 18. The Request for Proposals (RFP) was released on March 23 and closed on April 30. One RFP response, from the current concessionaire, was received and is currently under evaluation. Additionally, to ensure ongoing services, the current concessionaire has agreed to a 180-day holdover operating period.

Expedition School Boating Concession: The City Council has directed the City Manager to provide a boating concession for The Expedition School through a resolution. PARD Contract Management staff is working closely with the vendor to develop a proposal that will serve as an essential component of a resulting contract. The Expedition School is in the process of completing its proposal. To date, PARD has not received a proposal but continue to answer questions and provide guidance. PARD has been granted an extension to August 1 from March 31 to complete the contract negotiation process.

Lions Municipal and Morris Williams Golf Course Food and Beverage Concession Operations: The current concession contract for both Lions and Morris Williams Golf Courses' food and beverage concession with Players Concession expires on May 25. PARD is worked with Events Management to coordinate a temporary food concession trailer at both locations until the courses return to normal operations and can establish a new longer-term concession agreement.

Lions Municipal Golf Course Negotiations and Operations: A lease extension is expected by the end of May. The new contract will be month-to-month with a minimum of five months notification for termination.

WebTrac/RecTrac Upgrade: The Information System Management team implemented an upgraded version of the WebTrac/RecTrac (Point of Sale Module) registration and payment system utilized by PARD. This new functionality enables patrons to make advanced reservations and obtain permits to enter parks. This reservation system enables staff to control, restrict and limit the number of patrons entering the parks. This reservation system has been implemented at the following three locations: Emma Long, Walter E Long & Commons Ford.

Pharr Tennis Center Rehabilitation Community Engagement: The first community meeting for the project will be June 11 using WebEx as the online tool. The meeting will primarily inform the community about the project with some opportunities for input.

Hancock Golf Course Planning Community Engagement: The initial feedback period after the presentation to neighborhood groups on February 29 has ended. Plans for follow-up community meetings have been delayed due to the COVID-19 situation. PARD is exploring options for engagement through a virtual meeting setting.

Metz Recreation Center Renaming: The 90-day period for comments concerning the proposed renaming of Metz Recreation Center to Rodolfo "Rudy" Mendez Recreation Center ended in early May. PARD is compiling the comments and the Director will present the findings at the June Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP): The Department has completed draft guidelines for operating facilities while promoting physical distancing and in consideration of the many public health recommendations related to COVID-19. These guidelines include an outline patron safety protocols, employee safety protocols, cleaning/sanitation protocols and other key operational modifications based upon CDC, industry experts and local health authority recommendations.