

## **PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**DATE:** *September 2020*

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### **PLANNING UPDATES:**

**Walter E. Long Metro Park Vision Plan:** The park vision plan was presented to City Council at the September 1 work session meeting. After Council direction, this vision plan is currently on the October 15 Council meeting agenda. The draft vision plan and additional information can be found at the project's website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/walter-e-long-park-vision-plan>. **District 1**

**Vision Plan for John Treviño Jr. Metropolitan Park at Morrison Ranch:** The park vision plan was presented to City Council at the September 15 work session and is scheduled to be considered for adoption by City Council on October 1, 2020, barring any additional Council direction. The draft vision plan and additional information can be found at the project's website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/john-trevino-jr-metropolitan-park-vision-plan>. **District 1**

**George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center Facility Expansion Plan:** The Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) and the consultant team continue with the planning phase following several months of community engagement. All materials from previous engagement activities, including the presentation and recording from Community Meeting #1, are available on the project's webpage and allow community members to provide feedback and address the same questions posed in Community Meeting #1. After presenting updates to the African American Resource Advisory Commission (AARAC) at their July 6 and August 3 meetings, the planning team requested a working group to continue to be involved throughout the planning process. The team will meet with the Commission's Culture and Lifelong Learning Working Group on September 22, as well as the City Technical Advisory Group on September 21. The preliminary planning concepts will be presented to the community at the second virtual community-wide meeting on October 3. The meeting will be hosted virtually via Zoom and streamed live on the Carver Museum's Facebook page. Additional information can be found at the project's website: <https://www.austintexas.gov/CarverATXplanning>, or SpeakUp Austin! page: <https://www.speakupaustin.org/carveratx-planning>. **District 1**

**Central Williamson Creek Greenway Vision Plan:** This community-activated planning process continues in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and Community Powered Workshop and their selected consultant, Asakura Robinson. PAR and the Watershed Protection Department (WPD) maintain involvement through a working group of City staff members including the National Park Service; the project also has a working group of community members. The team will host the second round of virtual community picnics on October 15 and 17. For additional information, upcoming events and opportunities to get involved visit the partner website at <https://www.centralwilliamsoncreek.net/>, or PAR's website at <https://austintexas.gov/department/central-williamson-creek-greenway-vision-plan>. **District 3**

## DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:

**Montopolis Recreation and Community Center:** Construction began in September 2018 and has reached final completion as scheduled. PARD began occupying the facility in early summer and continues to prepare the building for reopening to the public. Remaining work includes finalizing networking connectivity, installation of IT equipment and rain garden maintenance. In addition, four remaining Art in Public Places projects are expected to be fully installed by the end of September.

This project, funded in the amount of approximately \$15 million by the 2012 G.O. Bond, provides over 33,000 sq. ft. of new space, including a commercial kitchen, gymnasium, fitness room, computer lab, conference rooms and educational programming areas. In addition, generous landscaped courtyards on both the east and west sides of the building are intended to activate the street frontage, encourage social interaction and invite the pedestrian into the building's central atrium. The building's design seeks to support the initiatives of both sponsor departments, PARD and Austin Public Health, by fostering mental and physical well-being through community recreation and the pursuit of healthy lifestyles. The project is on track to achieve LEED Gold certification. The facility will reopen to the public in accordance with the City of Austin COVID-19 protocols. **District 3**

**Bull Creek District Park:** The majority of the proposed amenities and site improvements are focused on the park trail and picnic areas near the existing parking lot and restroom that anchor the district park. The intent is to preserve the park's natural beauty and characteristics while providing long-term solutions to connectivity, wayfinding, creek access and waste management. The accessibility improvements are nearing completion. The contractor has been working through much of the summer to pour new concrete pathways (8,000 sq. ft.) and improve access to many of the existing, well-loved amenities throughout the park. These improvements will allow the park's natural beauty to be enjoyed by all for many years.



**Left:** A new accessible walkway leads to the historic Bull Creek stage and bouldering area.

**Right:** A new brick wall will match the existing restroom and provide seating and community gathering opportunities. Trees will be planted in October.

Remaining work is focused on many of the smaller scale, new amenities that are strategically positioned throughout the park, including an informational kiosk, a nature play space and a community gathering plaza near the existing restrooms. Work on these new features is expected to be completed in October. The project experienced some delays due to COVID-19 and subcontractor availability in early summer.

Funding for the improvements is provided through the 2012 and 2018 G.O. Bonds. Additional information about the master plan and the park improvements can be found on the project's website: <https://austintexas.gov/bullcreekplan>. **District 10**

**Circle C Metropolitan Park:** The Circle C playground replacement focused on providing a new, enjoyable playground in Circle C Metro Park that meets and exceeds accessibility and playground standards, while providing play opportunities for children of all abilities. Shade structures were integrated into the new playground equipment with nature play and picnicking opportunities provided under the existing live oak canopy. Funding for the improvements is provided through Parkland Dedication fees and 2018 G.O. Bonds. Project completion is anticipated in October. **District 8**



View of the new play equipment and swings. A new turnabout is set in the foreground.

## MAINTENANCE UPDATES:

**Austin Memorial Cemetery:** Cemetery Operations continues to work with the Public Works Department to install and repair the roads of the Cemetery, which is funded under the 2018 bond. This will also include new roads that will be installed in Section 12. **District 7**

**Bartholomew and Govalle Pools:** New electrical disconnect has been installed at Bartholomew Pool for the slides and the Division has received thermal blankets and blanket reels for heating the Govalle Swimming Pool for off-season use. **Districts 3 and 4**

**Butler Pitch and Putt Golf Course:** The Course remains closed with ongoing maintenance repairs and the new ADA accessible bathroom project continuing through November with a planned re-opening in December. **District 9**

**Jimmy Clay Golf Course:** The irrigation renovation project will begin construction in late September and is anticipated to last five months. The construction team is working to keep nine holes open throughout the project but may be able to have only two holes closed at a time for much of the project. Staff will continue to water the course with water trucks to preserve turf. This project is funded through 2018 bonds. **District 2**

**Deferred Maintenance Projects:** PARD has addressed otherwise unfunded needs like HVAC systems, gym floors, courts, and docks at 13 locations through the Deferred Maintenance Program. These projects have been funded by a combined \$2.2 million appropriated to PARD's Capital Budget in Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020.

The Fiscal Year 2021 Approved Budget will appropriate an additional \$2.1 million for PARD Deferred Maintenance:

- \$1.35 million will be invested in replacing athletic field lighting systems at Givens District Park, Martin Fields at Edward Rendon Sr. Metro Park at Festival Beach, Parque Zaragoza Neighborhood Park, Rosewood Neighborhood Park, and South Austin Neighborhood Park. The systems identified for replacement have frequent maintenance issues that inhibit PARD programming at the fields. A third-party assessment also identified structurally deficient wood poles within these systems that pose a safety risk.
- \$750,000 will contribute to various building deferred maintenance projects, primarily in east Austin recreation centers. Projects will include replacements and improvements to HVAC systems, elevators, windows, bleachers, and flooring.

Since the last program update to PARB in June, three projects have been completed and one is approaching completion:

- **Jack W. Robinson PARD Main Office HVAC Replacement** – PARD completed the replacement of a roof top 60-ton chiller and upgrades to air handling equipment and HVAC controls for energy management in July. **District 5**
- **Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex Skating Rink Floor Replacement** – PARD completed the replacement of the Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex skating rink's flooring system with a hardwood floor to accommodate skating, basketball, and other event activities in June. **District 1**

- **Martin Field Light Pole Demolition** – PARD completed the removal of five 80-foot and 84-foot metal field light poles that had reached the end of their life expectancy in June. A new lighting system will be installed with Fiscal Year 2021's Deferred Maintenance appropriation. The Martin Mixed Use and Softball Fields are located in Edward Rendon Sr. Metro Park at Festival Beach. **District 3**



- **Waller Creek Boathouse Dock Replacement** – Work began in May to repair the gangway, fixed dock and floating docks at the Waller Creek Boathouse. The dock repairs have been completed and final adjustments to the floating docks are expected to be finished in September. **District 9**



## PROGRAM/EVENT UPDATES:

**Hancock Golf Course:** PARD is exploring options for at least two additional virtual engagement meetings related to Hancock golf operations. PARD is planning for early November to further discuss concessionary concept ideas.

**Golf Division:** Golf tournament capabilities continue to be closed to patrons until further notice.

**Waterloo Greenway:** PARD Office of Special Events, the Austin Center for Events (ACE) and representatives of Waterloo Greenway have continued meeting this month regarding the 2021 opening of Waterloo Park. The discussion includes draft event site plans, sound management and related items associated with the 5,000-person occupancy outdoor amphitheater.

**Aquatic Division:** All sites currently remain closed to patrons. Aquatic Division staff are continuing to support PARD with park monitor positions and other alternate assignments throughout the city. The Division is currently working to develop an alternative schedule for reopening pools with the schedule to be determined by staff availability and COVID -19 modified procedures.

**Athletic Programs:** All direct and contracted athletic programs and leagues for youth and adults remain suspended under PARD COVID-19 modified operating procedures. For information on upcoming virtual programs, please visit [capitalcityathletics.com](http://capitalcityathletics.com).

**Tennis Centers:** Austin, Caswell, Blondie Pharr and South Austin Tennis Centers continue to operate under reduced capacity and COVID-19 modified operating procedures. ***Neighborhood tennis courts are now accessible.***

**CTFB Youth Afterschool Meal Program:** CTFB Youth Afterschool Meal Program is finalizing plans to distribute youth meal packs at six locations:

- Givens Recreation Center
- Dittmar Recreation Center
- Dove Springs Recreation Center
- Montopolis Recreation Center
- South Austin Recreation Center
- Turner-Roberts Recreation Center

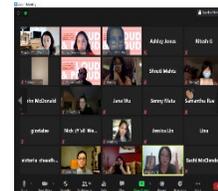
Staff is awaiting the finalized serving days/times and what the meal packs will include.

**Event Camps/Virtual Learning:** Delores Duffie Recreation Center continues to provide support for the City's essential employees via day camps.

**Virtual Afterschool Clubs:** Community Recreation is planning two sessions of afterschool recreation virtual clubs. Topics included are Junior Detective, Magic Moves, Game On!, Exploration Station, Muscle Monsters, Connection Hour, Scribe Tribe, Power Fit Kids, Junior Scientist and Between the lines (art) to name a few. Clubs will begin at 3:00pm and will conclude at 7:00pm. Age groups include 5-7, 8-11 and 12-16. Clubs are free, but registration will be required. It is great to see the creative side coming out in the design of these afterschool clubs.

**Asian American Resource Center (AARC) Ya'll We Asian, Loud & Proud Open Mic:**

On August 6, the AARC hosted “Y’all We Asian, Loud & Proud” Open Mic-Online Edition. It was night of community building filled with comedy, music, poetry, and more with 17 performers and 112 people in attendance. On August 15, AARC held a virtual screening and community discussion of “SEADRIFT,” a documentary feature directed by Tim Tsai. This talkback event explored Asian American history here in Texas and drew meaningful correlations between the film and present-day discussions around racism, equity and social justice; over 140 people viewed the film and 51 people attended the talkback. On August 29, the AARC hosted our first virtual exhibit, “Tea and Travel,” with our Visions of Asia/FOTO ATX photographers; 36 participants attended. To stay up-to-date on all that’s happening at the AARC, follow: <https://www.facebook.com/aarcatx>.



**Brush Square Museums Walking Tour:** Brush Square Museums staff have created a new self-guided walking tour through downtown Austin. Follow the famous O. Henry's footsteps through downtown on this walking tour while hearing the O. Henry Stories associated with these historic buildings. This is a fun and safe way to go out and explore Austin.

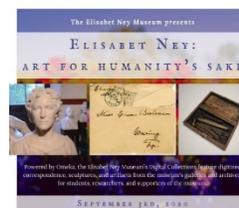


**Dougherty Arts Center Foto ATX Exhibit – Amar Gupta, Sarah Luna, Michelle Gardella:** This August, the

Dougherty Arts Center hosted virtual exhibits by three Austin-based photographers: Amar Gupta, Sarah Luna and Michelle Gardella. Participants viewed Gupta’s visual narrative on the martial art Muay Thai, discovered Luna's process of sculpture and photography, and experienced Gardella’s eleven years photographing the story of women’s reunification with water. The exhibit culminated with an artist talk on August 26 with 578 attendees. Please visit: <https://spark.adobe.com/page/RStKV0U9IbWGD/>.

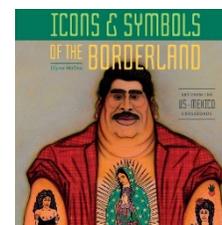


**Elisabet Ney Museum Art for Humanity’s Sake:** On September 3, the Museum launched the remarkable “Elisabet Ney: Art For Humanity’s Sake.” Visitors worldwide can now experience 200 Elisabet Ney artifacts, including sculptures, letters, photos, tools and even clothing online. High quality photos and very well-written and informative texts illuminate Elisabet, her work, her subjects, her life and her story. Starting in January 2020 as a much smaller intern project, it’s blossomed thanks largely to the COVID closure. Newly under-occupied temps, a Summer VISTA volunteer and the intern together greatly expanded and completed this effort under full time staff guidance. Please visit <https://elisabetneymuseum.omeka.net/> for more details.



**ESB Mexican American Resource Center XX at the Crossroads XX, Exhibit Opening by Diana Molina:** A multi-media exhibition by Diana Molina will trace a labyrinth of

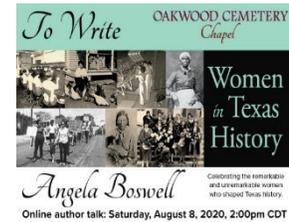
photography, film, and collage to crisscross dimensions of the Mestiza experience in a storyline that portrays and memorializes decades of border trajectories and ancestral journey leading to 2020. The female perspective is at the core of the storytelling as we reimagine, collectively, equity of representation and voice. The virtual exhibition celebration occurred on September 18 at 7:00pm on our social media pages. The kick-off program features artists from Molina’s book, *Icons and Symbols of the Borderland: Art from the US-Mexico Crossroads* Cesar Martinez, Margo Tamez, Victoria Suescum, Davinia Miraval, and Gaspar Enriquez.



**George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center Coker, Bereal and Lauren:** The George Washington Carver Museum opened the exhibition, Coker, Bereal and Lauren, curated by Hakeem Adewumi as a part of the Museum's and Cultural Programs annual FotoATX project. This virtual exhibition featured three Black Texas-based photographers and visual story tellers: Afritina Coker, Adraint Bereal and Bria Lauren. The work in this exhibition takes us into the visual cannon of Black vernacular photography and its history in subverting the gaze of the viewer. The curator also hosted an artist talk with the three artists on August 25. FotoATX website, [www.carvermuseumatx.org](http://www.carvermuseumatx.org), engagement number: 968.



**Oakwood Cemetery Chapel To Write: Women in Texas History:** On August 8, for the summer online exhibit "To Vote," the Chapel hosted an online author talk in the series "To Write: Women in Texas History by Angela Oswell"; 37 people registered through EventBrite. Please visit : <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/oakwood-cemetery-chapel-exhibits>.



**Old Bakery Emporium Martha Ruth Exhibit:** On September 4, the Old Bakery Emporium designed another digital exhibit, a collaboration with Capitol Art Society. Since it went live there have been 106 "likes". Please visit <https://spark.adobe.com/page/U715XOLOMUnZ6/>.



## ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES:

**Bring Your Own Booze (BYOB):** City-operated golf course will begin to transition to eliminate BYOB starting October 1. Notice of this transition has been posted [online](#) at each site.

**Oakwood Cemetery Chapel Symposium:** On October 9-10, PARD is hosting a 2-day symposium to discuss the findings from the May 2020 archeological report about the human remains that were found under the footprint of the Oakwood Cemetery Chapel during the building rehabilitation in 2016. The symposium will be hosted online, free, and open to the public.

The symposium will provide a provocative opportunity for the public to learn more about the archeology report released on May 14 and what the evolving fields of Bio-Archeology, Genetic Anthropology and African American Archaeology can now reveal about people who lived more than a century before.

The event will also invite the community to provide ideas about how these individuals are honored and memorialized. Additionally, viewers will learn how the community can become more involved in the discovery of the individual's identities. More information is available on the symposium website: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d0b7ec88a46147ff835c3be602d72938/>.

**Leave No Trace 2020:** The Leave No Trace campaign launched in August on Charter Spectrum Cable, Univision, YouTube and social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Additionally, advertisements were placed in the Austin Chronicle, The Villager and El Mundo publications. Using a combination of public service announcement videos produced by ATXN and social media graphics that highlight the Leave No Place principles, the August campaign has a combined total of 1,194,872 impressions across all social media platforms and YouTube. The target audience for the English advertisements were males aged 18-30 who attend parks while the Spanish advertisements targeted Spanish-speaking families in the Central Texas region.

The Leave No Trace PSAs have over 45,00 YouTube views for the English version and 29,000 views for Spanish, placing both videos in the top 20 most viewed on ATXN's YouTube channel:

- "Stay Cool" Leave No Trace PSA – English: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orObqnAw\\_i8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orObqnAw_i8)
- "Cuida La Naturaleza" Sin Dejar Huellas PSA: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQRGQ3b\\_Ukk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQRGQ3b_Ukk)
- ATXN YouTube Page: <https://www.youtube.com/user/austintexasgov/videos?view=0&sort=p&flow=grid>

The reach and view counts for these videos will continue to rise through the paid campaign and organically as the ads continue through September. The last piece of printed material for the Leave No Trace campaign are H-Frame signs with each of the Leave No Trace principles that will be placed at designated "hot spots" in parks and trails as defined by the Austin Park Rangers. Completion and posting of these signs are expected by the end of September.

**Covid-19 Communications Coordination:** The Community Engagement Unit (CEU) continues to coordinate internal and external communications regarding PARD amenity and facility openings and COVID-19 protocol with the Executive Team and the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Office (HSEM). As of September 9, open amenities include boat launches, boat docks,

boat concessions, clay shooting concessions, food concessions, golf courses, park greenspaces and trails, tennis centers, outdoor restrooms and water fountains.

**Fiscal Year 2021 Approved Budget:** The total Fiscal Year 2021 Approved General Fund Budget for PARD is \$101.6 million with 703.75 full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) and the approved Golf Fund Budget is \$8.1 million with 41 FTEs. The General fund base budget increased by \$3.2 million and 12 FTEs, while there was a minimal increase to the Golf Budget of \$47,000 for city-wide wage adjustments.

Here is a high-level summary of key budget items:

**STANDARD CITY-WIDE COST DRIVERS - \$1.7 million**

- Employee wage adjustment increases
- Fleet maintenance and fuel
- City support services

**DEPARTMENT-WIDE COST DRIVERS - \$1.2 million**

- CIP Operation and Maintenance Support – 4.0 FTEs
- Senior Services Outreach Services – 1.0 FTE (fully funded by base budget)
- Senior Transportation – 2.0 FTEs transferred from grant fund (fully funded by base budget)
- Park Planning – 1.0 FTE to aid in shortened review cycles (fully funded by CIP)
- Forestry Services for Parkland Acquisitions
- Park Planning - Highland Planning & Development Center (rent/utilities allocation)
- Contract increases Department-wide
- Adjustments for Fiscal Year 2020 rollover items

**BUDGET AMENDMENT**

- Trails Operations & Maintenance – \$300,000 which includes 4.0 FTEs
- There were additional PARD related items passed via budget amendment placed in other funds:
  - \$731,000 placed in the City’s Fleet Department’s CIP budget to support Trails Operations & Maintenance
  - \$750,000 re-allocated to PARD CIP fund for deferred maintenance

**Inventory Training:** PARD Financial Services Division Accounting will conduct an “Inventory Management Training” on September 25. This training is intended to assist PARD Division Managers and their respective area managers in maintaining control over Capital Assets/Fixed Assets, Controllable Assets/Tracked Property, Materials and Supplies, Information Technology items, Inventory Held for Resale (merchandise), and chemicals purchased by PARD. It is meant to safeguard City of Austin property and ensure accountability is maintained throughout the property life cycle.