

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD DIRECTOR'S REPORT

DATE: *October 2020*

PLANNING UPDATES:

Walter E Long and John Trevino Jr. Metro Parks: On October 15, the City Council unanimously approved the park vision plans for the two Metropolitan Parks in Northeast Austin. For further information on the vision plans, please visit for the [Walter E Long Metro Park Vision Plan](#) and for the [John Trevino Jr. Metro Park Vision Plan](#). **District 1**

Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest District Park Vision Plan: The Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) is working with a local landscape architecture firm, RVi, on the development of the vision plan for the park. The plan will provide recommendations for enhancement of the existing facilities and development of new facilities to meet recreational needs through a well-planned and documented community engagement process. The first meetings will be held in late fall of 2020, with a final Vision Plan, including design and phasing recommendations, presented to Boards and Commissions for approval in the summer/fall of 2021. For more information, please visit the [project's webpage](#). **District 7**

George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center Facility Expansion Plan: On October 3, PAR and the consultant team, Smith & Company with Perkins & Will, hosted the second virtual community meeting to discuss the George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogical Center Facility Expansion Plan. Community members were presented with three concepts for the expansion and discussed each option. The meeting presentation and video are available on the project's webpage; the planning team invited those who were unable to attend to provide feedback on the concepts via SpeakUp Austin through October 20. The team intends to use the cumulative input to refine a single concept to present to the community at the final community-wide meeting, scheduled for Saturday, November 21 at 1:00pm. PAR and the consultant team will continue to engage with the project's Technical Advisory Committee and the African American Resource Advisory Commission throughout the planning phase. Visit the [project's webpage](#) and the [SpeakUp Austin webpage](#). **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 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 held the second round of virtual community picnics on October 15 and 17, and community members were asked to collectively prioritize their favorite concepts for the future of this area based on the input gathered thus far. Additionally, the planning team offers regular "Creek Chats" via Zoom as an opportunity for more in-depth community conversations, questions, and ideas surrounding the vision plan, as well as "conversation tool kits" on the project website for community members to engage their own family and friends. Meeting materials and the Draft Site Inventory and Analysis Chapter of the Plan are also available on the [partner website](#) or [PAR's project website](#). **District 3**

Land Development Code (LDC) Rewrite: After District Judge Jan Soifer’s ruling in March, which rendered the first two votes on the draft LDC null and void, the LDC leadership team met with the City Manager to reassess and discuss a way forward. At this point, there is still no clear course or timeline. The draft LDC that was prepared for 3rd reading, now called the Reference Document is being completed, but not planned for publication. The LDC Leadership Team will host one-on-one meetings with Council offices to gauge priorities and direction regarding the LDC. There has been some interest in bringing forward Code Amendments to the existing Title 25 and Watershed-related amendments have been highlighted, but no final decision related to this consideration. No Parkland-related amendments have been proposed at this time. **All Districts**

DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:

Dougherty Arts Center: PARD is taking the next steps toward moving the Dougherty Arts Center out of the beloved naval center on Barton Springs Road and into a newly envisioned building on Butler Shores Park. The Dougherty Arts Center has been the heart of the arts in Austin since 1978 and is committed to supporting emerging arts through established artists by creating opportunities to showcase work and experience art firsthand. This project follows on the heels of the 2018 community engagement process and City Council direction in spring 2019. This phase of the project includes the design of three plan alternatives for the redevelopment site, community outreach and presentations to City Boards and Commissions. It is anticipated that design and construction phase services will continue following the completion of this phase in early 2021.

PARD is looking for community feedback on the vision for the new facility and will hold the first community meeting associated with the design phase on October 28 at 5:00pm. Interested stakeholders can register to attend at <https://publicinput.com/DACproject>. Additional information can be found on the [project's webpage](#). **District 5**



Butler Shores Conceptual Plan (as presented to City Council in May 2019)

Fiscal Year 2020 PARD Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Wrap-Up: The PARD CIP completed several significant projects in 2020 on the way to achieving a Department record \$47.8 million in capital spending.

Major Projects Completed in 2020

- Alliance Children's Garden (District 9)
- Colony Park District Park (District 1)

- Festival Beach Restroom (District 3)
- George Morales Dove Springs Recreation Center Expansion (District 2)
- Georgian Acres Neighborhood Park (District 4)
- Liz Carpenter Fountain (District 9)
- Montopolis Recreation and Community Center (District 3)
- Onion Creek Metro Park (District 2)
- Rosewood Bathhouse (District 1)
- Tanglewood Neighborhood Park (District 6)
- Walsh Boat Landing (District 10)

Major Projects Currently Under Construction

- Balcones District Park Playscape and Pavilion (District 7)
- Circle C Ranch at Slaughter Creek Metro Park Playscape (District 8)
- Comal Pocket Park (District 3)
- Emma Long Metro Park (District 10)
- Jimmy Clay Golf Course Irrigation (District 2)
- O. Henry Museum Restoration (District 9)
- Veterans Pocket Park (District 10)
- Waterloo Park (District 1)
- Zilker Barton Creek Trailhead Restroom (District 8)
- Zilker Café Rehabilitation (District 8)

Now 18 months into implementation, Propositions B and C of the 2018 General Obligation Bond Program have funded almost 90 PARD projects and land acquisitions. The largest projects in the program, Phase II of the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center, the Dougherty Arts Center Replacement, and the new Colony Park Pool and Givens Pool Renovation, had design contracts approved by Council in summer 2020 and will spend the coming year in the design phase.

MAINTENANCE UPDATES:

Evergreen Cemetery Monument Clean-up: Significant progress continues in the removal of the graffiti from the Evergreen Cemetery monuments. The restoration team has completed six of the 15 monuments; however, several more applications of the graffiti removal product are needed due to the porosity of the remaining monument stones. **District 1**



Oakwood Cemetery Navasota Street Gates: The entry gates on the Navasota Street side, that were closed earlier this year due to a vehicle accident, have now been fully repaired and reopened. **District 1**



Jimmy Clay Golf Course: The irrigation renovation project had been delayed due to a back order on pipe but was able to start on October 21. Equipment staging for the project is complete. The course will likely only need to close two holes at a time in the early stages and should be able to limit the 9-hole closure and full course closure throughout the project, which is estimated to take five months. **District 2**

Austin Nature & Science Center Maintenance: In partnership with Austin Resource Recovery's Brown Fields Program, the Austin Nature & Science Center installed three monitoring wells at the Outpost Ropes Course. The Austin Parks Foundation paid for crushed granite for the trails at the Center to be refreshed. The second phase of the path lighting was completed and there was a kick-off meeting for the third phase: installing new lighting in the Birds of Prey exhibit. **District 8**

Zilker Botanical Garden improvements: The Zilker Botanical Garden removed brush, bamboo and debris from its perimeter fence line along Stratford Drive and Barton Springs Road which creates a better sightline for safety along Stratford. This work also greatly improves the street appeal for the Garden and opens possibilities for future perimeter improvements. **District 8**

PROGRAM/EVENT UPDATES:

Oakwood Cemetery “Altogether Here—A Community Symposium for Discovery and Remembrance”:

Staff from three PARD Divisions collaborated to produce “Altogether Here—A Community Symposium for Discovery and Remembrance” on October 9 and 10 over ZOOM. The conference was free.

The two-day symposium was convened to discuss the research and the resonance surrounding the discovery of burials underneath Oakwood Cemetery Chapel’s footprint and the archaeology report that resulted. In addition, staff wanted the public to learn more about the archaeology, anthropology and history of the burials and participate in the planning of commemorations once these individuals are reinterred. Staff also wanted to bring to light the upcoming DNA testing that will be facilitated by the University of Connecticut and discuss the difficulties, concerns and things that could have been done better. The speakers and the public met staff with generosity, open hearts and open minds. The event received 331 registrations from 22 states and three countries with the furthest attendee from Lagos, Nigeria. Attendance varied from session to session, averaging about 100 people per session.

It’s My Park Day – APF/PARD PARKnership: In lieu of a one day, in-person event, *It’s My Park Day* will be virtual this year with things kicking off Saturday November 7, with a special video from PARD Director Kimberly McNeeley and APF Chief Executive Officer Colin Wallis, and will include digital content all week, culminating Saturday, November 14. You can expect things like contests for the oldest IMPD shirt, videos highlighting the immense impact of volunteers on parkland, opportunities to give back virtually and chances to safely engage with and enjoy your local park! Volunteers will have the opportunity to earn the new IMPD – at a Distance t-shirt and a customizable, vintage IMPD koozie by completing a portion of the activities posted in the GivePulse event page: <https://austinparks.org/impd/>.

Bartholomew Pool: Opened September 27 following a modified operational schedule:

- Lap Swim is weekdays from 12:15-2:00pm with four lap lanes available;
- Recreational swim is weekdays from 2:00-8:00pm and Sundays from 1:00-5:00 pm. During recreational swim there are two lap lanes available for lap swim and
- The pool is closed on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays.

Barton Springs Pool: Reopened on October 2 with the following modified operations:

- Swim At Your Own Risk is daily between 5:00-8:00am;
- Recreational swim takes place on Tuesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 8:00am-10:00pm and
- The pool is closed on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays except for Swim At Your Own Risk times.

Deep Eddy Pool: Reopened on September 26 with the following modified operations which includes additional closure days and a reduced capacity:

- The pool is open for lap swim only on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 9:00am-7:00pm and
- The pool is closed on Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays.

Springwoods Pool: Opened for recreational swim on September 26 with the following modified operational schedule:

- Recreational swim is available Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays from 4:00-8:00pm and Saturdays from 1:00-5:00pm. During recreational swim two lap lanes are available for lap swim and
- The pool is closed on Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays.

Stacy Pool: Opened September 27 with the following modified operational schedule:

- Lap swim is available weekdays from 6:00am-2:00pm;
- Recreational swim is available from 2:00-8:00pm;
- Lap and recreational swims are available on Sundays from 12:00-6:00pm and
- The pool is closed on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The facility is also being utilized on its closed days to facilitate in-service training for staff.

Temperature checks and contact tracing information are taken at the entrances of all pools. Additionally, showers and changing areas are still not available and staff are being diligent in COVID-19 cleaning protocols.

Virtual Programming and Participation: [Totally Cool, Totally Art:](#) TCTA Online Experience Fall 2020 October 5-November 6.

- Performing Arts (Acting/Improv/Sketch Comedy) Mondays and Wednesdays, 4-6 pm.
- Visual Arts (Painting/Sculpting) Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6-8 pm.



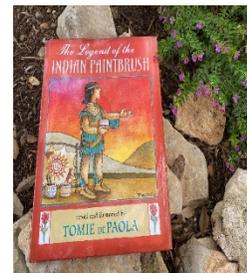
Central Texas Food Bank Youth Afterschool Meals: Meals are distributed at six locations starting the week of October 12 through the end of December. Youth will receive meal packs supplied with seven dinners and seven snacks, intended for consumption each day of the week.

Recreation Center	Service Day	Service Time
Dittmar	Thursdays	1:00 PM-2:00PM
George Morales/Dove Springs	Fridays	11:00 AM-12:00PM
Givens	Wednesdays	9:00 AM-10:00 AM
Montopolis	Fridays	9:00 AM-10:00 AM
South Austin	Tuesdays	9:00 AM-10:00 AM
Turner-Roberts	Wednesdays	1:00 PM-2:00PM

Fall 2020 Stay Engaged Series: The 50+ Programs, in conjunction with Aging is Cool, presents the Stay Engaged Fall Series. We are expecting over 500 participants to partake in these virtual programs and classes ranging from art, music, building and exercise. Upcoming programs include Exercise Kits, Ukulele, Book Club, Game Night Kits, String Art, Heroes Signs, Bird Houses, Candy Cane Vases, Decoupage Glass Lantern, Mandala Rock Painting, and Journal Notebooks Kits.



Brush Square Museums – Texas History Trunks: Brush Square Museums continue to expand on the resources in the Texas History Trunks to make them more accessible, especially as schools have been closed/limited for so many students. Latest additions to online curriculum include Texas History Trunk Storytime, where Museum staff read from children’s books that highlight Texas history and culture. All stories align with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) supporting curriculum. [The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush.](#)



Dougherty Arts Center – Museum Day: On September 20, local artists opened their virtual doors for a look at life inside their studios and the environments they have created to best cultivate creativity. This Museum Day, the Dougherty Arts Center gave access via Zoom to sessions where attendees viewed artists as they worked in their private studios. Participants watched artwork in progress, asked questions and learned more about Austin artists and their art practice. Attendance: 874.



<https://spark.adobe.com/page/fWSM007RQEyav/>

Elisabet Ney Museum - Portraiture Month: Visitors worldwide watched live Zoom-based programs all month, starting with the innovative partnership with Atelier Dojo, an artists’ collective, giving advanced drawing demonstrations based on Elisabet Ney’s sculptures live online. Other portraiture-based events for children and adults, including participation in Austin Museum Day, culminated in our annual signature event “Portraiture in The Park,” which was held online for the first time ever.

PORTRAITURE
MONTH AT
THE NEY
DRAWING SALON with
Atelier Dojo!
Live and Online!



ESB-Mexican American Cultural Center – Dia de los Muertos: The ESB Mexican American Cultural Center is proud to present Día de Los Muertos 2020 on November 1 and 2. This year, for the first time, this will be a digital event that anyone can view for free from an electronic device! Local artists and the community can participate, making this a collective event. We are asking the public to share their home altars, photos of their artwork, crafts or calavera-inspired attire and even plan to pick up a free sugar skull kit at the MACC. Visit the event website for more details: www.dayofthedeadatx.net.



George Washington Carver Museum Cultural and Genealogy Center – 40th Anniversary: On Saturday, October 24, the George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center will celebrate its 40th anniversary. During the past four decades, the Museum has served as a cultural hub for the Black community in the Greater Austin Metropolitan area. The broadcast birthday celebration begins at 3:00pm and will feature musical performances by EmiraL Sol and Distinguished Soundz; dancers, DJs, and guest appearances from community leaders, artists and educators. The celebration will also honor community members who have committed themselves to the growth and development of Austin’s African American community. The event will be streamed on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and at www.carvermuseumatx.org.



Oakwood Cemetery Chapel – To Vote: On September 12, for the summer online exhibit “To Vote,” the Chapel hosted an online discussion “Voting Rights for All or Some?” 18 people registered through EventBrite. Fox 7 News as well as KUT ran press articles about the exhibit and event.

<http://www.austintexas.gov/page/oakwood-cemetery-chapel-exhibits>



Old Bakery and Emporium – Store Remodel: The Old Bakery Emporium staff is remodeling and rebranding the consignor store before it opens again in Fiscal Year 2021. The staff has cleared out the merchandise and will clean and bring in new store displays that are fitting to the historical site.



Public Gardens Programming:

- The [Roots & Wings Festival](#), now in its third year, was transformed into a largely virtual experience this year due to COVID-19 precautions,.
- Community Garden Coordinators Meeting for the Austin Community Gardens Program was held on October 16. This meeting provided an opportunity to collect data on community garden members, vacant plots and waiting lists, and also included an overview of the new guidelines for volunteer activities on parkland. This meeting represented a significant opportunity to establish cross-communication between gardens, which can facilitate shared discussion and problem-solving.
- The Austin Community Gardens Program permit application is now online and live. Austin residents will now be able to move through the permit process online through a transparent and guided process.
- Zilker Botanical Garden was approved by Austin Public Health to host ACL’s giant frame at the Garden through the ACL weekend. Controlled access, staff monitoring, and a socially distanced line were all implemented to ensure a safe experience.

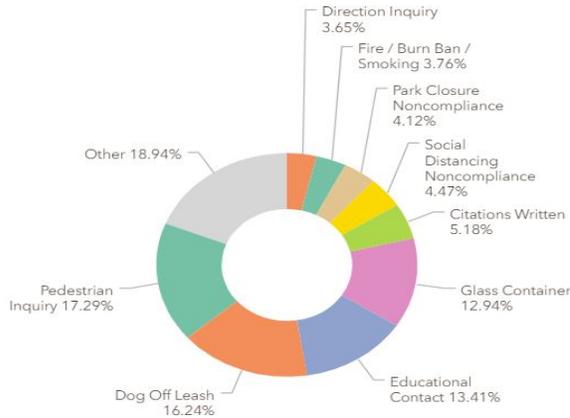


Austin Nature & Science Center: Fall programs that include planning and implementing virtual Homeschool Programs and a Homeschool Science Club have begun. Both new and returning participants have expressed their excitement for the interactive virtual programs. Virtual programming has also introduced many of the homeschool families to the Trade Counter by offering virtual appointments with a naturalist directly following the homeschool programs. Nature’s Way Preschool is again offering virtual programming to the participants that registered in the Spring to be a part of the 2020-2021 school year. The preschool instructors have also produced the [Early Childhood Series](#) of YouTube videos which have been viewed and shared nationally. Additionally, the programs team has developed a series of videos called [Tiny Tours](#).

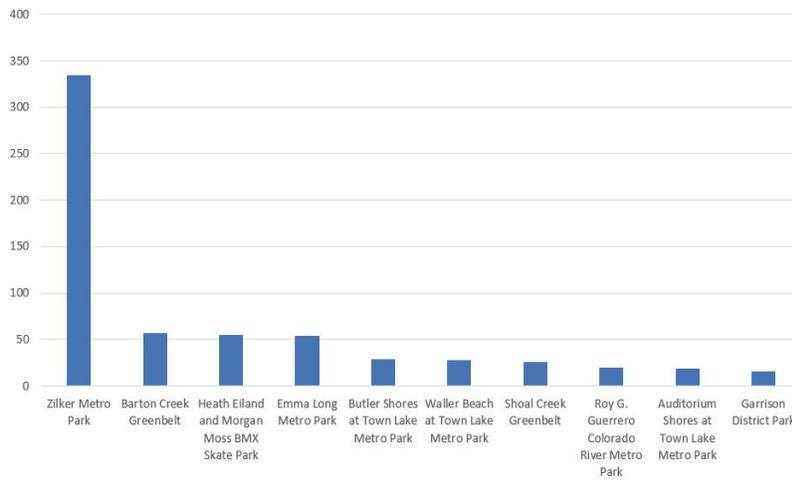
Camacho Activity Center: Camacho Activity Center’s Bicycle Repair Shop and resident bike expert, Theron Sweet, was featured in a Smart Trips Austin [Facebook Live broadcast](#) on October 9 along with Safe Routes to School. The broadcast highlighted Camacho’s Bike Shop and the biking programs. This is just the beginning of a collaboration with Smart Trips, an Austin Transportation Department and Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority program, and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Park Ranger Operational Data: Between September 15 and October 15, Park Rangers had a total of 862 contacts.

Contacts Breakdown



Park Ranger Contacts by Parkland
September 15th - October 15th



ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES:

Lions Golf Course Food and Beverage Concession Operations: The interlocal agreement with Save Historic Mundy District (SHMD) to operate the food and beverage concession at Lions was approved by City Council on September 17. The agreement is under review by SHMD and will require City Law Department review. The temporary food trailer will continue operations until the new SHMD vendor is in place.

Zilker Tree Lighting Event: The Special Events Team and Communications and Engagement Unit, have been working with Austin Energy, Austin Center for Events, Austin Transportation Department, ATXN, and the Trail of Lights Foundation to coordinate plans and communication for a virtual tree lighting ceremony and pre-recorded broadcast that will take place on November 29 at 6:00pm. Due to COVID-19, Austin's traditional kick-off to the holidays will be different, but will remain a joyous celebration of our community's spirit.

Hancock Golf Course Virtual Community Engagement Meetings: Two identical virtual meetings are scheduled for Monday, October 26 and Thursday, October 29 to discuss the future of Hancock Golf Course. These meetings follow-up the in-person meeting called by the Hancock Neighborhood Association held on February 29 and the survey that followed. PARD is considering pursuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to address ongoing financial concerns at Hancock and consider opportunities for a hybrid model for space usage to include a golf element and passive park space. The meeting will review feedback, discuss RFP process and share additional opportunities for community input. Meeting information can be found at <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/hancock-golf-course-planning>.

Zilker Metro Park Clubhouse Rehabilitation Virtual Open House: The Zilker Clubhouse Rehabilitation project will host a virtual open house on November 10 at 7:00pm. The Zilker Clubhouse was designed by Charles Page and is a part of the National Historic District of Zilker Metropolitan Park. The Open House will inform the community and interested stakeholders of the planned preservation work and functional improvements. A survey for vendors and renters of the Clubhouse received input over the summer, and results and additional information can be found on the [project's webpage](#).

Fiesta Gardens Complex Rehabilitation Survey and Virtual Open House: The Fiesta Gardens Complex Rehabilitation project will host a virtual open house on November 16 at 7:00pm. Fiesta Gardens is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, therefore all work on facilities within this complex shall conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. PARD released an initial survey to former renters, vendors and neighbors to identify areas of the complex, and will be open through November 1. The open house will inform the community and interested stakeholders of the planned preservation work and functional improvements. The survey and meeting information can be found on the [project's webpage](#).

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) Update: PARD Human Resources (HR) received 335 applications from employees related to COVID-19. These employees were unable to work because they were quarantined and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and sought medical diagnosis. HR also received 214 applications from employees related to health concerns of a spouse and/or care for a child. These employees were unable to work because of need to care for an individual that was subject to quarantine or to care for a child whose school/childcare provider was closed and/or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

PARD Position Vacancies: Positions that become vacant due to resignations, transfers, etc., will automatically transition into a frozen status. It is likely the hiring freeze will remain in place for the near future with approximately 89 PARD positions frozen. PARD recently received 10 additional full-time equivalent positions from the approved budget. Those 10 new positions will be frozen effective October 1, 2020 until the hiring freeze is lifted.

Zilker Boat Rentals: Zilker Park Boat Rentals opened for business in 1969 as a canoe rental service for Barton Creek and Town Lake. The business has been in continuous operation for 50 years. In 2006, the City of Austin entered into a revenue concession agreement with the Zilker Park Boat Rentals for use of the property located downstream from Barton Springs Swimming Pool.

Contract staff is working closely with Corporate Purchasing to release a solicitation for the management and operation of a boating concession at Zilker Park. However, Corporate Purchasing recommends a later solicitation release and establishing a holdover with the current vendor in order to continue services to the public. It is anticipated that this strategy will allow for a greater pool of responders that may be available following the pandemic. Next steps will be defined in collaboration with Corporate Purchasing.

Expedition School Boating Concession: The City Council has directed the City Manager to provide a boating concession for The Expedition School through a Council Resolution. The Expedition School has completed its final proposal and contract negotiation and execution is underway.

Morris Williams Golf Course Concession: A food and beverage concession agreement has been established with the successful proposer, Fairway Café. The concessionaire will start the process of obtaining all required permits, installing kitchen equipment and making cosmetic changes to the interior and exterior dining areas. The opening is anticipated in early November.

Zilker Zephyr Train Concession: In response to the February 20 City Council resolution, PARD contract staff developed a draft Miniature Train Concession Agreement between the City of Austin and Austin Parks Foundation (APF). The City of Austin Law Department is currently reviewing the agreement. Once the Law Department review is complete, the agreement will be provided to APF for review and approval.

Walnut Creek Park: Contract staff is working closely with PARD Planning staff and Corporate Purchasing staff to develop a Request for Information (RFI) to determine interest in the development of Walnut Creek Park.

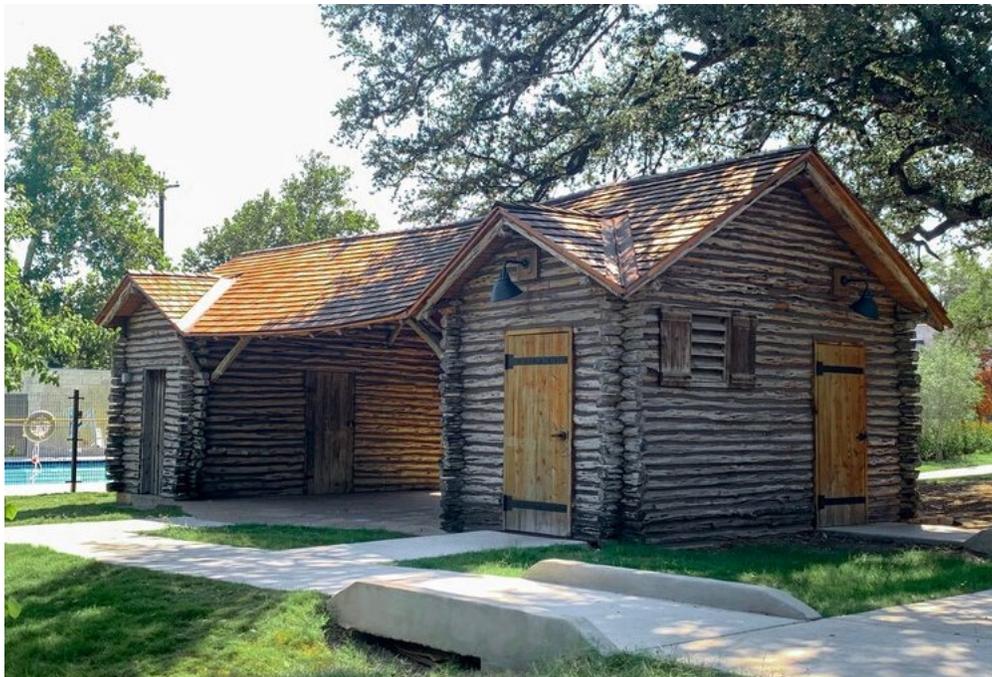
COVID-19 Financial Impact: The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted PARD's General Fund and Golf budgets. Of the \$98.4 million General Fund budget, 91% or \$89.7 million has been obligated as of the end of September, as compared to 99.8% spent in the prior fiscal year. The decline in spending is due to the city-wide cost saving initiative and hiring freeze.

Due to pools being closed, concessions halted, in-person programming and summer camps being cancelled, PARD has experienced a decline in revenue collection during the months of March through September. Only \$7.0 million of the \$14.8 million budgeted General Fund revenue has been collected as of the end of September.

Of the \$8.03 million Golf budget, 95% or \$7.7 million has been obligated as of the end of September and 84% of budgeted Golf Fund revenue has been collected, down 11% or \$0.9 million compared to the previous year.

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 September, PARD has incurred costs of approximately \$2.3 million relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shipe Park Shelter House: On October 18, Preservation Austin announced that the Shipe Park Shelter House has received a *2020 Preservation Merit Award for Rehabilitation*. The Shipe Shelter House was constructed in 1930 in the classic dog trot form and is among the first park buildings to be constructed shortly after the establishment of the department. The restoration project was a collaboration between the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, Friends of Shipe Park and Austin Parks Foundation. For more information, please visit [Preservation Austin](https://www.preservationaustin.org/).



Photography: Lindsey Derrington