

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD DIRECTOR'S REPORT

DATE: January 2021

PLANNING UPDATES:

Central Williamson Creek Greenway Vision Plan: On December 17, the partner team led by Community Powered Workshop and Asakura Robinson hosted the final community-wide meeting to present the draft vision plan. The draft vision design is available on the project's Social Pinpoint. Community feedback is requested, with comments on Social Pinpoint and is open from January 20 through February 17. The plan is tentatively scheduled for Environmental Commission review and Parks and Recreation Board approval in March. **District 3**

<https://cpworkshop.mysocialpinpoint.com/creek-idea-cards/central-williamson-creek-landing-page>
<https://www.centralwilliamsoncreek.net/>

George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center Facility Expansion Plan: The final engagement event for the Facility Expansion Plan occurred on November 21. Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) and the consultant team, Smith & Company with Perkins & Will, are making refinements to the building and site plan. Next steps include a phasing and implementation plan. The facility expansion plan is anticipated to begin the approval and adoption process in spring 2021.

District 1

<https://www.austintexas.gov/CarverATXplanning>
https://www.speakupaustin.org/carveratx-planning/forum_topics/community-meeting-3

Zilker Metro Park Vision Plan: A preliminary community survey to gather feedback on existing issues in the park, as well as needed improvements, is available on the project's website and publicinput.com. The planning team will continue to promote the survey through the first part of 2021. **District 8**

<https://www.austintexas.gov/ZilkerVision>
<https://publicinput.com/ZilkerVision>

Parkland Acquisitions – upcoming

January 27, 2021 City Council Meeting

- 3701 Clawson Road, approximately 3.016 acres of land out of and a part of Block 21, Theodore Low Heights Subdivision, an addition to the City of Austin recorded in Volume 445, Page 581, Deed Records, Travis County, Texas, located at 3701 Clawson Road, Austin, Texas from Vista Service Corporation, a Texas corporation, for a total amount not to exceed \$2,290,485 including closing costs. PARD is funding this proposed acquisition through fees in lieu collected under the parkland dedication ordinance and the 2018 Bond. The site is gently sloped and wooded with West Bouldin Creek running through. The acquisition will be a neighborhood park in District 5 with a service area extending to District 3. **District 5**

February 18, 2021 City Council Meeting

- 1212 W Slaughter Lane, proposed acquisition is for park and recreation purposes. The property is situated adjacent to Casey Elementary School. It is part of a partnership with the Housing and

Planning Department (HPD) to provide a park within walking distance to all residents, including residents of the future affordable housing project to be developed by HPD. This acquisition will remedy park deficiency of a growing area, a recommendation for the south region in PARD's Long Range Plan. PARD will purchase this proposed acquisition through a combination of parkland dedication funds and 2018 Bond funds. The purchase is for approximately 4.3 acres, with a price of \$4.3 million, which is the current fair market value as determined by an independent third-party appraisal. The purchase price plus closing costs is not to exceed \$4,350,000. **District 5**

- 1129 Tillery Street, proposed acquisition is for park and recreation purposes. The property is located within the Govalle neighborhood. It is part of a partnership with the Housing and Planning Department (HPD) to provide a park within walking distance of all residents, including residents of the future affordable housing project to be developed by HPD. This acquisition will secure a beloved pecan orchard as parkland, thereby remedying a park deficiency for the eastern region, a recommendation in PARD's Long Range Plan. PARD will purchase this proposed acquisition through 2018 Bond funds. The purchase is for approximately 2.5 acres, with a price of \$762,000, which is the current fair market value as determined by an independent third-party appraisal. The purchase price plus closing costs is not to exceed \$790,000. **District 3**

Request for Information (RFI) for the Walnut Creek Sports Complex: PARD is working with the City's Purchasing Department to issue an RFI for the parkland on 7800 Johnny Morris Road envisioned to be a sports complex, known as the Walnut Creek Sports Complex. This is a 60-acre property purchased by PARD in 2008. The only development that has occurred on the property since its purchase has been a tennis center, now known as the Austin Tennis and Pickleball Center. The center includes 10 tennis courts and 8 pickleball courts. PARD has a joint-use agreement with Gus Garcia Middle School, adjacent to the center, for the use of several tennis courts as part of their athletic program. The undeveloped portion of the property is envisioned as a sports complex through a public-private partnership.

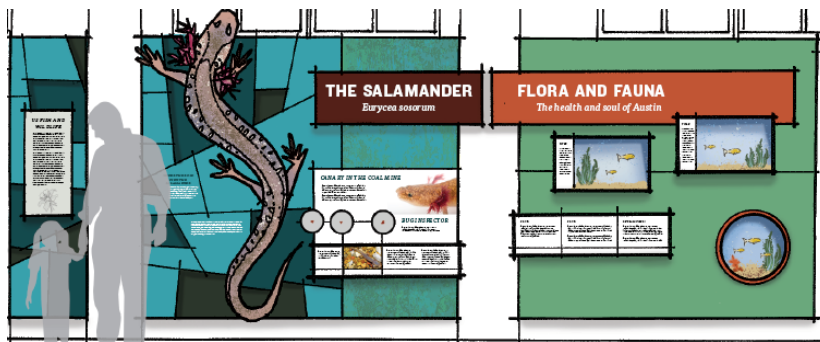
By issuing an RFI to the public in early 2021, PARD seeks input including business ideas and programming activities that will support the development of the sports complex and complement the Austin Tennis and Pickleball Center, Colony Park District Park, Austin to Manor Bicycle Trail and Walter E Long Metropolitan Park. The RFI proposals are expected to provide PARD with information needed to possibly issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) inclusive of partnership opportunities and consistent with existing City initiatives. **District 1**

DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:

Northwest Recreation Center: Discussions have begun to renovate the existing playground. Tentative install scheduled for fall of 2022. Community garden discussions are ongoing with hopes of breaking ground in spring 2021. **District 7**

Bee City Designation: Natural Resources Division staff members are working with PollinATX to have Austin designated as a Bee City. **All Districts**

Beverly S. Sheffield Education Center: The redesign of the exhibit space at the Barton Springs Bathhouse is currently working to narrow the gap between the projected costs and the current funding to ensure an exhibit space that everyone who visits Barton Springs will understand its importance to Austin's environment and history. **District 8**



Zilker Metro Park - Café Rehabilitation: A concession stand has been present adjacent to Barton Springs Pool for nearly a century, providing food and beverage services to promote extended use and enjoyment of the many recreational activities available throughout Zilker Metro Park. The current building was constructed in 1959 and was designed by notable architect Paul Roesle and is a contributing structure to the Zilker Historic District. It has historic ties to the community, holding a cherished place in the memory of generations of park visitors.



With funding from the Historic Preservation Fund and the 2012 G.O. Bond, PARD restored the building's original mid-century modern character and adapted it to accommodate current mechanical systems and

accessibility standards. Electrical, mechanical and plumbing improvements include new service connections and new systems to meet current codes. The new roof and restored facade received approval from the Historic Landmark Commission. The surrounding site was also improved to provide ADA access and improve drainage. A new sidewalk was built to provide ADA compliant access from the train depot to the café to the bathhouse. The site received fresh decomposed granite and new sod was placed on the south and north sides of the building.

PARD solicited for a food vendor in 2019 and ultimately signed an agreement with Springfed, L.L.C., who will operate the concession for the next decade. Springfed is actively monitoring the pandemic to determine the best time for a grand opening of their business. The contractor's work is complete, awaiting only the installation of the vendor's equipment to obtain a certificate of occupancy. The Zilker Café will soon again provide sustenance to thousands upon thousands of park visitors and tourists. **District 8**



Dougherty Arts Center: The preliminary design phase for the Dougherty Arts Center continued this fall and winter with a significant phase of community engagement, including the release of an electronic survey and nine small group meetings which took place in November, December and January. Input received in these meetings has helped shape four different site layout options and proposals to manage parking and traffic demand. This information will be presented at the second public meeting to be held on January 26 at 6pm. Following this public meeting, PARD will select a preferred scheme and seek recommendations of Boards and Commissions, prior to returning to City Council in spring 2021 for approval to move forward into design and construction phases. The Boards and Commission presentations are subject to change, but are tentatively scheduled to include:

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|---|-------------|
| • Environmental Commission and Downtown Commission: | February 17 |
| • Design Commission: | February 22 |
| • Parks and Recreation Board and Planning Commission: | February 23 |
| • Urban Transportation Commission: | March 9 |

Meeting registration information and a summary of all public engagement to date are available on the project website: www.austintexas.gov/dacproject. **District 5**

Aquatic Facility Projects - Givens and Colony Park: PARD kicks off two new projects in January: Givens Aquatic Facility Renovation and Colony Park Aquatic Facility Project. The first of three virtual community meetings will be hosted back-to-back: Givens on January 26 and Colony Park on January 27, both scheduled for 5:30pm. More information: [Givens Aquatic Facility Renovation Project webpage](#) and [Colony Park Aquatic Facility](#). **District 1 and District 1**

Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Phase II Implementation Building Program: Implementation of the Phase II Building Expansion Plan (2018 Plan) has begun. The first part of implementation includes developing a Building Program, identifying elements for renovation and expansion. The 2018 Plan will be the source of information and community engagement for this first part will include a few key stakeholder small group discussions, an online forum for feedback and Austin

3-1-1 questions that can connect people without Internet access. Engagement began in January and will continue through mid-February. More information can be found at <https://www.austintexas.gov/masmacc>. **District 9**

Montopolis Neighborhood Park Pool and Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest District Park Pool: The Montopolis Neighborhood Park Pool Replacement (District 3) and Beverly S Sheffield Northwest District Park Pool Replacement (District 7) are scheduled to be on the February 4 City Council agenda to approve the use of an alternative delivery method, Construction Manager at Risk (CMR). If approved, PARD and Capital Contracting Office will begin the solicitation process for CMR services on these projects. CMR will help mitigate pool construction risks and ensure a higher quality pool. PARD expects to have the project team fully assembled by January 2022, and then through community engagement finalizing the recommendations outlined in the Aquatics Master Plan. The adopted plan calls for the pool at Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest District Park to serve as a Regional Aquatic Center and Montopolis Neighborhood Pool to be a Community Pool. These two pools are expected to be complete in 2025. **Districts 3 and 7**

MAINTENANCE UPDATES:

Evergreen Cemetery: Cemetery Operations is in the final phase of restoration of the vandalized monuments and anticipates completion before the end of January. An archeological firm, Ama Terra, has been hired to evaluate and identify additional burial spaces at the Cemetery. Evergreen Cemetery currently serves the East Austin Community and only has 200-300 remaining burial spaces. At the completion of the project, Ama Terra estimates that they will be able to find 500-650 additional burial spaces. **District 1**

Austin Memorial Park Cemetery: The roadway improvement project continues. Upon completion, the project will resurface the road system within Austin Memorial Park and construct a curbing system to delineate between road and grounds surface. The resurfacing and curb construction (Phase II & III) began in mid-November and anticipate completion by spring 2021. **District 7**

Butler Pitch and Putt Golf Course: The anticipated re-opening in late January has been delayed due to slower greens growth during the winter months. The bathroom expansion and other improvements continue and should be completed in early February. The course will not open until the sod seams have transitioned to cover the thin gaps. The anticipated opening has been moved to March. **District 9**

Jimmy Clay Irrigation Project: The Jimmy Clay irrigation maintenance project has completed 11 holes and is currently ahead of schedule. The project team took off two weeks for the holidays and is back to work with an anticipated completion of the main line the first week of February and a project completion date the first week of March. The project has limited closures to one or two holes at a time most days, resulting in less revenue loss. The areas of completed irrigation will continue to settle and be rough in some areas. We will continue to discount rounds through this construction. **District 2**

Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center: The Center is almost finished with painting excluding the Charles Jordan Hall. The Language Room includes fresh paint and a white board upgrade. This room typically is utilized for Spanish classes; choir practices; monthly meetings with Neuropathy Group; City trainings/interviews; Advisory board and Guild meetings and Bible studies. **District 1**



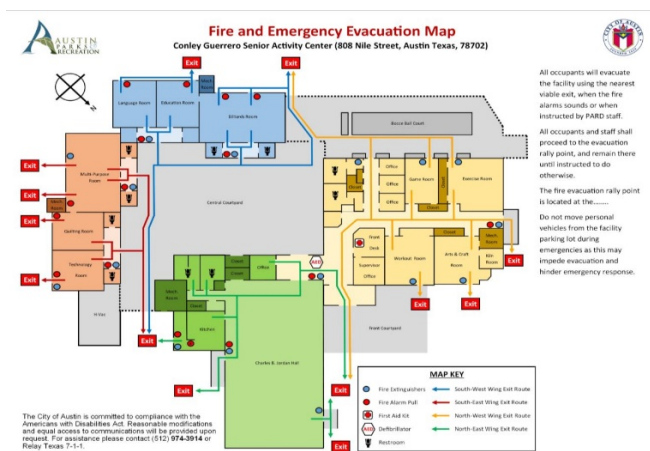
All offices, the Exercise Room and the Charles Jordan Hall have new flooring.



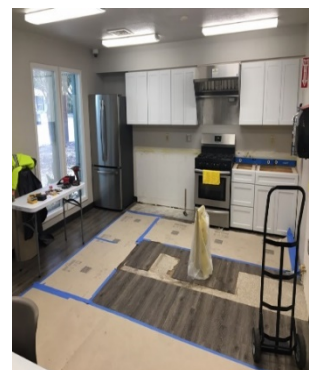
Vinyl names for outer rooms have been installed which will serve as directional signage and promote what's occurring on the other side of the building.



An updated fire and emergency evacuation map, that is easier to read and understand, was created for the Center in partnership with the Department's Safety Office.



Dottie Jordan Recreation Center Renovations: On-going renovations of the Center to create a more accessible space for future therapeutic programs continues but is nearing completion. The last items to be completed inside the facility are underway and include the removal of the old countertops and cabinets in the kitchen to be replaced with ADA accessible/compliant countertops and cabinets. Cabinets were recently installed, and removal of countertops has taken place; installation of new countertops is being



scheduled. Additionally, staff is conducting structural inspections to determine if any additional repairs are required. **District 1**

Zilker Botanical Garden: Working with a contractor, Austin Tree Experts, three large areas of long-deferred maintenance were completed including removal of a 600-foot stretch of bamboo along Stratford Drive, between Barton Springs and Lou Neff Roads, as well as removal of a 375-foot stretch of brush on Barton Springs Road, between Stratford Drive and the Main Entrance to the Garden. **District 8**

PROGRAM/EVENT UPDATES:

Barton Springs Pool and Deep Eddy Pool: Modified operations continue with the recent addition of lap swimming only. Barton Springs Annual Maintenance closure is scheduled to begin on February 27.

Bartholomew Pool, Big Stacy Pool, Deep Eddy Pool and Springwoods Pool: Pools are open to the public for lap swim only. During stage 5, PARD eliminated recreational swim hours to prevent the congregating of large numbers of patrons within the facility. Modified operations continue including but not limited to collecting contact tracing information, temperature checks, reduced capacity as well as continued COVID-19 disinfecting protocols.

Lifeguard Applications: Lifeguard application posting continues with 13 applications received as of January 6, as well as a few dormant staff requesting to return. Minimal advertising has been conducted so far, as staff are waiting on the recommencement of in-person training. Plans are in place for a social media/advertising push beginning in February.

Holiday Toy Drive-Throughs: Four Recreation Centers partnered with community groups to ensure our communities were able to celebrate the holiday especially this year as families are struggling. The Centers provided a little cheer while ensuring children received a toy. These events were contactless and safety precautions were made to ensure the safety of our employees and the community. Thankfully all events were completed prior to our community hitting stage 5.

- Rodolfo “Rudy” Mendez Recreation Center, December 9, provided fun and toys for 400 children.
- Givens Recreation Center, December 18, provided fun and toys for 200 families.
- Delores Duffie Recreation Center, December 12, provided fun and toys for 40 children.
- Turner-Roberts Recreation Center, December 5, provided fun and toys for over 250 families.



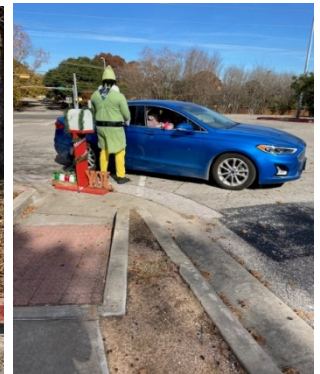
Dittmar Recreation Center: Dittmar Recreation Center hosted a “Winter Wonderland” holiday event on Saturday, December 5. Over 400 community members drove through the parking lot where they enjoyed holiday themed decorations, Christmas music, and giveaways that included candy canes, art, and blankets. Each child also received a stocking and a special toy from Santa.



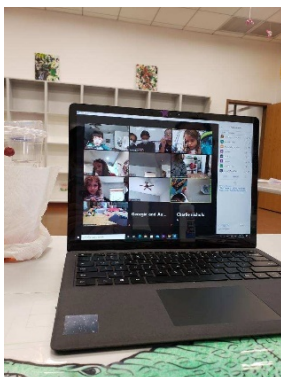
Montopolis Recreation and Community Center (MRCC): Montopolis Recreation and Community Center has hosted multiple community events in the past six weeks. On November 19, the Center teamed up with Austin Public Health for a turkey giveaway. Turkeys, including sides, were distributed to about 300 community members. On December 5, MRCC hosted the Montopolis Holiday Cheer. Children and their families received a Christmas stocking full of toys, candy and fruit. Breakfast tacos, orange juice and light-up head bands were also given out. Over 500 children and their families were able to participate and see Santa.



Northwest Recreation Center 2020 Storytime with Santa: This year, instead of participants visiting the Center, they watched a video of Santa reading his story. The video was available on Northwest's webpage and on YouTube. After hearing the story, kids were encouraged to create a wish list. They could drop off their wish lists in the North Pole mailbox at the Center December 21-23 between 10am-1pm. An elf greeted them with candy canes and let them know we would be sure to get their list to Santa!



Holiday Winter Camp: In celebration of the holiday season, Community Recreation hosted virtual meet-ups for youth across the city. Children ages 5-12 enrolled in the program for eight days and were able to participate in an interactive virtual holiday program from the comforts of their homes. Virtual kits were hand delivered to the homes of each child enrolled and contained holiday building kits, bingo cards, scavenger hunt prizes, cooking projects, science projects, arts and craft supplies, along with a small toy for the child to play with over the break. Each day, enrolled participants would log in to Zoom, interact with PARD counselors and see their friends while completing daily activities found in their holiday kit with the guidance of facility staff. There were 40 participants enrolled in the program.



Hancock Recreation Center Let Us Come to You! 15 participants registered for Hancock's drop-off challenge for youth, "HOORAY! Secret Agent Lewis the Elf successfully stopped his evil twin brother



Ricky from stealing all of Santa's presents! But... Oh no! Ricky escaped! Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to help Lewis build a secret GINGERBREAD SAFEHOUSE! Show off your construction & creative skills with Hancock Recreation Center's gingerbread safehouse building CONTEST!"

COVID-19 Vaccination Distribution at Virginia L. Brown: Virginia L. Brown collaborated with Austin Public Health for use of rooms to administer 900 COVID-19 vaccines to Group 1 individuals December 29-31.

Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center YouTube 50 Plus Programs: Currently the team has produced 65 videos since March 2020, with over 16,000 views, available on the 50 Plus Programs [YouTube channel](#). The Center also conducts Zoom classes of yoga, chair yoga and Strength and Stretch with 51 registrants in these three classes.



Asian American Resource Center – tones – sounds from Asian America: A monthly digital music series featuring Austin-area Asian American artists from across generations and genres. Held on the second Thursday of every month at 7pm, *tones* is an hour of intimate live performances that showcase the artist's contributions to the sounds of Asian America. Performances are free and will be live-streamed on the [AARC's Facebook page](#) and the [Austin Parks and Recreation Department's YouTube channel](#). The series started December 10 and featured [flobama](#) and [Emily No Good](#).



Dougherty Arts Center – Community Engagement/Panel Discussion/Painting

Demo: The Dougherty Arts Center continues Phase 1A of the Redevelopment Project with our next Community Engagement Meeting. This meeting will take place via Zoom and include life-time opportunities to give feedback through discussion, and a series of virtual survey questions.

As venues remain closed and the audiences stay home, performers are learning how to translate the experience of live theatre to a virtual audience. The Dougherty Arts Center will moderate a panel discussion with experts from the community as they discuss their experiences as well as best practices and platforms to use to successfully develop virtual performances.

Lastly, during a painting demonstration, participants followed along in a live demo as exhibiting artist Leticia Mosqueda painted La Catrina, the goddess of death, believed to protect the departed as they cross over into the afterlife.



ESB Mexican American Cultural Center - 2020-2021 Figúralo, Youth Exhibit: The ESB-MACC in affiliation with the Smithsonian Institute presented the 2020-2021 Figúralo, Youth Exhibit. The digital exhibit, which ran from December 15 through January 15, showcased the exploration of artistic mediums through figurines, figurative images and figurative narratives. All of the artworks were submitted by greater Austin youth ages 5-18. The MACC is sharing the collection on social media through an artwork-a-day boosted campaign intended to spread positive images of youth artwork during a particularly difficult few weeks in U.S. history. We remember that our youth are the future, and that future is bright.



George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center – Virtual Kwanzaa Celebration: The Carver Museum ATX and Six Square presented a virtual Kwanzaa Celebration on Wednesday, December 30. The celebration focused on the principle for the 5th day of Kwanzaa-Nia “purpose.” The event’s MC was Austin Firefighter Darren Hyson and featured presenter Elizabeth Kahura who educated and engaged the audience on Kwanzaa through dance, drumming and song; a special event highlight was a dance excerpt from “Sister Moses” performed by Renee Davis. The event had 99 RSVP via Eventbrite, with 75 attendees during livestream and has had 250 views via Carver’s Facebook page. (Note: livestream content is currently being edited and will be re-shared via Facebook and PARD’s YouTube page when completed.)



Senior Programs/Gingerbread Competition/All Together Here: In late November, the **Elisabet Ney Museum** started a very exciting series of programs designed for isolated senior Austinites. Thanks to collaborations with The Alzheimer's Association, AGE of Central Texas and Meals on Wheels, museum educators have been connecting directly with seniors via Zoom, providing them with art activities, remote site tours, and other interaction. **Brush Square Museums** hosted the 1st Annual Historic Gingerbread Competition, "A Taste of Texas" from: December 1 through January 5. We couldn't think of a tastier way to celebrate the holidays this year than by creating delicious treats that celebrate Texas history. "All Together Here" was the October-December 2020 digital exhibit for the **Oakwood Chapel**. In November the project was presented online for the TXGIS Day in a panel titled "Examining Culture Past and Present" and the Yale University GIS Day as the afternoon keynote titled "What We Share in our Common Humanity."



PARD Geocache Austin: This is a free event in which an individual or team will have two months to find as many contactless geocaches as possible and earn prizes along the way. Registration is currently open through February 5. The event will take place February 1-March 31 and is a self-paced geocaching challenge in over 20 Austin parks with more than 50 geocaches to find. For more information and registration visit www.capitalcityathletics.com.



Land Management: The Austin Civilian Conservation Corps (ACCC) crews began work January 19. The ACCC helps Austinites who have been economically impacted by COVID-19 serve their community and gain skills that can lead to strong new careers. One crew will work on preserve parkland and the other crew will work on the floodplain buyout area along Onion Creek that is both parkland and watershed protection land. The Onion Creek Crew will also include public engagement.

Solicitation for the PARD Land Management Plan will be sent out in January. Natural Resources Division Land Management Program will manage the contract once it is awarded. Once a vendor is selected the solicitation will go to City Council for final approval which is expected in May 2021.

Homelessness Response: In January, Park Rangers and the Homelessness Response Coordinator continued operations regarding People Experiencing Homelessness and is working to clear all 311 complaints from August through December. Park Rangers will be dispatched to find camps, make the initial ranked evaluation, call for service providers when needed and share Leave No Trace Information.

During one week in December, 7,625lbs of trash was removed from Williamson Creek Greenbelt, Onion Creek Greenbelt and Old San Antonio Greenbelt.

Gillis Neighborhood Park received a consistent visit from Park Rangers and the Homelessness Response Coordinator to seek voluntary compliance for moving from the large encampment at the park. Compliance took over six weeks and almost daily visits. The photo (to the right) previously had more than 10 tents.

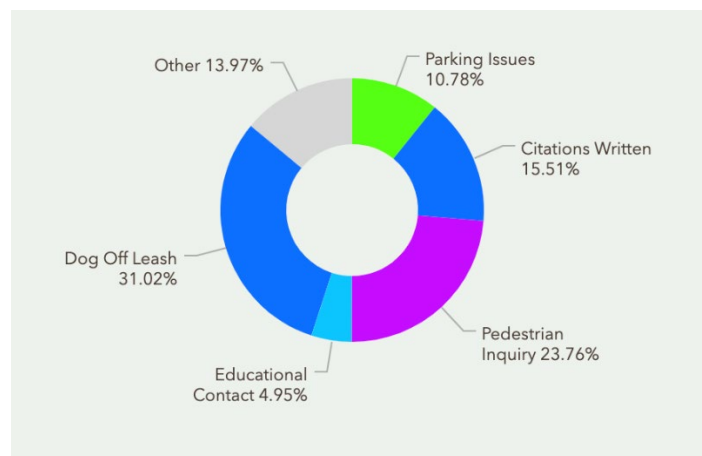


Camacho Activity Center: The Camacho Bike Shop has provided free repairs to the public for more than 100 units and counting. Recently, the Bike Shop tripled the size of the physical space and expanded the toolkit with donations from the Real Estate Council Association (RECA).

Community Gardens: A two-hour virtual event on December 4 provided support and training for existing community garden coordinators. The Austin Parks Foundation (APF) is the new fiscal sponsor for community gardens and is now providing Sponsored Fund Accounts and Liability Insurance for community gardens on city land.



Park Rangers: From December 10 through January 10, Park Rangers handled daily operations, including 909 contacts regarding Laws, Safety, Service and Education; 282 contacts were logged for Dogs off leash during this timeframe.



The Nature Conservancy and the Park Ranger Cadet program were featured in an article titled *Training the Next Generation of Texas Conservationists* (<https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/texas/stories-in-texas/austin-park-ranger-cadets/>). Texas Children in Nature Summit invited the Park Ranger Cadet team to present a youth-led discussion on equity in the outdoors. Presentation link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hZb8al7PS4>.



Community Activated Park Project Program: The [Community Activated Park Project](#) (CAPP) program falls under the PARD Community PARKnerships umbrella program. The program provides a pathway for neighbors, non-profits, community groups and partners to leverage resources and plan and implement park improvements projects that are in alignment with PARD goals and meet community priorities. The intent of the CAPP program is to streamline the proposal and implementation process for our nonprofit partners and community members seeking to initiate, engage, plan, design and implement improvements on parkland.

In alignment with SD23 Outcomes, the CAPP program supports the following strategies:

- Streamline internal and external processes to create a new and integrated approach to managing community members' multiple relationships with different City departments to strengthen feedback loops, build trust, and improve satisfaction (*Government for All*).
- Convene partners and leverage resources to improve, support and expand parkland (*Health and Environment*).
- Directly engages community members on parkland issues that are meaningful to them and provides short-term outcomes (*Government for All*).
- Utilize technology resources to allow for improved program access and customer service. The use of technology allows for program data collection, reporting and monitoring (*Government for All*).

FY2020 CAPP Program in Review

- **252** CAPP proposals received since the program started in 2018 (total at end of FY20),
- **88** CAPPs submitted FY20,
- **53** CAPP proposals received since City modified telework operations due to **COVID-19** health concerns (established March 15, 2020) and
- **60** different neighbors, nonprofits, community groups and partners submitted a CAPP (29 non-profit groups and 31 Adopt-a-Park/Friend groups/Park Stakeholders).



Take Me Out to Downs Field: Forklift Danceworks, in partnership with PARD and Six Square—Austin’s Black Cultural District, has announced that 20 oral histories focused on **historic Downs Field** will be donated to the Austin History Center’s African American Community Archives and the Huston-Tillotson University Archives. The oral histories were gathered throughout Forklift’s year-long residency, *Take Me Out to Downs Field*, which explored and celebrated the history of the site and built a foundation of community support for the continued promotion of the historic baseball field.

Downs Field, which is a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, has been a center for sports, particularly baseball, and community since the 1920s when Samuel Huston College first developed the land for a baseball stadium. Originally conceived as a racially segregated facility in the Jim Crow Era, Downs Field was home to the Negro Baseball League’s Austin Black Senators, the Austin Black Pioneers, the Austin Greyhounds, the Austin Indians, and the Austin Palominos. Baseball greats like Satchel Paige, Willie Wells, and Buck O’Neil are said to have played there. Downs Field is currently the home field for the Huston-Tillotson University Rams, and its neighboring field Mabson Field is home to RBI and Greater East Austin Youth Association little league teams.

Cities Connecting Children to Nature Green School Parks Update: PARD in collaboration with Austin Parks Foundation (APF) and Austin Independent School District (AISD), identified six school parks as high need for outdoor classroom infrastructure. APF Neighborhood Grants will provide funding for installations of infrastructure at Pickle, Pecan Springs, Cook, Odom, Oak Springs and Andrews Elementary over the next two months. PARD in collaboration with EcoRise and AISD, provides grant funding to help school leadership integrate outdoor learning into their existing priorities. The map, [Austin ISD Off-campus Greenspaces for outdoor learning](#), allows users to view additional greenspace within a walking distance of their campus and was created in response to COVID-19 as a way to allow teachers to take learning outdoors.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES:

Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Development: January 2021 marks the start of preparation for the Fiscal Year 2022 Financial Forecast and Annual Budget preparation. Here are the preliminary key dates from the COA Budget Timeline:

CALENDAR	
Jan 20	Budget Kickoff Meeting with Depts.
Mar 5	Revenue/Expenditure Forecast due from Depts.
TBD	<i>Council Briefing: Forecast Presentation</i>
May 7	5-year CIP Plan due from Depts.
May 7	Proposed Budget due from Depts.
Jul 9	<i>Proposed Budget Presentation to Council</i>
Jul 22, Jul 29	<i>Budget hearings</i>
Jul 27, Aug 3	<i>Council Budget Work Sessions</i>
Aug 11-13	<i>Tax Rate Hearing and Budget Readings</i>

Zilker Family Train Concession: In response to the February 20, 2020 Council resolution, PARD Contract staff developed a draft Miniature Train Concession Agreement between the City and APF. The City 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. A status update is scheduled for the February Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

Solicitation for Recreation Management Information System: With the current contract with Vermont Systems Inc. expiring in September 2022, Contract staff has initiated the development of a solicitation for these services with the Information Systems Management Division. Work has begun on the development of a new scope of work in anticipation of the solicitation release. Additionally, a request has also been submitted to the City's Communications and Technology Management Department to engage them in this effort. The identification of stakeholders is underway. The stakeholders will provide input regarding the scope of work.

Interlocal Agreement with Travis County: Contract staff is developing an interlocal agreement with Travis County in which the City and the County will provide mutual support, cooperation and assistance for prescribed fire management, mechanical fuel reduction and emergency planning and assistance for hazardous incidents such as wildfires and floods. The agreement will be brought to the Parks and Recreation Board for approval in early spring.

2020 Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) Update: FFCRA expired on December 31. Through-out the 2020 pandemic PARD Human Resources processed 591 applications related to FFCRA. With the expiration of FFCRA, the City of Austin announced on January 12 that it would extend the use of Emergency Paid Sick Leave of up to 80 hours available to employees experiencing issues related to COVID 19. Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) extension is available from January 1 through February 27. Emergency Paid Sick Leave will be available for all employees - full time, part-time, temporary, retiree,

seasonal, paid intern, and sworn employees - if the employee is unable to work or unable to telework due to one of the following:

- Subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
- Has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;
- Is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis; or
- Is caring for an individual subject to any of the above.

PARD Position Vacancies: Although the City hiring freeze was lifted, departments are advised to fill positions exercising caution. As PARD fills positions based on operational needs, the department and the City's financial risk continues to play a role in the decision-making process. Currently, PARD has approximately 96 vacant positions. With budgetary restraints in place, PARD will move forward with incrementally hiring positions based upon operational priorities as determined by the PARD Executive Team.

Vacancy Tracking and Onboarding System: PARD began developing and using a new Microsoft Teams and SharePoint based employee vacancy tracking and new employee onboarding system. The system streamlines the forms and the approval process associated with recruiting new employees using Microsoft tools such as Bookings and Planner to keep track of interview scheduling and the many administrative tasks associated with the search processes used to fill vacancies. The new system has received very positive feedback from hiring managers and HRD staff.

COVID-19 Communications Coordination: CEU continues to coordinate internal and external communications regarding PARD amenity and facility openings and COVID-19 protocol with the Executive Team and HSEM. As of September 24, open amenities include pools (operating under a modified year-round schedule), boat launches, boat docks, boat concessions, clay shooting concessions, food concessions, golf courses, park greenspaces and trails, tennis centers, outdoor restrooms and water fountains. All modified operations have been coordinated in cooperation with the Austin Public Health Department.

Hancock Golf Course: PARD has conducted several small group engagement meetings and is working with Austin Energy to develop a new survey for this project. PARD plans to continue small group virtual engagements in February and should release the new survey to patrons in February/March. PARD anticipates another update on survey results and engagement outcomes to the Parks and Recreation Board in April. More information: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/hancock-golf-course-planning>.