




MEMORANDUM

TO: Dawn Lewis, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Board

FROM: Kimberly A. McNeeley, M.Ed., CPRP, Director
Director, Austin Parks and Recreation Department 

DATE: June 18, 2021

SUBJECT: Endorsement of the Renaming of Payton Gin Pocket Park

This memorandum serves as my endorsement for renaming Payton Gin Pocket Park to Heron Hollow Pocket Park.

Process

At the Austin Parks and Recreation Board (Board) meeting on May 25, 2021, the Board directed the Parks and Recreation Department (Department) to initiate additional community engagement, as outlined in current municipal code, to supplement the initial naming process that took place in the early 2000s.

This memorandum is the submission of the completed endorsement to the chair of the Parks and Recreation Board according to subsection 14-1-39(F).

Background

On June 29, 2000, the Austin City Council passed an ordinance adopting the North Austin Civic Association (NACA) Neighborhood Plan. Amongst other actions, this Neighborhood Plan called for the creation of a pocket park at the Old Fiskville site located at Lamar Boulevard and Payton Gin Road. The Plan also called for assistance to recognize the site as a local historical site.

In the early 2000s, NACA conducted a contest and community engagement process to name the park. "Heron Hollow Park" was the name that was selected; however, the renaming was never memorialized by the Department and there is no archive of this process. As a result, the Department refers to this site as the Payton Gin Pocket Park because of its geographical location.

Following the reaffirmation of NACA's commitment to the name, NACA requested that the Department officially rename the park to "Heron Hollow Pocket Park." In addition to the history of public engagement, testimony, and recorded meetings that are considered to be evidence supporting the name Heron Hollow, the Department initiated an engagement process to ensure that we are receiving current feedback from the community.

Community Engagement

The renaming ordinance requires the Department to “take reasonable steps to inform persons who are likely to have an interest . . . consider[ing] the nature and location of the facility and whether a particular community is likely to be especially interested in the process.”

To achieve this goal, the Department focused on the geographic area of the pocket park as well as connecting to park visitors. The Department reached out to people connected to the NACA community and sent general notices across the city through Facebook and Nextdoor. In addition, the Department set up a canopy and tent to connect directly with visitors of the park on two Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

Community comments were collected online and in-person using a short survey tool. The Payton Gin/Heron Hollow Pocket Park Renaming Survey Report (Attachment A) includes responses to the survey questions and all community comments.

Results and Recommendations

The survey tool had 62 participants with 85% supporting the proposed name change; seven respondents indicated that they did not want the facility name to change. The two community meetings were lightly attended and overwhelmingly supported the name change.

Comments and Dissenting Voices

The majority of the 40 comments show support for officially renaming the park to Heron Hollow Pocket Park, many pointing out this has been the desire of the community since the early 2000s and that the park is already referred to as Heron Hollow.

Attachment B contains five comments that appear to not support the renaming of the park to Heron Hollow. The comments are not tied directly to the preference question, so we are assuming the connection. The comments focus primarily on not needing to change the name or possibly confusion that the park is already Heron Hollow, and this is an attempt to change it again. Concern is also shared about “heron” being connected to “heroin,” and this process being a waste of time and money.

We are grateful for those who shared their voices and appreciate their willingness to share their comments in this process.

Conclusion

Based on the NACA historical efforts around naming this park, the common name used for the park already and recent community feedback, I endorse completing the renaming of Payton Gin Pocket Park to Heron Hollow Pocket Park.

Attachments

- A. Payton Gin/Heron Hollow Pocket Park Renaming Survey Report
- B. Comments voicing dissent

cc: Parks and Recreation Board Members
Liana Kallivoka, PhD, PE, LEED Fellow, Assistant Director
Lucas Massie, M.Ed., CPRP, Assistant Director
Anthony Segura, MPA, MS, Assistant Director
Suzanne Piper, DBA, Chief Administrative Officer

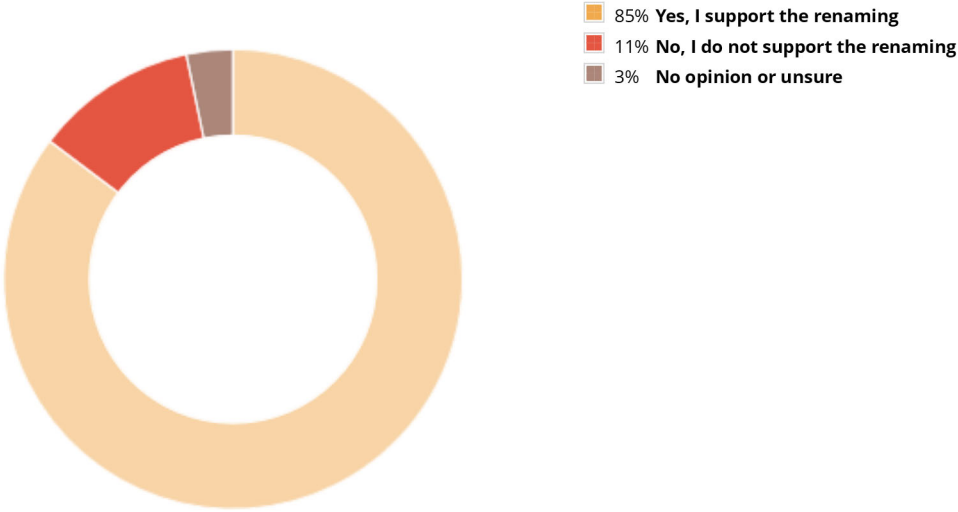
Payton Gin/Heron Hollow Pocket Park Renaming

Community Input (June 2 to June 16, 2021)

Project Engagement

VIEWS	PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSES	COMMENTS
553	62	325	91

* Do you support the renaming of Payton Gin Pocket Park to Heron Hollow Pocket Park?



61 respondents

I remember the original contest process of naming the park and would like the Heron Hollow name to be used for the pocket park. The contest was an excellent example of community involvement in city decisions.

13 days ago

[⊕ 3 Agree](#)

I think the neighborhood's original intent needs to be respected, given how much others from the neighborhood put into making this into a park. If there was a problem with the name they chose, PARD had *decades* to set the record straight. And they didn't, so there must not be a problem with it. I've spent several "It's My Park" days helping out there, so I take this personally.

14 days ago

[⊕ 3 Agree](#)

Members of NACA worked hard to clean up, plant and water seasonal plants. NACA paid a small electric bill to operate a pump to get water from creek for watering plants. We also emptied trash containers.

12 days ago

[⊕ 2 Agree](#)

After the massive amount of work NACA did to develop this unused piece of City property into a neighborhood park, we voted on 4 suggested names for the park. The name "Heron Hollow" won the vote. No one told us we had to go through a naming process with the City.

12 days ago

[⊕ 2 Agree](#)

Here in the neighborhood it has been referred to 'Heron Hollow Park' since the inception and should officially remain as such.

12 days ago

[⊕ 2 Agree](#)

Heron Hollow is much more lyrical choice!

12 days ago

[⊕ 2 Agree](#)

I have seen about five herons visiting the creek at the pocket park in the decade or so that I have lived in the neighborhood. I haven't seen any floating gins. Changing the park name to "Heron Hollow Pocket Park" is a good idea.

12 days ago

[⊕ 2 Agree](#)

NACA has taken care of this park for years. I hope the neighbors know that we have mowed it, planted trees and the little garden, watered the trees during the 2011 - 2012 droughts, built benches and a table, picked up litter, etc.

12 days ago

[⊕ 2 Agree](#)

NACA followed a community-based process in naming it Heron Hollow many years ago. PARD did not in renaming it.

13 days ago

[⊕ 2 Agree](#)

Heron Hollow is a better name.

14 days ago

[⊕ 2 Agree](#)

Another effort by PARD to rewrite history. Placing names on public things is complicated enough when everyone is honest and transparent. Just because PARD forgot to do its job doesn't mean no one else did theirs. It's fine to run a new naming process, but just be clear that's what you're doing.

14 days ago

[⊕ 2 Agree](#)

I have lived in this district all my life. There is no reason to change the name. Leave it alone!!!

14 days ago

[⊕ 2 Agree](#)

I have lived about 2 blocks away for the last 15 years and my neighbors and I have always called this park "Heron Hollow". This is a euphonious and evocative name and it deserves to be the official name.

11 days ago

[👍 1 Agree](#)

Heron Hollow is the original name and Herons are frequently seen nearby.

11 days ago

[👍 1 Agree](#)

We have called this park Heron Hollow for years. It's time to make it official.

12 days ago

[👍 1 Agree](#)

The city should change the name to what was originally selected by the neighborhood — Heron Hollow.

12 days ago

[👍 1 Agree](#)

Let's keep the original name and support the NACA.

13 days ago

[👍 1 Agree](#)

NACA leaders followed a thorough community-based process to name this green space Heron Hollow many years ago. PARD did not do so in naming it something else.

13 days ago

[👍 1 Agree](#)

Why not change it? It's definitely a nicer name for it. I live just a few blocks and I didn't know it had a name at all. Maybe people will notice it and care more. It's not exactly Zilker after all...

14 days ago

[👍 1 Agree](#)

Have we considered "Parky McParkface Park"?

14 days ago

[👍 1 Agree](#)

hondonada de garza? This is the chance to include our other language, too.

yesterday

The neighborhood association had named the park Heron Hollow, but apparently, we didn't go through the proper process.

Please rectify our mistake by renaming and honoring the wishes of the neighborhood.

2 days ago

Of course you realize that the day after you rename (which I support) everybody will be calling it "HeroIn" Hollow.

2 days ago

I drive by the park frequently and enjoy seeing the pretty little park. I think the people who worked to create it should be able to name it.

4 days ago

I believe the name is appropriate for the area as well as a fitting recognition of the people who got the park going in the first place.

5 days ago

Sounds like heroin

6 days ago

I am proud of Austin PARD for moving to correct this.

7 days ago

Heron Hollow for the name

7 days ago

The idea of transforming a vacant lot into a pocket park is lovely. The name is very appropriate.

7 days ago

Very appropriate to officially memorialize the work of the NA Civic Association.

7 days ago

Let's give our park a real name!

7 days ago

Thank you for the opportunity to support changing the name of the park to Heron Hollow. The neighborhood volunteers have done much to beautify the park over the years and the ability to provide input is much appreciated.

9 days ago

This park has been know as Heron Hollow for a long time. City needs to get in step with the people.

10 days ago

Art in Public Places should add a Heron art piece to the park. Maybe a large piece that includes a swing or Several heron shaped sitting benches.

10 days ago

Fix the name, and then maybe fix up the park?

11 days ago

This seems like a waste of time and money. How much city staff time has been spent orchestrating this public involvement program? How much would a tear-down of old signage and installing new signs cost? How much time will a GIS analyst have to spend updating map files? I could understand renaming if 1) the old name was offensive and/or 2) there was a desire to rename it to honor someone and/or 3) there was significant confusion (like a park being named XYZ Street Park but not being located near actual XYZ Street). I'm usually fond of citizens leading the way on public land but this seems frivolous.

12 days ago

Please go to www.naca-austin.org. Perform a website search in the upper right-hand corner for 'Heron Hollow.' There are 21 entries of minutes and announcements for Heron Hollow Pocket Park going back to 2005. There are many more attached PDF documents that we can reference to see the history of the neighborhood association and community involvement with this park. This park was added to the city's website as 'Payton Gin Pocket Park' after 2011/2012. No reason was given as to why PARD added the park name as this, no community engagement. I did not think that PARD was trying to officially name the park, and that the 'Payton Gin' name was only added to their website for location purposes. The address is 801 Payton Gin Dr.

The only reason neighbors referenced it as Payton Gin Pocket Park was because that is what APD recognized the name as in their system, and what certain cleanups in partnership with Keep Austin Beautiful/Austin Parks Foundation recognized the name because they often linked to the City website to help people understand the location of the park.

Neighbors continued to mostly reference the park as Heron Hollow unless there was an organized cleanup in which we felt we had to also include 'Payton Gin.'

There was a wooden sign in the park with the Heron Hollow name on it at the time that it was added to the City's website, but it eventually fell apart.

I have owned the home on the corner of Payton Gin & Bridgeport that directly backs up to the park since early 2011, and have been active in the care of the park since then.

I don't consider this a renaming honestly. The park's name is 'Heron Hollow Pocket Park'.

Thanks for your help in making this a transparent correction to PARD's website and name of the park.

12 days ago

none

12 days ago

The new name has a happy, lyric ring to it. Really like it.

13 days ago

Name it Fiskville Pocket Park. Heron looks too close to Heroin in print.

13 days ago

How frequently do you visit this space?

53%	Fewer than 5 times a year	17 ✓
25%	5-12 times a year	8 ✓
16%	I have never visited	5 ✓
3%	2-3 times a month	1 ✓
3%	Once a week	1 ✓
3%	2 times or more each week	1 ✓

32 Respondents

What park is closest to your home?

This one

4 days ago

This one

5 days ago

Heron Holow

5 days ago

This one

6 days ago

Balconies District Park

7 days ago

Gracewood

7 days ago

Ron Rigsby Park

9 days ago

Quial Creek Park

10 days ago

Heron Hollow

12 days ago

Heron Holloe

12 days ago

Wooldridge Elementary School Park

12 days ago

Ron Rigsby Pocket Park and Wooldridge Elementary School Park

12 days ago

Heron Hollow park

12 days ago

Quail Creek and Cook School park

12 days ago

Ron Rigsby and Heron Hollow are my closest parks.

12 days ago

Heron Hollow

12 days ago

Balcones

12 days ago

Heron Hollow and Ron Rigsby Parks

12 days ago

Ron Rigsby

13 days ago

Rom Rigsby

13 days ago

Ron Rigsby Pocket Park

13 days ago

Quail Creek Park

13 days ago

Ron Rigsby Park

14 days ago

Wooten park

14 days ago

Brownie

14 days ago

Brownie Park

14 days ago

Ron Rigsby pocket park

14 days ago

Heron Hollow

14 days ago

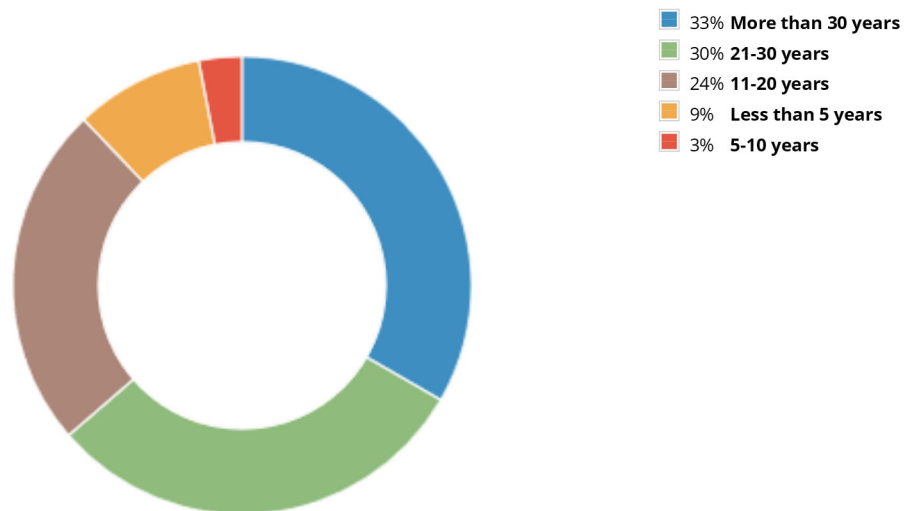
Georgian Acres Neighborhood Park

14 days ago

Payton Gin

14 days ago

How long have you lived in Austin?



33 respondents

What is your age range?



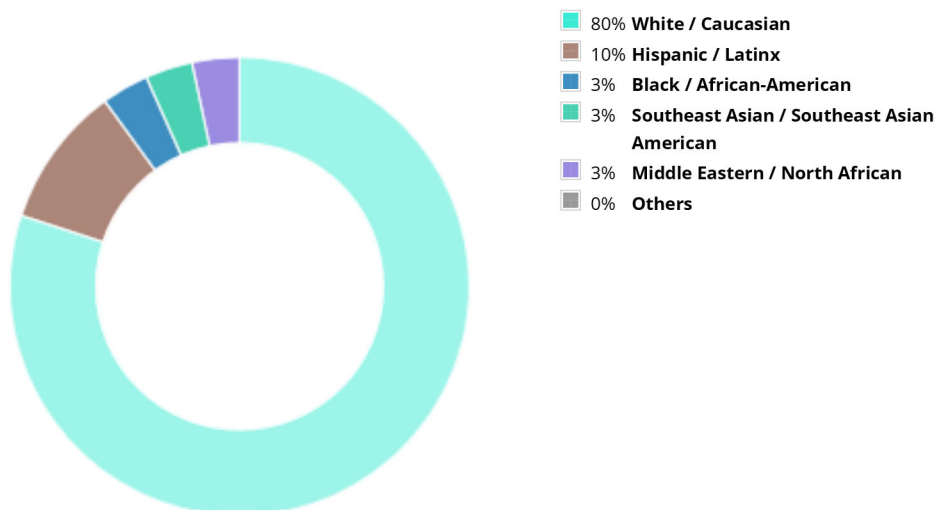
34 respondents

Not including yourself, what other ages live in your household?

32%	35-44	8 ✓
28%	17 or under	7 ✓
28%	45-54	7 ✓
16%	65+	4 ✓
12%	55-64	3 ✓
8%	25-34	2 ✓
0%	18-24	0 ✓

25 Respondents

What is your race or ethnicity?



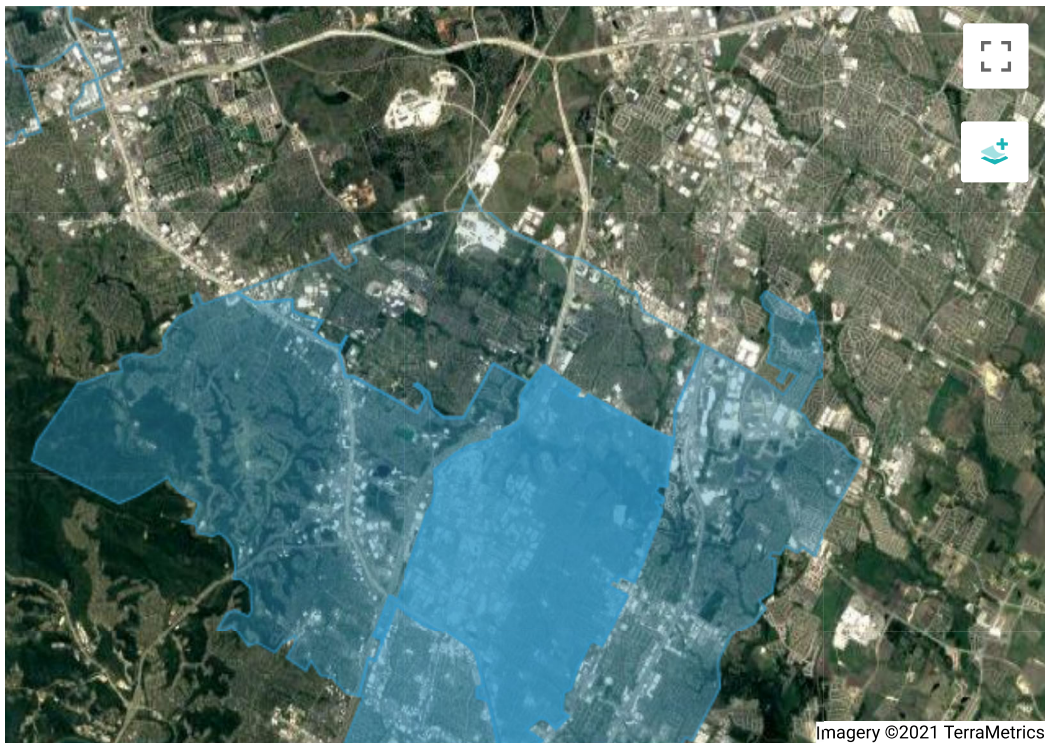
30 respondents

What is your gender?

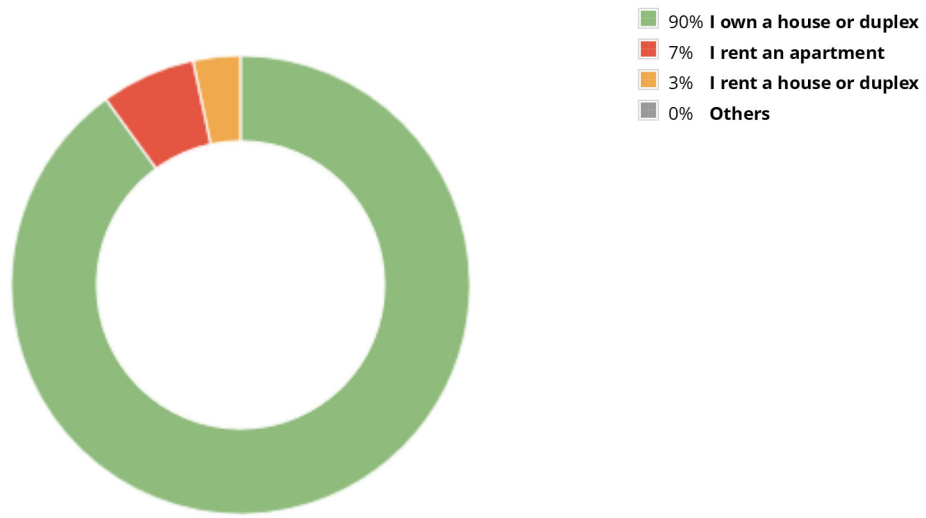


30 respondents

Participant Zip Code Map

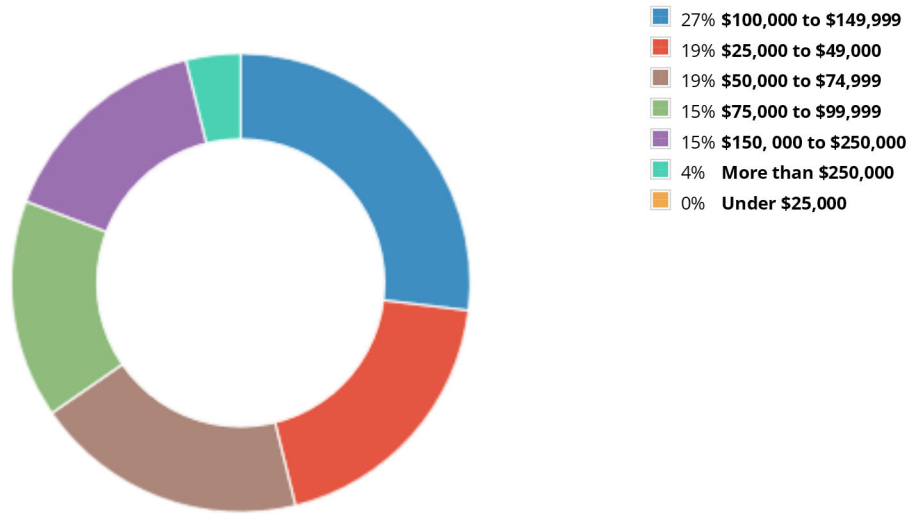


Please describe where you currently live?



30 respondents

What is your approximate household income?



26 respondents

Language spoken at home:

English

2 days ago

English

4 days ago

English

5 days ago

English

5 days ago

English

6 days ago

English

7 days ago

Vietnamese and English

7 days ago

English

10 days ago

English

12 days ago

English

12 days ago

English

12 days ago

-

12 days ago

Yiddish, English

12 days ago

English

12 days ago

English

13 days ago

English

13 days ago

English

13 days ago

English

14 days ago

English

14 days ago

English

14 days ago

english

14 days ago

Attachment B

Comments that may be considered not supporting the renaming

- Another effort by PARD to rewrite history. Placing names on public things is complicated enough when everyone is honest and transparent. Just because PARD forgot to do its job doesn't mean no one else did theirs. It's fine to run a new naming process, but just be clear that's what you're doing.
- I have lived in this district all my life. There is no reason to change the name. Leave it alone!!!
- Sounds like heroin
- This seems like a waste of time and money. How much city staff time has been spent orchestrating this public involvement program? How much would a tear-down of old signage and installing new signs cost? How much time will a GIS analyst have to spend updating map files? I could understand renaming if 1) the old name was offensive and/or 2) there was a desire to rename it to honor someone and/or 3) there was significant confusion (like a park being named XYZ Street Park but not being located near actual XYZ Street). I'm usually fond of citizens leading the way on public land but this seems frivolous.
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