

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD DIRECTOR'S REPORT

DATE: August 2021

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS:

Zilker Metropolitan Park Vision Plan: As follow-up to 11 in-person pop-ups in July which included an event at a park or pool in every Council District and one in Zilker Park, the planning team added several tabling events to continue to engage and survey community members prior to Community Meeting #2. Events included Blues on the Green (7/27, 7/28), Hillside Concert Series (7/27, 8/3), United Way's Family Resource Fair (8/6), and Austin Parks Foundation Volunteer Days at Oak Springs (8/7). Community Meeting #2 occurred virtually on August 10 and focused on programming uses and priorities. The meeting's survey will remain open for continued input and additional tabling opportunities will take place in September, as COVID-19 circumstances allow. Additionally, the planning team continues to engage the project's Technical Advisory Group (Meeting #4, 8/18) and is scheduled to provide a briefing to the Parks and Recreation Board on August 24. Further details including the Site Analysis and Needs Assessment Report, meeting recordings, and community survey may be found on the project website at: <https://www.austintexas.gov/ZilkerVision>. **Districts 5 and 8**

Water Quality Improvements at the Asian American Resource Center: The Watershed Protection Department (WPD), will hold an informational community meeting on water quality improvements for Little Walnut Creek, which will enhance and benefit the Asian American Resource Center (AARC) and diminish the occurrence of flood events on Cameron Road. The Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) and WPD have worked together on this water quality project, as it surrounds the AARC campus and portions of the WPD project will include elements identified in the 2019 Council approved AARC Facility Expansion Plan. The project includes pond expansion, addition of a wetlands area, a new pedestrian bridge as well as new trails and landscaping. The online community meeting will be held on **Wednesday, August 25, 2021, at 6:30pm.**



More information can be found at the project website at:

<https://www.austintexas.gov/LittleWalnutAARC>. This project will be funded by WPD. **District 1**

PLANNING UPDATES:

North Burnet / Gateway Regulating Plan Amendment: In the course of review of the Broadmoor Preliminary Plan, PARD staff met often with the developer (Brandywine/Drenner Group) and the City Law Department. The resulting code interpretation from Law was that any credit for offsite parkland dedication (e.g., parkland dedication on a separate block), would require the dedication be completed by the time the certificate of occupancy would be issued for the residential block taking credit. Based upon this interpretation, the developer engaged Council. Council brought forth a code amendment directive specific to North Burnet/Gateway Regulating Plan/development to gain flexibility for offsite dedication, specifically the timing of when the dedication would occur. PARD staff have worked with the Law Department to author an amendment as requested inclusive of protection for the City to receive parkland and lessen the risk of not receiving the parkland obligation. A Council Resolution on July 29 initiated the amendment. Per the timeline outlined in the Council resolution this item will be presented at the Planning Commission on August 24 and City Council on August 26. The City Council agenda information including the draft ordinance can be viewed [online](#). **District: 7**

Statesman Planned Unit Development (PUD): An update was recently submitted; the applicant has tentatively agreed to dedicate parkland along Lady Bird Lake by deed with a set of conditions (e.g., some control over programming, prohibition of camping in the park) and to place plaza areas in public easements. Outstanding items to be considered include investment in the parkland (comparing consistency with other PUDs); specific amenities commitments (e.g., elements of the South Central Waterfront Plan); phasing and triggers for dedication; ponds in the parkland; the future Project Connect line; and design and circulation through the site. The Housing and Planning Department (HPD) is coordinating with various disciplines and tracking what each will need to recommend the PUD as superior. A code provision exists that allows the applicant to receive placement on the Council agenda without staff approval. Therefore, PARD and other Departments will continue to track and account for what the current proposal lacks in order to achieve superiority. **District: 9**

Project Connect: Project Connect internal meetings have been focused on the 15% Drawings of the Blue and Orange lines, now moving forward to 30% Drawings. PARD has provided comments on drawings, which have come from many PARD staff with specific knowledge on locations. A key question regarding parkland takings is which agency or department will be the sponsor, and whether title or easement (change of use) will be pursued. These answers will clarify the path and process (e.g., friendly condemnation and/or Chapter 26). Other processes will include Section 4F of the Department of Transportation Act, and Section 6F of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. Key locations include:

- Blue Line Bridge, Design Competition – request for PARD to be on panel
- Trinity Street Boathouse / boat docks – Blue line will come through, and necessitate removal of Boathouse and docks
- Blunn Creek – potential underpass along Riverside Drive
- Norwood Park – impacting sidewalk zone, coordination with nearly approved site plan
- Long Center “head house” – Orange line entrance and exit, request to explore alternate or additional locations, e.g., Vic Mathias entrance
- Explore additional station location west of Ben White and Riverside, oriented around a new neighborhood park

More information can be found at the project website at: <https://capmetro.org/project-connect>.

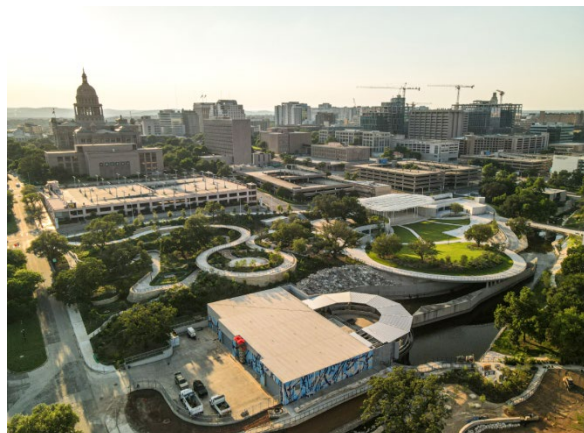
Parkland Dedication Land Requirement Appeal – Koenig Multifamily (SP-2020-0419C): This Site Development Permit is requesting an appeal of the parkland determination under 25-1-605 (F). This site is located on 6.5 acres in a critically park deficient area and proposing 434 multifamily units owing 6.9 acres of parkland. The applicant is required to dedicate 0.98 acres of parkland (15% gross site area Urban Core cap) on the site and pay the remaining amount in fees-in-lieu to satisfy parkland dedication requirements (per code criteria 25-1-602(B)). PARD staff met with the applicant early to work on a configuration that would maximize parkland while minimizing impacts to their developable site. The applicant believes the park configuration that is recommended by PARD will detrimentally impact their proposed units. PARD staff is not authorized under code to consider impact to proposed units as criteria when considering whether parkland dedication will be satisfied with land rather than fees-in-lieu.

The site plan indicates approximately 1,100 existing residents and 730 new in a parkland deficient area. There is little to no other land available in the vicinity suitable for parkland. The appeal is expected to be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Board in September 2021 and the Planning Commission on a date to be determined- but as soon as possible post Parks and Recreation Board consideration. **District 4**

Austin Community Gardens Program: At its July 29 meeting, the City Council approved a resolution directing the City Manager to plan, design, implement, and maintain a three-acre expansion of the Festival Beach Food Forest as called for in the Holly Shores Master Plan. Staff is beginning the planning for this project as Council requested an update on or before November 1, 2021. **District 3**

DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:

Waterloo Park Public Opening: Waterloo Park, developed via the City's partnership with the Waterloo Greenway Conservancy, opened to the public on Saturday, August 14. Given the current COVID-19 caseload in Austin along with the re-entry into Stage 5, the Waterloo Greenway, in partnership with the City, postponed the grand opening celebration and land dedication ceremony for the redeveloped 11-acre park in the interest of public safety. All Austinites are invited to explore and enjoy the new park amenities, including accessible pathways that weave through a network of gardens, traditional and nature play elements, a new restroom, restored creek banks, and the Moody Amphitheater, a 5,000-person permanent outdoor venue that will provide diverse entertainment experiences that embody the values of the community. For more information visit: <https://waterloogreenway.org/visit-waterloo-park/>. **District 1**



Zilker Metro Park Maintenance Barn Replacement: The new Zilker Maintenance Barn project is scheduled to start construction on August 23 and will relocate the existing facility to a new location along Columbus Dr. The new maintenance barn will be a 4,328-square foot (SF) pre-engineered metal building, with office, maintenance workplace and warehouse space. The existing maintenance barn, next to the Barton Springs Pool, is undersized for Zilker Park maintenance staff's current needs and in extremely poor condition. The new barn will be relocated out of the Barton Creek Watershed and into the Eanes Creek Watershed, in a less-trafficked area of Zilker Metro Park. The need for the new barn was first explored by PARD in 2009, with the Public Works Department joining to manage the project in 2015. After several years of coordination with the Development Services Department, the site development permit for the project was released in Spring 2020. Construction is anticipated to be complete in Fall 2022. This project is funded by 2012 and 2018 Bond funds. For additional information, visit the project website at: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/zilker-metropolitan-park-maintenance-facility>. **District 8**

MAINTENANCE UPDATES:

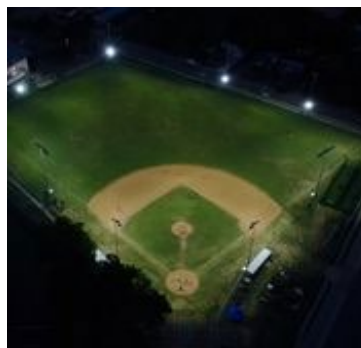
Evergreen Cemetery: In the design phase of a project to repave the roadway system throughout the Cemetery utilizing 2018 bond funds. This project is anticipated to begin in fall 2021 and be completed prior to summer 2022. As a result of last year's graffiti damage, security lighting is being installed within the next month. The additional lighting includes nightwatchman lighting which uses Austin Energy poles to illuminate on the outside of the cemetery and solar lighting within the Cemetery at select areas to assist further with security deterrence. **District 1**

Austin Memorial Cemetery: In collaboration with the Texas Department of Transportation and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA), the Department has been working the past two years on a tree planting project near the MOPAC sound wall to help mitigate freeway noise. Final approval of the memorandum of agreement is pending a CTRMA board meeting scheduled for August 25. **District 7**

Community Recreation Centers Ball Field Lights Replacement Project: The Community Recreation Centers received \$1.35M in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget to replace the ball field lights at five locations: Givens, Parque Zaragoza, South Austin, Martin Field and Rosewood Park. This project started in September 2020 to ensure that each site was getting the best product for its community. Each location had the old lighting removed and replaced with new galvanized steel poles. The final field just had its lights commissioned the week of August 9. **Districts 1 and 3**



Givens Recreation Center



Parque Zaragoza Recreation Center

Golf Greens Condition: The Kizer Course had the latest transition challenges from winter overseed. The Construction team has utilized available sod from the golf course nursery to repair several greens and will utilize portions of the Joe Short Course to repair greens on the Kizer Course, which may result in closing the short course until the greens can be re-sprigged. Kizer fees are currently being discounted through the middle of August. **District 2**

Maintenance Equipment Replacement: The Golf Division is working with the Purchasing Office to coordinate a lease to replace mowing equipment at several sites. This purchase is currently scheduled for consideration by City Council in mid-October.

McBeth Recreation Center: In early October 2020, the historic brick pillar at the entrance to the McBeth Recreation Center was hit and crushed to pieces by a large truck entering the property. Thanks to the PARD Historic Preservation team, the historical marker has been fully restored using leftover pieces and matching materials. Prior to the establishment of McBeth, this property served as the home for the Texas State Council of the Knights of Columbus.

Renovations continue in the courtyard to address long-standing drainage and flooding issues. In addition, the courtyard is being updated to be more ADA accessible so all individuals can enjoy the space. This soon-to-be new outdoor space will provide a much-needed enclosed outdoor program area where participants can safely gather. **District 8**



PROGRAM UPDATES:

Walnut Creek Metro Park Playground Earth Native Wilderness School Nature Programming, September 11 – December 18: The playground at Walnut Creek Metro Park was recently renovated to provide a leading, accessible playground for children of all ages and abilities. The design features a loop exploration path through a sensory garden, rubber safety surface with a variety of ground-level play opportunities, nature-inspired design, and PARD's first official Nature Play Space with the iconic Fairy Pavilion structure, re-homed from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's *Fortlandia* exhibit, as its signature feature. Working in partnership with the Community PARKnerships program and Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN) initiative to create more equitable and abundant access to nature in cities, Earth Native Wilderness School (ENWS) will be hosting four programming days on **Sep 18, Oct 31, Nov 28** and **Dec 18** that are free to the public. Targeting underserved neighborhoods surrounding the Walnut Creek Metro Park area, programming will be accessible to a broad age range in both English and Spanish and focus on topics such as making art with locally sourced mineral and plant-based natural paints and pigments, the ancient art of making rope using loose plant fibers, and physically engaging nature games. This nature play expansion and programming is supported by a grant from the St. David's Foundation. Programming website: <https://www.earthnativeschool.com/walnutcreek>.



Urban Land Institute Awards: PARD has two projects that are finalists for the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Austin 2021 Impact Awards. ULI Austin's annual Impact Awards are an opportunity to recognize and celebrate projects and people throughout Greater Austin that exemplify ULI's mission: to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. Alliance Children's Garden is nominated for *Best Project Design* and *Best Public Space*, and the Montopolis Recreation and Community Center has been nominated for *Best Public Space*. The awards ceremony and celebration will take place on Wednesday, August 25 at the Austin Marriott Downtown. For more information, visit the ULI Austin Impact Awards page at: <https://austin.uli.org/events/uli-austin-awards/2021-impact-awards-projects/>.

Barton Springs Pool: The pool continues to be open daily from 8:00am to 9:00pm with closures on Monday and Thursday and swim at your own risk hours from 5:00am to 8:00am and 9:00pm to 10:00pm.

Deep Eddy Pool: The pool continues to be open daily from 8:00am to 8:00pm with closures on Tuesday and Friday.

Balcones Pool, Dittmar Pool, Kennemer Pool, Montopolis Pool, Parque Zaragoza Pool, and Rosewood Pool: These pools closed for the season on Sunday, August 15.

Big Stacy Pool: On August 16, hours changed to fall operating hours. The pool will be open weekdays from 6:00am to 8:00pm and weekends from 12:00pm to 7:00pm with closures on Wednesday and Friday.

Springwoods Pool: On August 16, hours changed to fall operating hours. The pool will be open weekdays from 3:00pm to 8:00pm and weekends from 12:00pm to 7:00pm with closures on Tuesday and Friday.

Govalle Pool and Shipe Pool: On August 16, hours changed to fall operating hours. The pool will be open weekdays from 3:00pm to 8:00pm with closures on Saturday and Sunday. The pools will close for the season on Friday, September 3.

Civitan Pool, Dottie Jordan Pool, Garrison Pool, Mabel Davis Pool, Walnut Creek Pool, and West Austin Pools: On August 16, hours changed to fall operating hours. These pools will be open weekends from 12:00pm to 7:00pm and will be closed on weekdays. The last operating day will be Monday, September 6, Labor Day. The pools will close for the season on September 7.

Dougherty Arts Center – Summer Art Escape In-person Camp, June 21-August 13: DAC's Summer Art Escape in-person camp went well this year and was so much fun! Our participants "escaped" to explore different areas of the world, from seas to skies, from deep underwater to mountain tops, from humid jungles to scorching deserts, and from underground into outer space. What an adventure! Each day, students were given various themed creative opportunities to learn, experiment, and express themselves through an array of arts lessons and projects – sculpting, drawing, painting, playing instruments, performing theatrical tactics, and so much more. Exploring the new Alliance Children's Garden at Butler Park was a clear highlight for all involved parties. 160 in attendance.



Asian American Resource Center: Expanding on a previous bystander intervention workshop, the AARC hosted two sessions this summer for the general community to learn about the basics of bystander intervention within our communities, in public spaces, and in the school setting. The June 30 session focused on general bystander intervention skills and real-time techniques facilitated by JustPax Collective. The August 5 session centered on bystander intervention for the school setting facilitated by UT's BeVocal and Center for Asian American Studies. Both sessions will be facilitated by local experts from the field of bystander intervention. Approximately 75 people participated in the workshops.

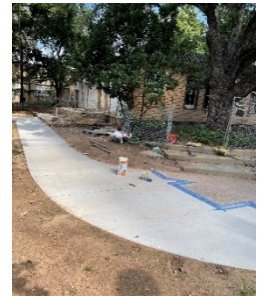


Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center – Healing Hearts

Virtual Session: For many of us, the past year has been a time of isolation and disconnection from our communities. The Healing Hearts or “Curando Corazones” series was created to build a connection between the ESB-MACC community and the artists of their [Latino Artist Access Program \(LAAP\)](#). The final installment of this three-part series took place on August 7th. The participating artists from dance, theater, and music backgrounds engaged viewers in a virtual discussion that reflected on their experiences during this extraordinary time. The discussion was held entirely in Spanish. Luis Ordaz from Proyecto Teatro discussed his group’s efforts in bringing resources to vulnerable communities during COVID and the challenges of working as an artist and producer during these uncertain times. Approximately 160 in attendance.

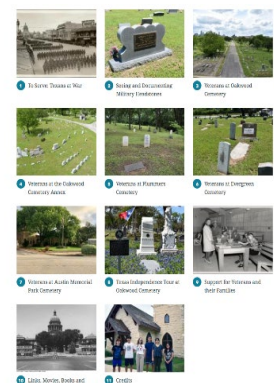


O. Henry Museum: Building Update: Currently the O. Henry House Museum improvement project is behind schedule by five months due to fire suppression system subcontractor responsiveness issues. The grand opening has been pushed back to December 2021. The encouraging news is that the back-patio walkways are now connected to the Susanna Dickinson’s Art in Public Places patio. This connection will provide more continuity between the museums and the park.



The Old Bakery and Emporium (OBE): Management and staff completed a thorough store procedure that included opening and closing procedures. It considered the City of Austin’s cash and check policies as well as customer service trainings. The OBE staff also completed a Vendor Information Handbook that defines the criteria for the artwork that artists bring to sell. The criteria will be a great way to communicate to the artists the OBE’s vision of offering high quality arts and crafts to the public.

Oakwood Cemetery Chapel: A lengthy digital history exhibit, “To Serve” launched in July as a collaboration with Cemetery Operations and Save Austin’s Cemeteries. The exhibit describes the history of military veterans buried in Austin’s five municipal cemeteries. More information: <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/oakwood-cemetery-chapel-exhibits>.



Elisabet Ney Museum: On Saturday, July 24 the Ney Museum hosted its first live discussion event in 15 months! Jade Walker’s artist’s talk drew a very cheerful and robust crowd of 35 people, with the presentation taking place, outside. The show also got a glowing review in *The Austin Chronicle*.



Carver Museum & Cultural Center: In May 2021, the Carver Museum completed its first artist residency project. The mission of the residency program is to support emerging artists of African descent who are largely underrepresented in institutions. The inaugural cohort of artists includes media artist, Temitope Olujobi, photographer and filmmaker, Hypatia Sorunke, and mixed-media artist, Adrian Armbrong. A group exhibition of their work will open at the Museum on Friday, August 27.

Zilker Botanical Garden: As part of the partnership with the Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy, a new series *Music in the Garden* began on Thursday, July 29 and will continue each Thursday evening from 5:30-7:30pm through August. Performances will consist of harp and flute music by two artists, designed to provide a small venue in an intimate setting. As of July 12, program modifications included shifting the venue to the Rose Garden to allow for more social distancing.

Austin Nature & Science Center: ANSC continues to offer reservations on Saturday and Sunday mornings. The team is gearing up to expand reservations. Additionally, the staff are preparing to transition into offering school programs in-person, on campus, and virtually. Nature's Way Preschool is preparing to kick off their school year in September and thinking about how to create a safe environment for young children to learn and grow.

Park Ranger Operations: Park Rangers handled daily operations that comprised 1,186 contacts regarding Laws, Safety, Service and Education, 158 contacts were logged for dogs off-leash during this time frame. Park Rangers also focused efforts on the July 4 holiday in parks.

Park Ranger Contact Breakdown



ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES:

Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Budget Approved: The total FY22 Approved General Fund Budget for PARD is \$106M (728.25 FTEs), and the approved Golf Fund Budget is \$8.7M (41 FTEs). The General fund base budget increased by \$4.4M (24.50 FTEs), while there was an increase to the Golf Budget by \$600K (no additional FTEs).

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

STANDARD CITY-WIDE COST DRIVERS - \$1.4M

- ✓ Employee Wage Adjustment Increases
- ✓ Fleet Maintenance and Fuel
- ✓ City Support Services

DEPARTMENT-WIDE COST DRIVERS - \$731K

- ✓ CIP Operation and Maintenance Support
- ✓ Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy Revenue Share usage
- ✓ 11 FTEs established using reallocated funds (zero budget impact):
 - Aquatics Plumber
 - Program Development Coordinator
 - Forestry Crew (7 FTEs)
 - Park Planning Landscape Architect
 - IT Application Developer

BUDGET AMENDMENTS - \$2.2M

- ✓ Expansion of Child Care at Recreation Centers - \$900K
- ✓ Park Grounds & Facility Maintenance – \$615K, which includes 7.50 FTEs
- ✓ Expansion of Park Rangers Program - \$615K, includes 6 FTEs
- ✓ Mendez Recreation Center Canopy - \$60,000
- ✓ Grackle Green Micropark Maintenance - \$12,200

Additional PARD related item placed in other funds:

- Austin Civilian Conservation Corps (ACCC) program - \$3.2M

City of Austin Vaccine Clinics: The PARD Human Resources team coordinated with other City departments to offer vaccine clinics at the following PARD locations: North West Recreation Center, Dittmar Recreation Center, Givens Recreation Center, Barton Springs Pool and the Central Maintenance Complex. While the vaccine clinics were available to the public, the HR Team coordinated times and locations to make the opportunity convenient to PARD employees.

Solicitation for Recreation Management Information System: A Request for Information/Innovation (RFI) related to a Recreation Management System was released on July 29. Responses are due August 26th. The responses to the RFI will assist the City in finalizing the scope of work prior to a Request for Proposals (RFP) solicitation. The RFI for Recreation Management and Program Planning can be viewed at https://www.austintexas.gov/financeonline/account_services/solicitation/solicitation_details.cfm?sid=135663.

Grey Rock Golf and Tennis Facility Request for Proposals (RFP): The current Facility Management Agreement with Touchstone Golf, LLC expires December 31, 2021. The City assumed this agreement in 2014, when it purchased the Grey Rock facility from Noram Management, LLC. An RFP for a Qualified Management Agreement was released on June 20 and closed on July 27. Three responses were received and are currently being evaluated. Once the Evaluation Committee identifies a successful proposer, the proposed vendor will be presented to both the Contracts and Concessions Committee and Parks and Recreation Board for recommendation to City Council.