

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD DIRECTOR'S REPORT

DATE: November 2021

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS:

Colony Park District Park Aquatic Facility: Open house-style community meetings were held on November 17 and 18 in-person following COVID-19 protocols. Attendees were able to review and comment on the progress of the new aquatic facility design since the last community meeting on June 30. Project funding is provided through 2018 Proposition C Park Bonds. An access link is posted on the project's webpage: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/colony-park-aquatic-facility>. **District 1**



Concept rendering, Colony Park District Park Aquatic Facility

Zilker Metropolitan Park Vision Plan: As follow-up to Community Meeting #3 (October 19) which provided an overview of planning alternatives being explored, the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) and the consultant team seek community input via online survey #4. To accompany the survey, planning concepts have been incorporated into an interactive map. This feedback will help establish the design options that are presented in Community Meeting #4. PARD also continues to host a second series of "pop-up" opportunities in every district through the end of the month. Recent events were held at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center, North Village Branch Library, H Mart, Circle C Ranch Metropolitan Park, Manchaca Road Branch Library, Austin Country Flea Market, the Old Quarry Branch Library and the South Austin Recreation Center. A pop-up occurred at the Zilker Holiday Tree event (11/27).

A second series of thematic small group discussions is outlined for December and January and will focus on gathering input from diverse perspectives through focused conversations. Direct invitations will be sent to stakeholders, particularly underrepresented groups from traditionally underserved and marginalized communities. The meetings will focus on the following themes:

- Environment, Sustainability, Conservation
- Mobility, Transportation, Accessibility
- Businesses and Events in and near Zilker
- Education

- Historical Preservation and Culture
- Equity and Inclusion.

Additional information including community survey #4 and interactive map may be found on the project website: <https://www.austintexas.gov/ZilkerVision>. **Districts 5 and 8**

Hancock Golf Course Virtual Community Meeting: On December 2 at 6:00 p.m., PARD will present a summary of the summer's survey results as well as a 2021 year-end fiscal report. The meeting will also discuss near-future plans for the golf course. [Zoom Registration](#) and project website: <https://www.austintexas.gov/departments/hancock-golf-course-planning>. **District 9**

PLANNING UPDATES:

305 S. Congress "Statesman" Planned Unit Development Amendment (PUD): PARD staff worked with the applicant on items where the PUD had not been deemed superior by staff and the Parks and Recreation Board. Staff produced a memo that listed the items and areas of progress and agreement with the applicant. The latest version of the memo stated that staff found the proposed PUD is superior in terms of parks. The memo went to the case manager and will be part of the approvals process at Planning Commission and Council. Future hearing dates have not been confirmed. **District 9**

Project Connect: The Blue Line team has shared draft technical documents for 4F of the Department of Transportation Act and 6F of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. PARD will continue to review these takings with the Law Department, such as the differentiation between taking for rail line vs. streetscape improvements, and whether parkland needed for subterranean infrastructure will be considered a taking. Other recent focus and actions:

- Blue Line Bridge, Design Competition: A virtual public meeting was held on October 12, and many Rowing Club advocates attended and expressed concern. PARD staff will contribute bullet points for the upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP).
- Norwood Park: A meeting was held with Donna Galati at Project Connect to explore options. Sidewalk improvements would not need to be constructed for about 3 years. PARD will work towards resolution on the parkland taking issue in that time. A redesign in this area has reduced impact on the park and will be shared with the Norwood Foundation.
- Blue Line station just west of Ben White on Riverside: Project Connect team wishes to create a park and ride, and PARD staff is working on a park design for a parkland dedication case. Teams will explore if these elements can be tied together.

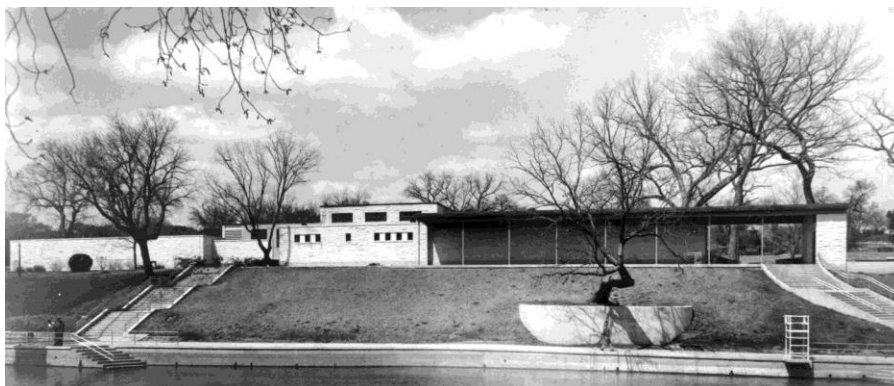
The Department, at the request of the Board, will provide a presentation related to Project Connect at a future Parks and Recreation Board Meeting. More information can be found at the project website: <https://www.capmetro.org/project-connect>.

DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:

Barton Springs Bathhouse: The Barton Springs Bathhouse will undergo a complete building rehabilitation inclusive of the interpretive exhibit space. The scope of work includes the renovation of electrical, mechanical, plumbing and drainage systems, structural improvements, expanded public spaces and enhanced operational space for the Aquatic staff. The rehabilitation, which is led by Limbacher & Godfrey Architects, will also include access/egress improvements and the restoration of the historical rotunda. Related to the site, the project includes improvements to existing walkways and accessible paths, improving the efficiency of parking along the one-way drive, extending a water line for

better domestic and fire flow capabilities, incorporating a fire lane adjacent to the building to improve emergency access, and replacing the existing vitrified clay wastewater service line installed in the 1940s.

Built in 1947, the building is a designated City of Austin Historic Landmark, State Antiquities Landmark, and listed to the National Register of Historic Places. The rehabilitation of the building must be completed in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. **District 8**



PICA 17226 Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

Barton Springs Bathhouse

Town Lake Metro Park Holly-Festival Vision Plan Implementation Phase 1 – Lakefront Trail: The pre-construction meeting for the Holly Implementation Phase 1 – Lakefront Trail was held on November 1. The meeting was held in anticipation of the issuance of Notice to Proceed (NTP) to begin work on the new trail. At this time, the NTP is anticipated to be issued in early December 2021. The project proposes to install a 12' wide concrete trail through the 9 acres ceded to PARD from the Holly Austin Energy power plant. Additional improvements include a decorative screen wall to separate the Austin Energy electrical substation from the new trail, landscape plantings along the trail and the creation of an overall park setting on the ceded property. ***The improvements to be implemented align with the recommendations of the approved Holly Shores/Edward Rendon Sr. Park at Festival Beach Vision Plan approved by Council in 2014.*** The new trail segment will close the Ann and Roy Butler trail gap and provide a continuous trail around Lady Bird Lake. The project is funded through PARD 2012 and 2018 Bonds a matching Federal Grant through the Federal Outdoor Legacy Partnership Program, Transportation and Mobility Bonds, and the Austin Energy and Public Works Departments of the City of Austin. **District 3**

Colony Park District Park/Givens District Park Aquatic Facilities: The project team will present a briefing to the Design Commission on these projects on December 13. The objective is to design and construct two new pool facilities in alignment with the 2014 Aquatic Assessment recommendations and the 2018 Council approved Aquatic Vision Plan. As outlined in the Aquatic Vision Plan, these aquatic facilities would provide enhanced recreation programming and build on establishing sustainable aquatic facilities. Respecting and preserving the historic and cultural values of the communities at Colony Park and Givens is vital to the success of the project. Project funding is provided through 2018 Proposition C Park Bonds. **District 1**

MAINTENANCE UPDATES:

Oakwood Cemetery: PARD continues to work on the archeological project and related community engagement for the Oakwood Cemetery Chapel and grounds. The project began in 2017 when PARD discovered that the historic 1914 Oakwood Chapel was constructed over existing graves. PARD provided an update on DNA and isotopic analyses that were underway as part of an academic partnership with the University of Connecticut (UConn) and the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) in a [February 2, 2021 memorandum to City Council](#). As the memo detailed, following the DNA extraction process, PARD would proceed with reinterment of the exhumed individuals with oversight from AmaTerra Environmental, Inc. under regulatory authority of the Texas Historical Commission. The preparations for reinterment are underway.



Photo by City of Austin, Archaeologist working next to Burial 8

As detailed in a [May 14, 2020 memorandum to City Council](#), an area near the chapel has been identified as a potential location for reinterment. This location is in alignment with a recommendation from the 2017 community engagement process. The reinterment process will require careful mechanical scraping of the surface of the cemetery and monitoring by archeologists to confirm whether the selected sites are devoid of unmarked burials.

PARD erected protective fencing and began the process on November 15, with the goal of completing the reinterment within two weeks. PARD has engaged Interfaith Action of Central Texas to give a blessing when all the displaced individuals are laid to rest on November 29. PARD provided notice to city leadership and the community. A public memorial service is in the planning phase and will tentatively be held later in 2022, pending delays in headstone production due to global supply chain issues. This timeline will allow time for the setting of grave monuments and the restoration of the sod. The individuals will be honored at Oakwood Cemetery through a memorial or cenotaph. More information is available on the project website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/oakwood-cemetery-chapel-rehabilitation>. **District 1**

Aquatic Division Projects: The Aquatic Division continues to update the project list for Fiscal Year 2022. Recent project completions include the following:

- **Rosewood Pool:** The shell of the swimming pool has been coated with Eco Finish. This is a surface that is longer lasting than paint and more resistant to chemical imbalances. **District 1**
- **Dittmar Pool:** The front entrance Pergola has been repaired. **District 2**

Golf Cart Replacement: The Golf Division is working with the Purchasing Office to coordinate a lease through the BuyBoard to replace golf carts for rental to the customer. The new carts will be utilized at all courses except for Hancock, which will remain walking only. The new Lithium charged carts will reduce charging time and utility as well as provide a more reliable golf cart to customers riding the course while playing. **District 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10**

Zilker Botanical Garden: Seasonal changeout of annual plant displays were completed throughout the Garden. *Viola* is being featured, as it is the Herb of the Year for 2022.

The overhaul of the network infrastructure at the Garden is now complete. This was an extensive project and establishes 21st century communications and technology options. The overall project cost approximately \$65,000. Gate entry fees supported about half of the funding needed to complete the project. **District 8**

Homelessness Response: In Fiscal Year 2021, The Other Ones Foundation and PARD crews collected 255,606 lbs. (127.8 tons) of debris from encampments on parkland. This is enough trash to fill a line of dump trucks parked bumper to bumper for half a mile. These crews provide trash service to some areas and work on vacant encampments.

Gillis Park: The Park was cleared and cleaned of an encampment with help from Austin Resource Recovery, Watershed Protection and the Austin Police Departments on November 2. **District 3**

Country Club Creek Greenbelt: The Greenbelt received support from the Austin Police Department and Code Compliance to clear and clean an encampment. The contract was estimating the total clean-up to cost between \$125,000 to \$195,000 and will take up to three weeks to complete. Clean-up began on November 16 and APD was able to provide support for the first three days. **District 3**

Urban Forestry: Tree planting season has started. This year, PARD has the following tree plantings planned:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| • Dittmar Recreation Center | 4 trees |
| • Morris Williams Golf Course | 104 trees |
| • Northwest Balcones Neighborhood Park | 49 trees |
| • Govalle Neighborhood Park | 65 trees |
| • Walnut Creek Hike & Bike Trail @ Austin Tennis Center, Phase II | 189 trees |

Districts 1, 3, 5, 7

PROGRAM UPDATES:

Cities Connecting Children to Nature: Austin will be hosting the Children and Nature Network's annual board retreat from November 29 through December 1. Planned events includes tours of the Reilly Elementary Green School Park and the Pease Park nature play installation. The Central Library will be hosting their working sessions.

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/cities-connecting-children-nature-initiative>.

<https://www.childrenandnature.org/about/our-team#board-of-directors>.

Aquatic Lifeguard Trainings and Events: The Aquatic Division continues to ramp up for the Fiscal Year 2022 season with the following trainings and events:

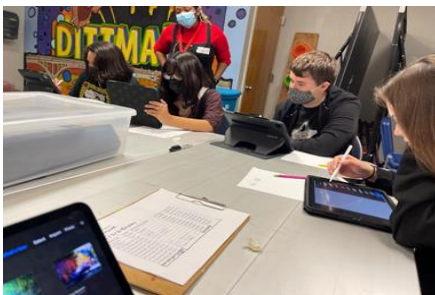
- FY22 Training schedule
 - Full Lifeguard Course 1 – November 6-November 14, 2021, Bartholomew Pool (*Cancelled*)
 - Recertification Course 1 – November 13-14, 2021, Bartholomew Pool (*no participants*)
- District 4**
- 11 Online applicants
- Recent and planned recruiting events
 - Holiday Drive-Thru Nutcracker Event, December 11, 2021, Dittmar Recreation Center.
- District 2**

Tennis Center Update: The four public tennis facilities (Caswell, Burnette Blonde “Pharr”, Austin Tennis & South Austin) have survived through all the COVID shutdowns and restrictions. Precautions have been in place since March 2020 and modified over the past year to accommodate the various levels we have been under. Outdoor activity has been a life saver for many. The concessionaires have all had challenges but have maintained a healthy view and programmed accordingly.

The smiling faces in the photo are from the NJTL (National Junior Tennis League) program that took place this past summer.



Community Initiatives – Totally Cool, Totally Art (TCTA): TCTA is excited to be returning in-person at select locations. Session 1 began on November 1 at Gus Garcia, Dittmar, Montopolis, and Delores Duffie Recreation Centers. Session 2 will start January 3 with the addition of four more centers, bringing the program back up to eight locations. Session 1 classes include *Painting, Sculpture, Filmmaking*, and our first-ever *Digital Art* class where students get to use individual iPads to explore the world of digital art. Check our website, Facebook and Instagram for more photos and videos. To date, 25 enrollments.



Gus Garcia Turkey Loteria: Turkey Loteria took place in the Gus Garcia parking lot on Saturday, November 20. There were 49 people and 30 cars in attendance. Participants played multiple rounds of loteria and took polaroid photos at the photo booth. There were 44 winners who took home a turkey, a bag of non-perishable items and PPE equipment that was donated from Austin Public Health Department.



Pan Am Recreation Center: Pan Am Recreation Center, in partnership with the community board hosted its Thanksgiving event on Saturday, November 20. The event format included a drive-thru set up. Over 300 Thanksgiving food boxes were given to those in attendance. A \$15 HEB food voucher was also included in each food box. Supporting agencies present included Austin Public Health, Sendero Healthcare, and the Austin Latino Coalition provided additional resources to include PPE supplies. The event also included the distribution of over 30 bags that included gloves, socks, hand sanitizer, a water bottle, and perishable food items for any individual identified as homeless. In addition to the food giveaway, participants also had the opportunity to attend a free concert at Hillside, provided by Jaime Vidal & Patsy Torres Street Talk Band. Just over 500 participated in this event.



Asian American Resource Center – Fall Exhibits Reception:

The AARC held the Fall Exhibit Reception on October 22 with the four current exhibiting artists:

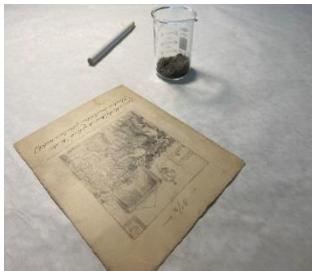
- Photographers Amar Gupta, Peter Shen, and Sherwin Rivera Tibayan and
- Sculptor Zoe Watts.

The reception was held outdoors by the Lotus with indoor access limited to small groups at one time to view the exhibits. An attendee shared that “The exhibition was great, and I enjoyed the diversity of the aesthetics and of the content of the artwork.” After a year and a half of virtual exhibits, the reception was a well-received event for artist and the community. 45 attendees had an



opportunity to interact in person with the art and artists and enjoy light refreshments and brief remarks by AARC staff and the artists.

Brush Square Museums: Museums are busy preparing for the re-opening of the Susanna Dickinson Museum. In addition, we will be doing some smaller holiday programs for visitors this year. However, one of the more exciting things that we have going on is the restoration of our newest additions to the O. Henry collections. These lovely O. Henry illustrations are receiving care so that they can be safely stored and/or used for exhibition. We have revived our “Artifact Allies” Digital Program now that we have staff available to work on it and will be showcasing this process and its importance to museums for our visitors in the next few months.



Dougherty Arts Center - Art a la Carte: Who doesn't love playing with Lego™ toy bricks? The Dougherty Art Center's hosted Art a la Carte: Block Party on November 17 to reconnect with your inner child as you dive into a pile of bricks to build with! 5 attendees.



E.S.B Mexican American Cultural Center – CAMINOS Teen Internship Program: *The CAMINOS teen internship program received an outstanding Arts and Humanities Award from the Texas Recreation and Parks Society Central Region chapter on Thursday, November*

4. The award was accepted at the regional conference luncheon in Temple, Texas by Culture and Arts Education Manager Michelle Rojas and Culture and Arts Education Coordinator Frederico Geib. CAMINOS is an immersive, one year long paid internship, empowering Austin-area teens to carve their own path in the creative arts. Students work alongside ESB-MACC professionals on a variety of community-oriented activities which include:

- Support and leadership at ESB-MACC's signature events and festivals.
- Curation and execution of Youth Art exhibits for the community at large.
- Production of relevant public artworks aligned with the ESB-MACC's mission.
- Public Outreach for the ESB-MACC at youth conferences; conventions and community events.



George Washington Carver Museum – Small Black Museum

Residency Project: Event scheduled for August 27, 2021-January 15, 2022. *The George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center received a very favorable review of its latest exhibit in Sightlines Magazine* stating, “And in my view, no Austin arts institution made a pandemic pivot as nimble, impactful, and necessary as the Carver Museum’s Small Black Museum Residency project.” The Carver presented an exhibition of art by its first cohort of



resident artists from the inaugural year of the Small Black Museum Residency Project: Temi Olujobi, Hypatia Sorunke, and Adrian Armstrong. The mission of this residency program is to support and promote both established and emerging artists of African descent who are largely underrepresented in institutions. The project began in 2021 and was a three-month residency for three artists to develop new artwork, engage in professional development initiatives, and receive institutional support offered through the program. Along with direct support through stipends, the artists received professional development support through workshops, professional consultation, and monthly critiques.

https://sightlinesmag.org/at-the-carver-museum-the-small-black-museum-residency-project-breaks-new-ground?utm_source=Sightlines&utm_campaign=391d958b6e-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_10_29_09_04_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_34c529794e-391d958b6e-63126283.

Museums – Smithsonian National Youth Summit: In October 2021, *the Elisabet Ney Museum was chosen to participate in the Smithsonian’s annual National Youth Summit, this year’s topic being Gender Equity.*

The nationwide virtual summit is produced by the National Museum of American History. In response, Museum staff prepared a special virtual tour of the Ney, given by its youngest docent (a UT Freshman), accompanied by a Zoom-based discussion featuring ten UT students, with Dr. Janet Davis, of the Department of American Studies, as the moderator. The Ney, a member of the Smithsonian Affiliates program, was one of 12 sites given a national spotlight in this year’s Summit. Video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mUBIWRYOQ&t=168s>.



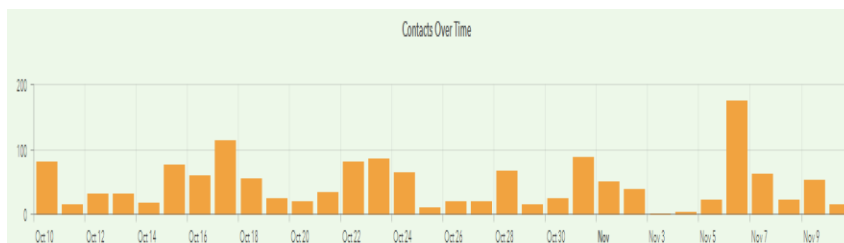
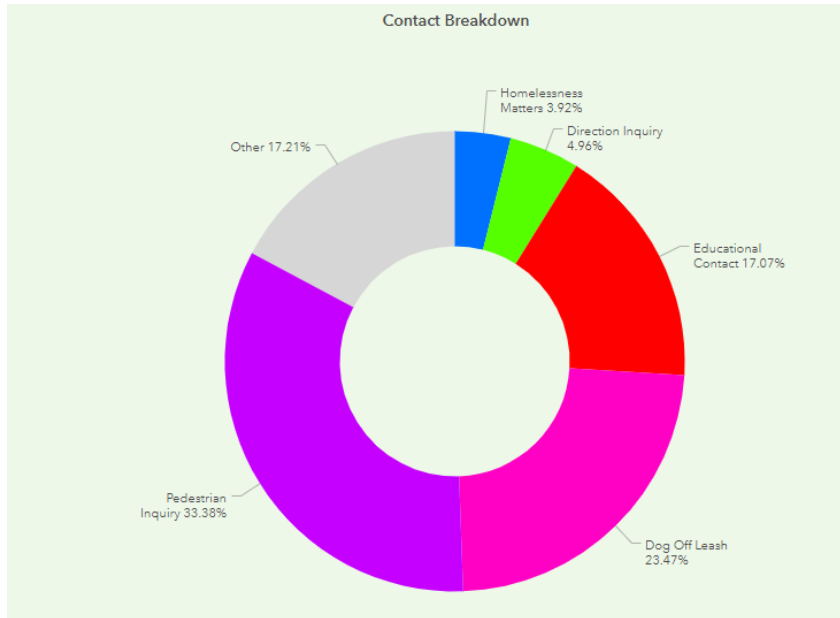
Zilker Botanical Garden: Yoga in the Garden continued through most of November, with additional dates added in early December based on the popularity of the program. Kick off the holiday season on November 28 with the Austin Camerata string quartet and enjoy a blend of classical and holiday sounds. This performance is included with the price of admission and is free for members.

Austin Nature & Science Center: Fall Fest at the Austin Nature & Science Center was held on November 13 with 950 attendees.

Park Rangers: From October 10-November 10, Park Rangers handled daily operations, including 1,453 contacts regarding Laws, Safety, Service and Education. Since October 1, Park Rangers have had 433 contacts with park visitors who had their dogs off leash. Park Rangers began issuing warning

notifications after several months of doing outreach at Longview and The Mexican American Cultural Center.

Overall contact breakdown (October 10-November 10, 2021): 1,453



Park Rangers successfully transitioned to limited in-person programming. From September 10-November 10, Rangers have held 16 programs, for a total of 36.5 hours with 248 participants. Programs are focused on Leave No Trace recreational practices, and responsible park visitation.

It's my park day Barton Creek Greenbelt Clean up with Bark Rangers.

Park Ranger hosted multiple It's My Park Day events. At the Barton Creek Greenbelt Bark Ranger Clean-up, 7 individuals volunteered their time to clean-up the area and speak to other individuals about responsible recreation with pets.





Rangers Aaron and Chris with a New Bark Ranger!

Ranger Chris Comier providing information on Local Birding over Barton Creek.



ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES:

Colony Park District Park Project: Colony Park District Park was honored at the **2021 Austin Green Awards** on November 3. The project implemented improvements consistent with the adopted District Park Vision Plan developed by the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative. This park contributes to the culmination of decades of community involvement. The improvements include a baseball field, soccer/multi sports field, a large play area with elements of nature-based play, fitness equipment, two pavilions, picnic tables, drinking fountains, and a portion of the hike and bike trails network to connect the adjacent communities from the west to the park facilities and elementary school. The park is inclusive, accessible to all, offers educational, health, fitness, and nature experiences to all visitors. All 2021 award recipients can be found here: <https://www.atxgreenawards.org/2021-awards.html#/>.

PARD's Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2022: The total Fiscal Year 2022 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).

PARD's General Fund's budgeted revenue for Fiscal Year 2022 is \$13.3M, a decline of \$1.2M from Fiscal Year 2021's \$14.5M revenue budget. The Golf Fund's budgeted revenue for Fiscal Year 2022 is \$9.2M, an increase of \$400K from Fiscal Year 2021's \$8.8M revenue budget.

The Rowing Dock: The delay in releasing the RFP is due to the need for a contract amendment that identifies asset ownership. Moreover, staff is closely monitoring the progress of Vision Plan process to determine any possible impact on the existing concession. The resolution of these outstanding matters will allow both PARD and the concessionaire to determine the best path forward for the management and operation of the boating concession.

Solicitation for Recreation Management Information System: The response review and evaluation portion of the Recreation Management Request for Information/Innovation (RFI) process has been completed. A formal report and recommendation are anticipated by end of December.

Barton Creek Greenbelt Toxin Levels: Recent water samples showed that levels of the toxin cylindrospermopsin have fallen well below EPA guidance values for recreational use. Visitors to the Barton Creek Greenbelt can once again play in the water. Notice signs have been downgraded to CAUTION at trailheads and a [press release](#) was sent on November 5.