




MEMORANDUM

To: Parks and Recreation Board

From: Kimberly McNeeley, CPRP, Director
Parks and Recreation Department 

Date: December 2, 2020

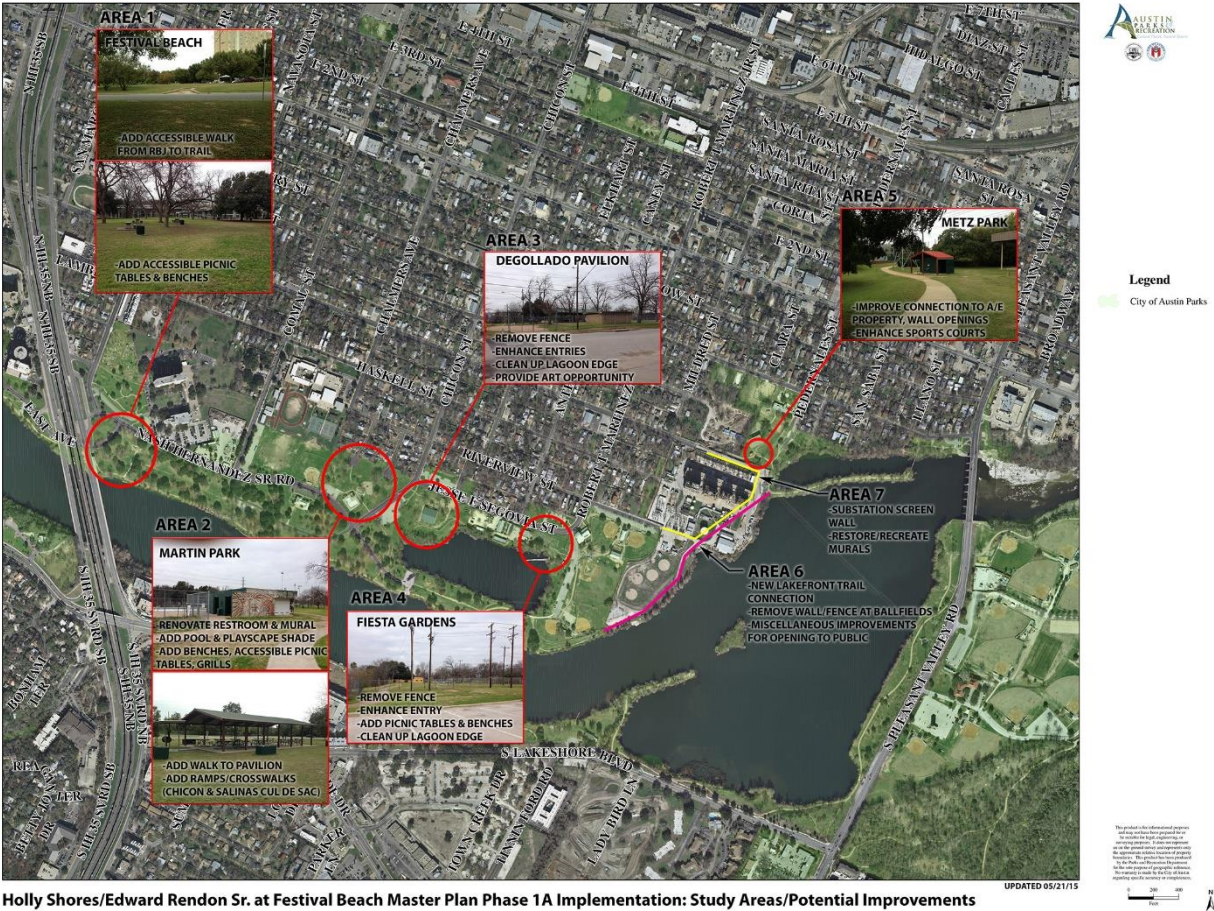
Subject: Update on Holly Shores / Edward Rendon Sr. Park at Festival Beach –
Vision Plan Implementation

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the [Holly Shores/Edward Rendon Sr. Park at Festival Beach Vision Plan](#) Implementation.

Background:

In September 2009, City Council passed [Resolution 20090924-068](#) that reallocated \$550,000 in funds from the Holly Good Neighbor Program “to develop a Vision Plan for Festival Beach, Fiesta Gardens and the Holly Power Plant Site Park.” The Vision Plan includes approximately nine acres of dedicated parkland from the Holly Power Plant Site and approximately 90 acres of existing parkland along the north shore of Lady Bird Lake from I-35 east to Pleasant Valley Road and south of Canterbury Street. City Council approved the Holly Shores/Edward Rendon Sr. Park at Festival Beach Vision Plan on August 28, 2014, and directed the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) to prioritize restrooms, sidewalks and ADA accessibility compliance for the first phase of implementing improvements.

Following City Council’s direction, PARC identified seven study areas. The map below highlights the improvements identified including the renovation or replacement of restrooms, addition of accessible picnic areas and sidewalks, relocation of fencing around the event areas and parkland improvements at the decommissioned Holly Power Plant. The initial phase 1A budget was approximately \$3 million provided by 2012 Bond Funding (\$2.4 million), Austin Parks Foundation (\$100,000) and an Austin Energy Allowance (\$407,480) for the screening of the sub-station to remain in the Holly Power Plant area. PARC also received a \$750,000 Texas Parks and Wildlife matching grant from the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program for improvements in 2018. The Public Works and Austin Transportation Departments have also contributed a combined \$190,000 from the 2016 Mobility Bond to support the Lakefront Trail’s construction. This memo provides updates on the projects that have been completed or are in the process of being completed. In addition, PARC has started working on additional projects within the Vision Plan area. Those include the Nash Hernandez Building, Velasquez Plaza, Holly Warehouses, Fiesta Gardens and the potential incorporation of the Expedition School.



Current Status:

Festival Beach, Area 1

Area 1 is located just east of I-35 and south of Nash Hernandez Dr. Improvements completed in 2018 include new accessible sidewalks, an accessible parking space, new concrete picnic tables that complement the historic concrete picnic tables throughout the park, and new trash and recycling receptacles. The walkways provided pedestrian connections to the picnic tables and the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail from the new accessible parking space and from the Rebekah Baines Johnson Center (RBJ).



View of the new picnic tables and accessible parking space

Martin Neighborhood Pool and Restrooms, Area 2

Area 2 encompasses the pool, restroom, playscape, sidewalks, and picnic area. Improvements were completed in April 2020 and include replacement and upgrade of the perimeter fencing and major upgrades to the restroom including new plumbing fixtures, new stall partitions, as well as new hand dryers, soap dispensers, wall mounted trash receptacles, and drinking fountains.

The Art in Public Places program contracted for the mural restoration on the restroom, which was completed in November 2020.



Mural restoration at Martin Neighborhood Pool

The community also identified the need for a shade structure at Martin Neighborhood Pool. The award of a \$30,000 grant from St. David's Foundation provided much needed supplemental funding for a robust and appropriately scaled shade structure. The installation of the shade structure was completed to coincide with the 2018 season opening of the aquatic facility.



Shade structure at Martin Neighborhood Pool

Additional work at Martin Neighborhood Pool includes accessible sidewalks with concrete picnic tables, replacement of damaged picnic tables, grills, park benches, water fountain and replacement of the playscape to improve accessibility and provide new play features. Work on the playscape was completed in 2019 and the sidewalk and park amenities were completed in February of 2020.



Playscape at Martin Neighborhood Pool

The playscape was identified for replacement as part of the [Vision Plan](#). The community provided input in the spring of 2018 and supported the proposed play equipment but requested an inclusive swing and a lighter color palette. The playground was opened to the public in February 2019. Funding of \$100,000 from Austin Parks Foundation and St. David's Foundation allowed for diverse play equipment with integrated shade structures and the planting of three shade trees.

Degollado Pavilion, Area 3

Work at the pavilion includes new accessible walkways from the parking lot and main entrance to the park at the intersection of Chicon St. and Jesse E. Segovia St., and along the north side of the pavilion. Work includes replacing the 8' tall posts with attached light fixtures and outlets with bollard lights along the north walkway with integrated electrical outlets for events. The perimeter fencing will be removed to allow public access when not reserved for public events. Work in this area began in April 2020. Completion of work at area 3 is anticipated by December 2020.



Left: aerial view of Degollado Pavilion

Below: new walkways and bollard lights



Fiesta Gardens Event Lawn and Boat Storage at Camacho Activity Center, Area 4

The scope of work in area 4 includes the partial removal, relocation, and upgrade of the perimeter fencing on the east side of the Fiesta Gardens complex to allow for public access, removal of the light posts in the lawn, improved walkway accessibility, new picnic tables, and a boat storage enclosure for the Camacho Activity Center programs. The fencing, walkways, and picnic table installation was completed in January 2020. Work continues on the removal of the light posts. Construction drawings for the boat storage enclosure have been completed.



*View of improvements from
Robert T. Martinez St.*

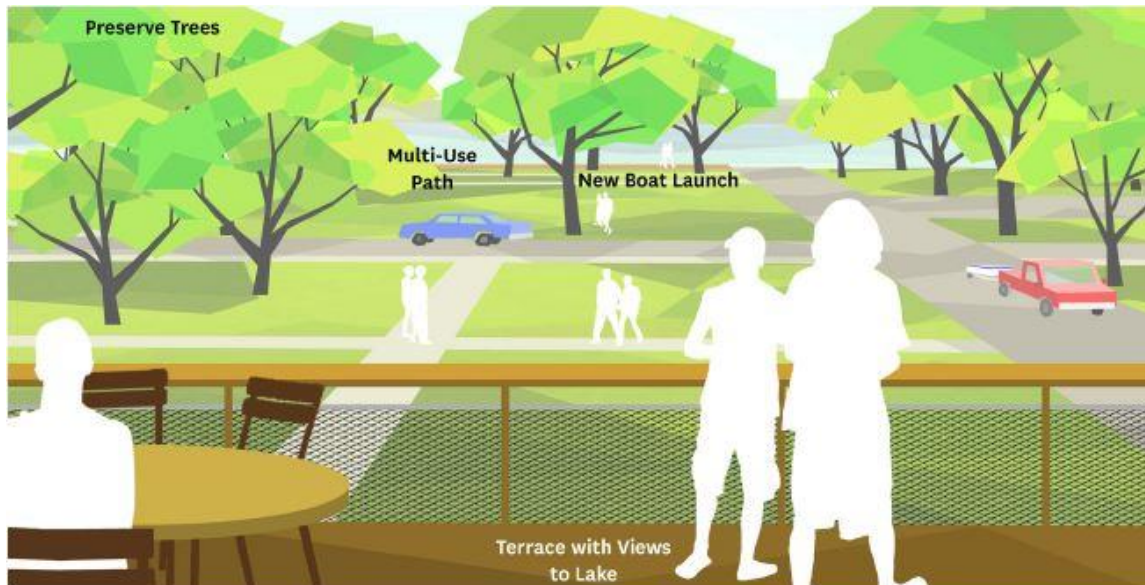
Work in Areas 5, 6 and 7 includes improving connectivity to Metz Neighborhood Park, and continuation of the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail through the area that was once the Holly Power Plant. The power plant area was officially dedicated as parkland in February 2020 and next steps include installation of screening and preservation of the mural walls surrounding the remaining structures of the power plant. Work also includes removal of fencing around the former power plant area to allow access near the ball fields at Camacho Activity Center. The new substation screen will provide additional art wall opportunities and existing art murals will be restored in collaboration with the Art in Public Places program.



Currently the Lakefront Trail project is in permit review, working through requirements to relocate the improved trail away from the shoreline, which is identified as a critical environmental feature/wetland. PARD is working with the Watershed Protection Department and have reached an agreement to move the trail 25 feet away from the shoreline and provide wetland restoration plantings between the new trail alignment and the shoreline. Once the permit has been approved, PARD will complete the formal construction bid process. Construction is anticipated to start in 2021.

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In February 2012, PARD started the development of the Holly Shores/Edward Rendon Sr. Park at Festival Beach Vision Plan. The Vision Plan process, inclusive of extensive stakeholder input, provided recommendations for the use of the Nash Hernandez Building as a shared space for the community offering meeting space, dining space, kitchen, and healthy food and beverage vending. The Vision Plan also recommended allocation of office space for park stewardship organizations.



Following public engagement during the design phase for the joint use facility, it became clear that stakeholders did not support the plan due to the limited community access. As a result, in August 2018, PARD and APD issued a memo indicating they will no longer pursue a joint use facility at the Nash Hernandez Building. At this time, PARD anticipates utilizing the space to support PARD office needs, to provide opportunities for community space and possible allocation of space to non-profit park steward organizations, as outlined in the Vision Plan.

In addition, PARD has recently been approached by the Austin/Travis County Vietnam Memorial Association (ATVMA) to establish a **Vietnam War Memorial** to honor Austin eastside veterans on the grounds adjacent to the Nash Hernandez Building. Members of the Association presented their idea to the District 3 Council Member in August 2020. Subsequently, the group presented the plan to the Commission on Veterans Affairs and to the Land, Facilities and Programs Committee of the Parks and Recreation Board. PARD assisted with the presentation of the proposal to the Veterans Commission, which supported the proposal unanimously. The item will be presented next to the Parks and Recreation Board with a request for a recommendation to the PARD Director to enter into a Parkland Improvement and Maintenance Agreement with ATVMA which will fundraise for the design, construction, installation and future maintenance of the memorial project. The Parks Committee of the East Town Lake Citizens Neighborhood Association expressed support for the Vietnam War Memorial project during its November 2020 meeting. The proposal is anticipated to go before the East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Plan Contact Team in January 2021.

The **Festival Beach Restroom** replaced an existing deteriorated and inaccessible restroom in the Edward Rendon Sr. Metro Park at Festival Beach. The restroom was identified for replacement in the [Vision Plan](#), but was not originally included as a Phase 1 project.

After The Trail Foundation (TTF) selected the restroom as one of the [15 projects](#) in honor of their 15th anniversary, PARD entered into a Parkland Improvement Agreement that allowed TTF to manage, design, and construct the project. Jobe Corral Architects, a local women-owned architecture firm, was selected as the architect. The construction of the new restroom, which was funded through the 2012 G.O. Bond, was completed in June 2020.



Holly Warehouses: The decommissioning of the Holly Power Plant by Austin Energy (AE) ceded and transferred ownership of approximately nine acres of lake front property to PARD. Contained in that acreage are several structures that were utilized by AE as support structures for the former power plant. These structures include a concrete bunker, and two metal warehouse buildings. The two metal buildings (A & B) are located on the lake shore, adjacent to the old water intake structure and are referred to as the Holly Warehouses. The pre-engineered warehouses date from the late 1950's or early 1960's, and were used for storage and other support services.



Holly Warehouses: building A (11,000 sq. ft.) and building B (4,000 sq. ft.)

In 2018, PARD engaged a consultant to provide an assessment of the warehouses, including the existing metal structure, and the mechanical and electrical systems. The warehouses do not have water or wastewater connections. The assessment determined that the warehouses are in sound structural

condition; however the mechanical and electrical systems were deemed non-operational, damaged or at the end of the lifecycle.

The consultants developed five options with estimated improvement costs for the future adaptive re-use of the warehouses. The options are:

1. Remove the building shells and structures, but keep the building slabs: \$82,000
2. Remove the building structures and the slab: \$113,000
3. Convert the two buildings into open-air structures: \$500,000
4. Substantially upgrade building A and remove building B: \$2 million
5. Retain and refurbish both buildings: \$2.5 million

The [Vision Plan](#) for the Holly Shores/Edward Rendon Sr. Park at Festival Beach outlined uses for the Holly Warehouses consistent with benefiting the surrounding neighborhoods. Potential uses of the warehouse buildings included fitness classes, performing arts space, community events and a black box theater. PARD recognizes the value of the adjacency of the current structures to Lady Bird Lake as an exceptional opportunity for the community. Complete removal of the structures, including the concrete slab, would detract from the inherent value of these structures and due to development codes, PARD would not be able to have a similar space close to the lake in the future.

The options and concepts generated by the assessment were communicated to stakeholders through two community outreach events held in the summer and fall of 2018. The fall presentation outlined PARD's recommendation for Option 3, converting the warehouses into open-air structures.



Option 3 – open-air structures

Velasquez Plaza

In 2006, City Council [Resolution 20060525-082](#) provided for the naming of an unfinished roadway, “vacant right-of-way”, called Medina Street, between East 5th and East 6th Street as the Roy and Matias Velasquez Plaza. The vision of the plaza was to serve as part of the Trail of Tejano Legends. Since the resolution, PARD has worked with adjacent property owners to design and develop the property. In the spring of 2017, PARD began the process of procuring design and construction documents by contracting with DWG Landscape Architects. At the beginning of 2019, PARD received a construction cost estimate of \$1.5 million, which resulted in a \$500,000 shortfall based on available project funding. Due to the budget shortfall and the awareness that the “vacant right-of-way” would not be dedicated parkland, PARD re-assessed the project and the proposed location relative to the goal of extending the Trail of Tejano Legends.

During the ceded transfer of the approximately nine acres of the AE Holly Power Plant property, PARD identified an opportunity that would better align with the extension of the Trail of Tejano Legends. The majority of the artwork associated with the Trail of Tejano Legends is located on the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail along Lady Bird Lake. The original location for the Velasquez Plaza at the Medina Street was not in close proximity to these art pieces along the iconic trail. In consultation with the District 3 Council Office and community organizations, PARD recommended relocating Velasquez Plaza along the proposed extension of the hike and bike trail through the ceded and now dedicated parkland, at the former AE Holly Power Plant property. Specifically, PARD is proposing that the Velasquez Plaza be incorporated into the development of the Holly Warehouses. By combining these projects the Holly Warehouses would be developed per the Vision Plan recommendations and would allow for the extension and incorporation of the Trail of Tejano Legends. Funding to implement the design and construction of the plaza could be provided by Parkland Dedication fees.

Fiesta Gardens is a lakeside event and entertainment complex that was listed to the National Register of Historic Places in 2019. The facility lies on the north shore of Lady Bird Lake, just east of IH-35. Constructed in 1965-1966, the complex features a mid-century modernist interpretation of the Spanish Colonial-Pueblo Revival architecture aesthetic. Oriented towards the lagoon constructed for the complex, Fiesta Gardens' principal structures include a Dining and Concession Hall (Events Hall), a Mexican Market Building with internal courtyard, and a generous patio with a circular fountain, decorative concrete planters and an open bandstand; as well as a spectator grandstand with seating for 1,000 facing the lagoon.



View of the Bandstand and Plaza at Fiesta Gardens – Rendering by Clayton + Korte Architects

After the City of Austin purchased the site in 1967, Fiesta Gardens' site boundaries expanded to include an outdoor pavilion and additional park grounds for large concerts and outdoor events. In addition to family gatherings such as weddings and memorials, the complex hosts multiple events such as the

Dragon Boat Festival, Texas Craft Brewers Festival, Texas Veg Fest, Austin Celtic Festival, Hot Sauce Festival, Austin Pride Festival, SXSW Music Festival, Dia de los Muertos Music Festival, and Ice Cream Festival – events that draw tourists to the Austin area every year.



View of the Dining Hall Connector South at Fiesta Gardens – Rendering by Clayton + Korte Architects

The Fiesta Gardens rehabilitation project will focus primarily on preserving and restoring the character-defining architectural features of the Dining and Concession Hall and the Mexican Market Building, while meeting current codes and enhancing the use of the site. Programmatically the focus will remain unchanged – Fiesta Gardens will continue to provide a special events rental venue for family celebrations such as reunions, quinceañeras, parties and weddings. The project scope will include a concept-level schematic design for future repurposing of the Mercado building and parking area, currently used for PARD Maintenance offices and equipment storage. But, under Phase 1, the only construction on the Mercado building will be related to repairs of the building shell. The focus of Phase 1 is the Event Hall, the plaza space, the bandstand, the grandstands and the surrounding landscape.

The A/E contract for Architectural and Historic Preservation services was executed in early 2020 with Clayton + Little Architects (now Clayton + Korte), and will provide design services for the entire project scope. Construction is anticipated in at least two phases. The design phase is currently underway and includes community outreach with a virtual open house meeting held on November 16, 2020 which showcased the schematic design. Funding for this project comes from the Historic Preservation Fund, which is Hotel Occupancy Tax funding that has been allocated for historic preservation of Austin sites frequented by tourists. After a construction cost estimate is refined in the current design phase, PARD will request funding for Phase 1 of construction through the Historic Preservation Fund, which is overseen by the Heritage Tourism Division of the Economic Development Department.

The Expedition School was operating on the eastern shore of the lagoon just south of the Fiesta Gardens building complex and, has provided city-contracted instructor classes (kayaking, standup paddling, canoeing and safety plans and programs) since 2006 on Festival Beach at the Camacho Dock near the Camacho Activity Center. PARD's use of the Camacho Dock for programming, including programs for individuals with special needs, and the daily rental of standup paddleboards has increased, and it was determined that a new location for the operations of The Expedition School was needed.

Following City Council [Ordinance 20191205-070](#), PARD began the development of a partnership agreement for a boating concession on Lady Bird Lake for The Exposition School that would allow rental of recreational rowing equipment such as canoes, kayaks, racing shells and row boats consistent with current boating concessions operated by PARD. In December 2019, a Request for Quotation (RFQ) was issued, and after extensive coordination between PARD and The Expedition School, the terms and conditions of the partnership agreement were finalized in October 2020.

The new operating location of The Expedition School will be at the Festival Beach Boat Ramp. The school received a Site Plan Exemption in September 2020 to relocate the storage containers used by the school for storage of equipment and materials used for operations. This location will use the existing Nash Hernandez Spillway which provides access to Lady Bird Lake (see images below). Based on the Terms and Conditions of the agreement, this location will be utilized by The Expedition School for eighteen (18) months, with possible extensions. PARD and The Expedition School will continue partnering in securing a permanent operating location for the concession.



New operating location of The Expedition School at the Festival Beach Boat Ramp

Camacho Boat Dock: In the fall of 2019, the Watershed Protection Department informed PARD of code-compliance issues at the Camacho Boat Dock. PARD is currently working on the permitting process for the dock and has secured the services of a civil engineer consultant. PARD expects to receive the Site Plan permit for the Camacho Boat Dock in the spring of 2021.

Community Engagement and Outreach continues throughout the implementation of the first phase of the Holly Shores/Edward Rendon Sr. Metro Park at Festival Beach Vision Plan.

PARD holds community outreach meetings semi-annually to provide progress updates to the East Town Lake Citizens Neighborhood Association (ETLCNA) and other community stakeholders. These meetings

are held at the Rodolfo “Rudy” Mendez Recreation Center (formerly Metz Recreation Center) or at Fiesta Gardens. In addition to these engagements, in 2019, ETLONA established a Parks Committee consisting of community stakeholders to allow for more frequent updates on the implementation plan. Furthermore, in the fall of 2019 PARD commenced the Holly Implementation Newsletter to provide quarterly project updates and improve communications.

As the first phase of implementation continues, opportunities for additional projects are being evaluated. The Nash Hernandez Building and the Holly Warehouses in conjunction with Velasquez Plaza are examples of projects that PARD has presented and sought stakeholder input and feedback. Before finalizing any improvements to these facilities, PARD will be reaching out to a broad group of stakeholders and surrounding neighborhoods for their input.

Should you have any questions, please contact Ricardo Soliz, Division Manager, at (512) 974-9452 or Ricardo.Soliz@austintexas.gov, or Liana Kallivoka, Assistant Director, at (512) 974-9455 or Liana.Kallivoka@austintexas.gov.

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