



Austin Raza Round Table
August 26, 2024

Chair Pedro Villalobos
Parks and Recreation Board
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, TX 78701-1088

Dear Chair Villalobos and PARB Members:

At least five car clubs have met at the Festival Beach parking lot just southwest of the Johnny Degollado Pavilion on Saturdays for most of the 20th and all of the 21st centuries so far. This area is known by the Mexican American community as Chicano Park. The car clubs share their love of their classic cars, many of which have been modified to be lowriders. Today, they continue to show their cars and barbecue at Chicano Park on weekends. Neighbors have fished off the existing dock, walked the accompanying trails, held family picnics, and held celebrations for events such as birthdays and weddings. Cinco de Mayo and Diez y Seis de Septiembre celebrations are held at the Johnny Degollado Pavilion.

The Expedition School has operated for almost two decades at Festival Beach, first at the Lorraine "Grandma" Camacho Activity Center and now at the boat ramp at the end of Nash Hernandez Street. The school offers educational programming, private events and public rentals. It operates as a for-profit concessionaire with a nonprofit component for its educational purposes. The school wants a new boating dock and storage facility on the lagoon down the slope from the parking lot these car clubs have used for many decades.

The car club members are concerned that the traffic created by kayaking and stand-up paddle board rentals service will push them out of the park by taking up the limited parking area and grounds. Raza RoundTable of Austin supports the car clubs, East Town Lake Citizens Neighborhood Association, and Hispanic Advocates Business Leaders of Austin (HABLA) in their opposition to the dock. We believe that this will be the final step to push all local neighbors' use of the park out not only of the Camacho Center but all of Chicano Park.

We request that the City rescind the 2019 ordinance that granted the Expedition School the concession and not allow them expand.

If you have questions about this issue, please contact our Co-Chair, Dr. Jane Rivera at janehrivera@austin.rr.com.

Respectfully, Raza Round Table of Austin:

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