



Barton Springs Bathhouse REHABILITATION

Barton Springs Bathhouse Community Meeting #2

Meeting Notes and Comments from August 14, 2018 at the Zilker Botanical Garden

Meeting Notes

Cara Welch opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda and introduced the City of Austin staff.

Laurie Limbacher made a presentation on the project and reviewed the project purpose and scope. She provided an update on the current status of the project including project related meetings and reviews.

Cara Welch covered “What We’ve Heard” in terms of community involvement activities.

- Congestion in the women’s restroom
- Keeping education uses in the rotunda
- SPLASH needs updating

Laurie Limbacher then defined key terms for the project including

- Rehabilitation
- Value
- Program

Cara then led the group through the facilitation of the meeting

Question 1: What do you appreciate most about what currently exists?

- Memories of the women’s restroom, outdoor showers and use the garden area to play in.
- The layout I really love the garden, showers
- A building that has been loved to death and needs to be loved a whole lot more, less used and more focused
- Materiality of the design, 40s design, evocative of a specific architectural style
- Fairly well designed for ease of maintenance: the men’s bathroom is a joy to clean
- Women’s is too busy
- Very impressed with the presentation of the historical design and realize a need for progress
- Garden spaces and the need for more current plumbing
- We need to make it enjoyable for another 50 years
- Like the rotunda area – very underused space



Barton Springs Bathhouse REHABILITATION

- Beautiful building
- Acoustics in the building mitigates noise
- The way the rotunda connects to the pool is a beautiful view of the natural creek, gorgeous
- We miss the height that was originally a part of the building
- Not any construction going on there right now
- Family orientated
- Pecan trees
- Showers and garden areas
- Education
- Bathrooms are a mess
- Cool design
- Better view of nature
- There is no construction needed (projects take too long)
- Shade and observe looking out
- Rotunda Space
- Appreciation of nature and space
- Preservation
- The building itself
- Reflective of Austin in the 40s
- Ease of Maintenance
- Beautiful building
- People enjoying other people
- Should do something to help future
- Scenery

USER EXPERIENCE

Laurie Limbacher presented different aspects of the building and asked for input from the users. Here are some of the comments:

- Purchase of tickets, people have to wait in line
- Currently at the entrance there is only one cashier, would be nice to add another queue
- Usually you can go in on the other side of the building but people don't know that, the signage is not well know



Barton Springs Bathhouse REHABILITATION

- I think the kids in Travis County are all getting aquifer education as part of their education, so I don't think it has to dominate the bathhouse
- Experience that you have going into the bathhouse right now is centered around the past – there are so many things that are important for today, water quality, flow, more things that are presented in the moment, it's missing
- Its kind of link you're cattle , you're in a line
- Lifeguards say that they are looking out of the window – never seen anyone looking out there
- Reopening the entrance
- If the main entrance was relocated to the rotunda it would allow the area outside of the women's bathroom it could be returned to a spectator area
- If there were an extra hot shower (in January)
- I would hate to see any space in the mens area et carved out for another use, use the basked area
- Never been to the SPLASH exhibit – is that the best location – are there storage or other needs
- Ladies room is sort of creepy the back is very dull lighting, creepy feeling (lightbulbs are out) if the light bulbs were brighter
- Open/public showers where you don't have to go into the bathhouse
- Not enough shower curtains, they get ripped off of they are never there
- I see some families setting up elaborate privacy screening – cultural
- There's not a good cultural representation of people here
- Lack of privacy in the men's bathhouse
- The bathrooms seems like a small number of stalls in the bathhouse
- I really like the dressing room as a cool, vintage thing, stalls are so small
- Outside of the bathhouse – it's really distracting that lights that are up there, they shine in your eyes brightly
- Stalls at the men's room, I don't ever see anybody in those, they should be repurposed and put in an historic corner “this is what it was like”
- Massive growth of Austin effects lines “purchase ticket prior”
- One cashier equals operational deficiency
- Family use “creepy” areas because of privacy
- Reopening original entrance could make lines go away
- Women gravitate towards cubicles with showers and curtains
- Lack of diversity and population representation
- I would hate to see space in the men's area cropped out for another use



Barton Springs Bathhouse REHABILITATION

- “Opposite of privacy- outside showers”
- More obvious signage
- Centered around past, focus on what’s happening today and in the moment
- Bathrooms have a small number of stalls when there are so many people
- Extra-hot shower
- Zone of cubicles (user likes private area)
- Better quality lighting
- New entrance around women’s area if current location is changed
- Lifeguard activity or lack of
- “Education” = no need to put it around pool

EDUCATION: What could or should be in the space?

- Can you put an education facility to the maintenance barn/hut? To get the education area out of the bathhouse.
- Space utilization
- Right now 90K kids use the facilities – there would have to be education somewhere in the park – one of the most important things that people who understands that this is different than any other pool
- Use the space better
- It’s not just about the hydrologic – cultural education needs to be involved, connecting people to the land/facility (e.g. history of Zilker Park, the Zilker Family, Butler family)
- Take education somewhere else (Ex: HVT)
- Find better locations
- Exclude bathhouse
- Train station?
- Children need to separate themselves from patrons
- 90 K used for facilities
- Space optimization
- Cultural education opportunities are being missed
- Safer loading/unloading
- Looking into settle locks, maps, and interactive experiences
- 3D Watershed cross sections that you can touch and interact with
- Better bus stop paths and stops
- See Kiosk at the pool with interactive parks and recs info



Barton Springs Bathhouse REHABILITATION

- More maps
- More employment training and educating
- Want to see the rotunda maintain education components
- See more education about desegregation of Austin through swim-ins

HISTORIC: What could or should be in the space?

- Architecture is being hidden by different uses that are in there
- The entire history of the area – American Indians, Spanish Missionaries, pioneers, incredible amount of history because of the springs
- Commemorative plaques and markers – not get rid of existing historical markers
- Reopening the entrances
- Bathhouse was used for the swimmers – would be nice to get back to that a little more
- Swimmers need lockers
- It was really cool the way you entered, separated, and then came back together
- Springs = central point of history
- Entire history of that area (Indian reservation)
- Data set= empirical data
- Do not get rid of existing markers
- Historic bathhouse
- Architecture
- Shift towards historic design for swimmers
- lockers

ENVIRONMENTAL: What could or should be in the space?

- Being able to offer an environmental plus
- Reduce impervious cover – parking lot that drains
- Rinse off before you go swimming; Air quality issues with sunscreen
- Parking – the message to the city should be loud and clear that parking is
- Cars are a reality and the space for parking is needed – don't reduce any parking
- Q: Are you including a large bus area? That probably helps you and count as a parking spot
- Let's get rid of congesting in the parking that is already there – separate uses for playground, Zephyr
- Impressions cover will answer some objectives



Barton Springs Bathhouse REHABILITATION

- Offer environmental plus parking
- Cars are a reality, spaces are needed
- Landscaping around playground = looks piecemeal
- H2O quality degrades = air quality problem with sunscreen
- Soil comes into pool after a rainy day
- Have busses park in handicap areas? Bus spaces?
- Net
- Loss of parking spaces

OTHER COMMENTS

- Playground looks haphazard – landscaping looks haphazard
- After the big rain – soil sediment made the pool super cloudy

[Additional Comments](#)

During and after the facilitated portion of the meeting, attendees had the opportunity to provide additional commenting on boards around the room. Here are the transcribed comments from those boards:

What do you appreciate about the Bathhouse?

- Open air dressing room
- Women's dressing room and hot outdoor showers
- Human center is being loved to death and is used too much
- Material and design of architecture and time of Austin
- Ease of maintenance in men's room
- Preservation of historical design and keeping it natural spaces
- Better plumbing needed
- Rotunda area is underutilized
- View of pool from rotunda/entrances in original location
- Tall open spaces in rotunda could be reclaimed
- Education programming in bathhouse
- Beautiful building needs to be appreciated for next 50-70 years
- Seating area by entrance is beautiful sitting area



Barton Springs Bathhouse REHABILITATION

- Open air dressing/shower areas
- Education could be enhanced
- The staff and operations
- Memory of restroom
- Good memories in bathroom
- Use the outdoor show
- Love the layout
- Grass dried up
- Love hot shower
- Want more hot showers
- Bathrooms and toilets are a mess
- Human center of the experience
- Building loved to death
- Love the design and reflection of its time
- Ease to clean – joy to clean
- Preservation of design
- Need for progress
- Correct plumbing
- Need people to enjoy it for the next 50 years
- Like the rotunda – underused
- Pool connects a good view from rotunda
- Miss the height of the building
- Appreciate the education that is in the space
- Beautiful building
- Love the shade and seating
- Appreciate seeing sky and trees
- Appreciate there is no construction at this time
- Take away use for years and it is fine the way it is
- Education part the temp where the showers are opportunity for more education

What could/should be – User Experience

- Address waiting lines by allowing pre-purchase of tickets
- Two queues at entrance
- Additional entrance on other side



*Barton Springs
Bathhouse*
REHABILITATION

- Education requirement not needed at bathhouse now
- Provide data about current water conditions and flow to visitors
- Viewing access not being used at aquatic office
- Reopen original entrances for user expedition
- Moving entrances to rotunda would free up women's area and spectator gallery
- More hot showers
- Women's dressing area creepy factor could be improved with better lighting
- Women's dressing area – privacy options needed
- More bathrooms needed and more space needed
- Better light in bathhouse
- Lower pool lighting
- Growth of Austin and the lines purchase before you get there
- Absurd that lines more lines
- You can go in on other side of building
- Education not needed
- How fast is the flow, water quality – is it safe to swim
- Today feel like cattle
- Lifeguards don't look out those windows
- Reopen original entrance
- Rotunda return to spectators needed
- Not use the men's area for storage
- Need extra hot showers
- Not best location for education
- Dull lighting needs to be brighter in the women's room; light bulbs are out
- Like the private back area
- In support of private options
- Not enough shower curtains
- Some people like the privacy
- Very small number of toilet "stalls"
- Bathroom lights distract swimmers in the dark
- Back stalls repurposed in men's room
- Add wishing well
- Avoid over programming the facility
- Should be free for people who don't want to swim but want to tour facility



*Barton Springs
Bathhouse*
REHABILITATION

What could/should be – Education

- Move education out of the bathhouse to free up bathhouse space
- Move education to playscape for better use of bathhouse for storage/staff
- Optimize space
- Add education to park
- Move education function out of bathhouse and keep some in bathhouse with kiosks and photos
- Improved school bus experience with relocated education
- Add education as cultural/historical topics in new space
- Move education to maintenance barn
- Education needs to be included in the entrance
- Move education out of bathhouse
- Move classroom
- Get the bus out of entrance area
- Train station could be utilized for more education
- Safer loading and unloading
- More education for employees

What could/should be – Historic

- Embrace history by reopening tall interior spaces
- Keep existing markers and statute
- Reopening men's/women's entrances
- Restore swimming experience focus to historic origins and focus
- Add lockers
- Historic architecture
- The history of the area is missed
- Maintain existing historical treatment
- Reopen men's and women's entrance
- Open it back up for swimmers
- We need lockers

What could/should be – Environmental

- Reduce impervious cover or make water quality improvements
- Some loss of parking lots
- Sunscreen usage/shower education requirement



*Barton Springs
Bathhouse*
REHABILITATION

- Improve parking at pool by moving activities to other parking lot areas
- Reduce impervious cover
- Parking lot changes would be good
- You could lose spots if you could get a shuttle
- Require people to be aware of sunscreen and water quality, sweaty people
- Parking lots not answer to Barton Springs
- Cars are a reality, do not reduce parking
- Landscaping
- Topsoil runoff into pool
- H2O Quality concerns
- Provide alternative access from remote