



& Barton Springs Plan Coordinating Committee

BARTON SPRINGS POOL MASTER PLAN UPDATE

August 2011

Goal for the Master Plan

Our goal for the Master Plan is to restore Barton Springs Pool to its rightful glory, where the water is clearer and the experience of the pool is more enjoyable. The humble origin of the plan comes from grassroots advocacy by regular pool users who raised concerns beginning in 2005 over the deterioration and lack of funding for the pool. The plan proposes appropriate additions and renovations to the swimming pool, its buildings, and the surrounding grounds.



The Friends of Barton Springs Pool (FBSP) seek restorations mindful of the historical setting and respectful of the fragile and unique natural environment. The plan must also accommodate significant user demands on Austin's most popular park amenity.

Master Plan History

The Master Plan results from numerous critical issues we helped the City identify. In 2006, FBSP presented to Council a list of improvements needing immediate attention. Council approved spending \$6.2 million for improvements in Fall, 2007. Council directed staff, stakeholders, and planners to develop the BSP Master Plan, a process culminating in unanimous Council approval of the Master Plan in Jan. 2009. FBSP and many pool users, City

staff, and consultants continue to meet regularly, discuss individual projects, work towards approval through the various boards on the 15 short term projects. The process has been long, rigorous, and inclusive. A Joint Committee of Parks and Environmental Board Members steers much of the process. Staff of PARD and Watershed Protection lead the projects and communicate status and draft designs to the public. There has been progress on many fronts, and a few completed projects using the funding allocated in 2007. Short Term Project Status

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

Tree Assessment and Tree Care \$84,473

Project included tree condition assessments in 2009. Since then, unsafe trees have been removed and new trees were planted through early 2010. Also, a rigorous maintenance and tree replacement plan is on-going: after installation of irrigation improvements, more regular tree treatments, new plantings, and mulching are occurring.

Rehabilitation of Bathhouse Roof and Windows (Phase 1) \$271,122

The roof has been completely replaced with new surfacing. Windows have been sealed and caulked and the metal casings restored. Construction nearly completed with final inspections of work and "punch list" items remaining.

Structural Testing of Dams \$129,385

Both the dams enclosing the pool were to determine their structural strength. The final report was released in April, 2011. The findings indicate the downstream dam has horizontal cracks and exposed rebar that need repairs. Funding for the repairs are not been budgeted in the Master Plan.

Ultrasonic Control of Algae

City staff recommend project not be undertaken due to unknown impacts to the BS Salamander.

Removal of Flood Debris \$735,216

Following extensive planning, permitting, and public input, gravel and debris deposited in the pool during various flood events was removed from January 17th through March 12th, 2011.

Pilot Study for Water Recirculation

Project showed positive results that more water circulation in beach area may reduce occurrence of nuisance algae.

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

Pilot Study for Creek Flow

To determine the effects of creek flow through the pool, a water quality study will measure water chemistry to determine effects on algae and habitat. The study will take place during the repairs to the bypass culvert.

Renovations to Bathhouse Restrooms and Mechanical Systems \$320,000

Project is 95% complete, involves installation of solar water heating systems and upgrades to restroom fixtures and facilities, including ADA enhancements.

Topographic Survey \$150,000

Survey was completed after the gravel bar was removed. Survey maps the natural surfaces in pool and surrounding area; will aid in future modeling and landscaping placement.

Hydrodynamic Modeling \$250,809

City expects to contract with Univ. Texas in mid-2011 to prepare a model of water flow and velocities emanating from springs and through the pool, as well as flood flows. Results will inform managers of ways to improve water quality and possibly reduce algae proliferation as well as reducing buildup of flood debris.

ADDITIONAL PLANNING BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION

Repairs to Bypass Culvert \$299,840 + WPD funds of \$3.111 million

Project would alleviate high priority structural issues brought to light in 2008, including leaks between pool and tunnel, sloughing of terrace and lawn, addressing a cracked tunnel and deteriorated bottom. Design alternatives and engineering plans have gone through many changes. A final construction schedule has not yet determined with the design at the 60% phase and permit approval from USFWS pending.

New Inlet Grate on Bypass Culvert \$219,000 + \$300,000 from APF/FBSP SEP

Project work will construct a re-designed inlet to tunnel to reduce clogging by creek flood debris. A preliminary design was completed thus far. Construction is targeted for Fall 2012.

Interpretive Plan \$122,000

Project will bring new signage and information technology to the pool area. Initial planning phase and user surveys completed; implementation will be tied to general grounds improvements. IT projects for improved public education, exhibit improvements at Splash, and other plans for areas like sunken gardens and Violet Crown trailhead are being started.

General Grounds Improvements \$2,282,000

Several projects addressing fencing and enlargement of the pool area, tree court redesign, an all-access trail from the south entrance, landscaping, electrical upgrades, burying overhead wires, and improving capacity of water and power for pool cleaning. Four design workshops successfully solicited stakeholder input. A 30% design plan was prepared for stakeholder review in Nov. 2010. A 60% design plan awaits significant design changes due to the goal of improving the tree court.

Sunken Gardens Improvements – Phase I \$278,000

Phase I will renovate the deteriorated inner walls of this historic structure and install an adjustable outlet gate to control spring flow and manage salamander habitat. Staff is working to enlist a contractor from the rotation list.

CURRENTLY UNDER DISCUSSION

Restoration of Main Pool Entrance

Through discussions on the general grounds improvement and tree protection projects, stakeholders have identified this project as an aesthetic and historical restoration goal that also would reduce foot traffic in tree court and long waits at the entrance gate. An inviting and grander entrance through the rotunda to the bathhouse was originally slated as a long term project. FBSP advocates for inclusion of this project sooner than long-term using a combination of in-kind, donated, and city funding. To date, FBSWP has secured in-kind design work from private architectural and engineering firms and is working with PARD staff to try to make this project a reality.

Long Term Goals

The Master Plan includes proposals for numerous long-term improvements. Implementation of water quality aspects of the long-term proposals is dependent on the outcome of the short-term scientific studies. Other issues that require more data before a recommendation could be made, as well as issues that were deemed controversial in initial discussions with the public, were placed in the long-term projects.



Even with approval of the Master Plan by City Council, each of these individual projects will require approvals and funding by the City. The FBSP advocates that project funding be included in the upcoming 2012 bond election. Some of these proposals and preliminary costs include:

- Renovation of Sunken Gardens (Phase 2), Eliza Springs, and water quality improvement projects (\$1.7 million)
- Improvements to Barton Creek downstream of the pool, dog pool improvements, general grounds improvements, and rehabilitation of Zilker Ponds (\$2.15 million)
- Renovation of Bathhouse (Phase 2), addition of a small bathhouse near the South Entrance (\$5.86 million)
- *Total: \$9.75 million.*