

## Seaholm Waterfront Back-up Material for Design Commission—June 25, 2018

[Austin Parks Foundation](#) (APF), [The Trail Foundation](#) (TTF), and the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) have completed the planning study for the future of Seaholm Waterfront, the historic Seaholm Intake structure and its surrounding parkland. The study, completed by internationally recognized architecture and urbanism firm Studio Gang, reveals a potential concept for future park improvements and the repurposing of the decommissioned Seaholm Intake structures for public use and recreation.

The study's goal was to develop a highly adaptable, long-range vision for the historic Seaholm Intake structure and underutilized surrounding parkland. Work on early phases including safety requirements and code compliance improvements could begin in the near future and the other phases and amenities would be built out in the coming years. The preferred design concept for the adaptive re-use of the building features an open and flexible space that can be used any day by the public, or periodically for events, and on occasion for large gatherings with the ability to serve food and beverages. Additional features of the proposed plan include the addition of support structures, flexible lawn space, multiple water access points, trail improvements and an amphitheater. Several important principles guided the planning process and potential design of the Seaholm Waterfront including embracing and preserving the historic integrity of the building, engaging with the local community and experts, restoring and diversifying the ecology in the area, and building sustainable principles into the design and operational models.

[Seaholm Waterfront Study--Start It Up!](#)

[Seaholm Waterfront Preferred Concept](#)

[Community Engagement Summary](#)

[Board, Council and Commission Schedule](#)

### **ABOUT THE PROJECT**

The planning phase, which began in May 2017, was designed to provide PARD and the City of Austin with a highly adaptable, long-range vision for the historic Seaholm Intake structure and underutilized surrounding parkland by developing the Seaholm Intake into a public facility, while respecting the historic significance of the structure. The study area spanned between the Pfluger Bridge and Shoal Creek, and from the lake's edge to Cesar Chavez. To learn more about community engagement on this project, please visit [www.austintexas.gov/page/seaholm-intake-public-engagement](http://www.austintexas.gov/page/seaholm-intake-public-engagement).

## GOALS

- Develop a long-range vision for the project with particular focus on the programming model to develop a public and civic facility
- Identify a phased approach to the project so that work can begin in the near future and be built out in the coming years

## Precedent Projects and Qualifications

The project team identified precedent projects and key attributes to be considered:

- Experience with similar projects in similar settings
- Experience understanding projects in the public realm and specifically parklands
- Experience with developing feasibility studies encompassing economic, environmental and cultural vitality
- Experience with public participation and outreach

With these attributes in mind, [Studio Gang](#) was identified to move forward to lead the effort. An internationally recognized architecture and urbanism firm founded by MacArthur Fellow Jeanne Gang, Studio Gang has developed such landmark urbanism projects as Civic Commons, a set of design strategies and techniques that communities can use to renew their public assets, created as part of the national initiative Reimagining the Civic Commons; two boathouses on the Chicago River; the Nature Boardwalk and Pavilion at Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago; and the framework plan for Northerly Island, a public park and former airfield on Lake Michigan.

The effort includes:

- Inventory and analysis of the physical attributes of the site along with all completed work to date on site conducted by PARD, with specific consideration paid to the historic integrity of the building
- Develop precedent studies of similar, national projects
- Conduct stakeholder meetings and public open houses to determine the best recreation and public use for the site and building based on public input
- Develop construction cost models to determine overall project costs and likely phasing opportunities
- Explore precedents for partnerships for programming, operations and the management of public facilities

Studio Gang has collaborated with 8 local Austin sub-consultants, including Ten Eyck Landscape Architects, Datum Engineering, Urban Design Group and GO Collaborative partnered with Civic Collaboration to facilitate public involvement.

## Background

The Seaholm Intake facility is an iconic Art Deco design and once was the pump house for the Seaholm Power Plant. The Seaholm Power Plant, a City-owned retired power generation facility, was designed by Burns & McDonnell Engineering Co. and built of

cast concrete in two phases in 1950 and 1955 by Odom Construction. Seaholm Intake is part of that overall structure. The Seaholm Power Plant represents a strong civic presence in the cityscape of downtown Austin and showcases a unique period of American Art Deco municipal architecture and Public Works engineering. Seaholm operated as a power plant until 1989. In 1996, Austin City Council authorized the decommissioning of the plant and all the associated buildings, in preparation for future adaptive re-use. The Seaholm Intake Facility is located on the banks of Lady Bird Lake and the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail.