

Schedule

Zilker: record Ap 22
hearing May 10



MEMORANDUM

TO: Parks and Recreation Board Members

FROM: Michael J. Heitz, AIA, Director
Parks and Recreation Department

DATE: March 17, 1994

SUBJECT: Town Lake Comprehensive Plan Review: Central Corridor

On January 6, 1994 the City Council instructed the Parks Board, the Planning Commission and the Environmental Board to solicit public input, review and make recommendations by June 1994 to the City Council on the update of the Town Lake Comprehensive Plan including Zilker Park, Town Lake and the Colorado River Park. The review schedule adopted by the Parks Board began with the Colorado River Park, continues with the Central Lake Corridor and will follow with Zilker Park. The review procedure is to spend two meetings on each section; first, a staff description of the relevant sections of the Plan and changes recommended by PARD staff and second, a public hearing. In the final meeting, the Parks Board will formulate a recommendation to the City Council.

Central Lake Corridor

For the purposes of this review, the Central Lake Corridor is identified as all the parkland on Town Lake, excluding Zilker Park and the Colorado River Park. Currently, the six mile long Town Lake corridor is composed of 535 acres of public parkland on both sides of the lake. The shoreline is public parkland except for the south shoreline around Congress Avenue and east of I-35, and both sides west of the MoPac bridge.

Central Lake Corridor Recommendations (see pages 58-81 and 87-91)

The major Comprehensive Plan recommendations will be listed in geographical sequence from east to west.

Longhorn Dam to I-35

- + 1) Locate a sailing facility near Pleasant Valley Road to permit more water-based recreation.
 - Recommendation: Agree, when sufficient user demand is demonstrated.
- (-) 2) Alter the Fiesta Gardens traffic flow by establishing a new park road along the shoreline, connecting Robert Martinez Street (formerly Canadian) with Comal Street.
 - Recommendation: Retain existing street access. The proposed road would disrupt the new ballfield complex at the end of Canadian Street.
- + 3) Enhance the Fiesta Gardens area for neighborhood park activities.
 - Recommendation: Agree.
- + 4) Extend the trail on the south shore between I-35 and Lakeshore Drive.
 - Recommendation: Agree.

I-35 to Drake Bridge

- + 5) Acquire property south of River Street, and dedicate City's Street and Bridge Yard as parkland. *St. + Bridge*
 - Recommendation: Agree.
- + 6) Develop a cultural facility in the Rainey Street area.
 - Recommendation: City is currently doing a feasibility study on the conversion of Public Works Service Center #2 to a cultural facility.
- + 7) Complete trail access on south shore between Drake Bridge and I-35. *Landry's*
 - Recommendation. Agree.
- + 8) Develop neighborhood park activities on Town lake between East Bouldin and Blunn Creek.
 - Recommendation. Agree.
- + 9) Rehabilitate the Norwood House on its original site.
 - Recommendation. Agree.
- + 10) Create a promenade along Caesar Chavez (First Street) between Shoal Creek and Waller Creek.
 - Recommendation. Agree; PARD has applied for ISTEA funds to build a stairway connection from street to shoreline trail; future development should emphasize informal character of the lake.

* Bouldin Creek Neigh.
free, one-day events - OK
Not multi-day, fenced

Drake Bridge to MoPac Bridge

~ 11) Continued use of Auditorium Shore for occasional special events should be complemented by measures to limit the noise and traffic impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.

- Recommendation. Agree.

☆ (-) 12) Cultural institutions such as museums or theaters should be accommodated in the current location of the Coliseum and Daugherty Arts Center. Renovate DAC; re-use Palmer

Re-focus on 1st - 3rd area

- Recommendation. Agree; development should be limited to areas along existing roads to minimize impact on open space.

+ 13) Surface parking around Palmer Auditorium should be replaced by a landscaped parking structure surrounding all but the lake side of the auditorium.

- Recommendation. Agree, if the City decides to retain the Auditorium in its present function.

(-) 14) Develop a lagoon between the Coliseum and Palmer Auditorium. *What use instead?

- Recommendation. The lagoon should be deleted due to the high cost of maintenance.

+ 15) The City power generating facility and the cooling water intake structure should be converted to a recreational or cultural use when they are no longer necessary for utility purposes.

- Recommendation: Agree.

☆ (-) 16) Develop neighborhood park activities east of Austin High School, after suitable replacement of existing ball field and the Humane Society Animal Shelter.

No.

- Recommendation: Agree.

Add Pecan Garden → Developing thru private business but not frivolous amusement park

MoPac Bridge to Red Bud Isle

+ 17) Acquire the commercial properties between Eilers Park and Lake Austin Boulevard as they become available to provide higher visibility and access.

- Recommendation: Agree.

+ 18) Preserve Red Bud Isle in a predominantly natural state.

- Recommendation: Agree.

(-)
19) The Plan recommends an enhanced transportation system for Town Lake, including trails, bikeways, strolling paths, a water taxi, and a tramway.

- Recommendation: PARD supports additional hike and bike trails, but recommends against implementation of a water taxi or tramway until clear community support is demonstrated.

For your information, I have attached a copy of the Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. Please contact me if you require additional information.



Michael J. Heitz, AIA, Director
Parks and Recreation Department

MJH:SS

SCHEDULE

Phase One: Colorado River Park

- February 22: PARD Recommendation
- March 8 and March 22: Public Hearing

Phase Two: Central Lake Corridor

- March 22: PARD Recommendation
- April 12: Public Hearing

Phase Three: Zilker Park

- April 26: PARD Recommendation
- May 10: Public Hearing

Action

- May 24:
Council

Board

Recommendation

to

AMENDMENTS TO THE TOWN LAKE PARK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
ATTACHED AS EXHIBIT "A"

The Town Lake Park Comprehensive Plan attached as Exhibit "A" to this ordinance is amended by the following provisions, which shall control over any inconsistent provisions established or implied in Exhibit "A":

- (1) The proposed lagoon on the north side of West First Street is eliminated.
- (2) Some of the retrofitting features of the 14 recommendations of the Comprehensive Watershed Ordinance Task Force approved by the City Council on May 22, 1986, shall be incorporated into the remaining lagoon sites.
- (3) Existing athletic fields shall not be removed until alternate locations have been identified and users have been consulted about the adequacy of such alternate locations.
- (4) There shall be no attempt by the City of Austin or a municipal improvements corporation to develop any of the "Pecan Gardens" property until a thorough environmental impact study is completed and submitted to the City Council analyzing and detailing the environmental impact of the proposed Pecan Gardens development. The environmental impact study shall analyze the potential water, air, and noise pollution resulting from the proposed development. The study shall particularly evaluate the potential runoff impact on Barton Creek's already environmentally sensitive status. The impact of motor traffic related to the proposed location of parking facilities in the Pecan Gardens shall be evaluated. The prospective cost of acquiring the Pecan Gardens properties, based on present appraised values, shall be determined, as shall the estimated cost of the development proposed in the Town Lake Park Plan.
- (5) No part of the Town Lake Park Plan affecting Barton Creek shall be implemented unless there is an affirmative finding by the City Council based on an environmental impact study that such implementation will not adversely affect the shoreline or waters of Barton Creek.
- (6) Inclusion of the "Pecan Gardens" does not commit the City to develop this facility but merely acknowledges that this is the most appropriate place for this development. References to any specific number of eating establishments, specialty shops, exhibition spaces, and amusement/entertainment features are deleted. Limitations shall be placed on the use of high amplification equipment so that the use of this area remains sensitive to adjacent neighborhoods.

- (7) Plans for the Performance Pavilion in the Colorado River Park shall be deferred until the expansion of Lakeshore Drive between Pleasant Valley Road and Montopolis Drive is completed and traffic studies indicate that access to parking adjacent to the Performance Pavilion will accommodate the projected traffic volumes. Acoustical technology must be incorporated in the design and use of the Performance Pavilion so that it does not become a nuisance for surrounding neighborhoods.
- (8) No particular priority or phasing of actions necessary for implementation of the Town Lake Park Plan is adopted. The Director of the Parks and Recreation Department shall consult with park users and the various affected boards and commissions for the establishment of priorities.
- (9) Existing open areas utilized for kite flying, soccer, softball, kickball, and other sports activities shall not be planted with trees; but trees may be planted in other open areas to provide shade.
- (10) In order to keep the trains, pool, and playscape accessible to automobiles during off-peak hours, the number of parking spaces on the south side of Barton Springs Road shall not be diminished.
- (11) Implementation of the Town Lake Park Plan is to include specific opportunities for minority entrepreneurship east of IH-35.
- (12) In order to receive private contributions, a Town Lake Park Trust Fund shall be established at the earliest possible time.
- (13) The Town Lake Park Alliance is recognized for its work in promoting this vision for Austin's future. The preservation and enhancement of creeks and waterways was the City's Bicentennial gift to the nation.
- (14) The Environmental Board shall have the opportunity to review the Town Lake Park Plan concerning water quality, native habitat, and other impacts upon Town Lake such as dredging.
- (15) Riverside Drive (as it goes through Town Lake Park) shall not be abandoned until Barton Springs Road is upgraded to handle extra traffic.
- (16) In the interest of maintaining a good working relationship with the University of Texas in achieving the goals and objectives of the Town Lake Park Plan, and since the University has offered to "work with the City to the end of

including walks, parkways, trails, open spaces and the like into its land plan, and to help achieve the goals and objectives of the plan," inclusion of the Brackenridge Tract in the Town Lake Park Plan is deferred pending the results of further cooperative efforts between the City and the University of Texas.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Parks and Recreation Board Members

FROM: Michael J. Heitz, AIA, Director
Parks and Recreation Department

DATE: April 4, 1994

SUBJECT: Improvement Agreement for Norwood Estate

On April 27, 1989, the City Council passed a resolution reserving the Norwood Estate - located at the northwest corner of Riverside Drive and IH 35 - for a 5-year period for the Women's Chamber of Commerce of Texas (WCCT) to make property improvements including the following: relocation and renovation of the house; renovation of the grounds; and creation of a sculpture garden. By April 1993, the WCCT had raised adequate funds to hire an architect to execute a plan for the proper relocation of the house. Several months later, on the basis of WCCT's commitment to continue and complete the project, PARD began discussions on a formal agreement.

The main points of the proposed "Parkland Improvement Agreement" include a term of five (5) years which may be extended on an annual basis as necessary to complete the Improvements. Improvements include relocation and restoration of the house, restoration of the grounds, and creation of a sculpture garden. The Improvements are divided into six phases to be completed sequentially within certain years (see Attachment A). The last phase is development of the sculpture garden, which is seen as an ongoing endeavor, and therefore has no completion date.

All costs of the Improvements will be borne by WCCT. Each phase of the Improvements must be approved by PARD prior to commencing work. WCCT must show substantial progress in completing all Improvements on schedule before the City shall grant extensions to the term of the Agreement.

The Improvement Agreement will have an exhibit entitled "Norwood Estate Sculpture Garden Maintenance, Operation and Improvement Agreement" (Operation Agreement), to govern the property after the Improvements have been completed and accepted by the City. This

Parks and Recreation Board Members
Norwood Estate
April 4, 1994
Page 2

Agreement is based on the City's operation agreement with the Friends of the Umlauf Sculpture Garden. The term is for 10 years, but may be extended for two additional periods of up to ten (10) years each.

PARD will assume the following maintenance and operation responsibilities for Norwood, upon annual approval of such duties in PARD's operating budget: payment of utilities; parking lot repair, repair and maintenance of the house, irrigation system and water features; mowing and trimming; litter pickup on the grounds and parking lot; landscaping, forestry and horticultural assistance; and routine park security.

WCCT will assume responsibility for all other maintenance and operations including but not limited to all specialized horticultural and grounds maintenance, operation of the Visitors' Center (in the house), special security to protect the outdoor sculptures, and public information costs. WCCT would also manage, operate and program the Garden to exhibit sculptures, stage events and exhibits, and schedule the facility for special meetings or events.

The Garden will be open to the public, and its hours and fees subject to annual approval by the City. WCCT may make further improvements to the facility only upon written consent from the City. WCCT must follow the City's policies and procedures for acquisition and loan of public artwork, and shall assign ownership of all acquired artwork to the City.

Revenues generated from operation of the Garden shall be used by WCCT to meet operational and maintenance expenses, and for further improvements. Revenues will be deposited in a special account, and WCCT shall make regular accounting reports to the City.

This item is scheduled to go before the City Council on April 21. They will be asked to authorize the Department to negotiate and execute the proposed agreement.

RECOMMENDATION: I request your approval to negotiate and execute this proposed agreement with WCCT for improvements to and operation of the Norwood Estate.



Michael J. Heitz, AIA, Director
Parks and Recreation Department

ATTACHMENT A

NORWOOD IMPROVEMENTS

PHASES	COMPLETION YEAR
PHASE ONE: Historical research to determine technical specifications for relocation of house.	1994
PHASE TWO: Relocation of house	1994
PHASE THREE: Historical report for proper restoration of house and grounds as well as candidacy for National Register of Historic Places	1995
PHASE FOUR: Fundraising for next phase	1996
PHASE FIVE: Restoration of house and grounds	1998
PHASE SIX: Develop sculpture garden	Ongoing

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN

Resolution

Eleanor Hunt McKinney

WHEREAS Eleanor Hunt McKinney has served with distinction on the Parks and Recreation Board since June, 1992; and

WHEREAS she contributed greatly to the effectiveness of the Board by implementing the practice of reviewing new projects in phases; and

WHEREAS she has chaired the Land and Facilities Committee of the Board with energy and distinction; and

WHEREAS she has always brought insight and clarity to the discussion of issues pending before the Board; and

WHEREAS the demands of her successful practice as a Landscape Architect have obliged her to resign from the Board;

THEREFORE BE IT UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Parks and Recreation Board of the City of Austin commends Eleanor Hunt McKinney for her distinguished service; thanks her for her many contributions; and regrets her departure.

ADOPTED _____

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN



MEMORANDUM

TO: Parks and Recreation Board

FROM: Michael J. Heitz, AIA, Director
Parks and Recreation Department

DATE: March 16, 1994

SUBJECT: Approval of Name for New Golf Course

After discussion with Mrs. Jimmy Clay and with the Golf Advisory Board, the Parks and Recreation Department requests that the name of Roy Kizer be considered for the 18-hole golf facility currently under construction located at 5300 Jimmy Clay Drive.

Regarding the naming of the course, Roy Kizer was born in 1907 and served as the Golf Course Superintendent at "Old Muni" from April 1937 until his retirement from the City of Austin in January 1973. During his 36 years of service, Mr. Kizer earned the respect of the Austin golf community through his dedication to the golf course and his special involvement in the Junior Golf Program. Mr. Kizer contributed time and money to insure that the Junior Golf Program was a success. He introduced golf as a career to many young people who went on to become golf professionals and superintendents. Mr. Kizer was the father of eight children; his influence is still being felt today with twenty-two of his descendants being employed in the golf industry.

Mr. Kizer passed away in 1975 after a short retirement. As a demonstration of their affection for him, the Austin golf community placed memorial plaques at each of the municipal golf shops. For his contribution to the game of golf and to the golfers of Austin, the Parks and Recreation Department recommends that the new golf course currently under construction be named the "Roy Kizer Golf Course." Mrs. Clay is comfortable with this recommendation.

The Parks and Recreation Department will pay the cost for signs, estimated at \$5,000.

I recommend your approval of the request to name the new course the "Roy Kizer Golf Course."

Please let me know if you need additional information.



Michael J. Heitz, AIA, Director
Parks and Recreation Department

MJH:jh

APPLICATION FOR FACILITY NAMING

The Parks and Recreation Department, upon the recommendation of the Golf Advisory Board, requests that the name of Roy Kizer be considered for the new golf course located adjacent to the Jimmy Clay Golf Course.

Biographical Synopsis: Roy Kizer was born in 1907 and served as the Golf Course Superintendent at "Old Muni" from April 1937 until his retirement from the City of Austin in January 1973.

Justification: During his 36 years of service, Mr. Kizer earned the respect of the Austin golf community through his dedication to the golf course and his special involvement in the Junior Golf Program. Mr. Kizer contributed time and money to insure that the Junior Golf Program was a success.

Mr. Kizer introduced golf as a career to many young people who went on to become Golf Professionals and Superintendents. Mr. Kizer also was the father of eight children. His influence is still being felt today with twenty-two of his children, grand and great-grand children being employed in the golf industry.

Mr. Kizer passed away in 1975 after a short retirement. As a demonstration of their affection for him, the Austin golf community placed memorial plaques at each of the municipal golf shops.

For his contribution to the game of golf and the golfers of Austin, the Parks and Recreation Department recommends that this new golf course be named the "Roy Kizer Golf Course".

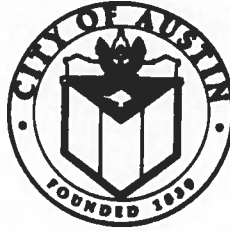
Estimated cost for replacement of signs and plaques \$5,000. PARD will pay full cost, \$5,000 or will participate ____% in the cost.

Submitted to the Public Works Department this 1st day of February 1994.

See Laull

Signature

APPLICATION FOR FACILITY NAMING



MEMORANDUM

TO: Parks and Recreation Board Members

FROM: Michael J. Heitz, AIA, Director
Parks and Recreation Department

DATE: February 8, 1994

SUBJECT: Approve Concept of Barton Springs Road Underpass

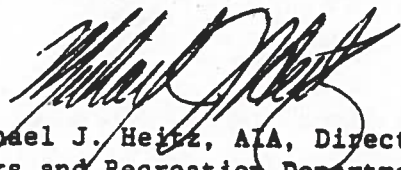
The August 1992 Bond Election included funding to construct a pedestrian walkway under the Barton Springs Road bridge. Currently, the trail along Barton Creek terminates at Barton Springs Road. Trail users must cross the road without the aid of a formal crossing. The miniature train passes under Barton Springs Road on a narrow bridge from which pedestrians are prohibited.

The CIP project approved in the 1992 Bond Election is to construct a pedestrian walkway under the Barton Springs Road Bridge, parallel to the train bridge. The underpass will be a 6'-8' wide surface with appropriate railings, supported by concrete piers drilled into the west bank.

The structure will be designed to comply with all watershed and City Code requirements, and will be processed by all review authorities. The underpass is in the Town Lake watershed, therefore it is not subject to the SOS ordinance. The concept has been reviewed and verbally approved by the Environmental and Conservation Services Department.

In compliance with the Board's review procedures, the design will be brought to the Board for Schematic and Design Development approval.

Please contact me if you require additional information.


Michael J. Heitz, AIA, Director
Parks and Recreation Department



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board & Commission Staff Liaisons

FROM: Arlene F. Ablanedo, Board & Commission Coordinator

DATE: March 3, 1994

SUBJECT: 1993 Financial Disclosures.

Please find enclosed copies of letters which have been sent to Board and Commission members with regard to filing their 1993 Financial Disclosure Statement. These statements are due in the City Clerk's Office on April 29, 1994 with a 60 day grace period attached making the final deadline June 29, 1994.

Enclosed for your files is a copy of the financial disclosure form should anyone need an extra copy.

Your assistance with reminding the members at their monthly meetings to file would be greatly appreciated and if you should need further information, please feel free to contact me at 499-2497.

Sincerely,

Arlene F. Ablanedo
Board & Commission Coordinator

enclosures.

March 20, 1994
City of Austin
Parks & Recreation Board
200 S. Lamar
Austin, TX 78704

Dear Parks Board Member:

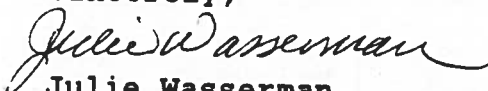
As a concerned citizen of Austin I am writing to you regarding the (city acquired) Forest Ridge tract located off of FM 2222 just west of Loop 360. As you know, this biologically valuable property in the Bull Creek watershed was purchased as part of the BCCP efforts (now defunct) and I commend the city for taking such action. It was to be managed by the City Nature Preserve staff under the Parks and Recreation Department with the primary goal to protect the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler.

I visited this property last week for several hours and observed numerous new trails cut into the vegetation by mountain bikers. The newly cut trails criss-cross much of the wooded area and are not part of existing gravel roads or worn down paths already found on this property. Mountain bikers had even cut tree limbs, removed boulders, and caused erosion along most of these new trails in order for them to bicycle through the forest at fast speeds. The warblers are using these oak/juniper woodlands as they now return for spring nesting and may be disturbed by the heavy presence of bikers (and noise, litter, pets, etc.) especially on weekends. Besides the bikers increased physical presence into the habitat, the disturbance to the vegetation has lasting negative impact and will permanently degrade the quality of these woods for birds, other wildlife, and future users. As documented by the Texas Dept. of Transportation (in last year's survey report), the densest occupied Golden-cheeked Warbler areas are right above the bikers new trails.

The City of Austin has spent much time, money, and effort to rightfully protect our environment and some of its rare inhabitants. In addition, adequate management and educational programs must be addressed especially within properties so close to residential areas. While it is important to allow for public recreational use, those uses must be compatible with endangered species management. The public needs to be supervised, monitored, and thoroughly educated about the resource prior to and during their access.

I would appreciate your response to this concern. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Julie Wasserman
3410 Bridle Path
Austin, TX 78703
474-7671

cc: Lea Stone, COA Preserves Manager
Chuck Sexton, COA ECSD Biologist

Date: March 21, 1994

TO: Rev. Sterling Lands II
Austin Parks and Recreation Board
Greater Calvary Missionary Baptist Church
7517 Cameron Rd.
Austin, TX 78752

FROM: Robert Corbin

RE: Zilker Park Train Ride Concession

The contract to operate the Zilker Park train is up for renewal, and I would like to voice my strong objections to its renewal on the grounds that the train is:

- 1) unsafe
- 2) a plunder of public assets, and
- 3) a nuisance.

My objections are based on serious observations made on innumerable visits to the children's playground from January 1990 to date. The considerations which must be addressed first and foremost are those which represent very real and potential dangers.

Mechanical Dangers

1- In the past the train has operated in the crowded playground area with a defective gas tank, which is basically a lawn-mower gas storage can, from which gas has leaked at the gas-line connection about three feet from the hot engine exhaust outlet. This was corrected when I called the Austin Fire Department, which ordered the train shut down until a new steel tank was installed. I possess photos of this tank and more.

2- It appears that the gas gage/monitoring system malfunctions because I have seen the train loaded with passengers run out of gas in the middle of the playground filled with children. The engineer pulled out a plastic can and poured gas into the tank which is next to the hot engine.

3- I was told by an ex-engineer that the train operates with defective/non-functioning brakes. He added that sometimes the train came out of the tunnel with no brakes heading right into the crowded station area (while the engineer prayed that no one would be on the tracks).

This has been recently verified by an accident due to brake failure in which an injury took place July 13, 1993. The injured party is seeking damages from the train's insurance company, Allied Specialty of Texas, Inc. in San Antonio. The accident victim informed me that at the time of the accident the train staff immediately ordered the train closed for the day and quickly scattered all patrons i.e., eye witnesses, away. Also I believe that by law the train operator should have immediately notified the city about the accident. Was this done?

4- The train's one flywheel operates without a cover; this would enable a passing child to extend a hand into the powerful spinning flywheel system. I possess a photo of this.

5- Hot exhaust outlets are positioned where a passing child could grab, touch or just stumble into them and suffer severe burns. There are also operational dangers which are of extreme importance, some of which are a result of the problems listed above.

Operational Dangers

1- The train sometimes speeds through the playground area with children running alongside.

2- At times the speed is such that it would be impossible to stop if a child ran in front of it.

3- On one occasion I saw the train backing up in the station area with two boys hanging on the back of the last car. The driver either did not, or could not, see the boys. Possibly this was due to the curve in the tracks.

4- A train-car derailed alongside the river, possibly due either a wheel-support malfunction or a deteriorating track system.

5- The train, pointed towards the playground, is always left idling unattended in the crowded station area with the engine running. Someone easily could commandeer the train or just push the gears into forward.

6- The repair structures in the dark tunnel are next to the track and could easily entangle and perhaps maim a child who accidentally held an arm out from the moving

train. Repair work, including the use of a crane and heavy machinery, occur in the park and around children. I also posses photos of this as well.

7- I am deeply concerned about the competency of the train personnel to keep the train mechanically safe and sound in order to conduct the vehicle safely through a playground filled with children. In addition to the operational hazards, there are various types of pollution which deserve mention as well.

Pollution

1- The last four (of eight) "smoke stacks" in the front of the train spew out fumes especially at start up from the train station, but also continuing throughout the ride and into the tunnel. These fumes are toxic and are especially hazardous to those riders seated in the first few passenger seats, and to all passengers when the train is passing through the tunnel. I urge you to ride the train and see for yourself.

2- When weather conditions are right, these fumes are so pervasive that they form a layer over the deep end of Barton Springs, adding pollution to the swimmers' environment.

3- The city is already aware of the hazardous waste pollution in the train tunnel that must be addressed. There is, no doubt, additional pollution around the fuel tank storage area as well as the leaks along the tracks. There still exists much dropping of grease, etc. around the train station , and I have witnessed train personnel hosing the pollution straight off into Eliza Springs. In fact, they dug a little channel to enhance their "clean up" (I have a photo). Even with their attempts at cleaning, there remains a greasy odor around the station and tunnel. On May 16, 1993 I witnessed train operations with a large open can of oil/grease in the engine compartment. I suspect that the entire track area throughout the park is contaminated with heavy metals, etc.

4- Noise pollution from the whistle blast at start-up at the playground and elsewhere in the park measures at an excess of 120 decibels. The running train operates at a 100 decibel reading. These amplitudes are definitely injurious to the eardrums of the children at play nearby. The whistle can be heard a mile away. It

appears that the whistle is blown as a ride advertisement letting people throughout the park take note of a train ride nearby.

Private Plunder of Public Assets

Rental Income

The train owner has told the Parks Board that the concession fee to the City of Austin is \$1,700 a month. This fee covers:

- 1) the boarding area in front of the station,
- 2) mechanics area next to the train station,
- 3) train storage area in the tunnel,
- 4) switching areas,
- 5) warehouse and fuel storage area in the Park maintainance yard,
- 6) the bridge under Barton Springs Road which pedestrians are not allowed to use,
- 7) the train's reserved parking place in the parking lot, plus parking for train personnel and the crane-truck, (which is present 24 hours a day in the parking lot but never in the spot reserved for it, and
- 8) the track that covers over one-half mile through the park.

Considering Zilker Park to be prime real estate, how would such a land concession be valued in a private Austin location such as Barton Creek Mall? For that amount of prime land (approximately one acre total) the rental fee would be at least \$17,000 per month, rather than \$1,700.

The train also occupies the only underpass going under Barton Springs Road. It is clearly marked "people stay out." As a result families risk their lives to dash on the street above from the north side of the part to the south side and vice versa.

Loss of Property Tax to the City

Every business owner knows that the city, county and school taxes must be paid on property. In this case the city has signed over land worth at least one million dollars to a private business which is operating in order to make a profit. Has this land been given to the train concession tax free? If so, it is a subsidy to a private owner. Exactly how much property tax has the train owner

paid on the train station, maintainance facilities, truck, track and parking space ? These questions must be answered.

Loss of Parking Income

On busy summer days when park users pay \$2.00 per vehicle to park, the cars of the train personnel are not charged to occupy these spaces. The train's crane truck is parked 24 hours per day. I would estimate that the city loses about \$20.00 per day in fees.

I am writing about these problems out of my concern as a parent of a child who frequently plays in the Zilker playground and as a concerned citizen of Austin. I am most seriously concerned about the mechanical and operational hazards involved with the train, the issue of pollution on various levels of train use, but I am concerned as well about the degree to which this concession does not compensate the city for use of prime land.

Regarding the safety factors absent in this concession, the present train operation appears to be a disaster waiting to happen. Vehicles on our city streets need safety inspection stickers to operate legally. How can a totally unsafe vehicle be allowed to operate in playground areas of Austin's finest park with no accomodation at all given to safety? I believe that when there is a truly serious accident that the City of Austin will be taken to task. This letter is now in the public hands.

I believe that viable possibilities for the City at this time would be:

- 1-Either immediately discontinue train operations in the park, or
- 2-move the train (after making it quiet and non-polluting) to the area between Barton Springs Road and MoPac with the station at Mopac so that the train could be used as a shuttle. The present train underpass under Barton Springs Road would then be free to become the badly needed pedestrian underpass that every family yearns for.

3-Lastly, if the train is moved, as a taxpayer I demand that it pay fair market rental price for the public properties that it occupies and that it pay property taxes on all assets.

I appreciate your cooperation and serious consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Corbin
P.O. Box 3278
Austin, TX 78764
472-4490

cc: Austin City Council Members
Director of Austin Parks and Recreation
Safety Director of Austin Parks and Recreation
Principle Planner of Austin Parks and Recreation
Board of Directors of Austin Parks and Recreation