

UPDATE ON CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CITY OF AUSTIN AND HUSTON-
TILLOTSON UNIVERSITY FOR LADY BIRD LAKE CAPACITY STUDY
JULY 15, 2022
PRESENTER: PATRICIA ROSSETT

Background Information:

Parks and Recreation Board and Environmental Commission Annual Concession Report Recommendations:

Contracts and Concession FY20 Recommendations



Concession Development

Provide a comprehensive contract and concessions report that includes a plan to increase concessions at park facilities.

Concession Reporting

Report expenditures and revenue on all park concessions outside of Lady Bird (Town) Lake.



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Environmental Commission Recommendations

At their November 20, 2020, meeting, the City of Austin Environmental Commission recommended that PARD do the following:

Marine Waste Disposal

- Verify that three years of records have been maintained for entities that pump waste on Lady Bird Lake; include these monthly records in the public record.
- Include waste pumpout data in both the public record and the Annual Report.

Lake Safety

- In consultation with City of Austin rescue teams, review the number of public and private boats typically on lake and if there are capacity issues, that should be considered.
- Consider physical, social, and environmental capacity issues when anticipating upcoming solicitations.

Other Concession Considerations

- Continue working on consistent terms and conditions in concessions contracts to the extent practicable.
- Provide an update on any new concessions, including the Seaholm Power Plant.



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In response to Parks and Recreation Board and Environmental Commission recommendations received as part of the Annual Concession Report, PARD staff has contracted with Huston-Tillotson University (HTU), specifically the Business Administration, Natural Sciences, and Environmental Justice departments, to conduct a Lake Capacity Study. HTU is the most qualified vendor to conduct the study and report its findings because:

- The university has an Environmental Justice (EJ) program and major, making it the only undergraduate institution in Central Texas to offer this degree at the undergraduate level. The faculty, in the EJ program, are thus uniquely qualified to conduct an environmental assessment integrated with an environmental justice analysis.
- This perspective is critical to the lake capacity study for several reasons.
 - First, environmental justice addresses the human consequences of environmental issues and how these often disproportionately impact systematically marginalized communities. This perspective mirrors a multi-lens approach to lake capacity, which must consider environmental, economic, and human parameters to understand capacity and impact.
 - Second, the economic assessments must similarly be anchored in an appreciation for the systemic factors that can lead to disproportionate economic impacts for vendors and consumers that ultimately impact opportunity and access.
 - In addition, HTU is a highly collaborative liberal arts institution that applies a multidisciplinary approach to student instruction and research.

Agreement Overview

The purpose of this contract is to work collaboratively with HTU to define lake capacity, determine the capacity of Lady Bird Lake (LBL) based on this definition, to make recommendations regarding safe recreational use of the lake and to report on current and future environmental impact of watercraft recreational activities on LBL.

The study will include:

- Environmental Study – For example, students and faculty will collect and analyze water samples before, during, and after a peak-use period for standard water quality metrics and algal toxins.
- Vendor and Stakeholder Study – HTU will survey current watercraft vendors, both PARD and non-PARD concessions, to craft inventory, usage patterns, usage distribution, customer profile and growth plans/concerns.
- Watercraft Census – HTU will conduct a watercraft census at both peak levels of recreational use and across several typical non-peak use days. Data will include:
 - Number of boats in the lake
 - Type and size of boat
 - Speed of boat (when possible)

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- Environmental Justice Analysis – HTU will report on the demographics of impacted parties, including concession vendors, concession workers, concession customers, impacted businesses, and impacted communities.
- Enforcement Analysis – Students and faculty will analyze 311 complaint data, social media advertisements/listings (such as Airbnb, Facebook, Instagram), and any available law enforcement data to identify vendors acting in violation of PARD policy.
- Articulation of Goals – HTU will assist the City to set clear goals regarding the use of the lake. To ensure the information collected meets the demands of the City, clear goals must be set according to problems with historical use and the intended nature of the lake. HTU will use the results of their stakeholder surveys, conversations with PARD staff, and research of other cities' approaches to determine an approach to carrying capacity that balances environmental and economic goals.
- Developing a Plan and Recommendations – HTU will develop a use plan that takes the factors articulated in the study elements into account. The study will be delivered at internal meetings, board and commission meetings, and Council meetings as requested by the City.

Furthermore, the collaboration between the City and Huston-Tillotson University supports the City's commitment to inclusion and equity.

Deliverables (see attached deliverables chart)

Agreement Term

This contract shall become effective upon final authorization and shall remain in effect until the earliest of when the deliverables set forth in the contract are complete or the City terminates the contract.

Implementation Timeline

May 2022 through December 2022

Contract Discussion Items
City of Austin (PARD) and the Austin Rosewood Community Development Corporation
Funding, Operations and Administrative Agreement

I. 2.1	Contract Description: Huston-Tillotson University will provide PARD with a Lake Capacity Study for Lady Bird Lake to assist with internal planning and reporting to external stakeholders. The study process will include (i) articulation of goals, (ii) calculation of carry capacity using environmental, economic, and health and safety metrics, (iii) developing a plan to optimize use of the amenity.													
II. 2.2	Contract Term: This contract shall become effective upon final authorization and shall remain in effect until the earliest of when the deliverables set forth in the Contract are complete or the City terminates the Contract.													
III.	Public Benefit: Contractor will provide services that define lake capacity, that determine the capacity of Lady Bird Lake based on this definition, that make recommendations regarding safe recreational use of the lake, and that report on current and future environmental impact of watercraft recreational activities on Lady Bird Lake in order to protect one of Austin's greatest assets.													
	Huston-Tillotson Deliverables													
Discussion Item #	Contract Reference	General Description	Questions/Follow up Items											
1	Environmental Study	Collect and analyze water samples before, during, and after a peak-use period for standard water quality metrics and algal toxins.												
2	Environmental Study	Analyze existing data on water quality to contextualize the peak use sample data and to identify critical sampling areas.												
3	Environmental Study	Articulate a suggested water-sampling plan if changes are needed to the existing plan.												
4	Environmental Study	Conduct biodiversity studies that focus primarily on shore species. These studies will identify species richness and relative species abundance and will include an analysis of invasive species.												
5	Environmental Study	Coordinate with Austin Water to conduct testing for algal toxins on water samples gathered.												
6	Vendor and Stakeholder Study	Survey current watercraft vendors (both PARD and non-PARD concessions) as to craft inventory, usage patterns, usage distribution, customer profile and growth plans/concerns.												
7	Vendor and Stakeholder Study	Conduct follow-up interviews that will allow vendors to provide less structured feedback.												
8	Vendor and Stakeholder Study	Survey stakeholders (concession customers or prospective customers, lake users, environmental experts, business owners, Parks and Recreation Board members) to articulate customer experience and concerns, environmental concerns and business concerns. Surveys may include perspectives from outside of Austin to provide points of comparison.												
9	Water Census	Conduct a watercraft census of both peak levels of recreation use and across several typical non-peak use days.												
10	Water Census	To gather census information, observations will be executed via drone photography and videography and land-based counts.												
11	Water Census	At time of observations, the following data will be collected: 1. Number of boats in the lake; 2. Type and size of each watercraft ; Speed of boat (when possible).												
12	Water Census	Provide a plan for continued periodic monitoring of peak-use periods.												
13	Environmental Justice Analysis	Report on demographics of impacted parties, including concession vendors, concession workers, concession customers, impacted businesses, and impacted communities.												
14	Environmental Justice Analysis	Report on downstream effects of lake capacity with implications for marginalized groups included in the recommendations.												
15	Enforcement Analysis	Analyze 311 complaint data, social media advertisements/listings (such as AirBNB, Facebook, Instagram), and (if possible law enforcement data to identify vendors acting in violation of PARD policy												
16	Articulation of Goals	Use results of stakeholder surveys, conversations with PARD staff, and research of other cities' approaches to determine an approach to carrying capacity that balances environmental and economic goals.												
17	Developing a Plan and Recommendation	Generate a plan to reduce use if it is determined that lake capacity is currently being exceeded.												
18	Developing a Plan and Recommendation	Develop a use plan that takes the factors articulated in the study elements into account.												

Contract Discussion Items
City of Austin (PARD) and the Austin Rosewood Community Development Corporation
Funding, Operations and Administrative Agreement

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