

Butler Park and Auditorium Shores

Stakeholder Meeting 1

10-24-2011

The following summarizes the comments and discussions in the first stakeholder meeting on October 24, 2011 at the Mexican Center in Austin, Texas. The stakeholder meeting was held by the Austin Parks and Recreation Department and directed by Marty Stump.

List of attendees:

City:

- Marty Stump – COA - PARD
- Reynaldo Hernandez – COA - PARD
- Terry Jungman – COA - PARD
- Kelly Snook – COA - PARD
- Laura Esparza – COA - PARD - History Arts and Nature Division
- Mike Kelly – Watershed Protection Department
- Gary Schatz – Transportation Department
- Megan Crigger – COA – Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office

Design Team:

- Earl Broussard
- Justin Lindabury
- Chris Jackson
- Tom Afflerbach

Stakeholders:

- Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association
- Junior League of Austin
- Austin Parks Foundation
- Palmer Events Center
- Friends of Auditorium Shores
- Long Center
- South River City Citizens
- Save Town Lake
- Downtown Austin Alliance

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- PARD
- Friends of the Parks of Austin
- The Trail Foundation
- League of Bicycling Voters
- SXSW
- Austin Lyric Opera
- 1155 Partners

The meeting began with an introduction of the City staff and the Design Team. The stakeholders were asked to introduce themselves and their respective representation to the park.

Marty Stump presented an overview of the project and projected schedule of work. This included two future stakeholder meetings and the projected four open public meetings. The City also announced the launching of a website that will track progress and public comments during this process.

TBG presented a short overview of the history of the project; this included the original master plan, along with phases 1 and 2. The progress of the project up to 2009 and the results of the public meetings were also presented, as well as the Council resolution and the individual program elements that will be part of the Revised Master Plan.

After the presentation by TBG, Marty Stump polled the stakeholders on a variety of program elements that were presented in the plan. The following represents the summation of the comments during the discussion of the program elements as listed.

- Funding Mechanism

Discussion of the revenue stream for the park and exploration of future sources

- Develop funding opportunities and revenue strategies for development and maintenance
- Discussion of the park's existing revenue source, the car rental tax, which expires in 2028 and would have to be reauthorized by a citywide election

- Pitch and Putt

Discussion of the possible reuse of this facility

- Existing contract is in a five-year extension period that ends in 2014
- Stakeholders voiced concern about disturbing the facility right now, but the need to have a plan for the future in the master plan
- Iconic was a word heard to describe the facility

- Riverside Drive

Discussion on revisions needed to Riverside Drive and the range of possible alternatives, which include removal of some portion of the road and/or modification of the street development into festival staging that would replace the First Street Art City Austin festival now held on Cesar Chaves Street. The Long Center accommodates the needs for access and queuing at Long Center events by using Riverside.

Removal of Riverside Drive was the result of a negotiated agreement, endorsed by all stakeholders during the 1999 Master Planning process. The trade-off was to close the street in exchange for creating an enlarged Palmer Event Center/Long service area and moving the Palmer Events Center (PEC) significantly further west. The current alignment was accepted as a transitional step and was explicitly recognized as such by City Council, which also accepted the original agreement, embedded in the Master Plan.

- Need for pedestrian and bike flow
- Desire that the street not be open to vehicles 24/7
- Desire to engage Palmer Event Center's north side terrace/pond area
- Discussion of a hybrid design that addressed pedestrian mall/temp auto traffic
- Interest in a "pedestrian-centric corridor"
- Interest in bioswales to green the street along with educational rain gardens adjacent to the street
- Need for traffic calming on Riverside
- Traffic study will be provided by Transportation to review the removal of Riverside
 - Reconsideration of commute times were discussed (i.e., Riverside versus Barton Springs)
 - Compare old/new report (since Cesar Chavez opened flow in both directions)
- Riverside corridor in the park could be a "great central plaza, town center"
- Request to study parking at the north end of Palmer Event Center (circle)

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- Queuing was discussed along Riverside to the roundabout for the Long Center
- Discussion of the roundabouts and their impact on the park
 - Scale is too large
 - Present roundabout is not totally functional
 - Conflict issues for pedestrian traffic
 - Scheduling of events/wayfinding for the Long Center, Palmer and Auditorium Shores
- Discussion of the lack of parking for both facilities and how the scheduling of three events at the same time creates huge problems for the park and the neighborhood
 - Need better coordination in scheduling events
 - Long Center Event, Palmer Event Center and FFF Fest Nov 5th weekend
 - Request to check out traffic issues
 - Discussion of better communication for visitors that would guide them to additional parking locations
- Wayfinding
 - Kiosks: information on events and parking (potential coordination with IT and event information)
- Parking

Parking is a major issue for running the events correctly and the impact made in the neighborhoods

- Discussion of structured parking and possible locations along with possible use as a revenue generator
- Parking Analysis will be done for the park
 - Team will define the delta; what are we dealing with currently?
 - Peak Hours Study
 - Major Event Study
 - Parking opportunities off-site were discussed
 - Austin Energy and One Texas Center
 - Cumulative +/- 1000 spaces
 - Shared parking w/ Austin Energy currently Homeland Security Issue
 - Austin Energy is potentially relocating; we will investigate the timing of move
- Bouldin Creek reclamation

Discussion of the homeless camping and fire safety in the area by the railroad along the creek along with:

- Make an amenity of the creek
 - Bridge at Barton Springs for running safety
 - Understand off-site flows, upstream, etc.
 - Return meander to edge of sidewalk (edge of floodplain)
- Dougherty Arts Center

Discussion that the Center is in the floodplain and needs to be moved; noted that the team would look at alternative locations. There seemed to be an interest in keeping the Center in the park if the impact is not too great.

- History, Stakeholders
 - DAC programmable spaces
 - Building program needs list was provided to the team
 - Mention that the Center is built on contaminated soils (old landfill), potential for methane gas leak from ground
 - Option discussed was the structured parking, raise DAC
 - Children's health and wellness component was seen as part of this in this park
- Art (Art in Public Places)

AIPP discussed its role in the park and the 2% participation as well as its previous role in the Alliance Garden

- Art is an important component
- Transportation and coordination with other plans
- Planning was discussed regarding the need to coordinate park needs with the other citywide plans that are in process.
- Coordinate with other Austin master planning efforts going on
 - (Seaholm, Comp Plan, CAMPO, East Riverside Drive, etc.)
 - Precedent Studies – temporary closures of streets for events
 - e.g., Fairmount Park System, Philadelphia, PA
 - Multimodal - Transportation Opportunities to/from site
 - Events on site – how do they affect traffic studies around town?
 - Study macro-effects of traffic
 - Traffic calming on Barton Springs

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- Commercial/micro-vendor component of park

The desire to put retail food opportunities in the park was mentioned

- A food/beverage option would extend users' time at the park
- Shade was heavily desired in the park
 - Liz Carpenter fountain
 - Any place where a programmed use provide concentrations of people
- Public Open House: Adjacent to Park, on Saturday
 - Encourage public to go visit park, develop ideas and provide input
 - Location options: Palmer Event Center, One Texas Center, Austin Energy
- Trails
 - Must manage circulation at water's edge
 - Runners, cyclist, off-leash dogs, tourist photography, etc.
 - Study how
 - Bridge at Barton Springs
 - Study capacity
 - Understand off-site flows, upstream, etc.
 - Spend more time at park if food/beverage was an option

These notes represent a summary of the discussions and comments made during the stakeholder meeting.

Please make comments base on any omissions or additions you wish to make on the website.