

1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PURPOSE

City Council Regular Meeting – October 23, 2014

Agenda Item #23:

Authorize negotiation and execution of a 50-year operations and management license agreement with four ten-year extension options with DECKER LAKE GOLF, LLC to provide funding, design, development, management and maintenance services for a golf course at Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park.

City Council Directive:

Addressing concerns raised by the Parks and Recreation Board, Council Member Riley requested additional community input for the proposed golf course at Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park, taking into consideration the project's citywide impact. Additionally, Council Member Tovo requested the draft management license agreement be made available to the public and Council for review prior to the next City Council meeting on November 20, 2014.

2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

October 31, 2014 – November 17, 2014

Methodology:

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department implemented a community engagement strategy that provided the public access to and the ability to provide feedback on the Decker Lake Golf, LLC proposal, the draft agreement for the development, operation and maintenance of public golf facilities at Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park, an executive summary of the draft agreement and community engagement plan should the project be approved.

The department provided a public discussion forum on www.speakupaustin.org from October 31 to November 17, 2014 inviting feedback on topics considering the pros and cons associated with the proposed golf course at Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park. In addition to the online discussion, an open house community outreach meeting was held on Monday, November 17, 2014 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Morris Williams Golf Course.

Communications:

In order to inform the public about the aforementioned opportunities for community input, the department utilized the following communications methods: press release, flier distribution, email distribution and social media notifications, including Nextdoor. The fliers were available to the public at Parks and Recreation golf courses, cultural and recreation facilities. Over 20,000 emails were sent to Parks and Recreation participants, as well as the Austin Public Links, Colony Park and Muller email lists. Moreover, citywide notification was distributed to users of Nextdoor and Speak Up Austin.

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

October 31, 2014 – November 17, 2014

Speak Up Austin Discussion Overview:

The Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park Golf Course Project discussion topics yielded 54 participants with a total of 142 answers, 49 replies and 121 votes in agreement with other participant responses.

Speak Up Austin Discussion Topics:

- i. Considering the materials presented, what benefits or challenges does the proposed project bring to the City of Austin? Total of 70 responses.
- ii. To what extent could the proposed project add or detract value from the City of Austin? Total of 20 responses.
- iii. How will the development of the land at Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park affect you? Total of 15 responses.
- iv. To what degree does this proposed project align with Austin's environmental, conservation and development efforts? Total of 37 responses.

Speak Up Austin Summary:

For the Project: Walter E. Long Golf Course is not just a golf course; it's the future of East Austin. This is an example of positive change and an opportunity to turn Austin into a golf destination. The PGA event space would provide economic development and add to the extraordinary experiences Austin offers tourists. Having a world class golf course is beneficial for collegiate golf teams. The economic impact of tourist dollars would positively influence local businesses, providing opportunity to the community through jobs and services.

Against the Project: Golf is in a structural decline, it wastes land and water. Who will burden the cost of moving reclaimed water to the site? With the current drought conditions, will there be enough water available to maintain this facility? Golf is a sport

for the wealthy. Is this the right development solution? Why a golf course? What community benefits are written into the agreement and will it be a concession contract? The city is giving away public land to a private developer at no cost and the long-term contract will require the city to maintain upkeep on the lake with our taxes. Integrating uses and truly making it a place where the public wants to come whether they golf or not is critical to economic, environmental and social success.

Community Outreach Meeting Overview:

The Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park Golf Course Project community outreach meeting had approximately 65 attendees. The open house format provided stations for the public to view project materials, ask questions, and leave written comment.

Community Outreach Meeting Stations:

- i. Project Overview – Decker Lake Golf, LLC
- ii. Golf Programming – Austin Parks and Recreation Department
- iii. Economic Impact / Land Use – Austin Parks and Recreation Department
- iv. Community Engagement Process – Decker Lake Golf, LLC
- v. Community Resources – Neighborhood Housing and Community Development

Community Outreach Meeting Written Comments:

For the Project: This is a great opportunity for East Austin. Most of the opposition to the project is coming from citizens that do not live in this area or have never visited the lake. This is exactly what the neighborhood needs because the park is currently rundown and underutilized. The golf course would keep open space and have a positive impact on the community through economic development, jobs and services.

Against the Project: The cost of piping water to the proposed golf course should be covered by the developer instead of the City of Austin. Only organic products should be used to maintain the course. Additional information should be provided about the benefits to the neighborhoods and the potential to accelerate suburban sprawl. What are the anticipated water needs and what is the demand for golf? What happens if Decker Lake Golf, LLC goes bankrupt? The meeting should have been closer to the project site, provided presentations from both sides and advertised better.

1. SPEAK UP AUSTIN DISCUSSION RESPONSES

October 31, 2014 – November 17, 2014

Walter E. Long Golf Course Topic #1:

I think that is a great suggestion. Making the bike path completely paved so that all cyclist, whether road bikes or off road bikes can utilize this new, safer path! Awesome idea!

Its a nice plan, and honestly the area would greatly benefit from it BUT I have to say I'm opposed for one simple reason. Water

If the developer can somehow do this without impact to our water supply (impossible) than its a viable project. Until then, its a cool idea that will turn into a ghost town once the water wars begin in central Texas.

I see the following...is this what you're talking about for more details?

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Parks/Golf/rfqs_tvn0102.pdf

I think many here are overestimating the amount of water a golf course would require in modern course design. Please see the following article from USGA on best practices for low water use on a course: <http://www.usga.org/Content.aspx?id=25918> I would expect that Ogilvie, Crenshaw, and their associates who live right here in Austin would be highly sensitive to issues of water use and incorporate drought tolerant grasses and design the course in a way that would require much less water than the fairways and greens of yesteryear.

I can see no downside to this project. The water will not come from the aquifer and will not affect our water supply.

Many comments here think that a PGA tour stop in Austin is imminent. Before you think that please look near Bastrop which has one of he finest golf facilities in Central Texas. What??? No PGA. Wolf Dancer at the Hyatt Resort operates at about 20% capacity on average with green fees about what is proposed here and all of the facilities necessary for a PGA or LPGA tour stop are already in place.

Love it when you only pick and choose facts that match your position. You are another one of the many people on this board that that must have access to information that the rest of us do not.

The thousands of people who pay check gets a little bigger, who get a little more tip money, the people who need our help the most would SUFFER under your ideas for this community. Thank you F1 and ACL for taking the financial RISK to help better the people who need it the most. I am cool with you making profit from your risk taking.

Where is the proposed contract that will govern this 90 year agreement to take 735 acres or prime waterfront parkland for a private entity? Are we supposed to evaluate a huge deal like this from the developer's promotional materials? Seriously?

Another poster that has facts the rest of us do not have. What is your basis for the growth being inflated? Just curious. What is your plan to help East Austin?

I see no benefit except to a small number of wealthy people who would likely use the golf course, while at the same time it would likely degrade adjacent Austin nature preserves (Indiangrass Preserve and Walter Long Tallgrass Prairie).

And if the pumped (from the river) lake is no longer needed for the electric plant, why spend the money and water to keep it full? A public park with trails and native grasses and flowers would benefit the whole community and not require the electricity or water that the lake maintenance requires.

I'd prefer to see the land used for a public tallgrass prairie park with native grasses and flowers for people and wildlife to enjoy, with trails that connect it to the adjacent Indiangrass Preserve and Walter Long Tallgrass Prairie.

See this Austin parks and preserve document for more information about the adjacent Austin nature preserves:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Parks/Preserves/preserves.pdf>

Golf wastes land. Golf wastes water. Golf is a game for rich people with time on their hands. I say thank God this wasteful sport is in decline. Don't convert out open spaces into suburbia!

The city can easily bring jobs to Colony Park - require local area hiring whenever the city does incentive deals that bring companies to Austin. Direct those incentive deals to poverty alleviation. The old council never cared enough but with the new 10-1 council, that will be a priority according to answers given by most of the candidates in questionnaires. Finally, this area will have representation with a new District 1 council member. Probably Ora Houston who well understands this issue.

Wishing and hoping that a high-end golf course will drop some loose change isn't a big

enough ask for an area so long deprived, especially at the cost of giving up 735 acres of a lakefront metropolitan park until the year 2105.

comment...It may have easy access to the toll road but it is not where I will venture from south Austin. How about turning the city owned land into a park with a jogging trail, veloway and playgrounds for the area kids.

Lots of folks like golf, but do we need more golf courses, especially high end resort facilities? Is this a good economic decision considering the pronounced long-term decline in golfing? <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-06-19/golf-loses-players-as-millennials-find-it-expensive-time-consuming>

Walter E. Long is also a reservoir that requires augmentation to remain full. Its watershed is too small to allow it to remain full in our semi-arid environment. Even though rainfall in Austin and the Hill Country has increased over the last 30 years, the way we get our rain has changed. More rain comes in larger storms with longer drier times between. These longer dry periods allow for greater soil evaporation and less runoff (and base flows) to fill our reservoirs.

The natural gas used as fuel for the power plant, and for a future power plant in this location has now been shown to create more warming than coal because of more than just direct warming from fugitive emissions from natural gas production (indirect atmospheric effects, global cooling sulfate emissions from coal).

Twice before since 1990, Walter E. Long has been the target of golfing development. Twice before those proposals have been defeated, but for reasons of open space, accessibility, conservation and etc. Now add this 25 percent decline in golfers over the last dozen years and changes to our hydrologic cycle making Walter E. Long an even less desirable reservoir and the reasons to not add more golf courses to our urban environment are even more profound.

Personally, I like golf courses. I am a native plant collector and gardener and golf courses represent the largest efforts at urban landscape cultivation outside of botanical gardens. Their presence enriches that part of my person that appreciates urban landscapes.

Beyond the aesthetic, health and recreation benefits for participants, the good in golf courses is undermined by nonpoint source pollution unless very significant efforts towards the understanding of nonpoint source pollution are considered. In the last two decades, great strides have been made in golf course maintenance relative to water pollution, but golf courses remain significant sources of nonpoint source pollution.

I do not golf, but I am a stormwater quality professional and golf courses have been one of the biggest urban sources of nonpoint source pollution in recent history.

The additional nutrients in stormwater runoff from golf courses cause deterioration of water quality and species diversity in waters where golf courses drain. In general, golf courses remain a source of pollutants in our environment and in our waterways specifically.

Is another golf course in Austin what we need? Is a golf course of this nature specifically, a high-end course with even greater need of extensive fertilization and pest control a good fit for the Austin Way?

In light of the participation in golf as an industry/recreational pastime and contributor to our society, and considering the environmental challenges and social benefits targeted at a small audience, and considering the Austin Way where environmentally and socially conscious lifestyles rule, Like the two proposals before since 1990, we should not be building new golf courses.

Specifically in this location, because of environmental considerations and the lack of open space in east Austin, uses more equitable to a greater portion of our community and more sensitive to the environment are more desirable.

Bruce Melton PE

Hi Kris, I don't think we are economically cautious when it comes to our city. I wish we were. The city just bought the Grey Rock golf course. That's probably a fine addition but our municipal courses are only at 35-40% capacity. Golf is in a structural decline.

"A golf course closes every 48 hours in this country. Golf is dying on a limb."
NBC Sports Anchor David Briggs

"Golf has been a crummy business for a long time," said Paul Swinand, an analyst at Morningstar Inc. in Chicago.

Bloomberg quoted the National Golf Foundation as saying 200,000 players ages 35 and younger "abandoned the game" over the past year.

Wow. As a former East Austinite who longer can afford to live there, I can say with confidence that this will do nothing to overturn the prevailing notion that gentrification

(displacement, ethnic cleansing, whatever you want to call it) is here to stay. We just squandered 9.6 million on a golf course in Circle C that could've gone to improving schools or keeping pools open for more than just May-August for example. The idea that this is being taken seriously is in itself horrifying.

Hi, Brian--sorry you couldn't see the proposal; here's a link.

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Parks/Golf/dlg_proposal.pdf

Gerald, I am fully aware of what a concession is. In this case, as any, the concession is described and delineated to be what both parties agree and become signatory to. There has been no contract made public so it is very easy for one to assume that the land is "given up" until contract documents are made available.

Thank you for posting the contract. Scribd won't allow the contract to be downloaded. Please post the contract and the other portions as a PDF like you did with the developer's proposal.

Jim, I understand your concern, however East Austin has a large number of high school students. Not only that but we now have the new ACC in our area and college kids typically need part time jobs while they go to school. This would be a great opportunity for our youth to be able to have jobs within their community. So even if some of these jobs are minimum wage, it would be a great place for these young adults to start. Maybe these young adults will help grow the community they live in. There is a limited amount of jobs at this point in this area for them. So giving them this opportunity is crucial in my opinion.

The only way this area receives positive impact is with a private partner. Period. History has shown that Austin proper could care less about East Austin. What if all your ideas could be accomplished with a little help from wealthy people coming to East Austin and leaving money on the streets? Creating jobs, prosperity and a sense of community? That would be a great place to live, work and play.

Alice, in the informational document that is included, it lists everyone that is included within the development group. I suggest you take a moment to look at all the cooperating components. In the informational information provided, not only does it list who is involved it gives information about each person and their part in it. COA, are there questions that are asked of such a project, if so what are these questions?

Those are great points. I am hoping that the contract will answer some questions. I am assuming that all the public engagement period may be a big driver of what those non

golf improvements may actually consist of. The RFQ clearly says non golf improvement plan is required, but I would hope that the locals in East Austin decide what this is, not the developer.

For those who read the attachment in any depth, have you noticed the numbers don't really add up? For the first year of golf course operation, 22K rounds are forecast divided equally between resident and tourist. This will be an approximate cost of \$175 per round for visitors and if residents are given a 40% discount, \$105 per round for residents. The third year of operation shows an approximate cost per round of \$200 for visitors and \$120 per round under the same circumstances for residents. The rates obviously continue to increase each year. These prices are justified by the developers as providing "a fine dining option" to the Austin area for golfers. These prices conflict with the Austin Tourism and Economics Bureau Key Results in the Golf Visitor EEI Draft which shows a \$32 average recreation expense for a 1 night lodging with a 2 day stay. Some folks are happy for an increase in jobs but when you look at the number of full time jobs for years 1-5 of operation, that number is only 35 permanent jobs. Years 6-10 are only 50 permanent jobs. Now before you jump up and talk about all of the jobs that will come (if) when tournaments are played, please realize many if not most are volunteer positions which are rewarded with admission tickets, shirts, parking, etc. Very few paid positions are added and those are predominately minimum wage. Who will be considered "local" under the pricing plan? Austin residents only? Travis county residents only or will you add in Hays and or possibly Williamson county? If you allow only Austin residents to be considered "local" you have eliminated probably 40% of the users of the Austin area golf courses. These are people that will be needed to sustain this grand endeavor. Unfortunately, I don't believe enough demand will be present for this "fine dining option".

The jobs that this movement would create are not simply the jobs of maintaining or managing a park but the jobs created by an influx of dollars spent by tourism. That's Much More. It's a multiplier effect generated by the creation of a PGA level course. This project will bring revenue into the Parks system rather than asking the Parks Department to spend money it doesn't have. We can do nothing and let this park remain unused in perpetuity, or we can recognize that an economic partner who will finance the course and return money to the Parks Department for the benefit of all of our parks is a good move. COA gets a park built and maintained for free, the venue brings in a significant influx of dollars to the Austin economy, the people of Austin get a City Park for the use of all, and the revenue generated by the development of only a portion of the WLP helps finance the vision of a well rounded park that has amenities for all recreational uses. It's a great return on our public asset and keeps our park system growing. We are not giving an asset to a private company, we are letting a private

company finance a portion of our public park and allow us to finally make it available to the public. It's not about golf, that is simply one economic engine to build the larger goal of a vibrant public park system.

Nice proposal, but I oppose this plan on the basis of resource use, and that it would amount to private control of public land for a use which excludes a large percentage of the people of Austin on the basis of ability to pay. Those Austinites willing to spend \$100, or more, for a round of golf are still in the vast minority. Turning a public park into a virtual country club is not my idea of a beneficial resource.

Water is one valid issue, the average golf course uses 300,000 gallons of water per day. http://www.golfdigest.com/magazine/2008-05/environment_intro.

Getting there by car, SUV, or bus is another. Most people will drive their car. Greens, fairways, and tees use tons of fertilizers, pesticides, and fungicides to maintain them. Just because it's out on 130/45 doesn't mean it won't pollute the area.

I should include that I quit golfing about 20 years ago because of my concern for water use and run-off pollution. I realize not everyone has my level of concern for the environment.

I suppose the last thing I want to include is that promises of economic growth based on one venue like this are inflated.

comment...I've lived on this side of town since I was a kid, and it would be so nice to see our city do something with this area other than build more prisons, dumps, or for that matter nothing at all. We need something that will promote change in our area, and I personally think that having this golf course will be more than just a "golf course" it will spark something good in our area. We need that. We need a fruitful change. So Brian, I understand why you feel that this will be a "negative" project out here because you feel that golf will just continue to decline. This is bigger than a golf course, this is the future of East Austin. I want a positive change out here and these people are willing to give us just that, something to be proud of on our side of town.

I definitely appreciate your opinion and you may be right, but what I have an issue with is: "I would expect that Ogilvie, Crenshaw, and their associates who live right here in Austin would be highly sensitive to issues of water use and incorporate drought tolerant grasses and design the course in a way that would require much less water". Why do we all have to expect that they'll create the course a certain way or hope that they will? We

have nothing but a for-profit developer's promise. No contract or anything and we're being asked to give away a huge swath of the City's land.

All the comments are well taken. Besides water a concern should be not just jobs but whether the jobs will pay much. I suspect too many of the higher paying jobs will be held by people commuting or from those moving into the gentrified areas. It seems this idea would be great for them but not really contribute to helping the long-term east Austin residents.

Expanding on the Southern Walnut Creek trail to make it safe to circle the lake or go further east would be nice. But I still wonder how much the long term residents will benefit. Maybe their dislocation is simply inevitable as more newcomers with money pour in.

I'm certainly open to any differing views and I'm not here for name calling. I didn't realize I was walking into a group that is dead-set on a new golf course. I'm not sure why there's so much disinformation being spread here. From everything I've read, the plan is to shut down that power plant and the city council has taken steps to start that:

<http://kut.org/post/why-closing-power-plant-could-be-part-austins-water-solution>

I'd love to see any info about it staying open because I live on the east side and I'm interested. If they're building a second one, I'd like to see a link to that, too. I can't find anything about that. I'm also not sure what everyone is talking about as far as the park being inaccessible currently. I've used that park many times: for boating, walking, biking. In what way is it inaccessible?

The fact that the city gets to keep ownership of the land and merely lease it out to a private company willing and able to develop a park, preserve, sanctuary, and bring Walter E. Long lake back to life as a gathering place for the people that live in East Austin is a no brainer win for everyone. Just looking at the map of the project makes me say yes to this. Right now the land is non-useable. This will change that for everybody. A PGA tour would bring hotels, retail, restaurants, and with that more jobs. I'm looking forward to East Austin becoming another hub for the city to live and work in.

"Decker Lake Golf has offered to build a multimillion dollar facility at no cost to the city." That is really the wrong way of looking at it. What is happening is that the city is giving away a large part of the public's land to a private for-profit developer at no cost. Not only that, they will have a long term contract which will include the city, with our taxes, providing upkeep on the lake to keep their golf course profitable. In all ways, the citizens of the city lose.

The entire park is several thousand acres and this RFQ is not for the whole park but only for a portion, far less than half of the total acreage. Importantly, this phase will generate revenue for the park system for other recreational uses. It's true that the pitch is to "tourism" and, if you live in that area, even folks from Downtown would be considered tourists. In that respect it will bring economic development into the local economy but not just from Austin's use. The bigger draw will be for national destination tourism for a PGA course impacting the local economy and growth of a very wide range of infrastructure and collateral developments.

Appreciate the link Elizabeth, but I can tell you from my many years of landscape and farm experience that the article is full of smoke and mirrors. The water savings of up to 50% with good management and breeding programs are absolutely correct. The problem is, 50% of an unimaginable amount of water needed for a golf course of any high standard is still an unimaginably large amount of water.

Let me be very clear here. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE for a golf course to not have a serious impact on water supply in central Texas...period.

Again, I feel its a cool plan, and would be great in the short term. But we are kidding ourselves if we think golf courses stand a chance in central Texas as our water resources continue to dwindle. Something has to give and Golf Courses are VERY low hanging fruit politically.

comment...I am opposed to this plan and would like to know who is behind this plan, i.e. who owns Decker Lake Golf, LLC? I may be wrong but I heard it was a foreign company with a local agent. I am concerned about non-local interests using and abusing Texas resources for years to come. Water is a legitimate concern for Central Texas and Austin and indeed many areas. Parks are wonderful but golf courses serve a limited number of folks usually those with money to buy specialty equipment, expensive balls and pay course fees. This is not a "park" for many citizens - only a few.

This proposal not only allows the City to move forward on a parkland master plan that has been unachieved since Decker Lake and the park vision began, but also provides revenue to the City Park system for the maintenance of WLP and other parks in the system. This is a public park that heretofore none could use. In all ways the citizens of the city, those who paid for the parkland, those who deserve its enjoyment, and those who will benefit from the local economies enhanced by destination venue dollars will win. I work in Manor and look forward to seeing this enhance my community. I see the hundreds of Austinites who come weekly to ride bikes around the surrounding roads but can't get in. It's time to take down the barb wire and finish this beautiful park for all.

I question the wisdom in developing a new golf facility anywhere at this time. I think that using the developer's marketing brochures as a way of determining the validity of any project of any size is ludicrous. If one looks at the actual use of each of the local courses, whether public or private, versus the capacity available, my immediate answer would be "No thank you". The claim that there will be 'major tour events' at this site is also rather unusual. Are there commitments by the PGA? The LPGA? Any other major golf sponsoring entity? There are many superb golf facilities in the US which could only dream of hosting a 'major' event, not to mention even any type of qualifier.

A facility of this type would also require that the green fees charged would be at least double those of any city owned course. Once again, who will be the players to step up and pay those fees? Are we going to have to depend on tourism to support an "Austin" facility. Kris, I appreciate your comments and input but is this something that the City of Austin can afford? Yes, we need help in east Austin, but is that help going to be something that pushes the residents farther away from their present homes? Similar to the present 'gentrification' of east Austin is doing now? Another concern I have is where is the water going to come from? Yes, I know all about "reclaimed water" and its pros and cons. I grew up working as a night waterman at one of my city's golf courses. With our present drought conditions, do you really believe that we can use the amount of water necessary to build and maintain this facility without a pushback somewhere else down the line of water demand?

Hi Kris,

I think you meant environmentally conscious. I agree with you there!

The golf digest blog says the sky isn't falling. That's correct, but every other indicator does show a long term "structural decline". Our own municipal courses are at only 35-40% capacity. Look at the graph in the attached article which shows about an 8 million drop in golfers since 2002 and still in a steep decline.

<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-06-19/golf-loses-players-as-millennials-find-it-expensive-time-consuming>

I view operating at 40% of capacity as strong! Imagine if Austin's restaurants could claim a time averaged 40% of capacity, they would love it. What we don't have is a PGA event space here and this would be a tremendous addition to Austin and provide economic development in a location that really really needs it. The 130 / 290 intersection is developing right now and this quality of venue would be a very welcome addition to the health and future of the community.

Thank you for the information on the proposed golf course at Walter E. Long park.

I agree that the land needs development, but why a golf course? It's sorta like setting aside land for croquet. Nobody plays that any more.

All the comments are well taken. Besides water a concern should be not just jobs but whether the jobs will pay much. I suspect too many of the higher paying jobs will be held by people commuting or from those moving into the gentrified areas. It seems this idea would be great for them but not really contribute to helping the long-term east Austin residents.

Expanding on the Southern Walnut Creek trail to make it safe to circle the lake or go further east would be nice. But I still wonder how much the long term residents will benefit. Maybe their dislocation is simply inevitable as more newcomers with money pour in.

The link provided by Paige is more helpful than the link provided on this Speak Up. Thank you Paige for the link to the RFQS.

During the city council meeting of October 23, PARD staff told council multiple times that the contract was 99% complete. CM Martinez and CM Tovo requested that this contract be released to the public. That has not happened. That was two week ago. The final vote on this project is November 20th. This is the period of public engagement but without the facts to discuss it realistically.

What are the default provisions of the contract in case the cash flow projections don't materialize? The contract can't be a lease or an alienation of parkland because that violates the city charter and requires a public vote. Therefore, it's a 90 year year concession contract (50 years + 4x10 yr options) which must be cancellable or it becomes a lease. What community benefits are written into the contract? Who pays the cost of bringing reclaimed water to the site? Reclaimed water is heavily subsidized by the rate payers. What water use are they projecting? Will the City of Austin be responsible for the cost of pumping the water from the Colorado River to keep the lake full after the power plant is no longer in use?

comment...I think it is a bad idea to go for such a deal that far east. With the closing of Lions in 2019, the City should look at making a deal with ACC to buy Riverside. This is an excellent location for a public course. Currently ACC has a private entity running it. If the City took it over I'm sure the course would improve. This makes more sense than the Decker Lake proposal.

Decker Lake Golf has offered to build a multimillion dollar facility at no cost to the city. This type of facility would bring tourist dollars not only to the golf course but also restaurants, hotels, rental cars and shopping areas. The east side of Austin has been neglected long enough. I have read all the comments on whether golf is declining or not but I think this is a case of "if you build it they will come." Golfers will travel to a destination just to play on a quality course and by coming here they would find not only a beautiful course but many other amenities that Austin has to offer. The east side of Austin is eagerly awaiting some positive development that will bring much needed services to this side of town. This facility would only encourage additional development for east Austin

Well stated, Kris! I'm all for funding projects that combine to promote recreational and economic opportunities on the east side of town (or any side of town for that matter). Not only would we get a great multipurpose space to play in, but we'd get the stimulus of large-scale events like the North Texas Shootout in Irving, the Valero Open in San Antonio and the Shell Open in Houston. I'd rather spend my money right here in Austin and not Irving, Houston, or San Antonio. Beside the economic impact, golf is a great sport that encourages core values and burns every bit as many calories as other cardio sports and can be safely played by all ages. And if the City of Austin wants to improve it's capacity at it's public courses then it merely needs to encourage 9-hole play with 9-hole rates, provide adequate practice facilities, and stop sending groups off right on top of each other. The current public courses in Austin either don't have adequate warm up and/or practice areas (Lions and Hancock) or they are overcrowded with folks backing up at every par 3 and the multiple unpublicized tournaments (why can't the schedule be posted on a web site so I don't drive to the course to find out I can't play or practice) that make the courses inaccessible to the rest of the public (Morris Williams and Clay/Kizer). And if you think Austinites don't like to golf, then head over to my neighborhood and spend some time at Butler Pitch and Putt. That place is always packed on the weekends! So, Brian, instead of pronouncing golf's imminent demise and raining on a great idea, let's make changes all the way around to encourage this great sport and make our city a great golfing destination!

I see the link to the developer's promotional materials. Where is the proposed contract that will govern this 90 year agreement? How are we supposed to have a meaningful discussion when the binding details aren't posted. Where is the contract? When will you post the contract?

The city has gone so far as to request this RFQ but I have not seen ANY indication of an RFP for any other usage of this prime lakefront. Seems to be a bit of tunnel vision to me

and obviously others. There are many ways this land could benefit a much neglected East Austin but this seems to be the only idea being pushed for it.

comment...In my opinion this development will bring much needed jobs, services and housing to our area. As a long time resident of East Austin, this is an exciting opportunity for our community. We have been the longtime recipients of trash sites, prisons, power plants, and waste water treatment facilities and the newly installed homeless RV park in 2014. We have raised our children in East Austin and have spent so many hours driving to get to services such as HEB, Dr's, Dentists, School functions etc. and this type of development be the catalyst needed to attract some of these entities.

Lake Walter E. Long once had a nice park area that was well maintained with public restrooms, a gate attendant who was present during hours of operation, the grass was kept mowed and the area clean. Over the last 15 years that park has declined significantly. The bathrooms are not open, the grass is poorly maintained and the park as a whole has suffered. As for the acreage that this entity is proposing the development for, that part is fences with 8' chain link and barbed wire. There are no trespassing signs and there are 1000's of dead trees scattered throughout. It would be a blessing to have that side of the lake be developed into a world class golf course that is Audubon Certified that gives back to the park through some sort of revenue sharing. It would address so many issues surrounding the park and our community.

After watching the city council meeting and hearing all of the neighbors feed back and excitement it has only encouraged me to think that this can and will happen.

I am in full support of this exciting development.

Walter Long was "way out there" but no longer. I see 50 cyclists every weekend day and a dozen each week day riding on Blue Bluff and Bloor. This location is 15 minutes from the Airport and 15 minutes from I35 and 290. It takes me longer to get from Riverside to Hyde Park. This is now in "our back yard" and we finally have a developer who has a plan to not only pay for the city park construction but return revenue to the city and park system.

Hey Brian,

There is a great article regarding exactly what you are referring to. However I think it might give you a different perspective on this whole, golf courses are shutting down every 48 hours thing.

<http://www.golfdigest.com/blogs/the-loop/2014/07/has-golfs-demise-been-greatly.html>

According to Mother Nature Network, Austin is ranked in the top 10 greenest cities in the US. <http://www.mnn.com/health/allergies/photos/top-10-green-us-cities/10-austin->

texas

Again, here we are listed in the top 10 for being one of the greenest cities in the U.S.

<http://ecosalon.com/americas-greenest-cities-319/>

Also, we are listed on the popular science list in the top 10 again of the greenest cities in the U.S. <http://www.popsoci.com/environment/article/2008-02/americas-50-greenest-cities?page=1%2C1>

So I would like to disagree with you and say yes we are much more economically conscious than most cities in the U.S.

You seem to have a lot of facts that have not been made available to the rest of us. What is your opinion of East Austin. What is your plan for their prosperity? The latest position of Austin Energy is not closing the power plant, they want to dbt down and build another one! Great for East Austin, you should be able to see it from the top of the local dumps. The current power plant puts 40M a year in the general fund, and would take a 7000 acre solar farm to replace it. Simple math.

This is posted above when you click "View Discussion"

The marketing materials provided appear to bring forth the idea that they will be economically cautious with the land. As an Austinite, we are very economically cautious when it comes to our city. We try to keep everything as "green" as we can and knowing that this company will take the land, improve it, and maintain it while keeping the land as raw as possible is really impressive. Also, knowing that Austin is among the top cities for promoting a healthy lifestyle, this course will be a walking course. Austinites are always running Lady Bird Lake, and trying to be in the outdoors, experiencing nature. As I'm reading on through this marketing packet, I find it extremely beneficial to our city that this course will be hosting major tour events. Austin loves being a part of the extraordinary experiences. We already have COTA, Trail of Lights, Rodeo Austin, SXSW, ACL, XGames, FunFunFun Fest, and hopefully a world class golf event. Not to mention that University of Texas' men's golf team just recently won the U.S. Collegiate Championship. So having a world class golf course would be super beneficial to our collegiate golf team to practice on. Further benefits that I see coming with this development is the overwhelming amount of new jobs as well as the opportunity for people to work within their community. I see more business development coming our way that we didn't have before. So I can't wait for all of this to come to East Austin!

I'm very opposed to this plan. With the electric plant being decommissioned, the giant pumps that bring water to the lake will no longer be necessary. But once this FOR PROFIT golf development comes in, the city will be paying an outrageous amount to keep the

lake full for their use. Not only that, the water (which we obviously don't have enough of), will be used for watering the golf course and get returned to the lake with fertilizers added. Why would we even consider giving away our public land to a private developer? And why wouldn't the gift of such a huge piece of our property be on the ballot where we can all decide as a city?

Second challenge: Being a good steward of the environment and of neighbors. There is nothing in the documentation that sets the expectations of the design of this recreational facility apart as an exemplary specimen, and nothing I read requires the developer to consider impacts beyond the property's boundaries. The impacts this type of development has on water quality (fertilizers, pesticides, monocrop of grass and decrease of biodiversity, run-off, impaction, etc.) are not noted and addressed. The impacts the high level of water consumption has on a region that's already poorly managed as far as water rights (area aquifer is already depleted by nearby ball parks and other park uses so neighboring farms are having to shut down and move) is also not noted. I want to see a long term impact analysis and a plan for this concept to rise above as a golf course that replenishes the environment and acts as a good neighbor. Not one that depletes the environment and takes away from those nearby. It's not economic development and job creation when you build a business that employs a few low wage workers while putting neighboring business owners and providers out of business.

Hi Sam,

I feel this development will provide a great opportunity for the city to direct Austin's growth eastward. Austin is growing extremely fast and I believe it is not only in the city's best interest but also consistent with it's current long term plans to direct some of that growth to East Austin. In my opinion buying and developing the ACC course will just further add to downtown congestion. 130/290 offers easy access for most austin residents without adding to the traffic problems.

Water usage is absolutely a major concern for this project, but speaking strictly from the perspective of one of the cyclists that uses the roads in that area, the addition of the trails is wonderful to see. The proposal includes a loop that would connect to the existing South Walnut Creek Trail, which connects us all the way to Govalle Park on dedicated trails, and out of the way of traffic.

Completing this loop means the cyclists are no longer forced to take the service road of 130 to get to FM973, which is a dicey, narrow road with a decent hill climb. Too often, large truck traffic flies by far too closely out there.

On the flipside, they actually never specify that the new trails would be paved like S. Walnut Creek is. Paved trails are far more expensive than crushed gravel, but road bikes can't really utilize crushed gravel as safely. We could make the assumption that it would be paved, since it is connecting to an existing paved trail, but we know where assumptions get us.

For those who read the attachment in any depth, have you noticed the numbers don't really add up? For the first year of golf course operation, 22K rounds are forecast divided equally between resident and tourist. This will be an approximate cost of \$175 per round for visitors and if residents are given a 40% discount, \$105 per round for residents. The third year of operation shows an approximate cost per round of \$200 for visitors and \$120 per round under the same circumstances for residents. The rates obviously continue to increase each year. These prices are justified by the developers as providing "a fine dining option" to the Austin area for golfers. These prices conflict with the Austin Tourism and Economics Bureau Key Results in the Golf Visitor EEI Draft which shows a \$32 average recreation expense for a 1 night lodging with a 2 day stay.

Some folks are happy for an increase in jobs but when you look at the number of full time jobs for years 1-5 of operation, that number is only 35 permanent jobs. Years 6-10 are only 50 permanent jobs. Now before you jump up and talk about all of the jobs that will come (if) when tournaments are played, please realize many if not most are volunteer positions which are rewarded with admission tickets, shirts, parking, etc. Very few paid positions are added and those are predominately minimum wage.

Who will be considered "local" under the pricing plan? Austin residents only? Travis county residents only or will you add in Hays and or possibly Williamson county? If you allow only Austin residents to be considered "local" you have eliminated probably 40% of the users of the Austin area golf courses. These are people that will be needed to sustain this grand endeavor. Unfortunately, I don't believe enough demand will be present for this "fine dining option".

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Wow, another great point. Looks like the due diligence period of the project will have a lot of questions to answer. There is no way those could be answered in the proposal, it would take a full blown site analysis and environmental study to address these issue. That would not be done by any developer without the ability to pull the trigger if he checked off all the required boxes.

It is my understanding this is a concession agreement. So how can you say it gives up land until 2105? If you fully understand a concession, then you know that it can be terminated by city council without cause. No exceptions.

I agree that the City has swung and missed on Colony Park, have had plenty of opportunities to help but decided not to. Another point, are you sure this gives up all 735 acres to golf? With the typical irrigation area of a Crenshaw course only being around 90 acres, and the RFQ stating that the developer has to develop non golf amenities on the site, I think you might be stating something that will turn out to be false.

Austin Proper has done nothing for the East Side, and I doubt you have either. I saw the letter from Colony Park, they are not asking for your kind of help, they want this project. Please focus on your community and stop trying to torpedo this East Austin asset with made up information and naïve ideas of the 10-1 helping the East Side. After the 10-1 council sees the plan to build a open air recycling center at the intersection of SH130/290 by Republic Trash, then District 1 needs to grab their ankles and get ready, because 9 other districts would love to keep shipping their trash to District 1!

I'm looking for more diversity in how the site is used. One challenge is having enough land to support all the needs of the current and future booming population moving into the DDZ. Just a golf course? I expect to see a lot more under the "Infrastructure" section

of the RFQ than what I saw. Integrating uses and truly making it a place where the public wants to come whether they golf or not is critical to long term economic, environmental, and social success. Right now it's "just a golf course" with a token mention of some trails, and it's pitched as catering to outside tourism.

Austin and central Texas are becoming more arid, water is scarce, and golf courses drink water like a mad Scotsman drinks whiskey. So why would we build a gold course on this prime piece of property? It will only serve those well heeled enough to pony up what passes for a lot of money to the majority of Austinites to hit a little ball with a stick around a well watered lawn. If east Austin need economic development, find something that fits in with our environmental future. The number of east Austinites who will get good jobs with benefits from this project is laughable. As far as the park system getting money from this, just look at how much budget money the park system gets from its "rental" of Zilker for ACL. When the number are settled out, almost nothing. The commercial interests pay the park to keep it up for them, yes, but overall the commercial interests pay very little compared to what they would pay for the in kind benefit they get for use of this center city jewel. There is no reason to think the use of this parkland would get any better pay off for Austin and its citizens. F1 and ACL bring a lot of money to Austin, but much of that money is carried off by national hotel chains, corporations and businesses that come here for the event. Restaurants get an increase in business, but how many regular restaurant employees or hotel employees get much of a real boost in their income. This golf course idea is just another transfer of public assets to private use and in this case, well heeled private use. Water is our most precious resource right now. Do not squander it on a huge water sucking golf course.

From Bloomberg:

“The baby boomers were supposed to be the salvation of golf,” says Jim Koppenhaver, president of Pellucid, but they have yet to take up the slack. “We’ve got to find a way to stem the decline in the golfer base,” he says. His company’s research shows the number of golfers today is lower than in 1990, even though the U.S. population is 27 percent greater.

Koppenhaver calls the traditional 18-hole round “an anachronism,” requiring about six hours “door-to-door,” including more than four on the course. Nor does the pastime have the social currency it once held. Explains Gerald Celente, publisher of marketing magazine Trends Journal: “Everybody’s hooked up to their handhelds, so [today] it’s social networking instead of sports.”

Michael, see my reply to Michael Schofield above. A modern golf course doesn't have to be a water hog. Golf course management has come a long way!

Can we afford it? Yes! The Parks department can tell us what it costs to maintain a city park let alone build one from scratch. This opportunity costs the city nothing, builds a park in accordance with the original master plan, and returns revenue to the park system. Our voters would never agree to build this park with bond money, that's why it has been sitting unused and inaccessible for so long. Let's finally give the public what they paid for 50 years ago.

So today I drove out to Walter E. Long to see what all the fuss is about. I am pretty sure I found the site, it looks like a fallow forgotten piece of land with barb wire and no trespassing signs on it. It was so overgrown and dense that the clearing of cedars and underbrush alone would put hundreds of thousands of gallons of water back in play every day! Not exactly what I would consider "open public space" I have also read the RFQ released by Austin and the responders proposal. That by no means the proposal a piece of "marketing" or "promotional" material. If you actually take the time to the COA RFQ, and the response by Decker Lake Golf, then you will see that the proposal is an attempt to answer every question asked by the RFQ. Nothing more, nothing less. What I did not see in the proposal was the answer to some very tough questions, and so I will hold my judgment on the validity of the project until we actually see a copy of the contract that has been negotiated. I did notice by actually reading the proposal, that signing an agreement would not guarantee a course gets built. They have a lot of time in their time line for due diligence, site analysis and community input. What that tells me is nobody has any idea if a course is even suitable on this site. The only way to properly asses if it is suitable would be like any other real estate development deal, sign a contract, do your feasibility, and then execute the takedown if you check of all the boxes.

I 100% agree that East Austin has been getting hosed for the last 100 years, nobody on this forum can honestly say that East Austin has EVER gotten a break, East Austin has been a dumping ground of undesirable projects and a victim of systematic abuse by the current form of government. I would like for all the negative commenters on this board to explain why East Austin does not deserve a positive development. It will not affect me, but it will affect my neighbors, and it seems like these neighbors need a break.

As far as the tough questions that need to be answered....

Water. I would think they have only 1 or 2 options. The first choice should be reclaimed, but after looking at the maps on the COA reclaimed water system, do not appear to have the current pipes in the area. Another option would be the 200 million or so acre feet of water that is sitting about 3500' under East Travis County and most of Texas (Please do

research before you freak). This water is not very suitable for treatment for drinking (too expensive with the TDS make up), but it may be suitable for irrigation. This water is not in a water district, and has zero mention on any long term water plans. Probably cost a Kings Ransom to get to it, so it may be out of the question. As far as the water in the lake, that would have to be off limits. That water is critical to our long term drought plans. I also would in no way allow this development to hold hostage any long term water or energy plans that may be in store for Lake Long. Be a clear case of buyer beware!

2) Community access. I agree, most citizens would not benefit from the golf course itself, but what about park improvements that were non golf related? We will need to see the contract to see if a slice of the revenues are slated to build parks that 100% of East Austin can use. If this venture funds non golf related improvements, then it will be very hard to tell East Austin no to new parks. Parks lift communities. The rest of Austin has no interest in funding East Austin park improvements. Zero. If you take the time to look up the Austin Parks Foundation (wonderful community tool), then you will see that a grand total of 3 grants out of 128 grants went into East Austin. And the lake in question has received 0 dollars from the rest of Austin. Shame on us.

3) Jobs.Jobs.Jobs. This is going to bring jobs to East Austin, maybe not the golf, but the likely hotels built around it, and I do not care what kind of job. If you do not have a job, cannot afford to drive into Austin, cannot afford to feed a parking meter in downtown Austin to be a waiter, then this project will be for you. If you are living, working and playing in downtown Austin, that is awesome, but our neighbors in East Austin to not have that luxury. They need a hand.

4) Community. If you live anywhere in Austin BUT East Austin, then you have amenities available to you that East Austin does not (hospitals, stores, parks, jobs). How do we fix that? It is our duty as citizens to help our neighbors, and these neighbors need help. If you look at what has been dumped in East Austin, and you have not actively tried to stop it, and you are in this board trying to stop this without knowing the facts, then shame on you. Let's get the contract, read the FACTS, then make a decision. if the decision is not to help East Austin on this, then what do you plan on doing? Nothing? Go back to Zilker and feel good about yourself?

We owe it to East Austin to get the facts before we cast judgment.

We shouldn't have to trade East Austin parkland (the part of the city that needs it most) for a few golf course jobs IMHO. A golf course build elsewhere on private land in East Austin plus a public park on this City park land would get both.

Not all Colony Park residents support this project but we have no voice!

Lake Long may one day be needed for its water supply. Even an environmentally responsible golf course will have an impact on the water quality as well as use more water than other parkland. As this area grows, why would we give up this parkland to likely be used by folks that don't live in that area. In 20 years, will we be talking about a lack of park space in far east Austin? How much economic impact does a golf course have? Have the existing courses in the city been studied to see what kind of jobs they produce? There is plenty of private land in the area for a golf course if there is a real demand for it. Why take parkland that may not be used now but has potential for the future?

Walter E. Long Golf Course Topic #1:

Hello,

I currently live in North Austin in the Domain area. The Domain has become a secondary business, shopping and entertainment center in compliment to Austin's downtown. It has helped me tremendously to be able to work, shop and enjoy myself without having to fight my way to downtown. East Austin needs to experience the same type of growth in order to avoid a situation where the eastside becomes Austin's neglected dumping ground. A healthy city has balanced growth; a healthy city is one that takes care of all of its people. I believe the value added to the city from this project greatly outweighs any opposing concerns. Thank you.

A golf course seems like a poor use of the property, given the lack of parks in east Austin. More public parkland would be a better benefit.

I'd prefer to see the land used for a public tallgrass prairie park with native grasses and flowers for people and wildlife to enjoy, with trails that connect it to the adjacent Indiangrass Preserve and Walter Long Tallgrass Prairie.

See this Austin parks and preserve document for more information about the adjacent Austin nature preserves:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Parks/Preserves/preserves.pdf>

Wow, Mr. Akers (and Mr. Wilson) has a strong opinion of this outstanding park development opportunity that will have a positive impact in East Austin. We finally have a chance at jobs, economy and prosperity. A sense of community! I am curious of his on the record comments on the years and years the negative developments shoved down

our throats East Austin. Did he fight for us then, or was we like the rest of Austin, happy the trash and prisons was not put in his neighborhood?

IF this provides a truly free (or almost free) teaching facility for East Austin youth who want to learn how to play golf, I might see this as beneficial, but I'm not getting that from the literature.

Additionally, golf course upkeep (and particularly greens upkeep) is notorious for polluting water supplies and creating algae blooms in areas where chemicals flow into waterways. Where's the part about recycling waste water and being cognizant of the overuse of chemicals impacting our water supply?

On another note, though some may welcome golf tournaments as yet another BIG event on par with COTA and endless music festivals, my friends and I have dubbed Austin as the place to live if you want to come down with event fatigue. A minor consideration if it's held once a year, but again my criteria to offer any kind of support is that such a course be utilized to actually serve east austin youth and NOT to line the pockets of more opportunistic promoters.

I'm sorry, but a few more tourist industry minimum wage jobs is not what East Austin needs, nor do we need 735 acres of prime public land taken over for high-priced commercial recreation development. If you want to help the folks in East Austin, then lease 50-75 acres for a high level manufacturing enterprise that will pay decent wages, and develop the rest of the land for families to use for jogging, biking, team sports and other outdoor enjoyment. The city's insistence on urban density is devouring all the areas where kids used to be able to ride bikes and play. So leave the vast majority of this tax-payer owned land for the tax-payers, not just the wealthy old guys who want to play golf, or another sports venue like the Circuit of America that only has low-paying jobs for locals.

Well said, Sir.

This project will bring jobs and services that are sorely needed to the eastside. Instead of costing tax dollars it will provide tax dollars. Sara you talk about park land and that is built into the plan and it will be self supporting with additional monies continuing to come in.

Sara, hypothetically if all of these jobs are low paying jobs, then maybe this is the perfect opportunity for our youth to get a head start in their careers. Something of this volume will have opportunity for growth. We have an abundance of young adults in the area and not nearly enough jobs for them to participate in. I am positive that these people often would like the opportunity to work but because the nearest open job is too far they

can't. So let's take another look and see the opportunity that this project offers. Think about what experiences they can put on their resumes as they prepare to apply for college... This is more than just about land, golf and money, this is about the future of east Austin and the opportunity to grow and succeed as a whole.

An alternative view to casting the City Manager and Council as "deceptive" is that the Council approving this proposal finally makes good on the promise the Public was given when the land was purchased. This master plan, long ignored, was and remains to make a public park for the use and enjoyment of those who paid for it - the public. It's time to take down the barb wire and develop this park in a way that doesn't ask all of us to pay for it again. And it remains, as planned, a public asset that can be used and can generate revenue for the development of the remainder of the park. This proposal is only a minority of the land and will provide for the development, according to the master plan long in place, for future use of all of this public asset.

On the subject of providing start-up jobs for East Austin youth, and learning opportunities for them, I would much rather see something like a public farm, where workers could learn something useful like growing food. Local produce sales could generate park funds. There must be a hundred better ideas for this public land that would actually serve the public. Golf seems of very limited interest to the general population of East Austin. Of all the things I've wished for on the east side, over the past ten years -- a public gym, more outdoor fitness courses, off-leash dog areas, grocery co-ops -- a golf course would be the last thing on my list.

I don't see this as alienation of public parkland. Quite the opposite. We needed a power plant 50 years ago and built Decker lake. But we bought far more land than was required for a lake and its purpose, approved by the public, was to build a park to take advantage of this new lake. We took public money and never did anything with it. We put a fence around productive farmland and kept it hidden from public use. That move, if anything, defines alienation of public parkland.

This proposal provides a competent steward to build and maintain this long awaited Public Park at no additional cost to the public. We are not selling public land to a private entity, we are allowing a developer to build our park for us and finally allow the public to access and enjoy the land they bought long ago.

Kris, it drives me crazy that there aren't enough jobs for our teenagers, but in my attempts to find out why, it always leads the same place: Most business insurance today requires that all employees be 18-years-old or older. And I'm sure a golf course would need business insurance.

Wow! The addition of a learning center focused on youth and job creation is an added benefit in itself. The golf course will most likely increase tourism to the park as well. It's a win in my book...

I believe it can only add value to the city. A beautiful parkland area that will provide economic and recreational opportunities on the East side and make Austin the pro golfing destination is a great asset.

Much of the justification for the golf course comes from the 1968 Master Plan as if the only item left to complete is the golf course. Here is every item from that 1968 plan starting from the dam and going counter clockwise. What a wonderful place it could still be as long as we don't cut out 735 acres to private interests for high-end golf until the year 2105.

1968 Master Plan: Rifle Range, Pistol Range, Archery Range, Skeet and Trap Shooting, Bridle Path and Stables, Overlooks, 18 hole golf course, Driving range, Docking and Cart Trail, Hike and Bike, Fishing Point, Open Area, Picnic Area, Play Equipment, Boat Dock. Naturalized Open Space with Open Play, Swimming Beach, Team Track, Fishing Point, Youth Camp Recreation Center, Rest Rooms, Fishing Point, Picnic Area, Small Craft Boat Launch, Open Play, Picnic, Fishing Point, 50 Campsites Trailer Park, Recreation Centers, Fishing Point, Swimming Beach, Picnic Area, Viewing Gazebo, Restrooms, Restaurant, Viewing Area, Fishing Point, Nature Trail Area, Group Shelters Recreation Center, Fishing Point, Boat Launch, Water Transportation to Golf Facilities, Lodge and Highrise Restaurant, Viewing Area, Marina, Boat Launch, Bait House, Fishing Point, Boat Rental & Docking, Park and Gazebos, Group Shelter, Miniature Golf, Picnic Area, Open Play, 50 Cabins, Restrooms, Picnic Area, Picnic Area, Boat Launch, Swimming Beach, 2 Bath Houses, 100 Camp Sites, Restrooms, 9 Baseball Diamonds, Overlook, Play Equipment, Open Play, Recreation Center, Amphitheater, Picnic Areas, Group Shelters, Boat launching and Docking, Fishing Point, Tennis Center, Restroom, Park Greenhouse, Naturalized Creek Area, Main Public Beach, Play Equipment, 50 Cabins, Docking and Small Marina, Boat Launch and Rental

What was built? One fishing pier, one boat ramp, a picnic area, trap & skeet, an open area for model airplanes.

This development could serve as the focal point for more interest in East and NE Austin which has been a long neglected part of the city. The land used for the course is a small piece of the park complex and will preserve much of the natural area to mitigate environmental impact. I understand concerns some have that since golf is on the decline as a sport, why would we need a new course. However, this course isn't intended to be

another Lions or Roy Kizer. The main interest of this development is to attract the big events which bring big dollars and there is no reason Austin won't get one with this course. Also, this course and the events it attracts will diversify the events in Austin. We don't need another music festival or 10k which increasingly disrupt the lives of those who live Central. This event will be something different and a benefit to our constantly changing city.

The population of northeast Austin is exploding, and Walter E Long Park is the City's principal and perhaps only opportunity to create a suitable destination metropolitan park to serve that population. That this has not already happened may be largely attributed to the city's not yet having been built out in that direction. But the build-out is happening. Turning this prime piece of parkland over to a high-end resort course would perhaps forever foreclose the possibility of a first rate metro park for Northeast Austin.

PARD has long considered that part of the park could become a golf course, and with the demise of Bergstrom and the possible demise of Lions, adding to the inventory would seem timely. But the kind of course proposed and the green fees required, even if discounted for local residents, would not serve the municipal golf community AT ALL. Many golfers require the kinds of green fees offered by the currently operating courses. Those with means and the desire to play high end courses have other options in the area. The City's role is not to facilitate resort golf for the very, very wealthy.

In its essence, the DLG proposal is a shrewd business scheme by an outfit that wishes to build a tourist resort and high-end playground and to profit in so doing by offloading its very, very substantial land acquisition cost onto the public. Their land would be free, it would carry no property tax burden, and it would generate a minimal cash payment obligation back to the City. Essentially giving away valuable and potentially irreplaceable City land for this purpose greatly detracts from the City, both financially and in terms of public health and vitality.

The scheme the City Manager has concocted to cast this as a 90-year concession rather than a lease detracts from the soul of the City, in that its purpose is precisely to remove the decision making power of the public from its agency. Moreover, the concession scheme shows a tremendous disrespect for the rule of law that undermines public faith and engagement with government. State law encodes the requirement that alienation of public parkland requires a popular vote, and there is sound civic philosophy behind that law. The Austin City Council and City Manager are flouting both the law and the purpose of civic engagement, and on these grounds alone the proposal should be disqualified. Devaluing public engagement and faith in the rule of law degrades the City of Austin and

the social contract between the City government and its public.

The current City Council's desire to railroad this proposal before leaving office has the taste of a Sherman's March. This Council has been dismissed by the voters. At the very least, action on this plan should be the business of a new Council, not the one that currently has no accountability.

When we talk about land use and value we must always take into consideration water, food, housing, recreation. The area surrounding this land currently sits in a food desert. Would more recreation be the best usage for this property? Parks and Recreation has already shut down farms in the area for bicycle lanes while the people in zip code 78724 suffer from some of the highest obesity and morbidity rates in Travis County. I keep hearing everyone talk about this project will benefit the children out in Colony Park. With the proposed PUD just down the street and this proposed golf course, those youth who you all claim to be so concerned about will no longer live in this area! I live in Colony Park.

Considering the materials presented, what benefits or challenges does the proposed project bring to the City of Austin?

The proposed benefits are for those who play golf and may want to play more cheaply than at a private club. I don't see the local residents suddenly taking up golf, an expensive declining sport. If they were to interact with the course, I'd imagine it would be occasional and not habitual as it tends to be for those with more money and free time. The jobs benefit "groundskeepers, caterers, pro shop workers; all jobs that go nowhere. So it may allow some kids or underemployed a temporary source of income, but nothing that's going to improve lives.

The challenges include drawing players from private clubs who probably prefer to play in elitist clubs, a criminal waste of water (even if that water is reclaimed), a wasted opportunity for a beautiful natural area that it was bequeathed to be, and another wasted opportunity to have a "Zilker East" venue that could be used occasionally for what Austin is beloved for, the festival. This last opportunity could relieve pressure at Zilker and bring revenue and revitalization to East Austin, while keeping the park mainly for use by its local residents as a natural refuge. Ironically, many of the pictures included in DLG's response to RFP were of Austin's musical heritage—we should embrace this rather than elitist golf.

There is also already a golf course, <http://www.bluebonnethillgolf.com/> immediately adjacent to the site. How's that course doing? What happens to that course if there is a huge new one opened next door? How often do the local residents use that golf course? The City of Austin runs 6 golf courses currently. What does their revenue look like? Have any of these courses had a positive impact on the surrounding neighborhoods? Where is

this quantified?

To what extent could the proposed project add or detract value from the City of Austin?

The project purports to add to Austin via 5 Key Points:

1. Real Property Values are positively affected
2. Municipal Revenues are increased
3. Affluent retirees are attracted and retained
4. Knowledge workers and talent are attracted to live and work
5. Homebuyers are attracted to buy homes

1. Real Property Values are Positively Affected. Real property values are already almost 20% overvalued in our city, why would we want to continue this hypervaluation and bolster exodus of those settled in the area via the increase in property values that may make their tax burden force them to move?

2. Municipal Revenues are Increased. Municipal revenues could be increased by the rental of the parks for festivals. Golf revenues are down and decreasing, and this has even been a recent (June 2014) Forbes article, "Think Playing Golf is Tough? Try Operating a Course" at <http://goo.gl/5QNHP>. Although DLG references some of their numbers in the chart on page 19, how they got to their estimated revenues is not referenced, and it does not jive with recent business news.

3. Affluent retirees are attracted and retained. I'm not sure why this is desirable. I think if it were true, which there is again, no reference for this claim, that the focus in this area should be on providing local residents opportunity versus replacing them with old rich people.

4. Knowledge Workers and Talent are Attracted to Live and Work. Besides having to look up the strange (to me) term "Knowledge Worker" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_worker, this Key Point is yet another example of an attempt at gentrification. Why does this sound to me like, let's bring in the rich folks so that the folks in the neighborhoods can serve them drinks and mow the golf course. This leads to a much bigger issue, but the preferable option would be to increase real job opportunities in Austin instead of trying to import the "knowledge workers".

5. Homebuyers are Attracted to Buy Homes. This is a desirable thing, if you're a realtor or developer. Otherwise, Austin's housing stock is already low and overvalued. Although any improvements in this area, including making a Zilker Park type atmosphere or a Nature Preserve may increase interest in the area, at least these types of venues are accessible to everyone, not just golfers.

How will the development of the land at Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park affect you?

This is one question where I have to step back and ask myself why I care. This is not my neighborhood. But what if it was? What if they wanted to build a golf course in my

Southwest Austin neighborhood? Although this is a more affluent area that would potentially have a larger base of people who find golf enticing, I would wholeheartedly reject it. Especially if there were an opportunity to have parkland in its natural state. Water, of course, would be a major concern. So would the idea that revenues would benefit Austin. Residents of East Austin deserve the same natural spaces that we enjoy in Southwest Austin. There are already 35 golf courses in the Austin area (<http://www.golfnow.com/austin/courses/course-map>); do we really need more of them? Who has looked at the revenues of these courses?

To what degree does this proposed project align with Austin's environmental, conservation and development efforts?

Obviously, this is a critical issue that makes the golf course choice easy to say no to. Purple pipe, reclaimed water is wonderful, but we can do better than watering golf course grass. Some of the more common comments I saw on online rating comments for golf courses included how "dry" the courses were and how they were too "fast" on courses due to the hardend dry ground. Do we really find it acceptable to dump water on this acreage to keep a world class golf course?

Let's use our brains and come up with a better way to benefit East Austin--it has so much potential! And a suggestion to those residents in the area who think it may be a boost to your area -- don't sell yourselves short and allow this developer to perpetuate elitist games with your hard-earned tax dollars!

This project would benefit very few. It would remove parkland for a long time and could detract from the water quality of the lake that may be needed for drinking water. It would be foolish to enter into a long term contract to impact the water supply. I don't think a golf course will be a big development driver. Are there other examples of golf courses drawing development to an area? Generally golf courses are pretty isolated. Most of the development near Lions is because of the lake, not due to the course.

Walter E. Long Golf Course Topic #3:

The proposal did actually include a cycling loop around Decker Lake and connecting to the existing Walnut Creek Trail. I think it would actually make it safer for us. That's assuming they were to build the more expensive paved trail instead of crushed gravel. That part they didn't specify.

The creation of a golf course on the lake would not change my behavior. I do not go to the fenced off property now, and would not go to a golf course for any reason. However, it would change my perspective on the priorities of the leadership of the City of Austin - and not in a good way. Create a park for everyone to use, rather than a golf course which would only be used by people who golf.

I am pretty disappointed to see yet another instance of inequity based on economics in Austin. The parks in East Austin have been neglected and have only been pursued as gentrification has moved in that direction. I am not opposed to a golf course at Decker, but all these years with no amenities in East Austin and now the proposal is to provide an expensive (so that most East Austin residents will not be able to afford to golf there) on the best area on the property with the beautiful lakeside amenities while situating the park facilities thrown in as a panacea on the busy corner which is dominated by Expo Center Events and frequently overrun by private events like the light-up run is shameful. How about providing some lovely lakeside facilities for East Austinites with some fishing piers that I am sure will be heavily used. Want another example, how much did the City spend on the Boardwalk after developers jumped on the East Riverside Corridor waivers and exemptions to allow development to surge? While just a little further East on CITY OWNED property which would not have cost anywhere near as much to provide a riverside trail, the City has constructed a chain-link fence to prohibit water access all along Roy Guerrero Park. Yes, they have provided some ball fields, but let's see some of those "first class" facilities that are easily accessible to east-side residents, affordable and for the activities that they prefer. Instead, no swimming in the river, wouldn't want them using the little beach area below the City's park on the east side, much less provide access and amenities. I am seething.

This project will have a very positive effect on the area by bringing in more people and services. I have only lived here for 11 years and so far I have not seen the city provide anything that would enhance the area.

It may harm my future water supply. Would detract from water quality when I fish at the park. Would be a waste of parkland that is held by the entire city.

I expect that it would increase my water bill.

Austin is growing leaps and bounds, and it seems the only direction left for that growth to take is either up (vertical) or East. Building an environmentally friendly world-class golf course on existing city-owned park land, land that would remain city-owned regardless if the golf course is successful or not, is simply a great deal for all of Austin, if done properly. "Go East young man!" is the new rallying cry here in this city, and the Powers-That-Be should take advantage of this opportunity to put Austin's best foot forward, right from the get-go. How would something like this affect me? Well, as an Austinite for nearly 50 years, I believe the addition of a beautiful new golf course (on existing park land long ear-marked for just such a project, privately funded - something that would not cost the city of Austin much, if anything) would affect me Much Better

than many other projects I've suffered through (and continue to suffer through) over the years; projects that have resulted in rush-hour-traffic-conditions at all hours of the day. That, and to see a project of this scale that would Not make my property taxes go up...golly, how much better can it get! It's a win-win situation for everyone...exactly the kind of growth Austin needs.

comment...The creation of a world class PGA golf course would be fantastic. I love golf and enjoy going to the PGA and USGA events. Having that opportunity right here in Austin is exciting.

As a resident in the area it will not keep me from enjoying the park on the other side of the lake or the many other parks in our area. We currently have a smaller park in the Colony Park area and a much larger one on Blake Manor Rd. called the East Metropolitan Park.

I work in Manor and tragically like the "Park" the city hasn't changed much in the past 50 years. This year Manor got it's first stop light and that's real progress. The discussion about whether golf is declining or not doesn't sway me at all. Not many of us drive formula one cars either but there are hoards of folks paying several hundreds each to be there. Regarding the success of golf: None of our existing courses have closed and operating at 40% of capacity is very strong. Imagine if our restaurant owners of Austin had a time averaged 40% of capacity fill of customers!! They would love it!

The main considerations for me are bringing the PGA here as a landmark for Austin, bringing economic development to austin's eastern border, and building and maintaining this park for all public access without asking the public to pay one cent. The course will fulfill a longstanding plan and finally make a return on our public investment in cash into the park system and economic development for the community.

I am a product of the golf business and after spending 20 plus years in that industry a few years ago I left to private business. As a young professional in the golf industry I had the unique opportunity to meet a number of business owners that are now my clients and I would have never had the opportunity to access to these Executives and Owners without golf. This project will not only create jobs, but will create jobs that will originate relationships that will last a life time. I am a big supporter.

Greg

I ride my bike to the end of the South Walnut Creek Trail, which terminates at Lindell Ln on the north side of Lake Long and keep going beyond on Lindell Ln., Blue Bluff and Bloor Rd and also on the 130 frontage road down to FM973 and then right on Gilbert Lane and off into the sticks. Right now these roads at the end of the grade-separated South Walnut Creek Trail are great to ride a bike on. But I'm afraid if a golf course community is

brought in, the roads in the area will become very hostile to cyclists, the same way that the roads on the south side of Lake Long are not good for cycling.

Not to mention, it would diminish the value of spending all that money building the paved South Walnut Creek Trail, I mean, why would a person want to ride all the way out there if the roads were not good for cycling. Unless, the intent of the city government is to make cyclists ride on bike paths only.

Next is the climate change aspects - Austin has become drier in the last 30 years and building a water-intensive golf course does nothing to help Austin be an environmentally friendly city.

And as others have noted, participation in golf is dwindling.

And there are already 2 other golf courses in an approximately 5 mile radius, Bluebonnet Hill on FM3177 and the Harvey Penick course at 51st and 183.

There's just no good reason to give away all this park land, either. Let the developers go buy some privately owned tract to build their golf course on.

In short, this is a major NO for me.

comment...After having reviewed a lot of the posts here today I am compelled to comment; I have lived in the Elgin/Manor area for 14 years and have watched our little towns struggle to bring even the taken for granted amenities available in other areas surrounding Austin, such as grocery stores and medical facilities! I have been to the park and honestly I thought it was a compound or something; land someone owned who had not done anything to it ever? And yes, the chain link fence is menacing. Austin is growing, why not the East Austin area? Austin is crowded and traffic is awful, why not East Austin? If you have not been down the 130 and 290 Toll ways they are pleasant and quick. I have never seen them backed up bumper to bumper. East Austin is prime for the new growth and prosperity brought by developments such as this. We have this great opportunity before us to bring new jobs, improve city owned park land that has been out of reach to the public for years, and create a revenue stream that will help the parks department improve the existing park at Walter E Long.

This will be the catalyst behind positive growth in our area and help offset all of the negative developments such as the homeless RV parks, waste water treatment facilities and County and State Prison in the area. In my opinion there is no negative side to this only opportunity. The last time my husband played it was 1 hour over and 1 hour back to

meet at a nice club. To be able to drive a short distance and play golf at such a nice venue would be great! Yes we would pay \$100 a round, we would save gas and time from having to drive for hours?! I support this development.

It will take away the people who have fished this location for quite some time, including myself. It appears the removal of most of the wildlife preserve is going to happen. Of course there is nothing we can do about that. Kind of like when we invaded and stole the land from the native American Indians. Going to make the investors more rich, and take away the landscape you have enjoyed and the reason you have gone to Walter E. Long.

A golf course seems like a poor use of the property, and would impact my and others enjoyment of the adjacent Austin nature preserves (Indiangrass Preserve).

I'd prefer to see the land used for a public tallgrass prairie park with native grasses and flowers for people and wildlife to enjoy, with trails that connect it to the adjacent Indiangrass Preserve and Walter Long Tallgrass Prairie.

See this Austin parks and preserve document for more information about the adjacent Austin nature preserves:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Parks/Preserves/preserves.pdf>

Walter E. Long Golf Course Topic #4:

Golf courses use a lot of water and take up a lot of space. It seems like the money could be better spent in Parks and Rec by increasing the salaries of lifeguards and by keeping one or two heated pools open all year to increase the swimming and water polo programs in the city. Also, why does the eastern part of the county need to be developed? Maybe it should just be left alone to conserve the rural area.

The course needs to be required to be Audubon Certified. That will calm down reasonable minded people who are sensitive to the Environment. If not, then you probably live in a fantasy world of zero compromise. I am sure if you are that person, you have everything you need in life, but do not care to discuss what others may need. Our neighbors in East Austin need help. If you have never tried to stop the BS that gets dumped in East Austin, then you have a chance to redeem yourself.

<http://www.auduboninternational.org/Resources/Documents/Fact%20Sheets/Golf%20and%20the%20Environment.pdf>

This golf course would be owned by the COA. You would have the same right to enter as all the other COA owned golf courses. I encourage you to exercise your right to entry at Lions Golf Course. Take a stroll down the fairway. You will be escorted out. What is your plan to help East Austin? They have stood up and spoke in favor of this project, they have asked for our help.

I posted the following in other sections of this forum and think the ideas also belong here:

I'm looking for more diversity in how the site is used. One challenge is having enough land to support all the needs of the current and future booming population moving into the DDZ. Just a golf course? I expect to see a lot more under the "Infrastructure" section of the RFQ than what I saw. Integrating uses and truly making it a place where the public wants to come whether they golf or not is critical to long term economic, environmental, and social success. Right now it's "just a golf course" with a token mention of some trails, and it's pitched as catering to outside tourism.

Second challenge: Being a good steward of the environment and of neighbors. There is nothing in the documentation that sets the expectations of the design of this recreational facility apart as an exemplary specimen, and nothing I read requires the developer to consider impacts beyond the property's boundaries. The impacts this type of development has on water quality (fertilizers, pesticides, monocrop of grass and decrease of biodiversity, run-off, impaction, etc.) are not noted and addressed. The impacts the high level of water consumption has on a region that's already poorly managed as far as water rights (area aquifer is already depleted by nearby ball parks and other park uses so neighboring farms are having to shut down and move) is also not noted. I want to see a long term impact analysis and a plan for this concept to rise above as a golf course that replenishes the environment and acts as a good neighbor. Not one that depletes the environment and takes away from those nearby. It's not economic development and job creation when you build a business that employs a few low wage workers while putting neighboring business owners and providers out of business.

Why can't it be both? Seeing how you do not like golf, you want to make sure you only get what you want? Who pays for your fantasy? The park improvement project will bring jobs in the hospitality industry via the resorts that always follow these world class facilities. These jobs are typically suited for the demographic that lives in East Austin affordable housing (blue collar). The East Austin housing will become MORE AFFORDABLE when you can live and work in your own community, not take long drives to work, doctors or grocery store. This is not difficult, a rising tide will lift all ships. East Austin has stood up and asked for the approval of this, took the time to go down and practically beg

council. Where were you?

By the way, have you looked at a map where this is? Not houses within miles of the site. So, unless you live in a tree house on the lake, how will it "Degrade" your East Austin? While a new golf course might passably align with certain ideas about the development of Austin, a golf course cannot be said to align with environmental or conservation efforts. To conserve a thing, you must not clearcut it. To be concerned with the environment, you must not plant it with grass that requires water.

Diane, I agree with the need to enhance our Parks and Rec right here in the city and this proposal can help with that because it uses no city monies. In fact, it brings revenue to the P&R system for use in existing parks and relieves the expense of maintaining the Walter Long Park.

Paige, I would suggest that you do a little more research of the developers and their previous projects. I think that you will find that the group that has been putting this project together is more than capable of putting together an exemplary environmentally sustainable golf resort. I'm a little concerned that you feel the only jobs offered at a resort are low wage jobs. I went to school for hospitality management and I can tell you for a fact that it is not only low wage jobs that are available. That mindset is shocking. Within every company there is a hierarchy, within that hierarchy are jobs that range in pay. At this point, who will maintain that park. Where will the money come from to maintain that park. Our area does not have the revenue to do it without the help of someone developing the area. Something has to go there that will generate revenue to pay for the cost of maintaining the park and to keep it accessible and safe for the residents using it. Our area is struggling and we could use all the help we can get.

The entire "park" is almost 4000 acres, the lake 1200 acres. The golf course is only a portion of the park potential recreational space and as it stands now we have not and will not be able to ever use it without some significant financial engine. Paddle boards and Bicycles won't get us there but we will be able to provide for them and much more by taking a diversified approach that includes this project. Where will we find the money otherwise to develop it into a usable green space? Float another bond and increase taxes, no. Take 25 million dollars out of the current Park budget, no. This project costs the taxpayers no money, it returns revenue to the Park System for further Park development. It is self funding.

I don't see this as an amenity for the wealthy, I see it as a way to finance Park development and bring the positive economic development to a impoverished area that is now is Austin's back yard. It doesn't benefit the "fat cats" it takes THEIR money and injects it into a park for the benefit of all. We have been waiting for this park for 50 years and it will never happen on it's own. This is only one part of the future of Walter Long

and a very important part of the economic future of this district. The roadways surrounding the "park" are dumping grounds. Let's develop this park in an environmentally and fiscally responsible way rather than continue to ignore it by keeping it surrounded in chain link and barb wire.

I agree with the concerns expressed: 1. it is a huge water suck; 2. it benefits few (rich) people and 3; what is environmental and connect to nature about a golf course? I do support developing that land, but not a golf course.

The City committed, 50 years ago, to developing this parkland for public use. Today, you can't access it without a bolt cutter. Developing this lake in an environmentally responsible way has always been in the master plan and this proposal makes good on that intent.

The SH130 corridor has opened the adjacent agricultural land to development. Now Whisper Valley and Indian Hills are beginning to shape the land adjacent to Walter Long "Park". How will the corridor develop? Shall it be storage container depots and waste disposal centers? No. Can the initial development of this park help shape what is to come in the surrounding area? Yes, and in a positive way that brings significantly enhanced local economy and destination venue dollars to the surrounding areas. This partnership provides for the conservation and responsible enhancement of a long ignored public park. It allows public access and utility of an asset that has been sequestered so long that folks have forgotten the reason why the land was originally purchased. It advances the original master plan in a way that does not ask us to divert conservation and parkland funds from existing project plans and does not further public debt. It provides return to our parkland projects that allow environmentally sensitive conservation efforts to go forward not only at Walter Long but also in other impoverished parks in the surrounding areas.

I cannot support a golf course project. We are having a DROUGHT with no end in sight. And since when do golf courses align with environmental conservation efforts? The fertilization runoff from golf courses is notorious for polluting our waterways. I feel like this is some kind of joke of a proposal. I am an east Austin resident, and this is not the kind of "help" east Austin needs, thank you.

whoops - "they're" not mine. Can't believe I did that.

-Chad Vanderlinden

I don't understand why this needs to be built on public land. Isn't there some private land somewhere these developers can buy for their golfing fans? And there's another golf course less than a mile away! It takes a lifetime, and then

Golf courses and the water required to maintain them seems like the wrong direction to go given our drought.

Indian Grass needs to be preserved. I agree. I think the entire north side of lake is a Indian Grass preserve, so we all know that will be off limits. I do not know who this will benefit yet, if it helps the rest of East Austin with a park system that is not golf related, then we give it a thumbs up. If it is only golf, then that is a problem.

Jeffrey makes some good points but honestly, there's no way I can conceive of supporting a project that benefits so few people, takes up so much land, and uses insane amounts of water resources... even with the most efficient golf course designs, the amount of water used on it is just unacceptable... WE ARE IN A DROUGHT. Please repeat that until you understand what that means.

And there's absolutely no guarantees whatsoever that the plan, let alone the actual finished project, would be water-conscious... Elizabeth remarks above that she's "sure the course designers would take Austin's drought into account" â€” there's absolutely no certainty in that statement and it's foolish and irresponsible to just hope for something like that... it's either guaranteed or it's not.

I agree that the park has been unused for too long but the drawbacks of a golf course and the limited benefit to a small fraction of residents should show this as an obviously bad idea.

Well put, Jeffrey. Also, as I stated in a previous thread, golf courses don't have to use huge amounts of water. Here's a USGA article outlining current best practices in water conservation on golf courses: <http://www.usga.org/Content.aspx?id=25918>. I'm sure the course designers (especially Crenshaw, a resident of Austin who is no doubt acutely aware of Austin's drought issues) will use these best practices and others to make this a low water use facility.

Agreed...I spoke with too much brevity on that topic...what I DO expect to see is a commitment to creating LOCAL jobs and supporting LOCAL businesses. Otherwise there will be a new "Domain" there, a new Walmart, a new string of national chain stores and restaurants...all whose revenues leave the region at the same time displacing local business owners who were already here who have to close up their farms (no water), their shops, their services to the community because taxes, rents, and land prices sky rocketed. We MUST show that commitment in writing in advance.

Our East Austin area is already polluted with more junk than you realize. Something like this will clean up the area in many more ways than just cleaning up the already polluted area. Change is coming to the area. It is our decision as residents to choose whether we allow something that will bring positive change or negative. I choose positive. What I have learned is that people do not like change. We need to be open to what could be instead of being closed minded and saying this will only hurt east Austin. What can it do for us? I really hope this project comes to fruition.

I am completely against adding any more golf courses in Austin. This is crazy. We are facing a huge drought. What a waste of water!!!!

PLEASE decline all requests for golf course permits, zoning, etc.

I agree with many above -- building a golf course during a drought is something a careless and arrogant Dallas suburbanite would do without regard. It's an environmentally irresponsible investment decision, and ultimately not what East Austin needs. The suggestion that the 'jobs and tourism' it will generate will offset the careless use of water and natural resources is absurd and not something one would expect from a progressive city in 2015. People want natural spaces these days -- please do not waste money and water on a 1980s dream around a sport that is slowly becoming irrelevant.

This project should be made sure to NOT impact Indiangrass Preserve (the only small piece of endangered tallgrass prairie protected by the City of Austin - less than 1% of this ecosystem which occupied the eastern half of Austin and most of the midwest remains) or the prairie restoration at Walter E Long Park.

This property should be restored as native tallgrass prairie with native grasses and flowers, and trails through the prairie - which would use no extra water (after becoming established) and be much more environmentally friendly than a golf course.

In addition, a golf course seems like it would benefit only a small number of relatively wealthy city residents. It also "smells" funny in that it sounds like this would enrich and benefit a private company using City (and thus property of the citizens of Austin) land.

"limited benefit to a small fraction of residents should show this as an obviously bad idea" Have you read something the rest of us do not have access to? What I read was this is tool to drive jobs, economy and prosperity in East Austin. Yes, it may not benefit the downtown crowd folks that much, but East Austin needs help, Austin proper owes a debt to East Austin, and if the price of that debt is to sit down with an open mind and learn all the facts prior to casting judgment, then we are getting off easy.

I'd like to also see Indiangrass Preserve open to the public with some light-impact trails around the edge of the prairie area. People won't learn to love native plants and prairie if they can't experience it.

"A few low wage workers" view neglects the larger economic impact. Any city park generates very few jobs on its own accord. The benefit to the community will be the restaurants, hotels, and service providers symbiotic with a PGA level golf destination. The local economy of East Austin needs influx that can only come from tourism, even if the tourists are from Austin Central.

Are you sure it only benefits a few? Have you seen a plan that does or does not provide new park space that 100% of Austin has access to? I think I will wait to see the agreement. This has too much potential for East Austin to make flippant comments. These folks need our help. If it is only golf, then I have a problem with it. If it has monies in it to build assets that all the community to use for free, then we need to sit down and listen.

I am concerned about the negative environmental impacts of large water use to maintain non-native plants (turf grass). I also think it would be a real shame not to provide access to a natural landscape for the enjoyment of average people, not only for those with enough money and interest in such a narrowly focused sport.

Thanks for the response. I hesitated including that line about low-wage jobs for fear that someone would read it the way you did...this forum isn't the place to delve into acknowledging details to that level, so I erred on trying to stick to the main point of the comment. You are correct, there are hierarchies, and as someone else pointed out, there will be other businesses cropping up to serve the tourism - also businesses with hierarchies. (I'm a business owner and cut my teeth in the hospitality industry for over ten years....I do truly understand...but I have a larger point.)

Yes, I also read the brochure from the developer and I looked at their other work. What I'm looking for is higher expectation and prescriptions IN WRITING from our city expressing what specifically needs to be included and cared for. I have seen countless developers build showcase developments in other cities and then come to Austin, with vague and lax requirements, and leave us with a mediocre project, at best. It is up to the City and the documents from the outset to spell out what we expect.

I don't see anything specifying that the course provide additional uses to ALL residents. I don't see anything specifying that the booming business that's encouraged to pop up around it needs to favor local business (without this prescription I envision a Marriot, a

W, a strip of pricey national restaurants, a Walmart, a Whole Foods, etc.).

Additionally I see nothing recognizing that former City projects have already depleted the aquifer in the area, and have already forced local business owners (who also create a hierarchy of jobs for neighbors) to have to move. We don't need more local businesses shutting doors and laying people off and moving further out of town so a golf course and non-local businesses can move in - it is well known that local businesses keep over 80% of their revenue in the region and national businesses keep the converse amount of revenue benefitting the local economy. No thanks.

There is nothing in the current documentation that holds these developers to high environmental standards and expressing expectations unique to Central Texas ecosystem limitations (don't get me started about the atrocity of placing a golf course in the middle of precious blackland prairie) and there is nothing that sets the expectation that they must create a regional project that supports long term local jobs and the utmost care for the environment HERE. I don't care if their literature shows they *can* do it and *have* done it before. I expect it HERE, and I expect our city to put those expectations in writing. Otherwise, it doesn't happen.

I think a new golf course is completely wrong for East Austin's environmental, conservation and development needs. Like the failed rail proposal, the need to "do something" doesn't mean we have to do this.

A plan that uses no city money and brings in revenue for Parks & Rec is a great idea! Why does it have to be a golf course, which most of us won't use? Why can't it be a pro-environment, space-efficient, inclusive, multi-use fitness/recreation facility that will serve the majority of current east Austin residents? Why is it that a golf course (with a big upfront cost, regardless of who's paying) will generate funds for the parks, but a more efficient use of this park space can't generate funds? Can't we think of a better idea than this?

A golf course would not improve my environment. It would degrade the East Austin I love: a diverse, working-class urban community with a casual rural vibe. This is what we need to conserve. The people who live here have recreational needs that are being ignored.

The language of this proposal seems oblivious to the community in which it wants to plant itself. The plan enthusiastically promises to increase property values [TAXES] in the area and stuff the coffers of tax authorities (no really, it says that!) while Austin's top "environmental" problems include affordability. It talks about attracting big tourist

events to the "fine dining" of golf courses. How will this improve the environment for East Austin residents? This plan takes advantage of "free land" in a community that doesn't have the money to develop its own park land for its own needs.

I live here and this is what I need:

Fishing, paddle-boating and camping park, designed around wildlife habitat.

Trails around the lake for bikes, outdoor fitness courses, and off-leash dog run and training loops.

Public gym with alternative classes like martial arts, African & Latin dance, and Black Metal Yoga!

A skating rink with DJs and live music, with adult evening hours -- this has been hugely popular at the Millenium Center (packed beyond capacity) -- maybe with an arcade of physical games for kids. This would generate funds, and if green-designed would also fit our environmental goals.

Organic farms with direct sale to the public, maybe linked to an ACC vocational program.

Why can't it be both? - You mean a golf course plus all the things I think would be a better idea? It would be great if it could. I'd love to see that plan. I'm against golf courses for environmental reasons, and the fact that they take up so much space that could be used for lots of other recreational things and/or more wildlife habitat.

"You want to make sure you only get what you want?" - Um, no. I forgot to mention some things that I wouldn't use, but other people would, like bmx dirt jumps, a skate ramp, etc. Some of the things I mentioned, I threw in there because they're already popular beyond capacity. I'd look at things that are popular/overcrowded in Austin, like the new pool/waterpark, which I don't use but is packed with kids so that tells me we need more things like that. There are probably lots of things other people would want that I'm not aware of. I'm offering my perspective (which was invited), and thinking of all the people I know who have had to move so many times in the past few years because their rents keep going up (in spite of, or maybe because of, new developments). It would be fantastic if a rising tide lifted all ships. A lot of little boats have been washed out of my neighborhood. Thinking of other current residents, besides me, who might have a similar perspective. I agree with you about living and working in your own community. It would be great if more development automatically meant more affordability and rewarding jobs for talented local people, but in my experience here, things have not gone that way for everyone.

Who pays for my fantasy? - Well.... I'll take a stab at this one: When I moved to east Austin (when I could afford it), my fantasy was to own a home. I pay for that. I think there's a bunch of other fantasies my taxes pay for, but their not mine.

"Where were you?" - I hadn't heard anything about it yet. I do my best to stay informed and participate. I bet there are other people who were not there, who would have concerns/input if they knew about it.

Yes I looked at the map, I've been to Decker Lake and I loved it as a natural area. It looks like a pretty huge chunk of lakeside land for the golf course, and in my opinion that's not something a "green city" would do.

How would it degrade my East Austin? - I've tried to answer that briefly but it's a complex situation that involves a lot of speculation, so the best I can do is look at recent developments, and consider what I think should be our priorities. Turning park space (with potential for more wildlife habitat and more diverse recreation catering to a wider spectrum of residents) into a golf course doesn't fit at all into my vision (or fantasy, if you like) of what would be an improvement.

If the plan could add some tree houses on the lake, maybe as camping rentals, I'd be interested in that.

Drought. We need to conserve water no matter what our rain conditions are and there is a serious drought. Conservation includes taking every opportunity to RE-use water. Across SH130 from Walter Long Lake Austin has just built a 24 inch potable water line to service the top end of Whisper Valley - a new 7500 home "city" and is building a 48 inch water line to service the bottom end. Austin has floated bonds - \$38 million - to pay for this infrastructure that includes a 3 million gallon per day waste water facility. Where can we re-use this waste water? How about putting it into the recharge zone of Walter Long Reservoir? Purple Pipe! And that waste water is sold, not given away to the golf course. There are ways to provide recycled water to this project that align with our conservation of water and return it to our water system for re-re-use. By using recycled water in an area that drains back into the lake this project would be actively conserving water.

"Five years ago I would have said no, but with the growth of downtown hotels, our market is basically leveraging the new hotel market that's coming," he said. "You're not going to be able to build golf [courses] very easily going forward [due to] drought [and] land costs, and you're going to have to get further and further out. Austin is going to put on somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,000 to 4,000 hotel rooms and we have one of the most robust hotel businesses in the United States." - See more at: <http://www.austinpost.org/article/golf-surveyors-eye-northeastern-property#sthash.jvXjEtIF.dpuf>

Doesn't align at all. It is not environmentally sustainable and likely won't drive desired development. I don't see golf courses as being desired in the Imagine Austin plan. Not really part of a compact, connected city. Mixed use development in this area (not on parkland) would be better driver of economic development for this area.

I am concerned as a resident of Colony Park, which sits smack dab in the middle of a food desert, about the negative impacts this project will have on the environment. The city of Austin currently values recreation more than food. While HEB and other stores will not come to the area, we could use some of the land for food production on a massive scale to instantly stimulate the local economy. I feel that the Office of Sustainability should consult with the city and developers regarding the best use for the land due to drought conditions and the existence of food deserts. We have a watershed protection division, maybe citizens should support a foodshed protection department. Are we really serious about our survival? Or do we want to just have fun and neglect the earth and our survival on her?

See this Austin parks and preserve document for more information about the adjacent Austin nature preserves:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Parks/Preserves/preserves.pdf>

why make the investors more wealthy? why drive out the grassland and the wildlife preserve? Oh yeah, it just does not matter. We stole land from native american indians and killed them so why not move some more wildlife? what? you can see the sarcasm, yes? Please don't develop another golf course. How does this help East Austin? It does nothing of the sort!

I strongly disagree with the proposal of building another golf course as a part of the Walter E. Long park development. Austin wants to be an environmentally progressive city. As we grow, we lose more natural areas. Nature, prairie preserves, native flowers, and trails provide valuable experiences that enhance everyone's quality of life in ways that a golf course cannot approach.

In "The Awe of Science," the cover article of this month's Sierra magazine, author Jake Abrahamson describes how people respond to the awe they feel in a beautiful natural setting.

In the wake of awe, "people act more generously and ethically, think more critically when encountering persuasive stimuli, like arguments or advertisements, and often feel a deeper connection to others and the world in general. Awe prompts people to redirect concern away from the self and toward everything else. And about three-quarters of the time, it's elicited by nature."

We need parks within the city that provide accessible and true natural experiences for our growing population.

You can see the entire Science of Awe article here:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2014-6-november-december/feature/science-awe>

2. **COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETING WRITTEN COMMENTS**

November 17, 2014 from 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

I am in full support of the proposed golf project. I live around the corner from Decker Lake. This is a great opportunity for East Austin. Most that are opposed do not live in area or/and have never visited this lake or area.

Support Decker Lake Golf project. If you can please see 11/17 email to Mayor and Council members from Jennifer Perkins. Please do this.

Community fund set-up for schools, affordable housing and roads and community center. Mirror based on proposed VI. Revenue sharing (section 9.2) ALL road, bridges and sidewalks up keep are golf course owners/developer responsibility current and future for the term of the 26 yr agreement. Contact me IsidroRodriguez @ P217@me.com.

Amenities far from established infrastructure can accelerate suburban sprawl. The cost of piping water to the proposed golf course may be expensive. The cost should be born more by the developer than the City of Austin. If the proposed course is built only organic products should be used to maintain the course. Define benefit to the neighborhoods (monetary) in writing. –S.J.

Proposed PGA at Decker. I am very in favor of this project. I live in the area and believe that this is exactly what this neighborhood is needing, amongst many other positive projects like this. Please vote in favor of going forward with this PGA project.

Pete Dwyn – This is good! Hope it gets approved!

This looks like a great plan. Go Austin!!

We are here in STRONG support of the WALTER E LONG Development. The park is run down, under cared for, and under-utilized. Of all the potential developments that could go on at the site, a golf course would be one of the best. It would keep open spaces “green” land and plenty of space in the park. It would also directly impact the neighborhood in a positive manner.

FOR THE PROJECT. LIVE IN AREA LOOKING FOR MORE DEVELOPMENT. – Barbara Scott
512-922-1202

Vote Yes! Best thing to happen to the EAST, EVER!

IF AUSTIN IS GOING TO CONTINUE TO BE GREAT IT NEEDS A GREAT GOLF COURSE & CRENSHAW ALWAYS DELIVERS GREAT COURSES. –LYNN SHACKELFORD

How will you supply the grass with water? Will we need that water in the future?

How will this benefit the ppl of East Travis County

What happens if Decker Lake Golf LLC goes bankrupt?

What is the demand for golf?

1. Meeting needs to be closer to the project site.
2. Need to have speakers for both sides
3. After speakers ask & answer questions
4. Sign—In Sheet
5. Bigger Place to have meeting & Chairs
6. Better advertising notice.

Arthur Sampson 512-928-3300

Email Arthur@arthursampson.com

David Bauman

Davidbauman16@gmail.com

Keep me posted!

PGA Golf Course Decker. I live in the neighborhood. I'm in favor of this project it will bring Econ. Development and many other opportunities that are much needed in our area – yes yes yes to proposed PGA course @ Decker Lake

Walter E Long Golf. I am supporting the golf project because I believe it is a win win for East Austin. We need positive development and this will only bring more services and jobs to our area. I live across the street from the proposed project and can't wait for it to get started.

Golf Course:

I live w/in 1 mile & have property in the area for over 30 years – Please vote for this. The East Side deserves something Great – Thank You. – Larry Beard 512-461-9666

Decker Lake

Service to neighbors – YES

Golf – NO

Loss of Parkland - NO