

Introduction

Public input was a critical component in the creation of the Seaholm planning process for the City of Austin. As a central civic asset for all of Austin's residents and visitors, ensuring robust opportunities for community input was essential. And while ideas and inspiration were also taken from national best practice models, those ideas were grounded in an understanding of what the community desires for the continued development and oversight of the Seaholm site.

The public engagement efforts of the project had many different components including the in-person, print, and digital-media strategies (see the original Public Engagement Plan for a full list.) The four primary input methods included

- Planning Partner Meetings (Spring and Fall 2017)
- Public Open House Events (Spring, Fall, Winter 2017)
- On-line Surveys (throughout the project)
- Focus Groups (Summer 2017)

Each individual engagement component played a specific part in development of the plan. The first Planning Partner Meeting, Public Open House and Online Survey helped the team to develop the overall framework of initial themes that guided the development of plan. The second Planning Partner Meeting, Public Open House and Online Survey served as a chance to update the public at large about how the plan was developing, and to gather feedback on the ideas that were emerging from within the more focused survey results and stakeholder discussions. The Focus Groups provided an opportunity to gather input from representatives of minority groups to ensure a diversity of perspectives were included within the plan.

The following appendix explains the methods and results for each of these strategies and outlines how the information gathered in each phase of the plan's creation helped to structure and inform the overall creation of the plan itself.

Open Houses

Over the course of the project there were three facilitated Public Open House Events that aimed to gather input on desirable and appropriate uses for the site and building and collect feedback on the proposed vision elements for the site.

- The first Public Open House Meeting was held on June 24 at (4) distributed locations at and around the Seaholm Waterfront and aimed to introduce the study and gather public input on desires and aspirations for uses and activities at the building and surrounding site.
- The second Public Open House Meeting was held on September 23rd and aimed to bring back the initial vision elements for the site in order to affirm the project's guiding principles and gather additional feedback on concepts for the building and site, identify priorities and share information on potential project operations and phasing.
- The third Public Open House Meeting was held on December 2nd and aimed to get feedback on the preliminary design ideas for the building and surrounding parkland.



First Public Open House

The first Public Open House happened on June 24th and was designed to be geographically distributed at 4 different locations including:

- Pfluger Pedestrian Bridge
- Butler Splash Pad
- Vic Mathias Auditorium Shores Deck, and
- Seaholm Intake Facility

Each location was staffed with project team members and volunteers who had information about the project, the intercept survey (digitally and on paper), as well as photos of the site. [See Survey section for a list of questions asked of the public.] Visitors were able to engage in conversations about the project, take the survey, and sign up to receive information on upcoming events about the project. Unfortunately, due to bad weather the three off-site tables had to be closed but visitors were still received at the Seaholm Intake Facility. Approximately 75 people dropped in and provided input during the Public Open House event.



Second Public Open House

The Second Public Open House took place on Saturday, September 23rd and was located at the Zilker Botanic Garden community meeting room. The meeting was designed in traditional open house style with a total of six stations. Stations included:

1. Seaholm in the Public Eye
2. Seaholm's Place in Nature
3. Seaholm's Place in the City
4. Seaholm in History
5. Seaholm Now
6. Seaholm – What would YOU like to see?

In addition to the six stations, handouts were available that listed the overarching project values as well and the PARD policy from the Master Plan that gives support to the development of public/private partnerships. A final area was also on site where two different kids' activities were made available and staffed with professional arts educators from the Dougherty Arts Center.

Boards

Input Notes

Slides



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Third Public Open House

The Third Public Open House took place on Saturday, December 2nd and was located in the drive in front of the Seaholm Intake Structure. The meeting was designed to allow to react to some initial design concepts for the building and the surrounding parkland.

A review of the six stations presented previously were on display, as well as design and programming ideas for the adaptive use of the historic Seaholm Intake Structure. Additionally three preliminary ideas for the building's front yard were on display.

Boards

Input Notes

Slides



Planning Partner Meetings

Another component of the project outreach strategy were the two facilitated Planning Partner Meetings. The Planning Partners group was comprised of representatives from an array stakeholder organizations representing civic, conservation, business and governmental entities. The group provided input on the process, including public engagement, and helped foster outreach to the community. The first meeting shared information about the study, and looked to gain insights on aspirations for the site and building, obtain feedback the public engagement approach, and gather ideas and support for outreach efforts. The second meeting aimed to gather feedback on a draft vision for the project and potential economic, operational and programming opportunities.

Planning Partners 1

The first Planning Partners meeting took place on Friday, June 9th from 9:30 – 12:00 AM and was held both at the Seaholm site and the Umble Conference Room. Attendees gathered together at the site in the morning for a tour of existing Seaholm Intake building. Then the group walked together to the Umble Conference Room to discuss their impressions of the building, and receive feedback on the goals and direction of the overall project.

Agenda

Meeting Notes

Slides



Planning Partners 2

The second Planning Partners meeting took place on Friday, September 22nd from 9:00 – 11:00 AM and was held at Cirrus Logic in the Rolling Stone Conference Room. The goal of the meeting was to present the overall information that was to be presented at the Open House and to get feedback that could help the team structure the conversations that would take place at the Public Open House the next day.

Studio Gang delivered a slide presentation of the work completed to date and a larger discussion was held regarding how to craft the larger vision for the project based on the diverse needs and desires of the Austin community.

Agenda

Meeting Notes

Slides



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Salon

In an effort to reach out specifically to the design and preservation professional communities in Austin, a specific information gathering was held on Thursday, September 21st. Space was offered by the design firm TBG for the event. At this meeting Gia Biagi from Studio Gang gave a project overview and a summary presentation that matched the Planning Partners meeting which was to follow the next day. After the presentation attendees had a chance to ask the Studio Gang team specific questions and a general conversation was held about the nature of the project, potential visions, and how future implementation might occur.

Focus Groups

The goal of the initial phase of plan outreach was to develop a specific understanding of minority group perspectives about any potential Seaholm programming and site renovation. Having noticed in the initial survey results that not all demographics from the Austin community were represented within the results, the planning team decided that further efforts needed to be taken to ensure that a wide diversity of perspectives were included within the plan.

Working with the Austin Parks and Recreation Department staff, a series of potential contacts with different minority communities (Asian, African American, Hispanic/Latino) were identified to help with outreach for the different groups. Working jointly on outreach, Ms. Osgood from GO collaborative, and Ms. Miller from Civic Collaboration contacted each person via email. Any email addresses that returned an undeliverable response were researched, corrected, and re-sent.

Once liaisons were identified within each community, conversations were set up. Sessions typically lasted 60 minutes and notes were taken in real time and sent to the participants for their review.

Outreach

List of Initial Outreach Contacts

- Darryl Horton, Chair, African American Resource Advisory Commission
- Vincent Cobalis, Chair, Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission
- Jill Ramirez, Chair, Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission
- Ricardo Hernandez, Chair, Mexican American Cultural Center Advisory Board
- Marina Bhargava, Executive Director, Greater Austin Asian American Chamber of Commerce
- Taja Beekley, Site Supervisor, Asian American Resource Center
- Tam Hawkins, President and CEO, Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce
- Rev. Freddie Dixon, Board Chair, Six Square
- Bamidele Demerson, George Washington Carver Cultural Center and Museum

Memo to Board and Commissions

Meeting Structure

Focus Group Agenda/Questions

Focus Group Notes



Online Surveys

An on-line digital public engagement survey tool was used to enable meaningful and far reaching public involvement. The Project Team conducted a survey at the project launch to gather feedback on desires and aspirations for uses and activities at the building and surrounding site. A second separate on-line survey was conducted following the second Public Open House event to serve as a “virtual” open house so those who could not attend in person could see the Open House information and provide their input. A third separate on-line survey was conducted following the third Public Open House event to serve as a “virtual” open house so those who could not attend in person could see the Open House information and provide their input. The surveys were promoted via the Project Team’s websites, social media outlets and via electronic communications to Outreach List contacts.

Questions and Results

[Survey One Questions & Results](#)

[Survey Two Questions & Results](#)

[Survey Three Questions & Results](#)