

## **Boardwalk Trail at Lady Bird Lake Frequently Asked Questions - Design**

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### **1. Will the Boardwalk Trail be on land or over water?**

Nearly half of the proposed trail will be over land although some of that will be elevated through sensitive wetland areas. Environmental sensitivities, steep bluffs and existing buildings require much of the project to be over the water.

### **2. Won't the Boardwalk over the water be more expensive than the Trail over land?**

If a land Trail were constructed on clear and level land it would clearly be less expensive than boardwalk constructed over the water. However, it is prohibitively expensive to acquire developed property especially where there are existing buildings. Even if there wasn't a significant environmental impact, the cost to hang structures on steep bluffs or over the sensitive riparian (lake) edges would be comparable to the over water costs.

### **3. Will the Boardwalk Trail be accessible to a variety of users?**

This shared use trail is being designed with slopes and turns that can be enjoyed by pedestrians, runners, cyclists and other non-motorized users. The primary route and major trailhead will meet the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.

### **4. How big is the Boardwalk Trail?**

The Boardwalk Trail is an approximately 7,100 linear foot section of the 10 mile long Butler hike and bike trail around Lady Bird Lake. Its standard width is 10 feet with a 2 foot shoulder on each side making a 14 foot total width for the bridge sections that will accommodate two abreast in both directions with room between for passing. There will be frequent minor widening and several rest areas to allow users a chance to stop out of the traffic flow.

### **5. How high will the Boardwalk be above the water?**

The boardwalk surface will typically be 5 to 6 feet above the normal lake elevation with the underside of the structural spans at least 3½ feet above the water. This will allow for normal lake level fluctuations without significantly affecting the boardwalk. There will also be places where the boardwalk will intentionally rise a few more feet to better allow kayaks, canoes, boats and feeder creek flood waters to pass underneath.

### **6. How will the elevated (bridge) segments of the Boardwalk be made?**

The elevated boardwalk will be constructed in 20 foot sections from a set of standard elements (the "Kit of Parts"). The structure and guardrails will be galvanized steel spanning between single concrete piers of 24" – 36" in diameter. The deck will be built from a series of 2 to 3 foot wide prefabricated concrete planks that are 6" thick. The surface concrete will be colored and possibly textured during manufacturing.

### **7. Will there be a noticeable gap between the planks?**

The gaps between the planks will be about 3/8" which is little more than the thickness of a pencil. These gaps are about the same size as a typical control joint in a sidewalk, so any disturbance to users should be minimal.

**8. Will there be railings along the elevated portions of the Boardwalk Trail?**

Yes, all sections of the boardwalk that are elevated, whether on land or water, will have 42 inch high guardrails. Safety railing may also be used if the slope alongside a land-based section is particularly steep.

**9. Why was concrete chosen for the Boardwalk surface?**

A wide range of materials were considered for the surface including wood, synthetic wood, various gratings and surface coverings. The deck surface is expected to last 50 years without major replacement or rehabilitation. Concrete was chosen for its sustainability, long life, superb durability, ability to withstand the occasional flood, slip resistance and affordability.

**10. Is this a “sustainable” design?**

Yes, the Boardwalk Trail follows many sustainable design criteria including the use of local and recycled material, construction waste control, efficient lighting and others. For example, the galvanized steel used for the elevated structure and guardrail will contain recycled content and the galvanizing gives it a long useful life. Plus, it doesn't require paint, which avoids VOCs and the potential for solvents to spill into the river.

**11. Will the land portions of the Boardwalk Trail resemble the existing hike and bike trail?**

Yes, major sections of the land Trail will be constructed primarily of decomposed granite similar to the existing hike and bike trail. Stone walls and curbs may be required to make steeper cross slopes more level. In some environmentally sensitive areas the trail will remain elevated.

**12. Will there be any place to rest or sit along the Boardwalk?**

Yes, there are rest areas or observation points placed about every 700' along the entire length of boardwalk. These rest areas will vary in size, shape, and features. Typically features in these areas include: seating, trash/recycling receptacles, and wayfinding or educational graphics.

**13. Will there be shade at the rest areas along the Boardwalk?**

Depending on the season and time of day many of the rest areas will be naturally shaded. Shade structures are included for the three rest areas in the longest boardwalk section on the east side of IH35.

**14. Are any new restrooms planned along the Boardwalk Trail?**

Yes, the existing restroom off Lakeshore Drive will be replaced with a larger and more modern facility. We hope to secure another location near the western end of the Boardwalk in the future.

**15. Will there be any enhancements at the existing Lakeshore Park (International Shores)?**

Yes, the plan adds a landscaped gateway area where the new trail connects into the existing trail.

**16. Will there be any new parking added?**

No new parking areas are planned with this project. Existing street parking will be utilized rather than building a parking lot within this park area. The Parks and Recreation Department is considering additional parking in their master plan.

**17. Will motor vehicles be allowed to drive on the Boardwalk?**

No, only pedestrians, bicycles and wheelchairs will be allowed along the Boardwalk Trail. The Parks and Recreation Department may use ATVs or other maintenance vehicles for trash collection or maintenance, but no personal motorized vehicles will be allowed on the trail.

**18. How will emergency services access the Boardwalk Trail?**

The proposed structure, access points and emergency call boxes have been developed with City Fire, Police and EMS to ensure they can serve Boardwalk Trail users. Emergency responses will be handled quickly with surface equipment and techniques used along similar trail systems without fire trucks or ambulances needing to drive on the Trail.

**19. Will there be safety patrols on the Boardwalk?**

Like other parts of the hike and bike trail around Lady Bird Lake, the bicycling Park Rangers will patrol these areas periodically. Occasional Police presence can be expected with specific operations as determined by the Police Department; dedicated patrols are unlikely.

**20. Will the Boardwalk Trail be lit at night?**

Yes, continuous LED light fixtures will be installed in the guardrail. These will provide enough light on the trail surface for safe passage while respecting the night sky. They will be shielded to minimize any glare seen from the shore line. Amber navigation lights will be placed along the open water side of the Boardwalk to warn boaters of the structure. As with most existing City trails, the land-based Trail will not be lit unless required for safety or security.