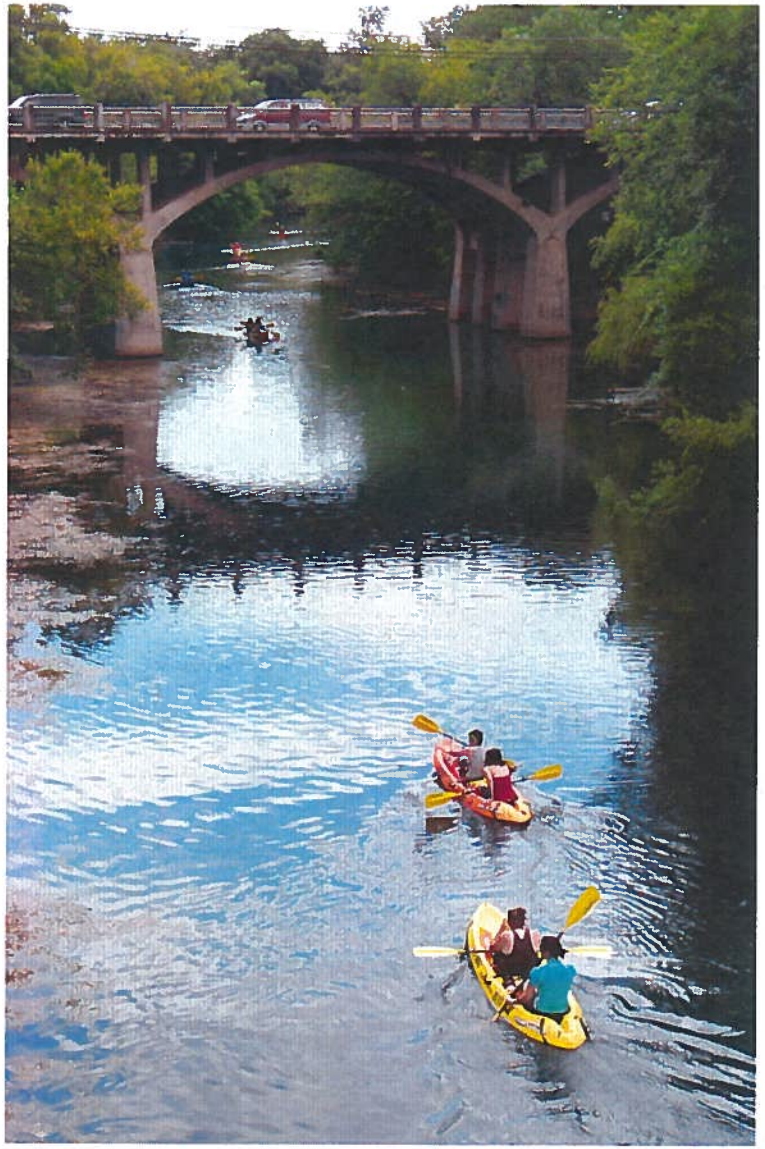
OUR PARKS, OUR FUTURE
LONG RANGE PLAN
PRESENTATION TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND CITY COUNCIL

OUR PARKS OUR FUTURE | AUSTIN PARKS & RECREATION LONG RANGE PLAN 2018 - 2028

AUSTIN PARKS & RECREATION | AUSTIN PARKS FOUNDATION | WRT



A REVIEW OF THE

LONG RANGE PLAN

- PROJECT BACKGROUND & SCHEDULE
- MAJOR PHASES OF WORK
- DRAFT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS OVERVIEW

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PURPOSE AND GOALS

ASSESS STATE OF CURRENT PARK SYSTEM

Conduct a thorough assessment of the condition and quality of the current park system to provide a strong data-driven baseline to inform prioritization and track implementation progress over time.

VISION FOR AUSTIN'S PARK SYSTEM IN 2028

PARD will reach its centennial in 2028 and the planning process should focus on engaging the community and city staff to define a new vision that is both inspirational and achievable.

GUIDE FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

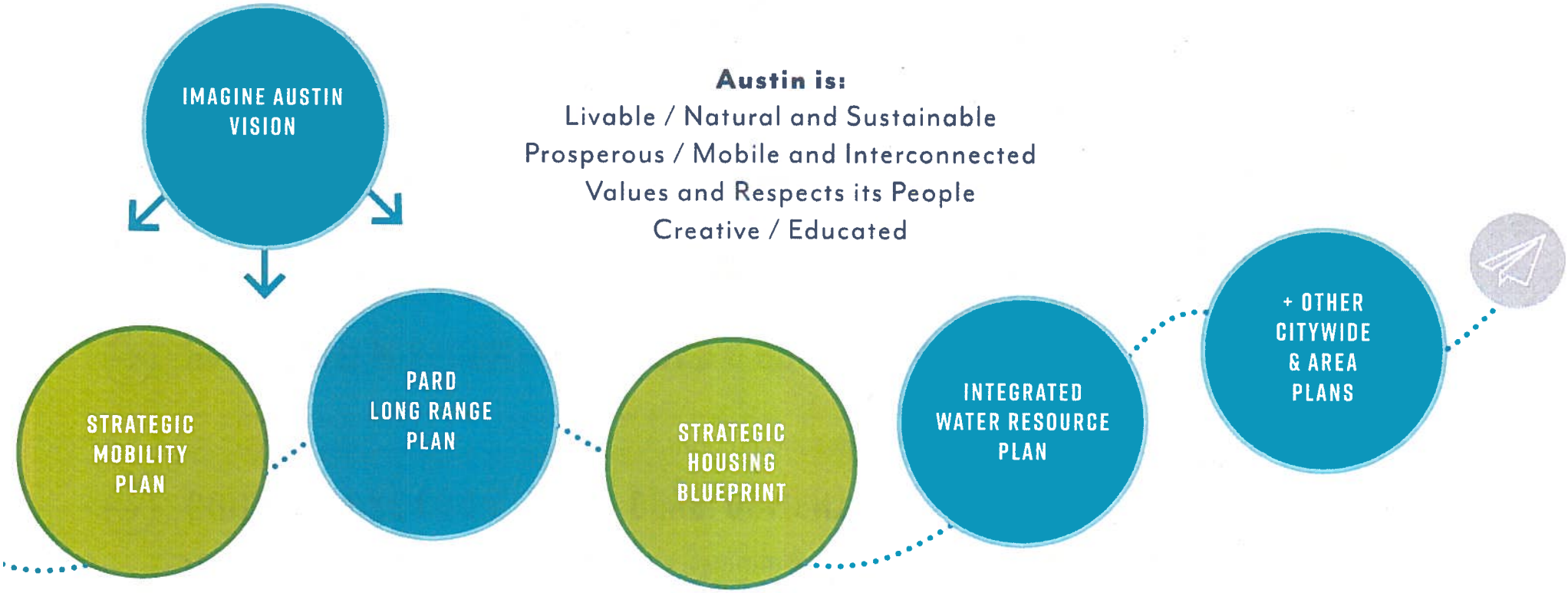
As Austin continues to grow and change, the Long Range Plan provide a careful analysis and guidebook for how and where to invest to ensure a stronger park system.

PARK SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS & PRIORITIZATION

Include both citywide strategies and planning area priorities to inform the Capital Improvement Plan and development of Park Master Plans.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER

CITYWIDE PLANS

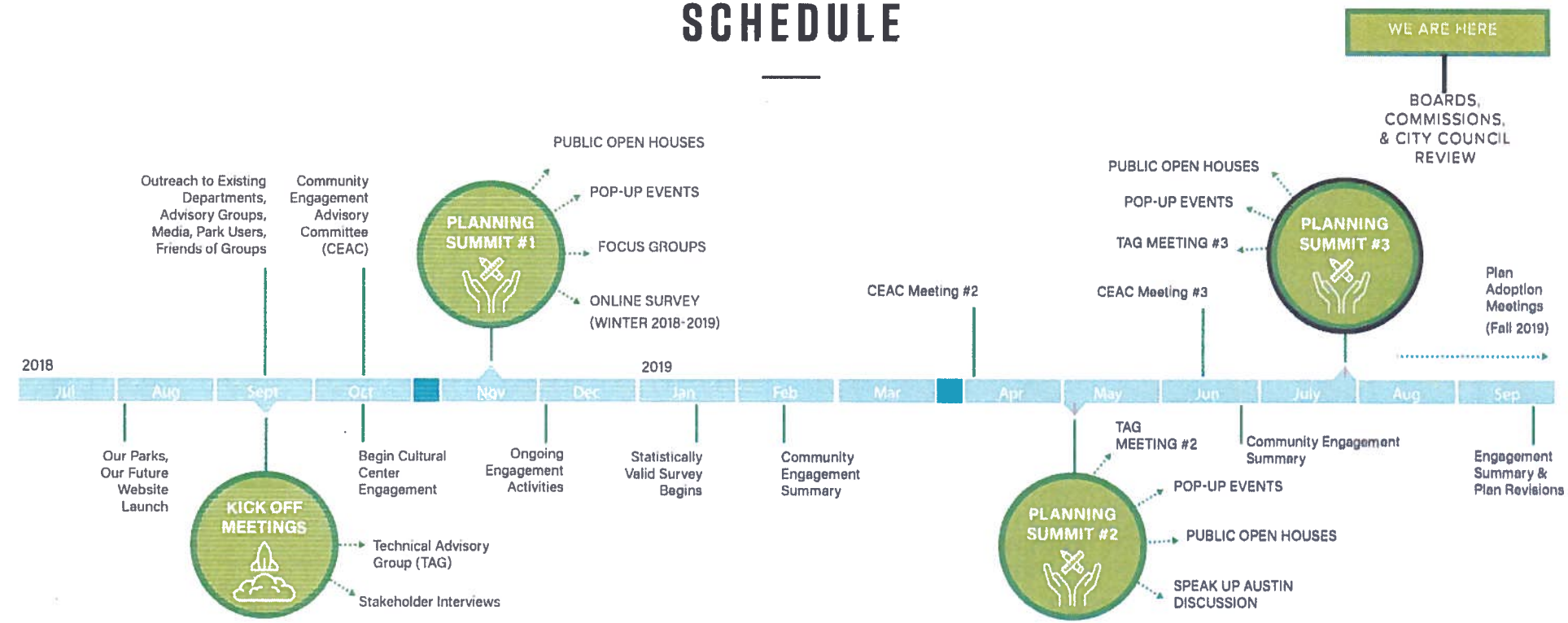


Austin is:

Livable / Natural and Sustainable
Prosperous / Mobile and Interconnected
Values and Respects its People
Creative / Educated

LONG RANGE PLAN

SCHEDULE



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A LOOK AT THE PARK SYSTEM

TODAY

JUST SOME OF THE FAC L T ES

300+ PARKS	**6** GOLF COURSES	**15+** PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS	**47** VOLLEYBALL COURTS
40 POOLS	**26** RECREATION/SENIOR GARDENS	**124** TENNIS COURTS	**24** HISTORIC BUILDINGS
227 TRAIL MILES	**147** PLAYGROUNDS	**13** OFF-LEASH DOG AREAS	**5** CEMETERIES
20 REC CENTERS	**11** MUSEUMS, ARTS & CULTURAL CENTERS	**10** STAGES/ AMPHITHEATERS	**78** MIXED-USE FIELDS

SOURCE: AUSTIN PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT FY18 ANNUAL REPORT AND STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021; *FROM AUSTIN AREA POPULATION HISTORIES AND FORECASTS

100

100-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF PARD (2028)

19,000+ ACRES OF PARKLAND

967K POPULATION IN 2018* → **1.143M** PROJECTED POPULATION IN 2030*

KEY METR CS

PARD

700+ FT EMPLOYEES

1,000+ PT & SEASONAL

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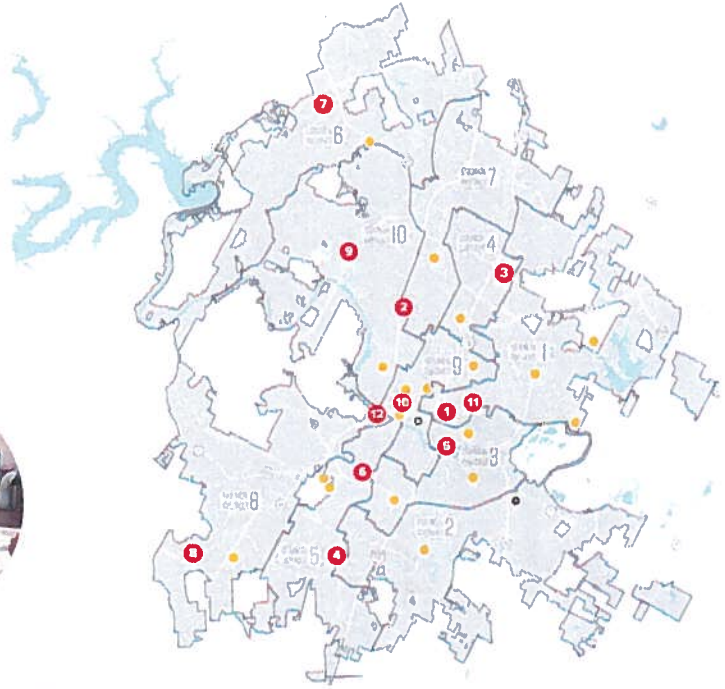
REACHING OUT &

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

OPEN HOUSES
400+ PARTICIPANTS

SURVEYS, WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA
925 STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY RESPONSES
4,400+ COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES
9,000+ COMMUNITY SURVEY COMMENTS

FOCUS GROUPS & INTERVIEWS



POP-UP EVENTS
21 EVENTS ATTENDED
297+ VISITORS ENGAGED

ENGAGING KIDS THROUGH ART

Pop-Up Locations (Series 1 & 2)

OPEN HOUSE SERIES #1

1. George Washington Carver Museum
2. Northwest Recreation Center
3. Gustavo "Gus" L. Garcia Recreation Center
4. Dittmar Recreation Center
5. Fiesta Gardens Building

OPEN HOUSE SERIES #2

6. South Austin Senior Activity Center
7. Anderson Mill Limited District Community Center
8. Circle C Community Center
9. IBPS Buddhist Temple/FGS Xiang Yun Temple
10. Austin Recreation Center

OPEN HOUSE SERIES #3

11. Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex
12. Zilker Botanical Garden

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OUR PARKS, OUR FUTURE

CONDITION ASSESSMENT

WHAT ARE THE PARK SCORE CARDS?

The park score cards are a pilot tool to assess the city's parks and determine areas where parks are performing well and areas where we need improvement. Criteria includes park access, key features, supportive facilities, safety & maintenance concerns, aesthetics, and health.

HIGH SCORING PARK

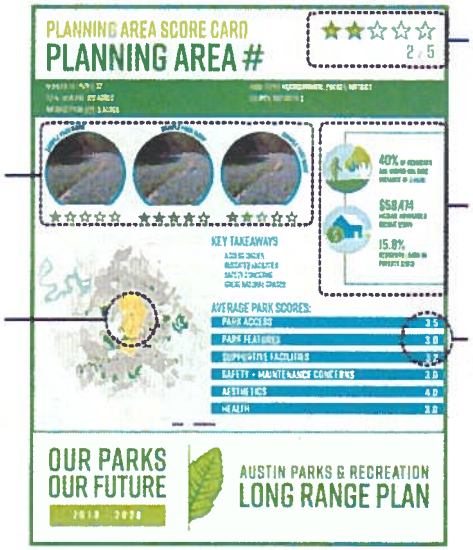
Score, out of 5, based on average of topic scores

Scored highly in transportation connections, social opportunities, and variety of landscape

HOW WILL THE SCORE CARDS BE USED?

These draft score cards will be both a snapshot and a living database PARD can utilize to make data-driven, priority-based decisions for investment. The score cards will be employed to increase accountability, transparency, and equity in park level of service across the city. The draft score cards will first focus on neighborhood/pocket parks and will be employed along with a pilot community assessment tool to increase accountability, transparency, and equity in park level of service across the city.

PARK PLANNING AREA SCORE CARD



Example scores of parks within the planning area

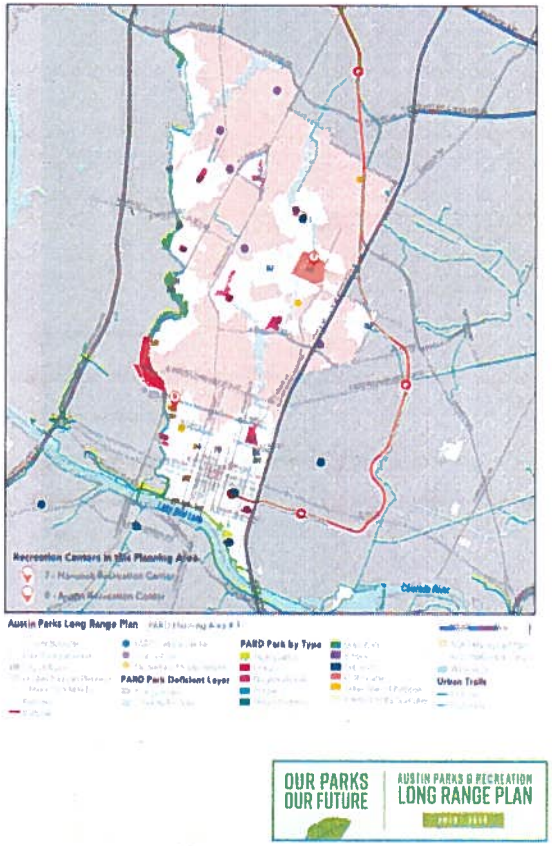
Planning area location key map

Score to be based on average

Key stats / metrics about the planning area

Average park scores by park planning area

PARD PLANNING AREA



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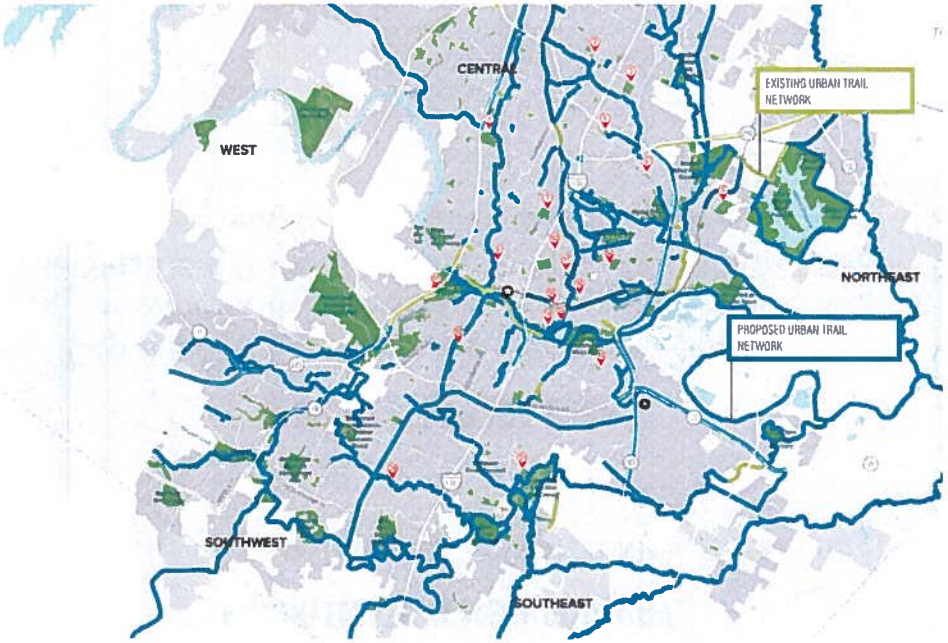
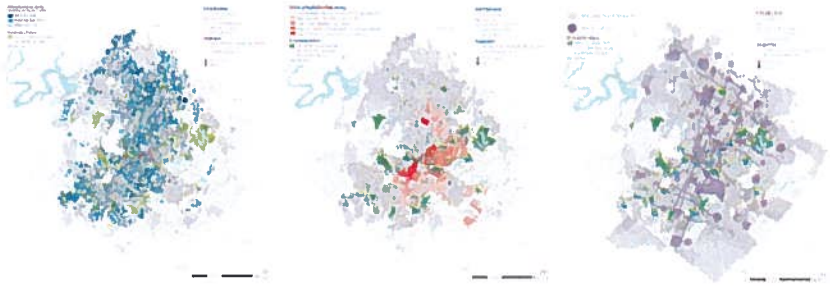
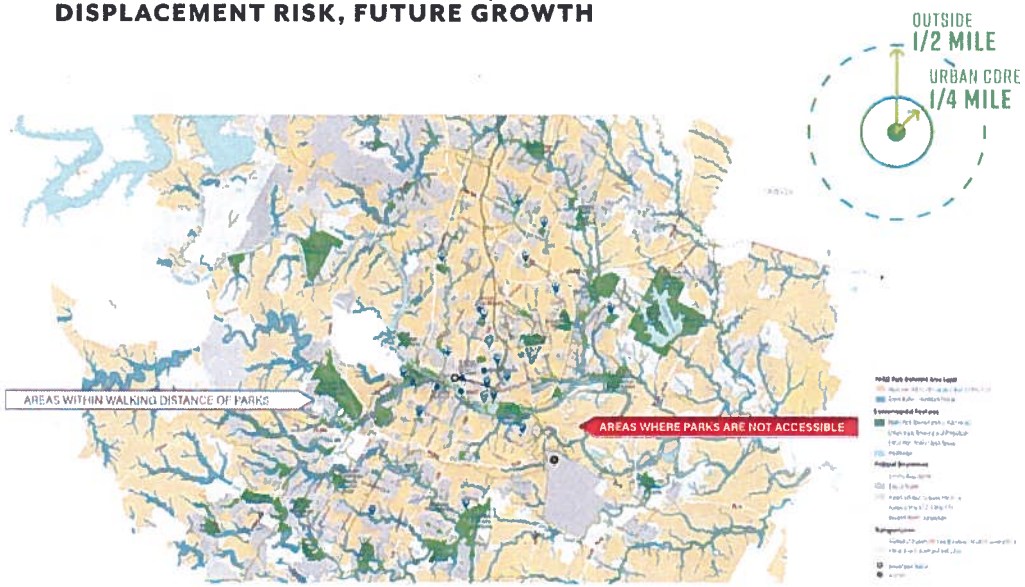
NEEDS ASSESSMENT



▲ **AUSTIN'S PROPOSED URBAN TRAIL NETWORK**
BASED ON STRATEGIC MOBILITY PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS



▲ **MAPPING OF EXISTING DENSITY, DISPLACEMENT RISK, FUTURE GROWTH**



▲ **MAPPING OF PARK ACCESS BY FOOT**

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IDENTIFYING

PRIORITIZATION

COMPARE AREAS OF HIGH PARK NEED WITH PARK AMENITIES BY GEOGRAPHIC AREA

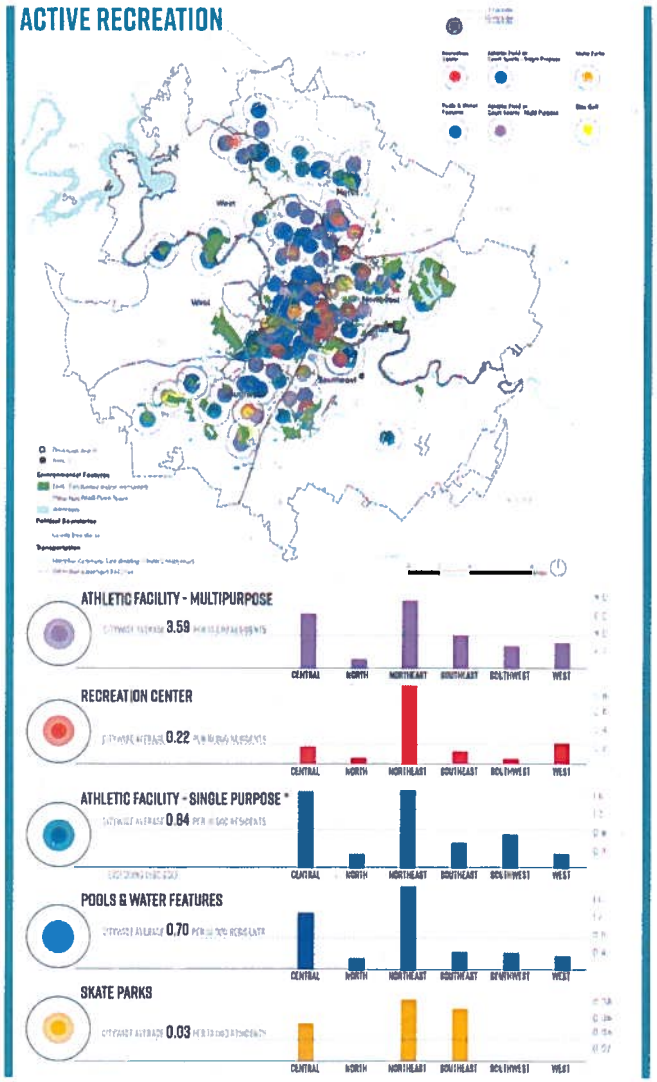
The LRP process includes detailed study of areas that are park deficient, as well as areas that have a high or low level of parks / programs compared to the city's average.

PRIORITIZATION METHODOLOGY

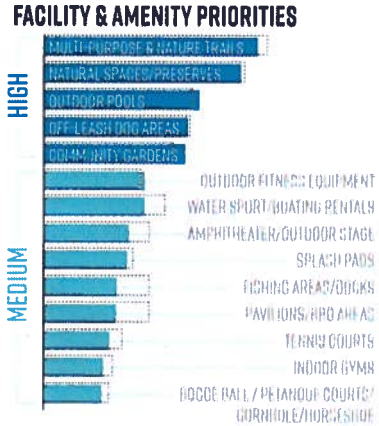
Developed for prioritization of PARD LRP investments.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK LOOP

Continual feedback through ongoing meetings and activities with staff, stakeholders and the public combined with these analytical tools lead to prioritization and refinement of goals and strategies.



◀ ANALYSIS OF ACCESS TO AMENITIES AND PRIORITY NEEDS BY COMBINED PLANNING AREA



▲ SURVEY PRIORITIES FOR THE CENTRAL PLANNING AREA

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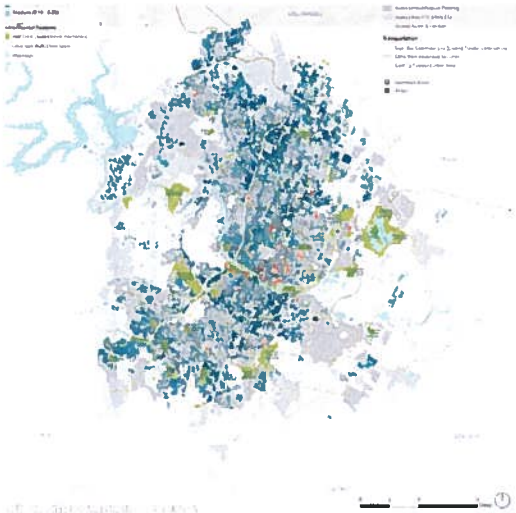
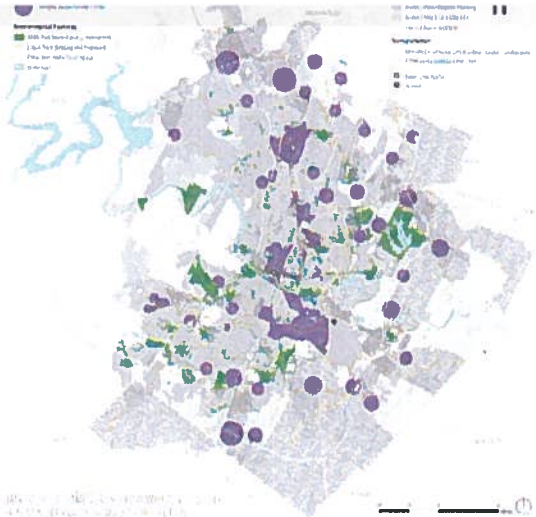
GROWTH & PARK NEED ANALYSIS

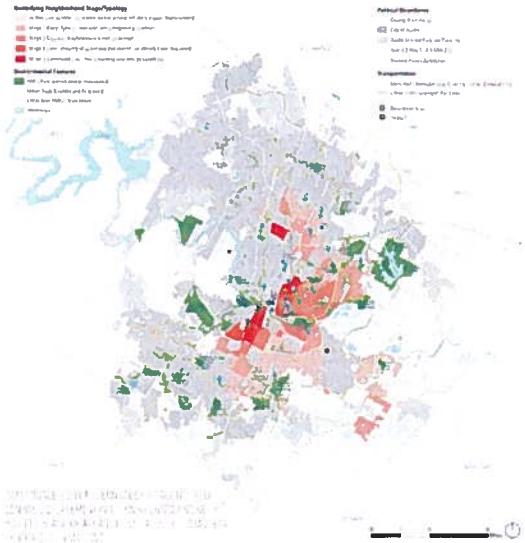


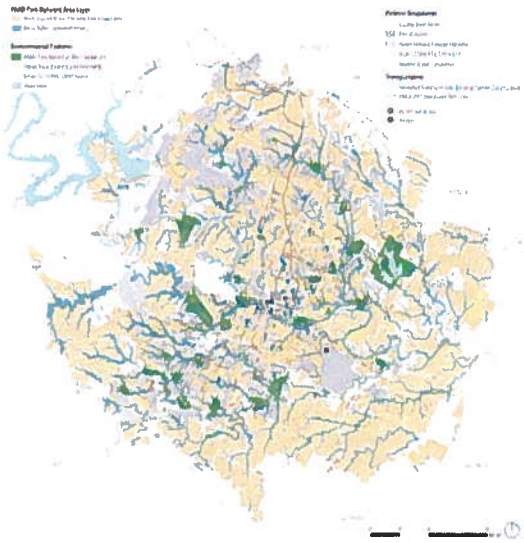
EXISTING HIGH-DENSITY AREAS

PROACTIVE PARK PLANNING IN HIGH GROWTH AREAS



AREAS AT RISK OF DISPLACEMENT





IDENTIFYING AREAS THAT LACK PARKLAND

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COMMUNITY THEMES

Ten themes emerged from the numerous community engagement events and surveys completed as part of this planning process. Those themes along with the priority needs and citywide analysis form the basis of the system-wide recommendations to follow.

NATURAL EXPERIENCES

People express a desire for parks that feel more natural. This includes undeveloped, wild natural spaces, rustic finishes instead of paved areas and more native plants.

UNSTRUCTURED SPACES

In general, people care less about spaces for specific programming, opting for more multi-use spaces and preserving green, natural and open spaces.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Proactively use green infrastructure in parks to build a more resilient city. This includes stormwater management, flood protection, heat island effect mitigation, drought tolerance, and native planting/habitat areas.

LINEAR PARKS & TRAILS

People are more interested in parks that allow them to move (walk/run/bike) as opposed to staying in one place. There is an interest in nature and multipurpose trails within PARD parks as well as connectivity between parks along urban trails.

PROXIMITY & ACCESS

People are concerned about both the lack of parks near them and/or their ability to get to parks. This includes walkability issues, lack of adequate parking and the lack of public transit access.

URBAN SPACES

People express a concern that existing parkland in high-density urban areas exists already at critical locations, but are underutilized The desire is for a renewed commitment to well-maintained green spaces and enhanced programming in urban parks in high-density areas.

PARKS & ARTS/CULTURE

People express a desire for increased arts/culture programming in parks. This includes increased community-focused programming and more cultural centers that could host these kinds of programs.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

People are interested in more hands-on educational opportunities. This includes youth education, art-based education and summer camps.

INCLUSIVITY

People express a desire for parks and programming to be more inclusive. This includes more publicity about activities, providing free parking, reducing fees that prevent low-income residents from participating, and increasing multi-generational programs and spaces.

CLEANLINESS & SAFETY

People are concerned that parks are not being adequately taken care of. This includes issues around lighting, shade, maintenance, recycling, bathrooms, off-leash dog areas and dog waste disposal. People also expressed concern about the issue of homelessness on many dimensions – safety, park cleanliness, humanitarian - and saw an opportunity to work with homeless population to improve park cleanliness & safety.

CITYWIDE STRATEGIES

A. ENSURE PARKS ACT AS A **RELIEF FROM URBAN LIFE**

B. EXPAND AND IMPROVE **PARK ACCESS** FOR ALL

C. ACTIVATE AND ENHANCE **URBAN PUBLIC SPACES**

D. **ALIGN PROGRAMS** WITH COMMUNITY INTEREST

E. OPTIMIZE AND IMPROVE **EFFICIENCY OF OPERATIONS**

A ENSURE PARKLAND OFFERS RELIEF FROM URBAN LIFE

ASEGURAR QUE LOS PARQUES SEAN ALIVIO EN EL AMBIENTE URBANO

The impact of Austin's rapid growth is becoming apparent as Austinites increasingly confront the loss of natural areas and increased development. PARD has to guard the park system's role as a relief from and counterpoint to Austin's increasingly urban context. Likewise, the parks must become more flexible and multi-purpose to support a higher intensity and wider variety of park users.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

- ✓ NATURAL EXPERIENCES
- ✓ UNSTRUCTURED SPACES
- ✓ GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
- LINEAR PARKS & TRAILS
- PROXIMITY & ACCESS
- URBAN SPACES
- PARKS & ARTS/CULTURE
- ✓ EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
- INCLUSIVITY
- CLEANLINESS & SAFETY

1. **Add between 4,000 and 8,000 acres of new parkland over the next 10 years**, maintaining the current park acres standard of 20 acres/1,000 residents while striving to achieve 24 acres/1,000 residents.

2. Protect and increase natural areas that support **immersive nature experiences** and provide space for **environmental stormwater benefits.**

3. Make it easier for Austinites to spend time **interacting with water** (e.g. recreational facilities like outdoor pools and access to natural water bodies like lakes and creeks).

4. Increase the number of PARD **community gardens.**

5. Invest in **multi-purpose, unstructured spaces** capable of supporting **flexible uses.** Park elements like small plazas or pavilions with electrical/water hookups, moveable furniture, and multi-purpose athletic fields allow for informal use of space while maintaining a natural, open feel.

6. Provide **dedicated off-leash dog areas** in appropriate locations to ensure both dog-owners and non-dog-owners can enjoy parks.

7. Protect and manage natural areas to intentionally **balance recreational use with environmental protection.**

B EXPAND & IMPROVE PARK ACCESS FOR ALL

EXPANDIR Y MEJORAR ACCESO A LOS PARQUES PARA TODOS

Providing equitable access for all residents is a priority for PARD, and accessibility has been identified as an issue during the LRP Process. PARD can increase accessibility for all by improving trails, signange, communications, and wayfinding, among other things. Any future investment in parks, trails, and associated facilities should be ADA compliant.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

- ✓ NATURAL EXPERIENCES
- UNSTRUCTURED SPACES
- GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
- ✓ LINEAR PARKS & TRAILS
- ✓ PROXIMITY & ACCESS
- ✓ URBAN SPACES
- PARKS & ARTS/CULTURE
- ✓ EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
- ✓ INCLUSIVITY
- CLEANLINESS & SAFETY

1. Prior to any significant master plan or development, work with partner organizations and current and long-time residents to ensure **community involvement** in the process.

2. Invest in the acquisition of new parkland that can **make parks a part of everyday life** in existing and future **underserved areas.**

3. Increase the number of entrances and access points to existing parks in order to expand the number of residents within **walking distance of a park**.

4. Increase **multi-use and nature trails** within the existing PARD park system and continue to acquire land for linear parks and greenbelts that can accommodate larger **trail systems.**

5. Support the efforts of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, city departments, and partners in advancing the **mobility network** beyond the PARD park system.

6. Achieve a more **even geographic distribution of facilities** that have a strong citywide interest.

7. Aspire to provide **universal access** (e.g. all ages, all abilities). Park spaces should be accessible, to the greatest extent feasible, by everyone regardless of age, ability, or language. Strive to create **equal access** for all Austinites by reducing barriers to use.

8. Improve **signage** and **wayfinding** markers at entrances and along trails to help park users navigate with confidence.

9. Improve the **web-based information** describing the park system to help people quickly find the amenities and experiences they are seeking.

10. Work with Austin Transportation Department to evaluate the need and appropriate fee structure for **private car parking areas.**

C ACTIVATE & ENHANCE URBAN PUBLIC SPACES

AVIVAR Y REALZAR LOS ESPACIOS PÚBLICOS URBANOS

The strength of Austin's park system has historically revolved around the iconic natural features and large parks; however, its downtown squares and urban parks have been overlooked and underestimated. These spaces can be activated to extend the benefits of parks to more people through a flexible, partnership-centric approach that expands and enhances use of our public spaces.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

- ☐ NATURAL EXPERIENCES
- ☐ UNSTRUCTURED SPACES
- ☐ GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
- ☐ LINEAR PARKS & TRAILS
- ☑ PROXIMITY & ACCESS
- ☑ URBAN SPACES
- ☑ PARKS & ARTS/CULTURE
- ☑ EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
- ☑ INCLUSIVITY
- ☑ CLEANLINESS & SAFETY

1. Build on the Downtown Austin Alliance's Downtown Parks Vision to holistically elevate the quality of the **urban public realm**.

2. Invest in more lighting and increased staff and volunteer presence, especially along trails and pathways to ensure parks feel **safe** after dark.

3. Support more **dense, flexible, and diverse programming and amenities** (e.g. temporary seating or play equipment) in urban public spaces within and beyond PARD parkland.

4. Continuously monitor and provide a clear picture of **cost and revenue information** to the community, including community and economic impacts associated with large events.

5. Increase the number of **Farmers Markets** associated with parks and open spaces.

6. Expand PARD's **Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism Program** to protect, restore, and promote the cultural and historic resources of the park system.

D ALIGN PROGRAMS WITH COMMUNITY INTEREST

ALINEAR LOS PROGRAMAS CON LOS INTERESES DE LA COMUNIDAD

While there is a high demand for more programs at parks, there is also a strong interest in Austin for natural experience and unprogrammed spaces and activities. As the needs and interests of residents change, program offerings should be evaluated and adjusted to reflect the most relevant programs as needed.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

- ✓ NATURAL EXPERIENCES
- UNSTRUCTURED SPACES
- GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
- LINEAR PARKS & TRAILS
- ✓ PROXIMITY & ACCESS
- ✓ URBAN SPACES
- ✓ PARKS & ARTS/CULTURE
- ✓ EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
- ✓ INCLUSIVITY
- CLEANLINESS & SAFETY

1. Provide more **nature-based programs.**

2. Increase **Adult and Senior programming** across multiple categories – active recreation, nature-based and arts & culture.

3. Increase the number, diversity, and equitable distribution of **arts and culture programs** being offered through PARD.

4. Explore partnership strategies to **increase low-income access** to PARD programming.

5. Leverage **"pop-up" programming and temporary uses** (e.g. beer gardens, seasonal markets, parklets, exercise classes, etc.) to activate public spaces and expand access to programs typically held in recreation and cultural centers.

6. Continually assess **community needs** and proactively plan for recreation programming that aligns to these needs and trends.

E OPTIMIZE & IMPROVE EFFICIENCY OF OPERATIONS

APROVECHAR LO MEJOR POSIBLE Y MEJORAR LA EFICIENCIA DE LAS OPERACIONES

Leverage partnerships and revenue opportunities to elevate the quality of PARD operations and maintenance while upholding equitable park access and ensuring a sustainable and well-balanced PARD budget.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

- [ ] NATURAL EXPERIENCES
- [x] UNSTRUCTURED SPACES
- [x] GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
- [x] LINEAR PARKS & TRAILS
- [ ] PROXIMITY & ACCESS
- [x] URBAN SPACES
- [ ] PARKS & ARTS/CULTURE
- [ ] EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
- [x] INCLUSIVITY
- [x] CLEANLINESS & SAFETY

1. **Consolidate and improve efficiency** of maintenance operations, administrative and program management functions to a central location with appropriate level of office space and facilities.

2. Engage with and provide **work opportunities** in parks to help people experiencing **homelessness** (e.g. the Workforce First program that pays individuals experiencing homelessness to help remove trash in public parks).

3. Improve the **value and awareness** of the parks and recreation system offerings to the community.

4. Develop a clear **organizational framework** for PARD partnerships that is equitable, supportive of PARD's mission and goals, and is regularly evaluated to track and monitor impacts and outcomes.

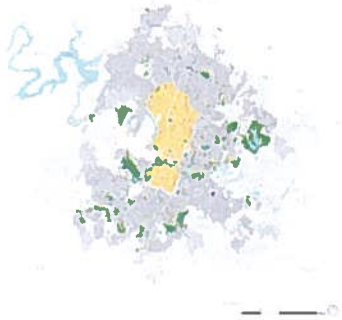
5. Work with partners to improve existing parks, trails, and facilities by creating and implementing **master plans**.

6. Pursue **sustainability and resiliency goals** in all PARD facilities.

DISTRICT-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

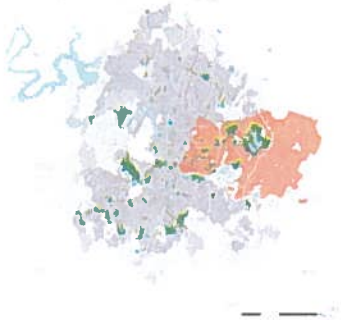
Planning area specific recommendations are included based on the five city-wide strategies and the specific needs and priorities of each combined planning area.

CENTRAL

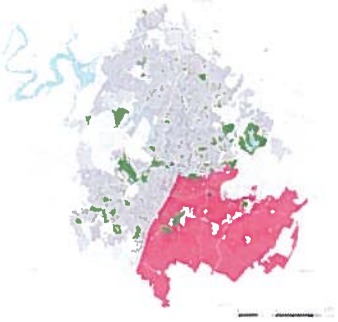


NORTH

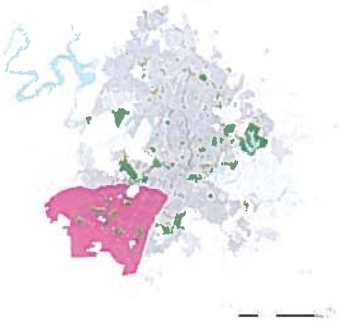
EAST



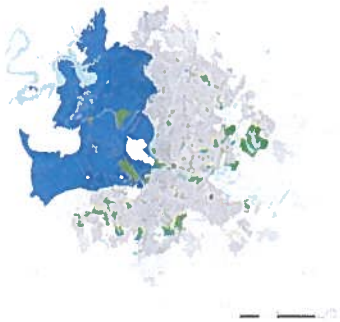
SOUTHEAST



SOUTHWEST



WEST



CENTRAL COMBINED PLANNING AREA RECOMMENDATIONS
ÁREA DE PLANIFICACIÓN COMBINADA AL CENTRAL

AT A GLANCE
UN VISTAZO

40% OF RESIDENTS LIVE IN PARK DEFICIENT AREAS

$58,474 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2017)

15.8% RESIDENTS LIVING IN POVERTY (2017)

19% HISPANIC

222,537 JOBS
203,740 RESIDENTS
7.8 PEOPLE PER ACRE

+50% POP. GROWTH BY 2040*
+77% JOB GROWTH BY 2040**

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS
RECOMENDACIONES PRELIMINARES

PARK DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

- ADAMS HEMPHILL NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - develop and implement vision plan, improve accessibility and key amenities
- BARTON CREEK GREENBELT - improve access points, signage and wayfinding
- BLUNN CREEK PRESERVES - improve access, trailhead, and nature play
- BRUSH SQUARE - master plan implementation
- COVERT PARK AT MT. BONNELL - design and construction
- DOUGHERTY ART CENTER AT BUTLER SHORES - complete design and implementation
- ELISABET NEY MUSEUM - development of visitor's center on north side of Waller Creek
- GROVE AT SHOAL CREEK - park system master plan implementation, includes dog park
- LAMAR BEACH - master plan implementation
- MAYFIELD PARK - rehabilitate buildings, grounds, and ponds
- OLD BAKERY EMPORIUM & VISITORS CENTER - rehab and plaza renovation
- PERRY NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - work with AISD to improve neighborhood access
- SEAHOLM WATERFRONT - master plan implementation
- SOUTH AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - master plan implementation, includes trail & multiuse field improvements
- STECK VALLEY GREENBELT - improvements and pocket park development
- REED NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - continue renovations
- WALSH BOAT LANDING - implement improvements
- WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - master plan implementation, includes addressing failing retaining walls
- WALLER CREEK - continue to collaborate with Waller Creek Conservancy improvements
- WOOLDRIDGE SQUARE - master plan implementation
- ZILKER METROPOLITAN PARK - construct loop trail extension and bridge, master plan implementation including, Ekra Springs Historic Amphitheater Rehab, Sunken Gardens Rehab, Zilker Gardens Rehab, Zilker Clubhouse Rehab
- Work with AISD to implement parks at
  Pre-K Schools: Uphaus Early Childhood Center, Read Pre-K Demonstration
  Elementary Schools: Webb Primary, Gullet, Reilly, Wooten, Pease, Brentwood, Brown, Lee, Pease, Ridgetop, Dawson, Travis Heights, Zilker, Gullett, Barton Hills, Becker, Dobie, Hill, Bryker Woods, Cass, Mathews, Highland Park, Austin State Hospital
  Middle Schools: Lamar, Burnet, Webb, Murchison, O. Henry
  Middle & High Schools: Richards School For Young Women Leaders
  High Schools: McCallum, Travis, Premier at Travis, Anderson, Austin, Travis County Juvenile Detention Center, Phoenix Academy, Leadership Academy, Speyer North, Rosedale

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

- SHOAL CREEK - reestablish the trail connection in landslide area

PARTNERSHIPS

- BRACKENRIDGE TRACT - work with UT to retain golf and/or recreational opportunities
- NORWOOD HOUSE - continue to collaborate with the Norwood Foundation to rehab the house and implement the master plan
- PEASE DISTRICT PARK - continue to collaborate with Pease Park Conservancy on improvements
- SHOAL CREEK CORRIDOR - continue to collaborate with Shoal Creek Conservancy on improvements
- TOWN LAKE HIKE AND BIKE TRAIL - work with UT to promote park trail connectivity to Red Bird Isle

ACQUISITIONS

- BLUNN CREEK TRAIL extension to LADY BIRD LAKE BOARDWALK TRAIL
- WEST AND EAST BOULDIN CREEK GREENBELT - acquisition and trail development
- New parkland within park deficient areas

MASTER PLANNING

- BEVERLY S SHEFFIELD NORTHWEST DISTRICT PARK - including Level 2-3 development
- BUTLER SHORES
- GILLIS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - including reinvestment in key amenities
- ZILKER METROPOLITAN PARK - including Umlauf, Zilker Botanical Garden, and Austin Nature & Science Center

FEASIBILITY STUDIES

- HANCOCK GOLF COURSE - study feasibility of golf and other recreational opportunities that can enhance sustainability of course

WHAT DID WE MISS?

DRAFT PLAN REVIEW

Public review of the Draft Plan

www.austinfutureparks.org

Available for comment through September 9th

Pop-up Events In Progress:

Austin ISD: Back to School Bash (Aug 3, District 9)

Jewish Community Center Splash Day (Aug 5, District 10)

Austin Pride Festival (Aug 10, District 3)

Dove Springs Advisory Board Backpack Giveaway (Aug 10, District 2)

Bartholomew Municipal Pool (Aug 14, District 4)

STAY CONNECTED

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