City of Austin

The George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center

Facility Expansion Plan

May 2021

City of Austin

The George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center

Planning Process

May 2021

Produced for the City of Austin by:

Smith & Company Architects
with
Perkins & Will

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1. Introduction

Project Background

Campus and Community

Community Engagement

Project Background

Project Background

The George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center (which may be referred to in this document interchangeably as "The Carver Museum" or simply “The Carver”) is situated in the heart of Central East Austin, a historically African American neighborhood, one whose history contains the stories of segregation, displacement, disinvestment that are all too familiar to cities across the country. Yet within this history is inevitably contained the stories of African American families, businesses, artists and musicians who have made their lives here, and the traditions, celebrations, and community that have developed and continue today. The Carver itself occupies a unique position in this story; it is simultaneously the story and the storyteller, the archive and the exhibit, the venue and the performance, the student and the teacher.

The Carver site has grown over the decades from one historic structure into a multi-facility campus. With this planning process, what started as a single humble building many decades ago will continue to grow and evolve into a complex that can more fully support the needs of the community and expand the mission of the Carver Museum far into the future.

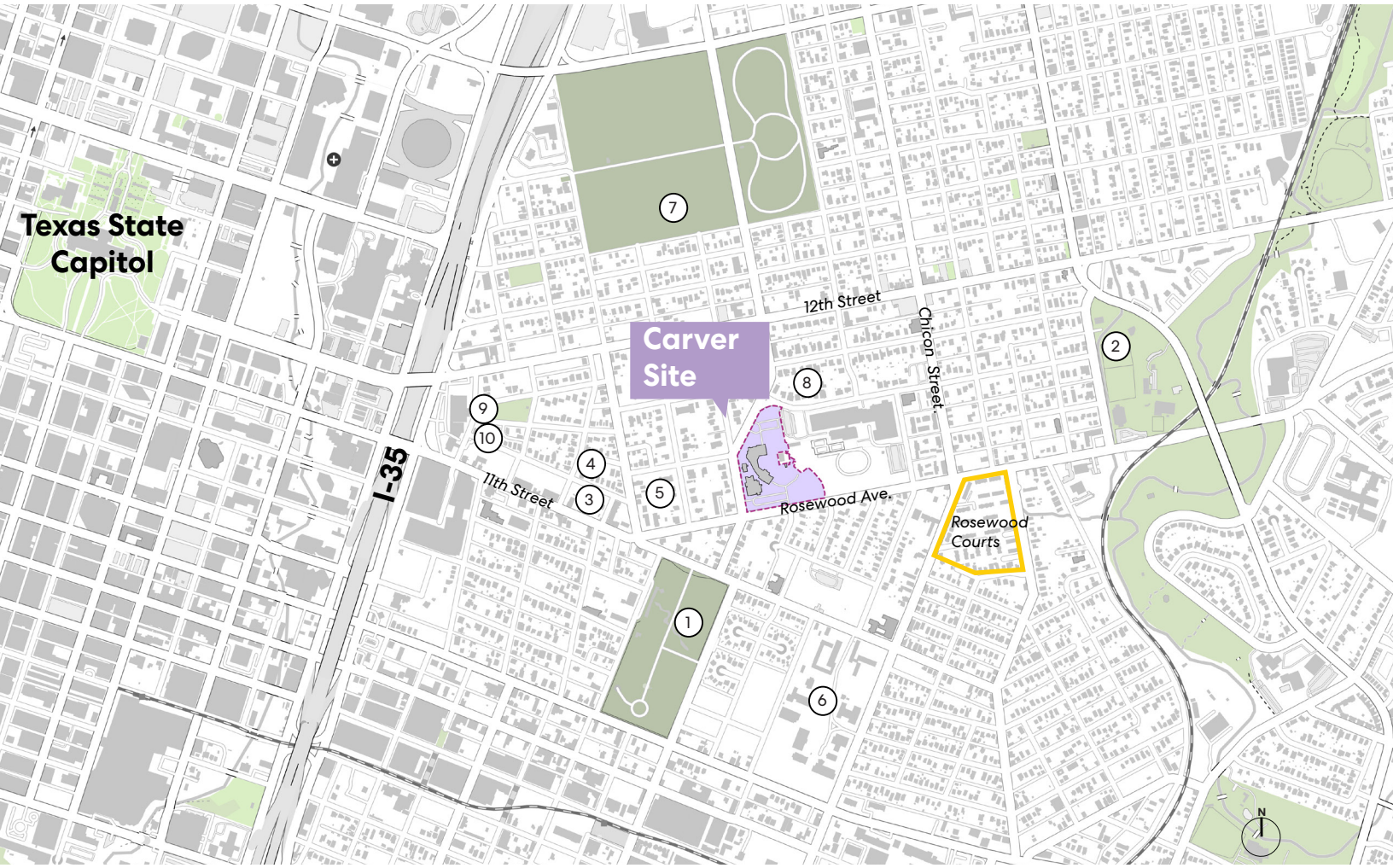
Project Scope

This document is the result of a planning process that was initiated to determine how best to achieve the growth and evolution of this important cultural facility. But this is not the first planning process that has been undertaken for the Carver facilities and site. A previous feasibility study was conducted in 2000, resulting in a proposed three-phase expansion program. Out of the three proposed phases, only the first phase has been implemented while the second and third phases have yet to be addressed.

After the passage of two decades, the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) determined the need to revisit the previously proposed improvements that were yet to be implemented and develop a new plan to serve the evolving needs of the community. To undertake this update, beginning in late 2019 and concluding in the spring of 2021, The City of Austin PARD engaged Smith & Company Architects in partnership with Perkins & Will to re-initiate the planning process for The Carver Museum. Taking this previous effort into consideration, this project seeks to develop a strategic expansion plan update that considers the facility’s current usage, the needs and desires of the community who use it today or may come to use it in the future.

The goal of the process was to envision a multi-facility campus for a “Living Museum” that is be immersed in African American experience, culture, history, and traditions that can serve the community for generations to come.

The project team was charged with assessing existing site and building conditions including utilities and parking and transportation, working with stakeholders to establish a program of building and site needs, and ultimately developing a proposed facilities expansion plan that encompasses these needs. The scope of the project includes the Genealogy Center (housed in the original building on site) along with the Carver Museum, which are managed by the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) as well as the site and grounds as a whole.



Central East Austin Neighborhood - African American Historical and Cultural Assets

1. Texas State Cemetery

2. Rosewood Neighborhood Park

3. Charles E. Urdy Plaza

4. Historic Victory Grill

5. Six Square

6. Huston-Tillotson University

7. Oakwood Cemetery

8. James L. Farmer Jr. Home

9. Dedrick Hamilton House

10. African-American Cultural Heritage Facility

Campus and Community

A Brief History of the Campus

The history of the Carver campus begins with the arrival of the library on site almost nine decades ago. Austin's first public library was built in 1926, at the corner of West 9th and Guadalupe streets. With an increase in patrons and an overwhelming demand for a library in East Austin, this building was relocated to Angelina St. (its current location) in 1933 and a new building was constructed along ninth and Guadalupe streets. The relocated library building was referred to as the 'Colored Branch' for over a decade and was only finally renamed to the George Washington Carver Branch Library in 1947, in honor of the famous African American inventor and scientist.

As years passed, the need for a larger library was expressed by the community resulting in the construction of a new library in 1979, directly south of the existing library at the corner of Angelina Street and Comal Street. This allowed the original library building to be repurposed into the first African-American neighborhood museum in Texas – the G.W. Carver Museum and Cultural Center.

The citizens of Austin voted to pass a bond in 1998 to expand the Carver Museum and Cultural Center. This resulted in the construction of a separate and much larger Museum and Cultural Center building to the east, and an expansion of the library in 2000. The historic library building was then converted into the Genealogy Center, while the new Museum and Cultural Center would house galleries, a theater, archival space, classrooms, darkroom, a dance studio, conference rooms, and office space.

The Carver Museum and the Community

With this history in mind, the Carver "complex" today consists of three primary buildings: the recently constructed Museum and Cultural Center, the historic Genealogy Center, and the Austin Public Library's Carver Branch.

The Museum and Cultural Center houses galleries that host rotating exhibits and installations, as well as several permanent historical exhibits on Juneteenth as well as a historical exhibit on Austin's African American families, and African American scientists and inventors. The Boyd Vance Theater is the main performance space, hosting theatrical and musical productions and other performance art. The facility hosts numerous events, workshops, outdoor music and arts festivals, such as the Phone Home Festival event during South by Southwest, and continues to remain an important landmark for the Black community.

The historic building, the library and more recently the museum have played a significant role in the lives of Austin's Black residents. People have memories studying at the Carver as children, making new friends and finding a space to call their own. The Carver continues to be a place that provides a dedicated space for the African American community to tell their own stories on their own terms, connecting them to their history and legacy in a space that is truly multi-generational.

The Carver Museum remains an institution in East Austin and has embedded itself with the community since 1933. Numerous programs would be held at the library for children and adults alike. Some of the older members of the community reminisce about exploring a new world through books and stories, learning new skills or making new friends at the Carver as a young child. The photo at the bottom left, shows patrons of the Carver Branch Library Hobby Group, 1962. The photo to the bottom right was probably taken during a school field trip.

Introduction

The Carver Community

Today, a wide array of events take place here throughout the year, for people of all age groups - classes for children, theater performances, cultural events, and large scale outdoor public events.

Community Engagement

Process and Input

Through numerous interviews and extensive process of community engagement, the design team attempted to understand the community's visions and desires for the Carver and bring this vision to life in the planned expansion. The opportunity to speak with smaller groups of community members with deep connections to the Carver helped to inspire and shape this vision.

The planning team was tasked with seeking community involvement and input throughout the planning process. This planning process kicked off simultaneously with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing the planning team to re-imagine our stakeholder and public engagement approach and adapt to the uncertain new conditions. As a result, all outreach, meetings, and surveys were conducted in a completely virtual environment. While this created a new set of challenges, the process was still able to reach a significant number of stakeholders and gain valuable feedback to shape the resulting plan.

The engagement efforts started with eight small group discussions with stakeholder groups which included performing artists, City of Austin African American employees, the Carver Museum staff, civic leaders, Carver Ambassadors, African American Resource Advisory Commission, visual artists, and the Carver Task Force. Three community meetings were conducted at different stages of the project to seek guidance on the next steps. Additionally, two surveys were available to the community: the first, to help the design team understand their desires and visions for the future of the Carver; and the second with a view to understanding the existing culture to help advance the principles of remembrance design and community identity. Throughout the engagement process, the City's project website was used as a medium to convey the latest updates and house all the presentations.

All these conversations and input from the community members helped the team to understand common themes amongst all their concerns – idea of the Carver, experience, program, indoor spaces and outdoor spaces.

Community Meetings: 3

Technical Advisory Group Meetings: 3

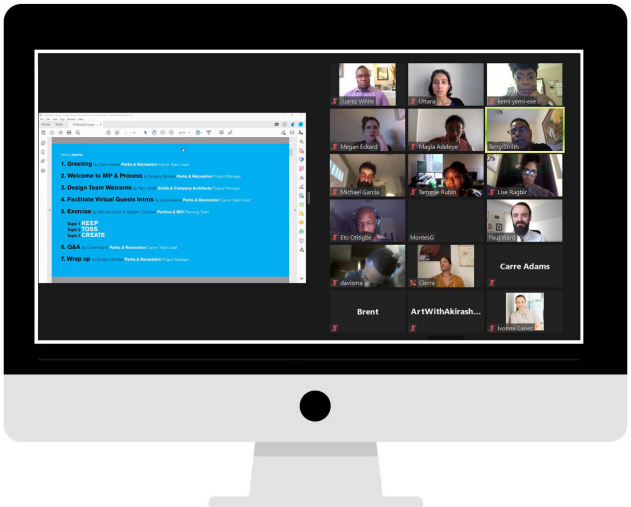
Small Group Discussions: 8 Groups, 77 Participants

- Performing Artists
- Carver Task Force
- Civic Leaders
- Visual Artists
- CoA African American Employees
- Carver Museum Staff
- Carver Ambassadors
- African American Resource Advisory Commission

Community Meeting Participants: 73

A VIRTUAL ADVENTURE...!

100% Online Planning Process



Online Survey Results

Brings you to Carver

84% Connecting to Culture

71% Arts performances/shows

Museum/Gallery Exhibit

Areas for Improvement inside facility

77% Museum & Gallery Space

Performing Arts Space

Collection/Archival

New Indoor Spaces to add

Artist Studio/ Maker Space

Visual Arts Space

Multipurpose Hall

Community Meeting Space

Outdoor Spaces to Improve

Temporary Performance Space

Juneteenth Monument

Shaded Areas

Outdoor Art

New Outdoor Spaces to Add

Pavilion/Gathering Space

Garden

Event Space

Most Voted Planning Priority

49% Focus on maximizing outdoor space for the greatest ecological / environmental impact as well as future outdoor programming

Priority Improvements

History Exhibitions

Youth Programming

Theater

Art Exhibition

Program Prioritization

78% Equal amounts of cultural programming and museum programming

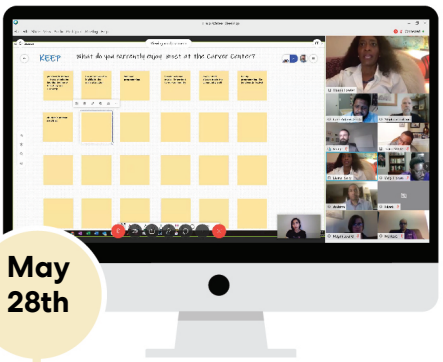
Frequency of Visit

61% Fewer than 5 times a year

Timeline

May 4th

Carver Task Force



May 28th

African American Resource Advisory Commission

June 25th

CoA African American Employees

Carver Ambassadors

May 20th

Performing Artists

June 18th

Visual Artists

July 9th

"The Carver is a place for us to tell our stories in our own words. Others have told it for far too long now."

July 30th

Black Civic Leaders

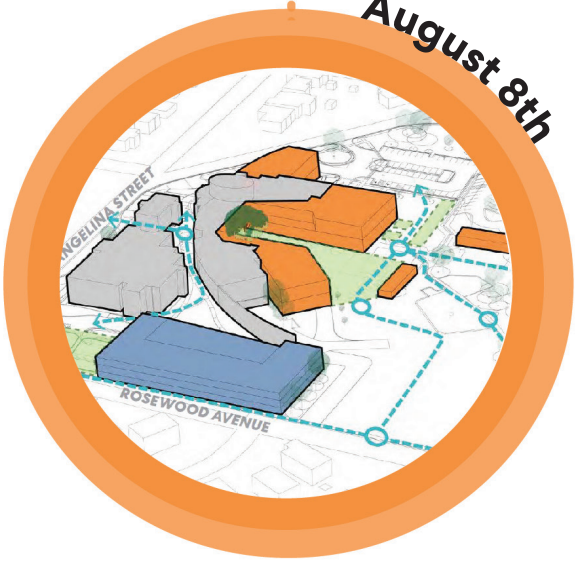
October 3rd

Community Meeting #2

Carver Staff

July 31st

Community Meeting #1



August 8th

Community Meeting #3

November 21st

"It is and should continue to be a place for people of all generations and stand as a truly inter-generational facility."

“The Carver has a great outdoor space that is used in interesting ways."

“The Carver staff always treat the community well.. feels like home here."

“The (new) building can be a receptacle to capture the ethos of G.W. Carver"

“..the story (of the Carver library and museum) and the place (its location in East Austin) are not as interconnected as they should be"

“I would love to see a dedicated community garden space that can be used by existing partners."

“...it is my dream to see a small child picking figs from trees in the garden."

Guiding Principles

The primary guiding principles of the process of engagement were:

1. Education: Informing key stakeholders about the design process

2. Diverse stakeholder representation: Encouraging involvement and inputs from a wide range of people

3. Consultation: The process of engagement was designed to gather inputs from the community to inform the plan.

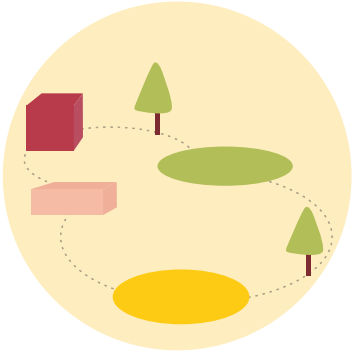
4. Conclusive: Each engagement session was designed to get specific information from the community and helped to direct and guide the design process.

Idea of the Carver

Explores the multiplicity of meanings and relationship of the community with the Carver

Program

Elaborates upon the programs and events organized by the Carver and their spatial requirements

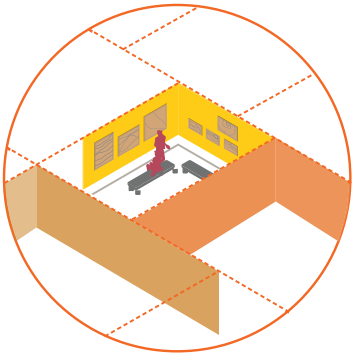


Experience

Looks at one's perception and experience of the building and the complex as a whole –includes branding, wayfinding & accessibility

Outdoor Spaces

Understanding the relationship and utilization of existing outdoor spaces to the buildings



Indoor Spaces

Understanding the design and utilization of existing indoor spaces

What would you like to see?

Through the virtual meetings with stakeholders, community members and survey results, the design team was able to understand the community's needs and aspirations for the Carver facilities. The inquiry began by asking the community how they viewed the facility today, keeping in mind the history of the land and the community in this area. How they perceived the Carver and listening to the people talk about their experience engaging with the facility as patron, student, teacher, organizer of events, staff member, as someone who has witnessed the growth of the facility over decades, a first time visitor to the city, or a person who wants to know more about the history of the community. Community responses ranged from technical improvements in the facility to aid with day-to-day functions, developments that cater to large scale cultural events, to understanding and growing the 'value' and importance of the facility in this area. It was clear that the community wished to see the Carver facility as the 'heart' of the Black cultural district here in Austin.

Input from the community has been selected, condensed, and categorized into the following themes that emerged during this process.

Idea of the Carver

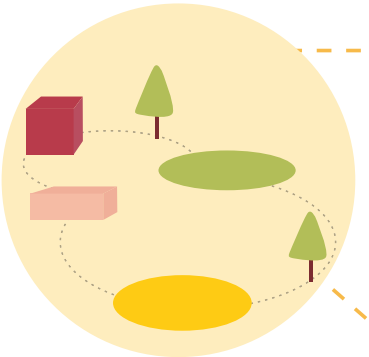
History of Community

Cultural Anchor

Arts Connector

Space for budding BIPOC artists

Ethos of G.W. Carver



Experience

Circulation

Choreographed layout & flow

Improvements to the way one moves around

Enable large-scale events

Moving artwork around the complex to be made easier

Wayfinding & Accessibility

Signage needs clarity

Safety to be improved

Improve accessibility to spaces

Branding

Connect to other important organizations

Heart of Black Cultural District

Program

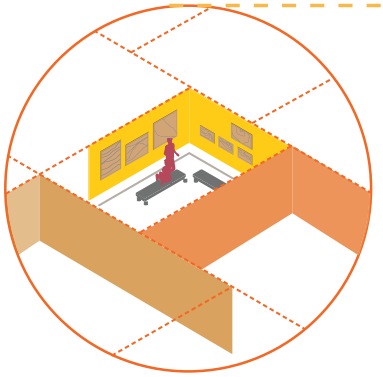
Activities for kids

More events and festivals

Increased hours of operation

Rotating exhibits of sculptures in the green area at the back

Building Management System



Indoor Spaces

Additional spaces for various programs

Improvements to existing spaces

Add child-care facility

Add Artist residency/studio

Spaces for staff

Add Museum shop

Add indoor gathering space/ cafe

Light improvements

Ventilation in the basement

Sound quality improvements

Supporting technology improvements for event spaces

Parking

Outdoor Spaces

Outdoor gathering space

Rotating exhibits of sculptures in the green area at the back

Redevelopment of decommissioned pool

Well maintained landscape

Community garden

Wheelchair access

Proximity to building

Safety and Lighting

Goals from the City:

1. Guide the future development and use of the Carver Museum.

2. The Carver Museum is dedicated to the collection, preservation, research, interpretation and exhibition of historical and cultural materials reflecting all dimensions of experiences of persons of African descent living in Austin, Travis County, and in the United States. The museum is also a key source of information on the history and celebration of Juneteenth.

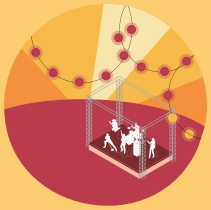
3. Create a multi-facility campus for a “Living Museum” that would be immersed in African American experience, culture, history and traditions.

4. Consider current uses, programming goals and anticipated future use.

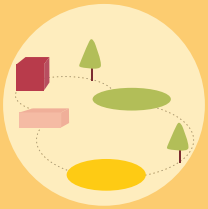
+

Goals from the Community:

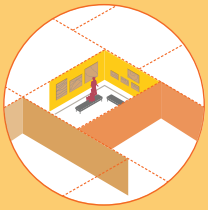
Idea of the Carver



Program



Experience



Indoor Spaces

Outdoor Spaces

Project Goals:

1. Recognize, respect and reflect the community's history, culture and heritage.

2. As the heart of Black art and culture in Austin, the plan should advance the vision and mission of the Carver Museum.

3. Establish stronger outdoor amenities that connect with nature.

4. Strengthen the diverse and inter-generational experiences in and around the facility, while meeting present and future needs of the community and staff.

5. Create flexible spaces that could be used by everyone in the community.

2. Assessment

Assessment Overview

Site Context

Site Analysis

Site Experience

Interior Spaces

Assessment Overview

The design team conducted a thorough assessment of the current state of site and building. Along with the historic significance of the Carver and it's companion buildings that speak to the Black/African American culture in Austin, it was necessary to understand the immediate site context. The assessment looked at a comprehensive overview of all aspects of the Carver experience – starting from a detailed site analysis to understanding how patrons and staff experience the campus, detailed building assessment and how patrons and staff experience the building.

Assessments also focused on the current state of the buildings; condition of the existing civil work and improvements required; traffic assessment through multiple modes, parking requirements; and landscape assessment focusing on studying the existing open spaces and their relationship to the campus.

These assessments were presented to the Technical Advisory Group to garner detailed feedback from the current users on the various aspects of the campus and formed the basis for further design ideation.

Site Assessment

Proximity to historically significant landmarks

Proximity to important organizations

Bus routes and bike share

Arrival and wayfinding experience

Landscape maintenance

Relationship of drop-off zones to buildings

Building Assessment

Crescent shape gives unique identity

Exterior in good condition

Lack of 90 degree walls presenting a challenge to connected building expansion

Circulation

Additional programming

Civil Assessment

Additional parking at Kealing MS

Existing detention pond could be converted to bio-retention pond

Potential downstream drainage issues

Waste-water line cuts north-south across site

Mobility Assessment

Access to transit lines and stops

Bicycle parking

Crosswalk updates

Pedestrians not easily directed to museum

Unclear where vehicle traffic should park to access museum and genealogy center

Landscape Assessment

Stormwater management

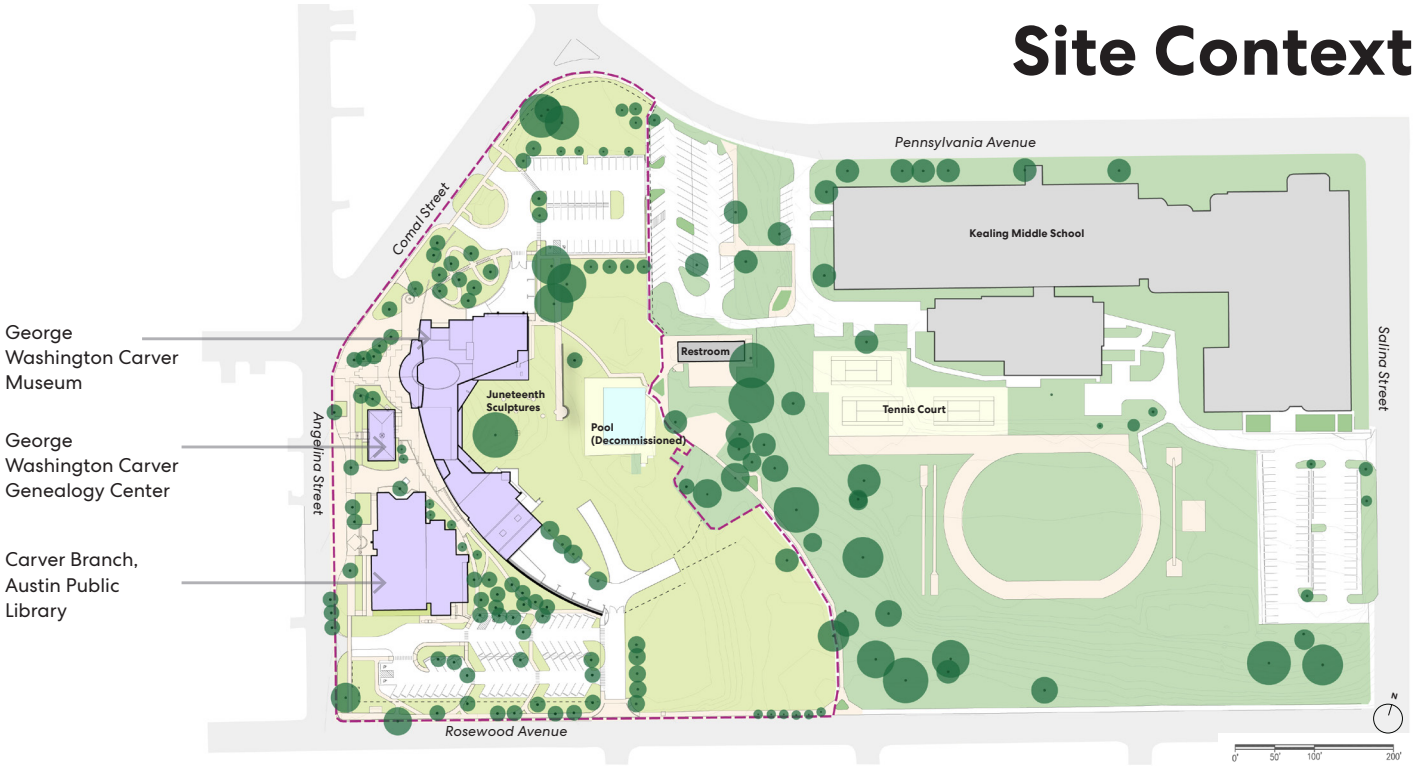
Reinforce interior greenspace

Water conservation/ reclaimed water

Excessive shrubs/ groundcover

Utility assignments at diagonals and land-use efficiency

Site Context



Existing Site Plan

The Carver Museum is located at the intersection of Angelina Street and Rosewood Avenue in Central East Austin. The campus is in a historically African American neighborhood and is surrounded by numerous markers that stand testimony to the resilience of the community in the city. It is surrounded by prominent Black organizations, historic residences, commercial establishments, and establishments of higher education. Huston-Tillotson University, the first the first institution of higher education in Austin and a historically Black university, is located just blocks from the campus.

The Carver campus is made up of three primary facilities. The Carver Museum, the Genealogy Center, and the Austin Public Library Carver Branch. The Library itself was not a part of the scope of work for the facility expansion plan, though Library staff were included in the project's Technical Advisory Group meetings as they share the site together with the other facilities.

Kealing Middle School also occupies the same block as the Carver, and was the first junior high school for African-American students in Austin. Kealing shares parking and park space with the Carver, including tennis courts and a running track, two more surface parking lots and a public restroom fronted by a children's play area. While this open park space does not have clearly defined boundaries to anyone using the site, for the purposes of this study the plan divides it roughly along a pathway and drainage area that creates a natural break in the site and perceived ownership and use of the two resulting portions. Similar to the library, Kealing operates separately and its representatives were also included in the project's Technical Advisory group meetings to provide input on the development of the plan.

Thus, the Carver Museum is a part of this rich tapestry of history, culture and traditions that developed here and continue to this day. The campus contains some prominent identifiers such as the checkered entry plaza that demarcates the front of the campus along Angelina street, zig-zag patterns in the walls of the museum building, 'the drum' that is instantly recognizable, and the heritage oak tree at the back of the museum. The library building contains a full-length mural along the side facing Rosewood avenue that acts as an important marker for the community. These markers make the Carver instantly recognizable and a landmark in this part of the city.

Assessment

Site Analysis

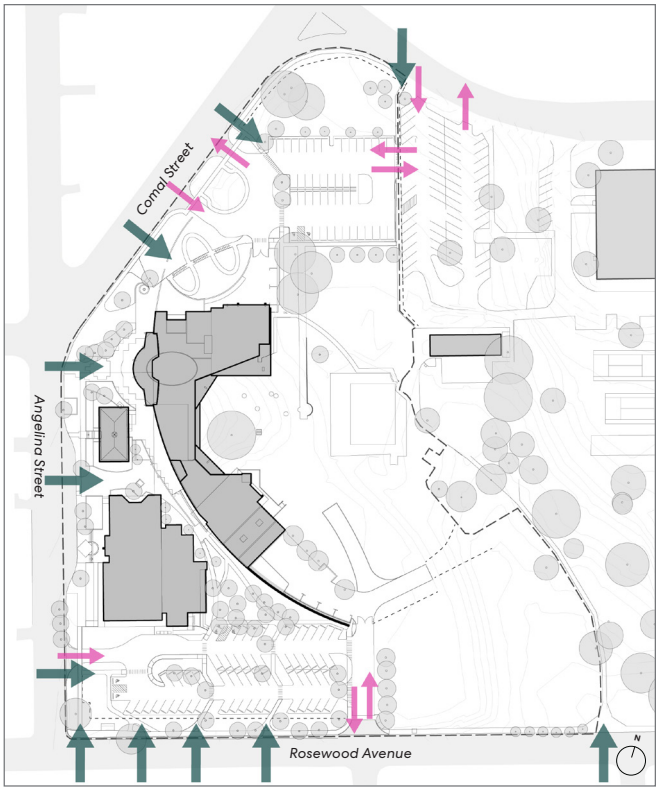
Access and Circulation

Pros

1. Existing bus routes and bus stop along Rosewood
2. Bike share facility available
3. Proximity to significant landmarks and organizations

Cons

1. Arrival and wayfinding are unclear for pedestrians
2. Relationship of drop-off zones to the buildings are unclear
3. Arrival and wayfinding needs improvement
4. Pedestrians are not easily directed to the museum
5. Main museum entrance not visible from loading zone along Angelina
6. Gates blocking sidewalks along north loading dock



Pedestrian entry points

Vehicular entry points

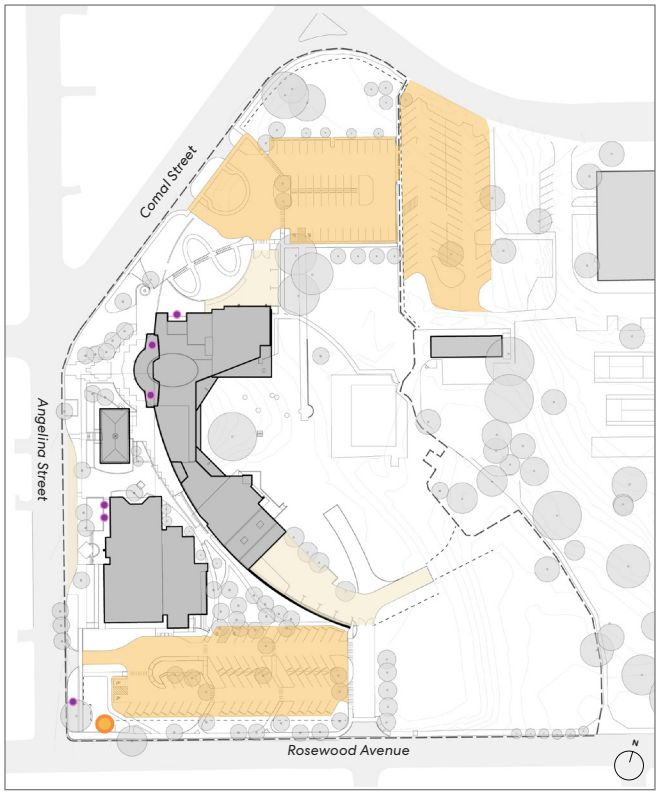
Transportation & Parking

Pros

1. Access to public transit
2. Crosswalk updates proposed in the near term
3. Shared parking between Kealing Middle school and Carver campus
4. Designated parking for handicap at north and south
5. Protected bike lane proposed along Rosewood

Cons

1. Unclear relationship of drop-off zones to parking and access
2. South loading dock parking is occupied by dumpster, storage container

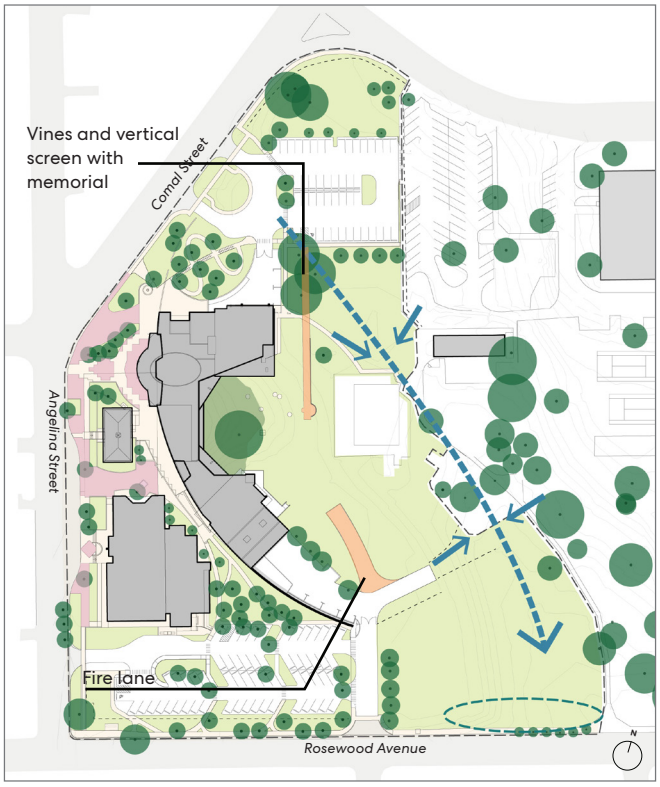


Bicycle Parking

Bus Stop

Parking

Loading Dock



Drainage

Colored concrete

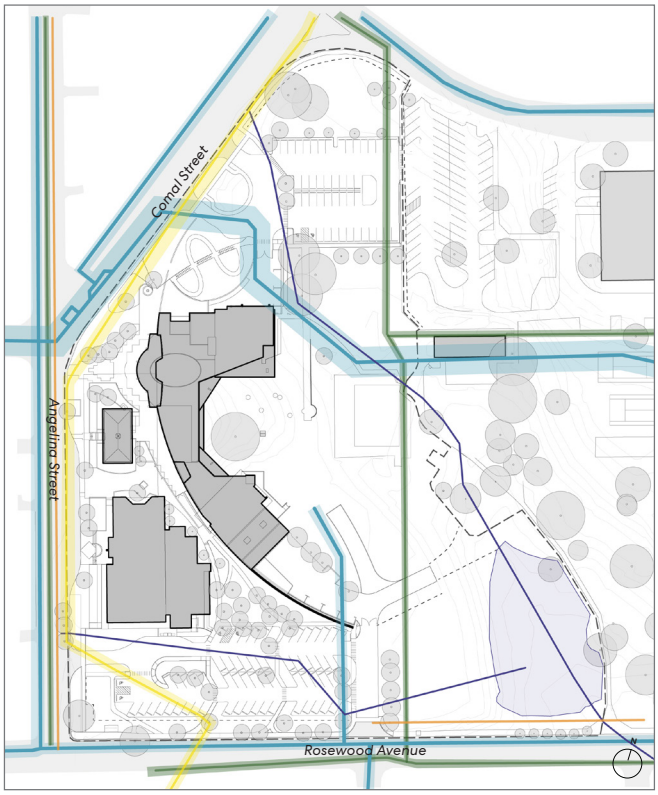
Landscape

Pros

1. Heritage oak behind the museum
2. Trees proposed in the 2002 site plan are installed and remain in place

Cons

1. Existing irrigation system is outdated
2. Lack of water and increased regulation of outdoor water use
3. Low tree canopy coverage of 15%, limited shade for pedestrian comfort
4. Large percentage of site contains building or paved surface that can absorb and generate heat through urban heat island effect process



Water

Electric

Waste water

Storm water

Gas

Utilities

Pros

1. Existing detention pond can be converted into bio-retention pond with native vegetation
2. Abandoned easement running north-south could potentially be vacated

Cons

1. Major transmission water line and 40' easement is close to existing building
2. Wastewater line cuts north-south across site
3. Major storm drain and associated easement
4. Potential downstream drainage issues

Assessment

Site Experience

The design team thoroughly explored the campus and interviewed site users to gain an understanding of community, staff, and artist experience. One key observation that emerged from these observations and discussions was that the lack of wayfinding and signage campus makes the site lack cohesiveness. Buildings built during different time periods, they lack a common architectural vocabulary or other elements of continuity, leaving the buildings to feel somewhat distinct and unrelated to one another.

A paved plaza along Angelina Street connects the three buildings together along the west edge of the campus, yet it remains somewhat difficult for an unfamiliar visitor to understand where the different programs on the campus are housed. The south and north sides of the campus are fronted by surface parking leaving the campus without a strong presence along these two sides. The mural on the south wall of the library is the exception to this, projecting a strong signal to passerby that the Carver is a center of arts and culture.

The open space to the rear (east) of the site is not visible from west side of the campus and access to this space from Angelina street is circuitous. The open space and buildings have minimal direct physical access from interior to exterior. A long balcony frames the rear building courtyard above the grade of the site, overlooking the courtyard and the grounds beyond, yet it remains difficult to access this open space from the building exterior, and the depth of the balcony itself limits its use to some degree.

From a landscape perspective, the open space is ample and flexible, if somewhat loosely defined, planned or programmed into functional areas. The terrain is somewhat uneven and gently sloping across the site and consists of excessive groundcover that can create difficulty for regular maintenance and even for walking. The grounds are mostly unprogrammed at the moment, and lack a coherent design that ties the site together. At present, the decommissioned pool occupies a significant piece of land right next to the Freedom Walk and while this has been repurposed for art installations, performance, and activity space, it reads as a leftover fragment of its former life as a public pool. Next to the pool is the public restroom, shared by the campus and the school, which is a simple shed-like structure.

One of the most cherished parts of the campus, the Juneteenth Sculptures and the Freedom Walk are located at the back of the museum and are not easily discovered, and are only accessible through the parking lot at the north of the site.

Service and loading areas behind the theater to the east and south are not cloistered but spill out into the park, further splitting it into smaller areas. The same uneven terrain continues through to meet the school playground with a bowl-shaped depression right alongside it.

Overall, the campus lacks somewhat in terms of cohesiveness in experience and imageability. The various programs and pieces of the campus that speak closely to the community are not explicit to a first time visitor.

The museum and the Carver campus as a whole have numerous elements that are iconic in nature. The images on the following page depict some of these.

1165
GEORGE WASHINGTON
CARVER
MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER

ONE
WAY

Interior Spaces

A high-level assessment was conducted of the building interior and exterior which involved a brief site tour and simple visual and superficial inspection of the facilities.

The building exterior and roof are in good condition, with evidence of some repairs that have been made to the building since its construction. The unique shape of the building makes it distinctive but challenging to expand, but there are good opportunities to improve on the existing design.

1. Building exterior and roof are generally in good condition.
2. The crescent shape of the existing building's footprint gives it a unique identity in the community. However, the building's lack of 90-degree walls may present challenges for additions to the building.
3. The facade consists of - 93% split face CMU, 5% plaster, 2% glass storefront.
4. There is a low amount of glazing overall, owing in part to some building functions that do not want to allow light in. There is opportunity to increase glazing and allow more natural light in areas where desired.
5. Structural exterior wall is constructed out of steel beam & columns with steel stud infills at 16" o.c. as well as grout filled CMU in some areas.
6. The interior wall structure has metal studs at 16" o.c.
7. Failures at exterior doors, windows, sections of the vapor barrier & expansion joints that have been fixed.

The building interior spaces are in general in reasonable condition, but many are inadequate in terms of size or layout for the existing or future desired uses of the building. The building circulation and access can also present challenges for certain functions. Some of these specific issues are noted here:

1. General circulation throughout the building is challenging during large scale events.
2. The whole building needs more storage space.
3. The gallery space is inadequately sized for the museum's needs, should be substantially increased.
4. The children's gallery houses an exhibit that is around 15 years old.
5. Archive needs more layout space.
6. Basement location of collections presents potential issues for water damage to artwork.
7. The orientation room should be made larger to serve as a proper small group meeting space.
8. The theater has very steep steps that feel dangerous to users.
9. The theater lacks an orchestra pit and is inadequately sized for larger productions.
10. Dance studio has an awkward shape and inadequate size.
11. The classroom has a dark room that is under used. This space could be absorbed by classroom or other use.
12. Office and Administration areas are small and do not allow for potential staff growth.
13. The conference room lacks AV technology. The space is shared daily for public and staff use.
14. The kitchen is inadequately sized, lacks appropriate circulation and counter-top area.
15. The museum store off the main entry is not used as such, space could be repurposed. Could hold 30-40 people.
16. There are some concerns about the location of the emergency exit door and guest's accessibility to the freight elevator.
17. Loading dock bay is difficult for trucks to access.

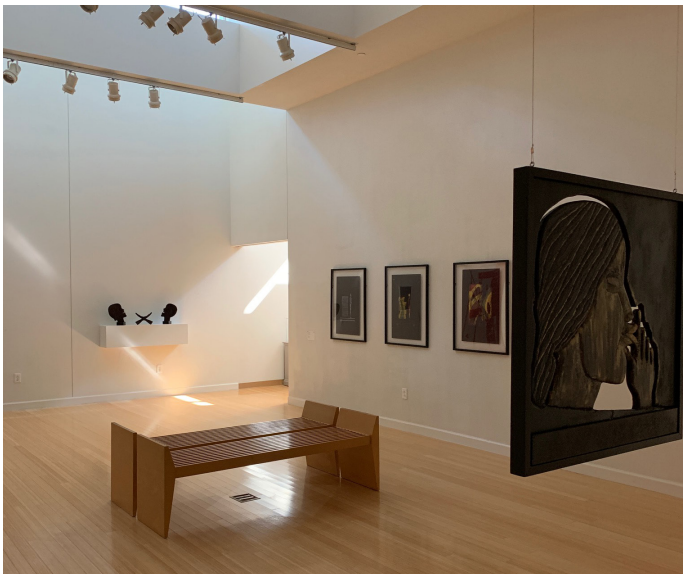
Main Entry Lobby

Theater

Dance Studio

Conference Room

Classroom


Gallery

3. Proposed Plan

Building Program

Proposed Facility Expansion Plan

Building Expansion

Site Program

Site Improvements

Cost Estimates & Phasing

Proposed Plan

Building Program

Conversations with community members and stakeholders highlighted the need for substantially greater space to better support and accommodate the wide variety of events and activities that take place at the Carver and are desired in the future. These inputs informed the development of a building space program, which quantifies the existing building spaces, identifies new spaces needed, and assigns square footage requirements to these spaces based on industry best practices. The space program information included on these pages are summary tables based on a more detailed conceptual program developed during the planning process which is included in the appendices.

Taking into consideration detailed space requirements for the needs expressed from the staff and users, this program proposes to roughly triple the size of the current facility to allow the Carver's to more fully serve it's community.

At a basic level, the plan proposes to increase three main program areas – Art & Education, Events, and Theater - with supporting spaces making up the remainder of the expansion square footage. All this growth will be supplemented with a new parking garage building to the south of the site.

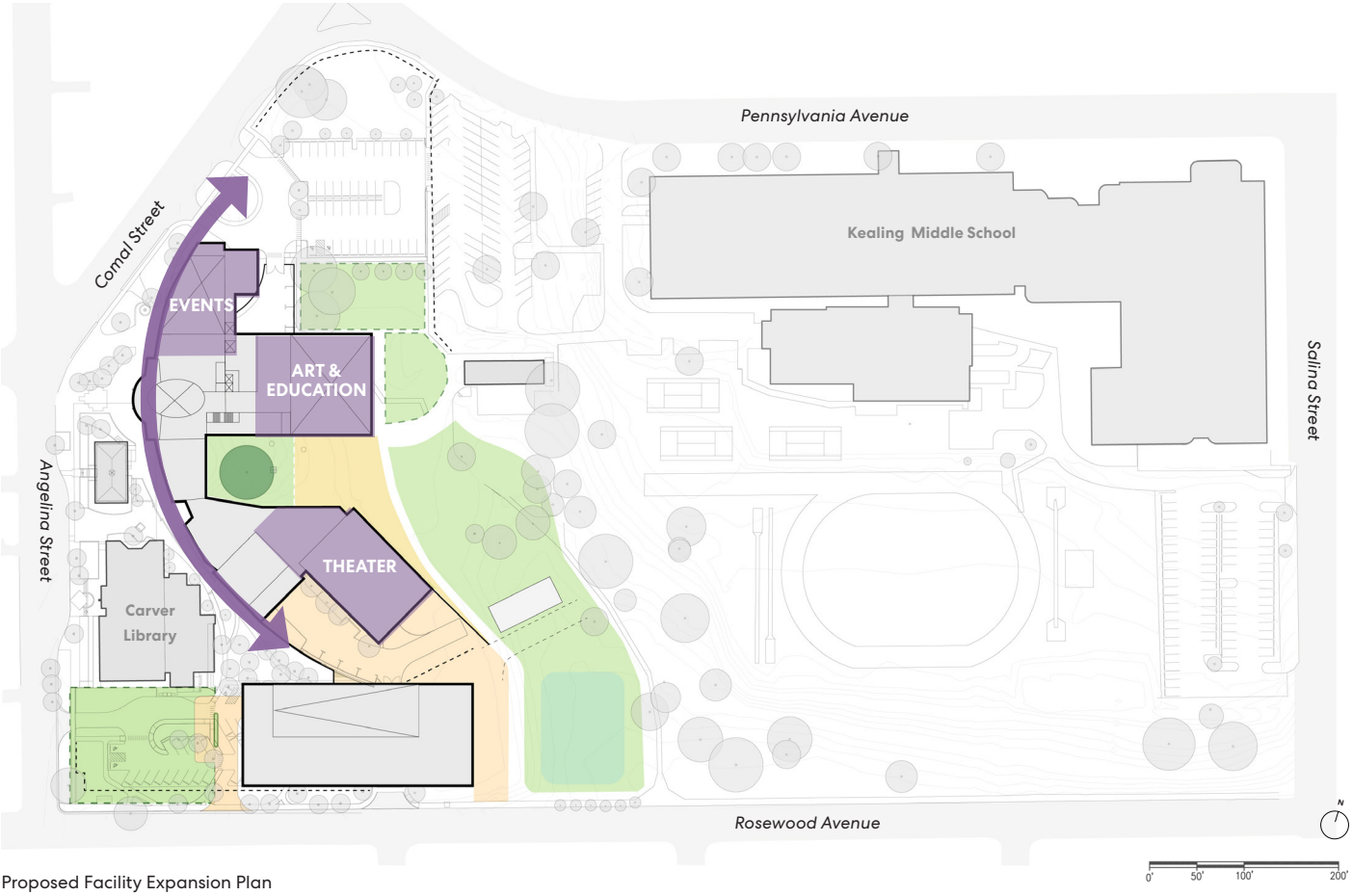
The existing building is deeply cherished by the community and the expansion proposed seeks to respect this and enhance these aspects. The proposed location and orientation of the building expansion seeks to pay homage to the design thinking of the original site plan, while building upon the opportunities identified for improvement.

Building Space Program Summary

Building Program Area	Total Existing Program Area (NSF)	Total Required Program Area (NSF)	Net Area Increase
General Building	4,882	8,381	3,499
Administration	1,190	3,647	2,457
Galleries/ Exhibition	4,162	12,500	8,338
Collections Handling	2,676	6,400	3,724
Collections Staff	637	763	126
Building Support - Lower Level North	750	1,415	665
Building Support - Main Level	3,683	6,065	2,382
Building Support - Lower Level South	167	167	0
Education	1,855	10,270	8,415
Events	314	7,900	7,586
Theater/ Performance	4,786	14,238	9,452
Theater Support	1,964	5,485	3,521
Roof Level	1,844	3,715	1,871
Sub Total (NSF)	**28,910**	**80,946**	**52,036**

Summary	**NET SF**	**GROSS SF***
Existing	28,910	30,665
New	52,036	59,841
Total	**80,946**	**90,506**

Proposed Facility Expansion Plan



Proposed Facility Expansion Plan

Building on the existing crescent geometry of the building, three new wings are proposed that extend this crescent, each housing one major element of the building program - events, art & education, and theater. While the ultimate building design will dictate the form these pieces take, the wings have been thoughtfully sized and located in the context of adjacency requirements, operational efficiency, circulation and access, service and loading, and separation of programs where desired.

Each piece of the building expansion seeks to take advantage of the opportunity to open up to outdoor spaces, and improve the interior exterior connections both visually and physically, The education wing on the lower level is intended to have access to the courtyard and outdoor classroom areas, while upper levels of theater, gallery, and corridor spaces may have balcony access or stair access to the courtyard, and should be designed to maximize glazing where appropriate to enhance this connection.

VOICE OF FREEDOM
FANNIE LOU HAMER

"The Drum"

At present, the main entry lobby or "drum" is an iconic element of the Carver with a high ceiling and clerestory windows. The proposed expansion re-emphasizes this space as the nexus of the building and further opens it up to the central courtyard. With abundant natural light and a feeling of openness it acts as an organizing and anchoring element directing people to galleries, events, theater and education spaces.

Proposed Plan

Building Expansion

As previously mentioned, the proposed expansion is designed to respect the existing design of the museum building and focuses on enhancing the user and staff experience.

The main floor is designed to accommodate community-centric programs and maximize community use of this space. The main entrance to the museum remains via the iconic atrium known by patrons as the 'drum'. Through the drum, people have the option of walking to the left to the event space, straight to the gallery or take a flight of staircase down to the education wing. Moving to the right, one passes down a long corridor that skirts the edge of the courtyard to come to a large lobby and reception area leading to the two theaters.

The proposed expansion improves upon issues of access, circulation, and separation between the different simultaneous programs and provides for separation of community-focused programs in and staff or support activities in the building. Additionally, the design emphasizes the need to have well ventilated spaces with increased connections to the outdoors.

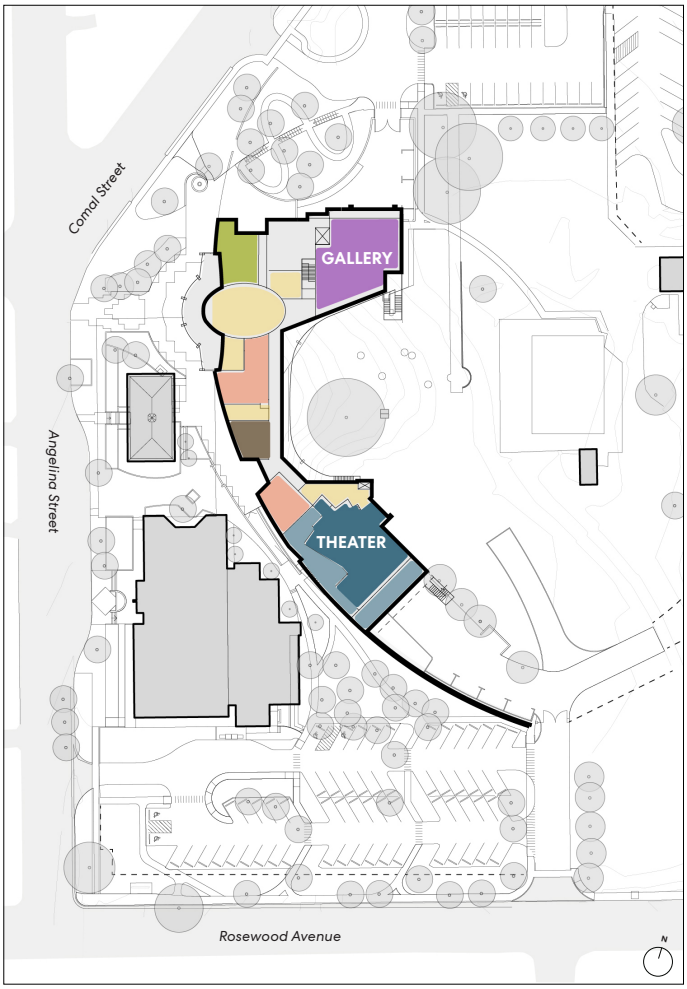
In terms of the quality and character of spaces, the event space and the gallery will be well ventilated spaces with high ceilings around 16-18 feet to accommodate a variety of uses. The gallery area will have several rooms that serve a variety of exhibits and displays. Towards the south of the site, the existing theater's size is unable to accommodate all the events that are expected to be hosted here. Issues with the existing rake of the theater make it feel unsafe for numerous users, and the smaller size of the stage does not support all types of performances. Hence, renovations are proposed to the existing theater along with the addition of a new theater that seats 500 people, to facilitate more events and performances. More intimate performances could take place in the renovated theater while the new one makes way for larger scale events.

A new parking structure is proposed to the south of the site to accommodate the additional traffic expected with the proposed expansion. The structure is proposed along Rosewood avenue for ease of access and to establish a strong presence for the Carver along this existing neighborhood and retail corridor. A location to the north off of Comal was also studied, but determined to be less easily accessed and less compatible with the scale of the neighborhood. If the parking structure remains as shown in the plan, efforts must be taken to soften the scale and visual impact of the structure on the site. Ways to make the structure a part of the neighborhood fabric such as adding concession opportunities on the ground floor or envisioning the structure as an art piece that captures the essence of the community along

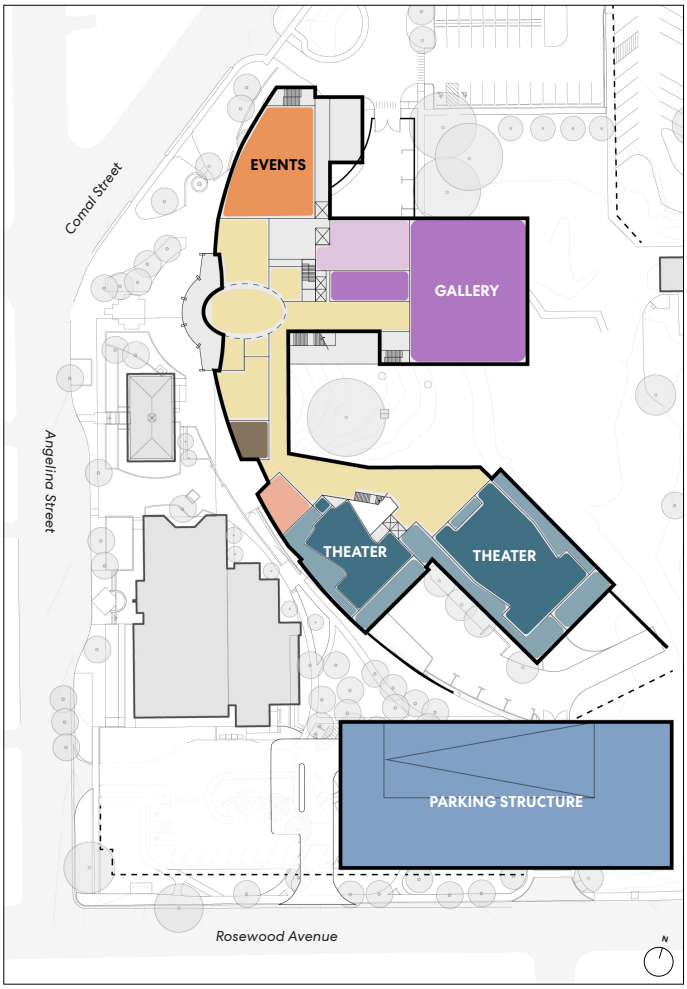
Parking structure could incorporate artwork that represents the community and culture of the Carver.

Ground floor active uses or community-centered concession space along with architectural treatments can make the structure a community amenity.

Building Expansion - Level 1



Existing



Proposed

Rosewood avenue should be considered in detail. Further design work should explore an underground parking structure, funds permitting, as well as further analysis of existing underground utility infrastructure.

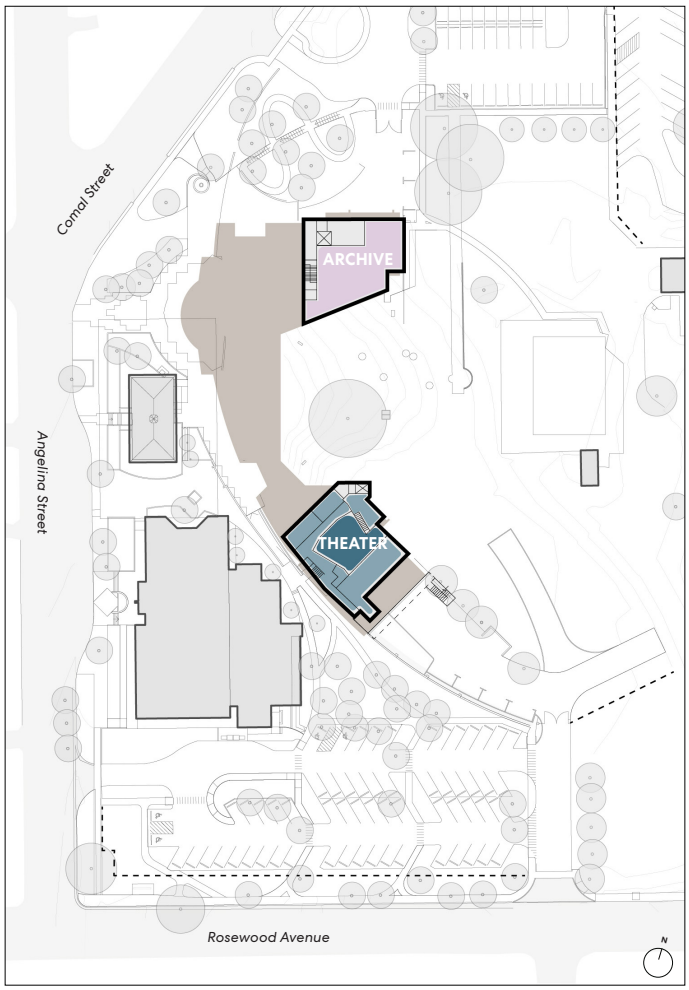
The existing administration suite to the north of the drum is proposed to be converted into a multi-purpose room in the short term, while in the long term it will serve as a pre-function space for the events and ballroom expansion. This new event space will be supported by a kitchen and increased capacity restroom, and a dedicated loading dock from the art loading dock.

- Public/General Program
- Events
- Services/Restroom
- Theater/Performance
- Theater/Performance support
- Education
- Gallery
- Art + Exhibit Support
- Administration
- Parking

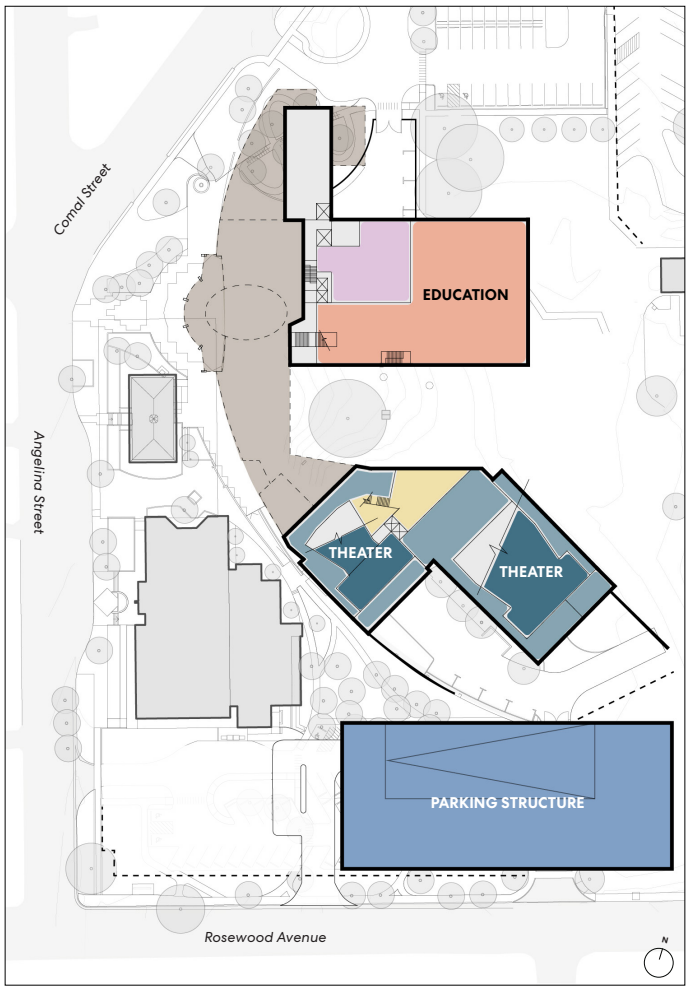
Proposed Plan

Building Expansion (continued)

Building Expansion - Lower Level



Existing

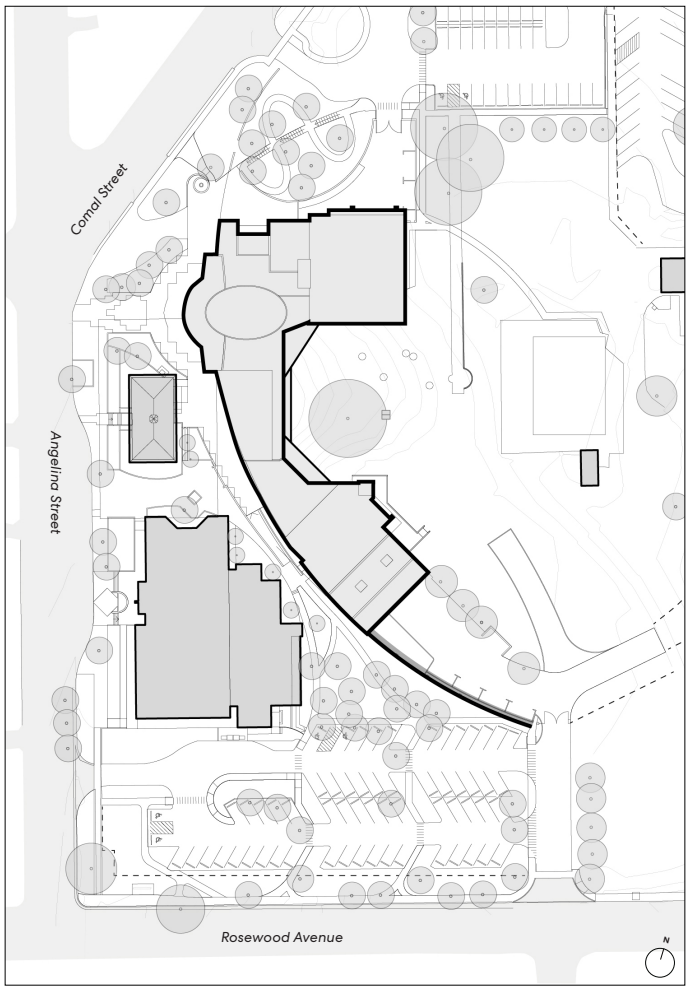


Proposed

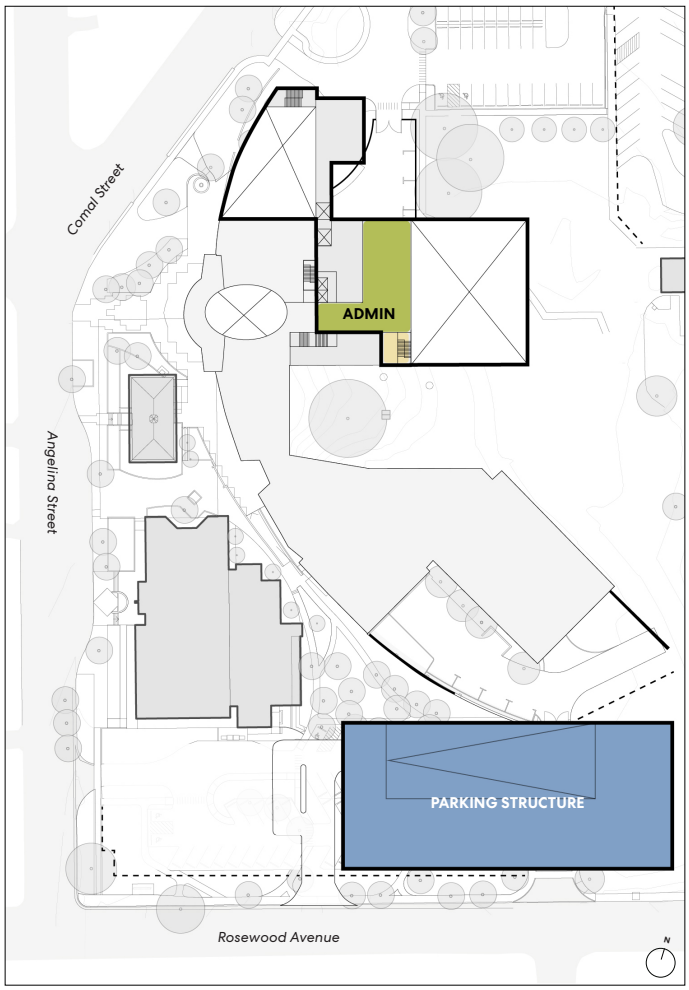
The lower level of the building will be expanded to accommodate education spaces to the north and portions of the new theater to the south. A new separate loading and support area for the events wing will also occur off the existing art loading dock area on this level at the north end of the facility.

- Public/General Program
- Events
- Services/Restroom
- Theater/Performance
- Theater/Performance support
- Education
- Gallery
- Art + Exhibit Support
- Administration
- Parking

Building Expansion - Level 2



Existing



Proposed

A new administrative space will be created on a new upper floor or mezzanine level designed specifically to accommodate the staff while separating the staff and the public. Numerous staff mentioned the lack of well ventilated, quiet workspaces and this shift to a new upper floor is aimed to address this concern.

- Public/General Program
- Events
- Services/Restroom
- Theater/Performance
- Theater/Performance support
- Education
- Gallery
- Art + Exhibit Support
- Administration
- Parking

Theater and Theater Lobby

A new 500-seat theater allows for a larger audience and wider variety of productions, while a significantly expanded theater lobby allows for ample spill-out and reception space with visual connection to the building courtyard.

Proposed Plan

Site Program

The planning process considered the site and grounds as an important way to connect people to the activities at the Carver, weave the facilities into the fabric of the surrounding community, and exemplify the ethos, history, and culture of the community itself. Scattered with moments to observation, remembrance, celebration, and gathering, it is designed to accommodate many different activities and change according to needs of the community.

Community members mentioned time and again of how the campus is disconnected from the school. As a response to this, it was necessary to connect the open space to the school. Programs such as outdoor classrooms, community garden to the north of the site, are proposed where children and adults alike can learn.

The expanded Carver Museum cradles the central plaza with the preserved heritage oak tree and opens to an outdoor performance space with a raised stage.

Additional programs proposed here include a plaza at the intersection of Angelina and Rosewood streets that acts as an important marker leading people to the front door of the library, museum, and genealogy center. Renovations are proposed to the existing restroom facility on site. A detailed program breakdown is exhibited here.

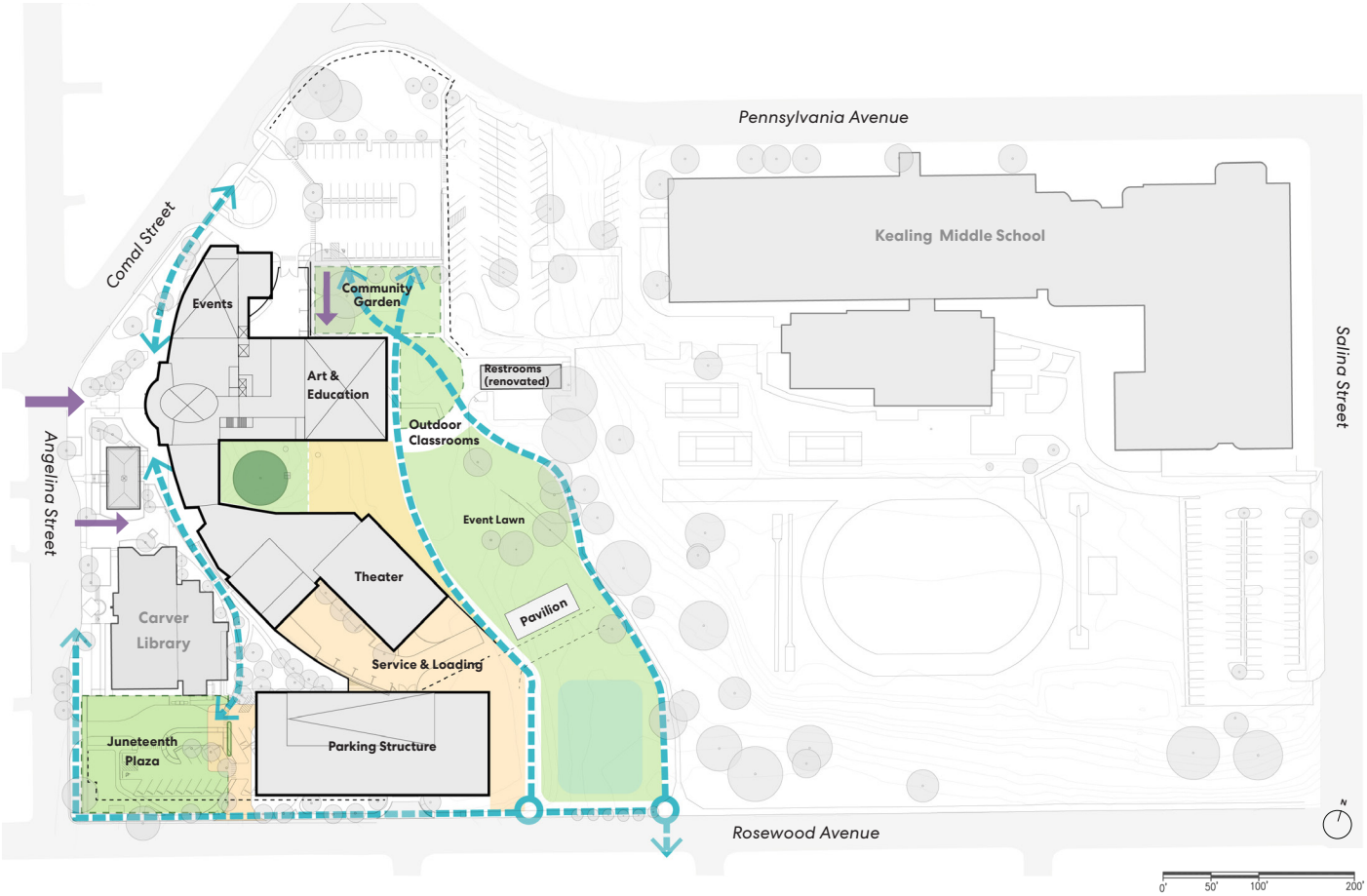
Open spaces are treated as unified assets responding to the community's desire for well-used outdoor spaces. Two main types of open spaces are designed to accommodate different types of events. Small gatherings can take place right at the heart of the building and large-scale events and festivities at the event lawn. The service areas are sheltered from the public spaces and interact directly with the back ends of the building. This separation between the service areas and the event lawn, hides unsightly back-of-house elements and makes it possible for the open space to take on its own identity.

Site Program Summary

Program Area	Total Existing Program Area (NSF)	Total Required Program Area (NSF)	Net Area Increase
New Community Garden	0	400	400
Existing Swimming Pool	n/a	0	n/a
New Underground Detention	0	TBD	TBD
Existing Juneteenth Sculpture Walk	n/a	n/a	n/a
New Black Austin History & Sculpture Walk	0	400	400
New Juneteenth Plaza	0	14,000	14,000
New Exterior Class-rooms	0	225	225
New Flexible Green Space	0	4,500	4,500
New Formal Pavilion Gathering Space	0	1,500	1,500
New Detached Rest-room Building	0	600	600
Existing/ New Carver Museum Parking	7,614	44,064	36,450
Sub Total (NSF)	**7,614**	**65,689**	**58,075**

Summary	**Program Area NSF**
Existing NSF	7,614
New NSF	65,689
Total NSF	**73,303**

Proposed Site Organization



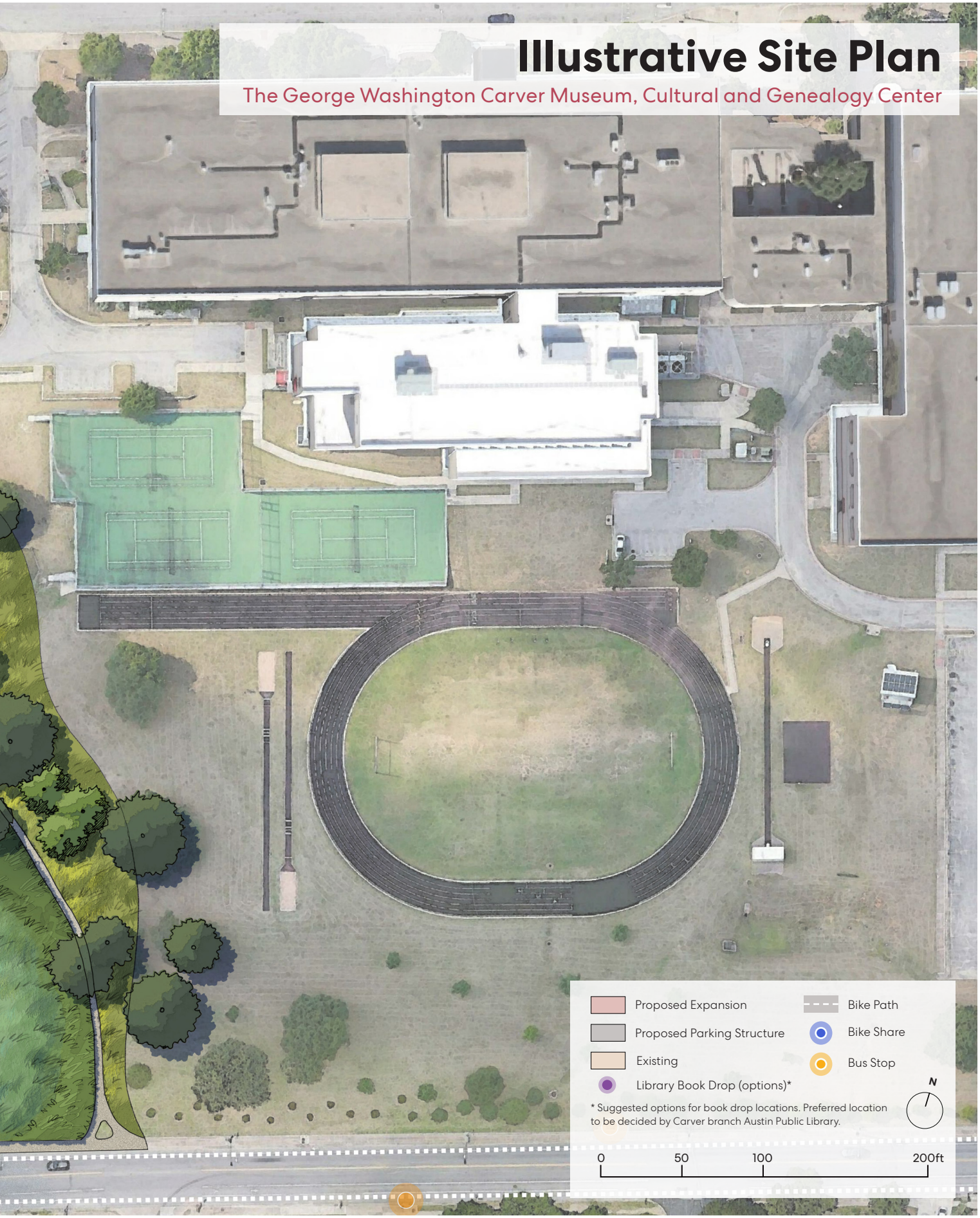
A landmark open space that is being called "Juneteenth Plaza" is proposed to anchor the intersection of Angelina street and Rosewood Avenue. While the event lawn and courtyard are somewhat less visible and separated from the street, this plaza provides a more public face at the south side of the campus and can be used in multiple ways – as a place for gathering, a festival space, it could be a part of the Juneteenth parade, and stand as a beautiful amenity. Additionally, this plaza is an extension to the entry plaza and generous sidewalk along Angelina street. It will further help to position the three buildings as part of one unified campus.

An increase in scale of the facilities goes hand in hand with an increase in entry points and ways of engaging with the site. The main entry to the museum through the drum is maintained as the primary entrance, and supplemented by a new entry to the art and education wing coming in from the north parking lot. The existing entrance into the theater south of the drum should is also maintained, but may be expanded or enhanced to handle larger audiences in the new theater. The possibility of this entrance also serving as a more direct connection to the rear courtyard, either through the building or completely exterior to it is desired and should be further explored during design. The existing service entry off of Rosewood is shifted to the east and sheltered from the public areas by a low wall. The surface parking lot at the south of the site will be converted into a plaza adjoining a parking garage, with egress points along Rosewood avenue.

The expansion incorporates the existing bus stop and bike racks as well as bike lane and pedestrian improvements proposed in the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan.

Illustrative Site Plan

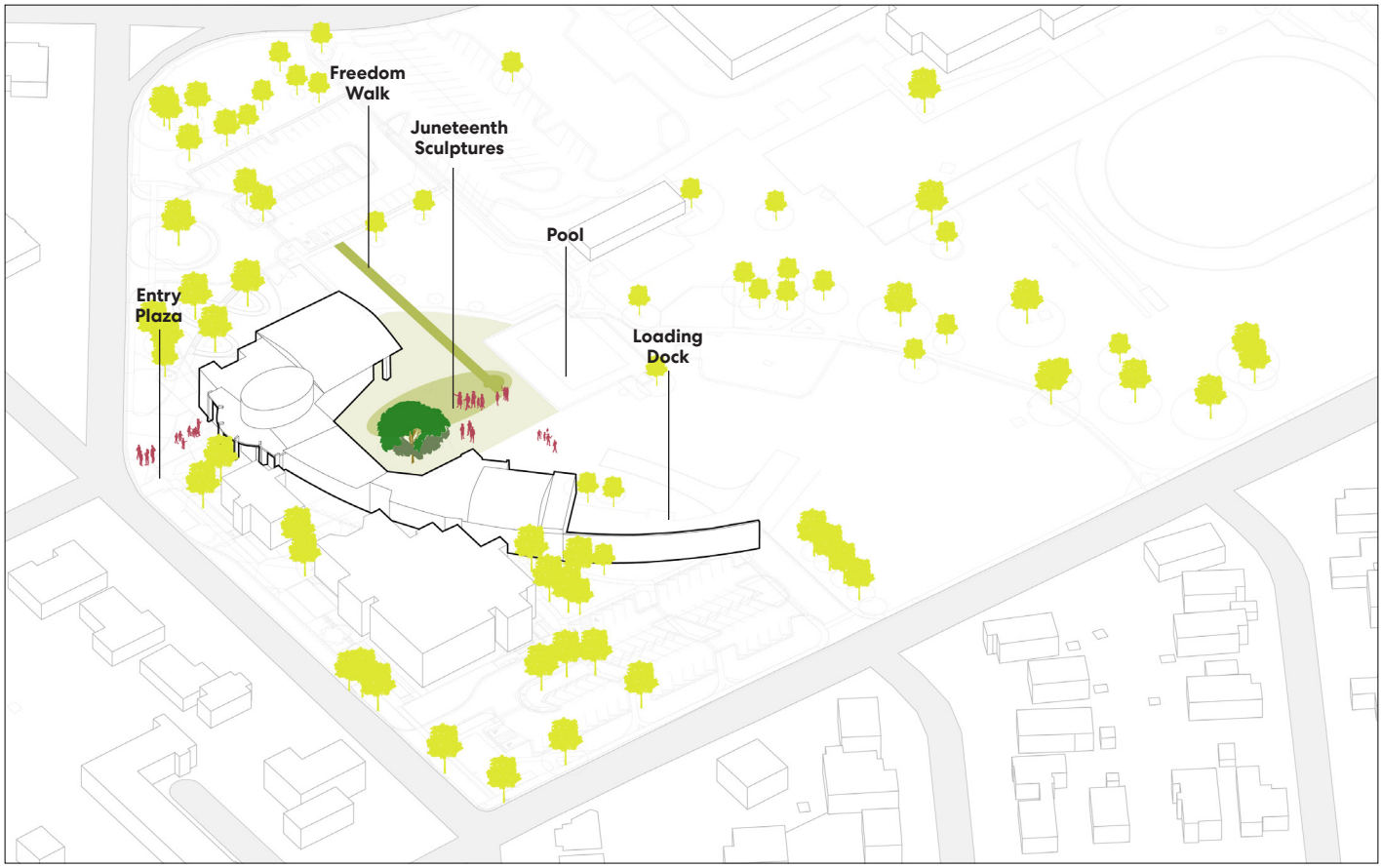
The George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center



Proposed Plan

Site Improvements

Site Elements - Existing

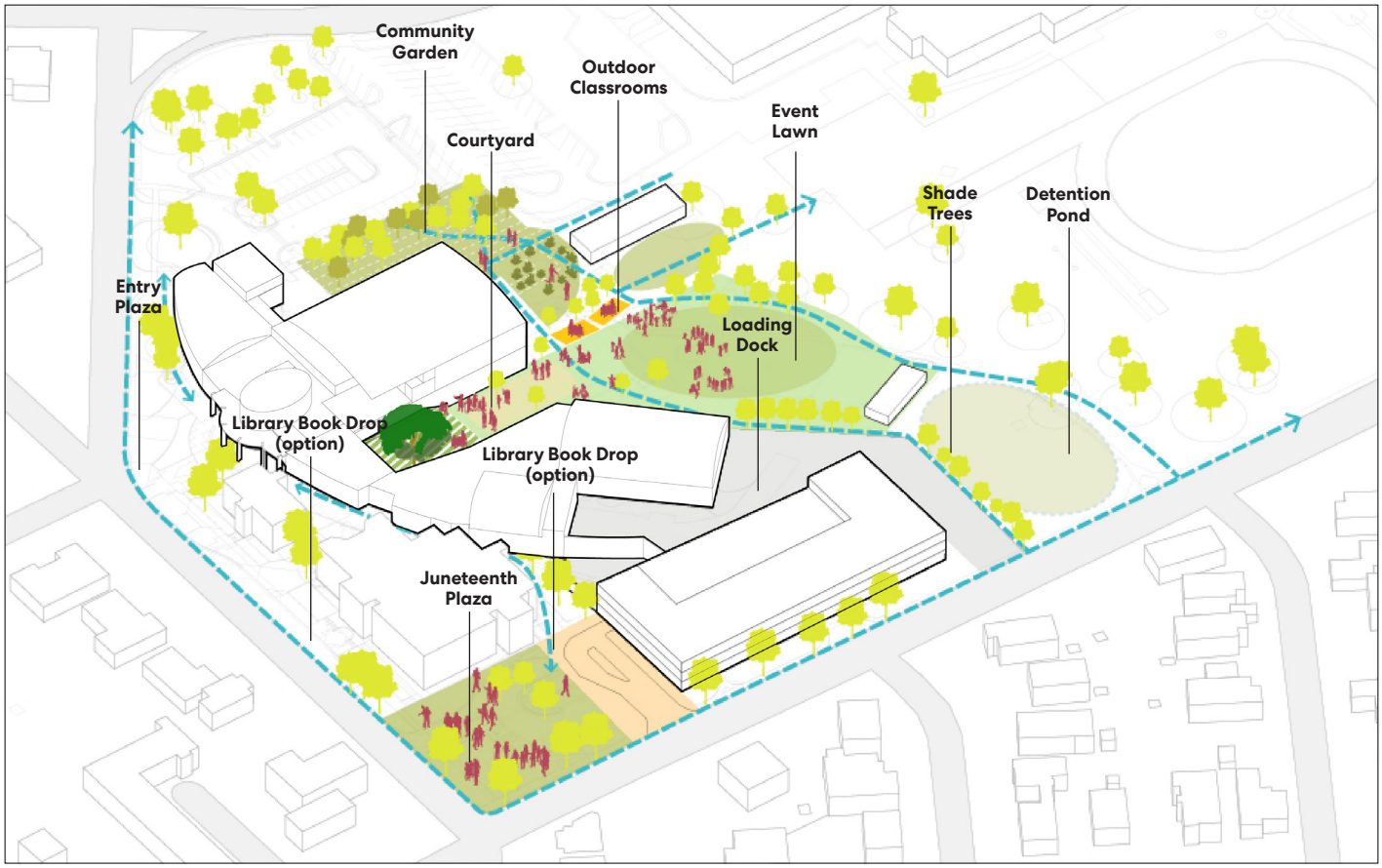


While the large amount of new construction occupies significant portions of existing open space, the site plan actually improves in many ways upon the existing outdoor area. While there have been a number of improvements, notably the Freedom Walk and Juneteenth Memorial Sculptures, the existing site is a somewhat loosely organized collection of spaces. The proposed site elements help create an interconnected set of distinct spaces that will not only beautify the site but support a wider variety of activities and functions.

The decommissioned pool on site will be removed to make way for an event lawn and an internal courtyard. Also, the expansion plan proposes a community garden and outdoor classrooms, programs that were greatly requested by community members. The idea of the community garden greatly speaks to the agricultural ties of G.W. Carver and further design development should acknowledge this. These new developments will be supported by the renovated restrooms on site.

The proposed expansion building masses create a well-shaded courtyard that can be occupied comfortably throughout the year. Austin deals with hot weather for extended periods each year and numerous members of the community mentioned the desire to walk and sit in shaded outdoor areas. Native tree planting along pedestrian paths within and surrounding the entire block should be employed

Site Elements - Proposed



to create areas of shade canopy. Lightweight shading such as trellises, pavilions, or shade sails, can help provide respite in the hot Austin climate.

The creation of the event lawn and courtyard would require a reevaluation of the location of the existing Juneteenth Sculptures. Some community members expressed the desire to position these sculptures proudly on the campus in an area that gets a lot of foot traffic. Safety of these sculptures should also be considered. The design team suggests that an additional study be undertaken by the City to identify the best possible location to relocate these sculptures. Artists and/or members of the community who have been involved in siting the existing sculptures should be consulted for identifying the best location for these sculptures and the Freedom Walk, one that does absolute justice to what it means to the community.

Throughout this process, the pedestrian experience around and within the campus should be prioritized. As the campus undergoes expansion, it is necessary to support this with adequate wayfinding and signage efforts. Wayfinding can certainly help address a lot of the current issues faced by first time visitors of not being able to easily access the various programs on site. It will help people understand the various buildings and programs on site and directly lead them to the community centric spaces. Wayfinding and signage will also help to unify the buildings and open spaces into a coherent and cohesive campus.

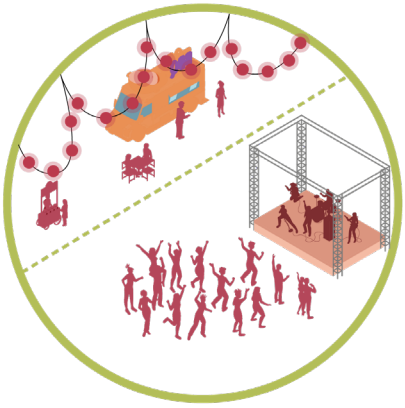
Proposed Plan

Site and Facility Expansion Summary

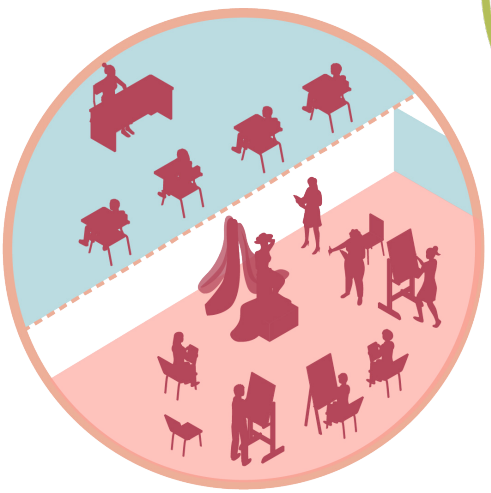
The expansion plan includes the development of amenities for the community and the staff alike. Along with the building related programs, programmed open spaces also cater to the growing needs of the community.

Theater

Event

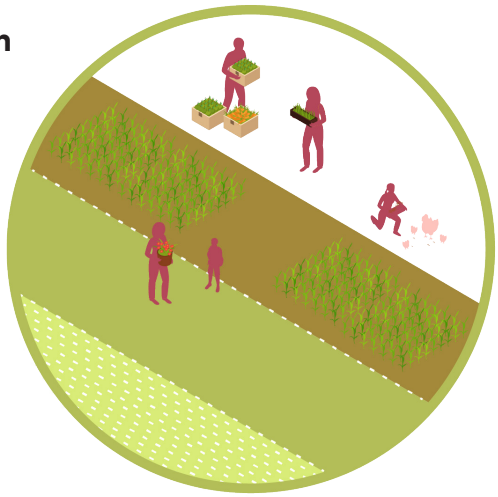


Event Lawn

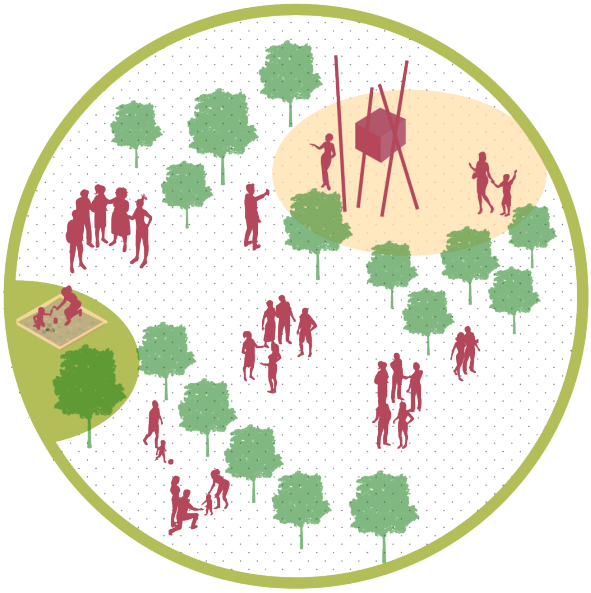


Education

Gallery



Community Garden



Juneteenth Plaza

Marshall
JVM
Marshall

Event Lawn

The event lawn and pavilion can host concerts and large scale events. This huge space can accommodate multiple food trucks and vendors adding to the festive nature of the space.

Cost Estimates & Phasing Plan

The 60,000 square foot expansion is proposed to take place in three phases over a period of 9 years or as funding is available. Phasing has been designed to provide community amenities immediately, knowing that some of the more costly elements may need to wait for multiple funding cycles to be completed. Utilities on site will also need to be addressed to make way for the expansions, particularly with the art and education wing. These priorities and considerations have gone into the creation of the detailed phasing chart complementing the cost estimate summary.

The first phase includes renovations, relocations and improvements of some of the most community focused areas of the facility. The second phase deals with re-routing site utilities, to allow for the addition of Art and Education and the Events / Ballroom expansions in this phase . The final phase includes the addition of a theater along with a parking garage to serve the increase in programs.

Phase 1a	$ 3,177,720
Phase 1b	$ 2,700,990
Phase 2a	$ 5,050,625
Phase 2b	$ 11,522,000
Phase 2c	$ 5,967,500
Phase 3	$ 15,834,000
Escalation	$ 13,452,726
Total	$ 57,705,561

* Base cost estimates by phase are based on current (2021) cost assumptions. Cost escalation has been projected over a 3, 6, and 9 year horizon for each phase respectively. Actual costs are subject to market conditions and actual date of construction.

Phase 1

Phase 1a - Building Renovations

Create new Multi-Purpose Room in existing Administrative Suite
New Roof Level Administrative Suite
New Elevator
Approved Relocation of the Existing Statues

Phase 1b - Outdoor Spaces & Site Improvements

Outside Classrooms
New Community Garden
Renovation of existing Public Restrooms
New Flexible Event Lawn with Covered Pavilion

Phase 2

Phase 2a - Site Utilities Work

Re-route Existing Underground Transmission Water Line
Re-route Existing Storm Drainage Line
Re-route Existing Wastewater Line
Expand Existing Site Detention

Phase 2b - Galleries & Education Addition

New Main Level Gallery & Lower Level Education Addition with Receiving Dock

Phase 2c - Events / Ballroom

New Main Level Events Ballroom with Pre-Function space & Lower Level Pre-Kitchen Addition
Redesign of the ADA Accessible Route (Existing ramp will be removed)

Phase 3

Phase 3 - Theater Addition & Parking Garage

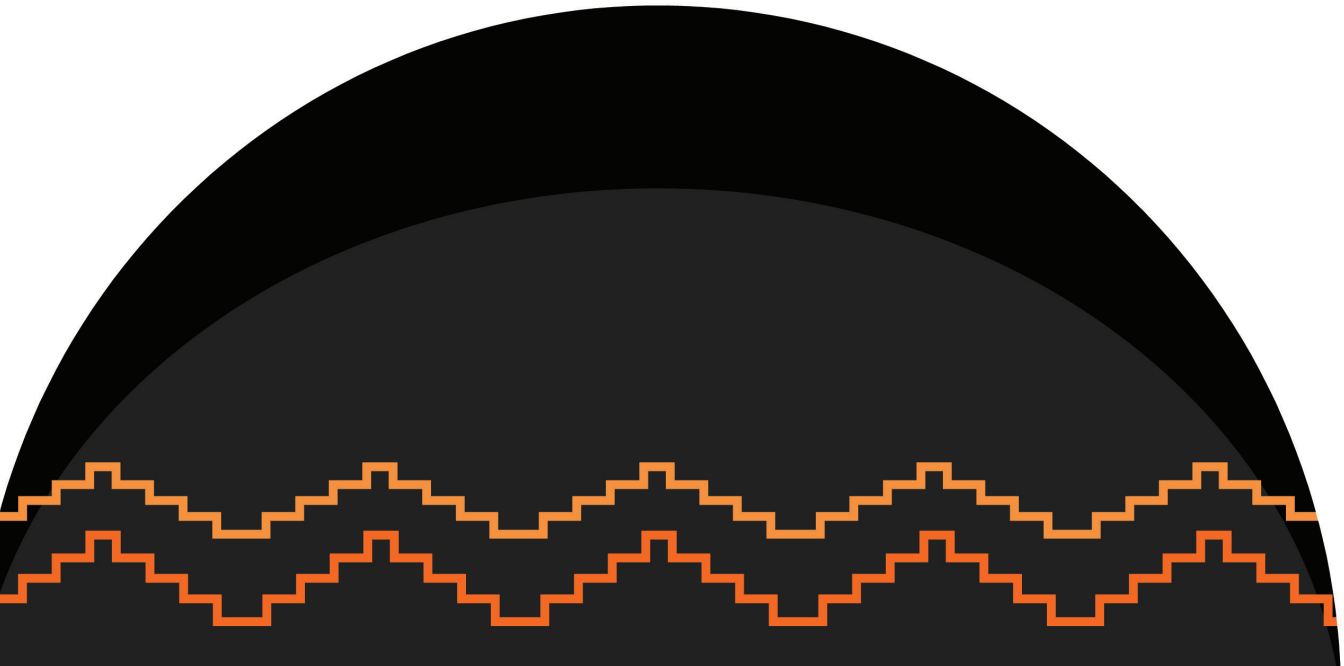
New Theater & Performance Addition with New Loading Dock
New Four-Level Parking Garage
Design of Service drive at Rosewood Ave
New Juneteenth Plaza at corner of Rosewood & Angelina
New Book Drop-off Drive

Funding and Implementation Strategies

A question that has been posed by community members who participated in the engagement sessions is how the museum will procure funding for the expansion. The Parks and Recreation Department has put forth a strategy to seek partial allocation from City Council, along with additional sources like corporate partnerships, private donors, grant opportunities, parkland dedication funds and a potential Capital Improvement Project with the Austin Public Library. Thus, the expansion which is proposed to take place in three consecutive phases will be funded by multiple sources.

Capital Funding Strategies for Implementation

- General Obligation Bond
- City Council allocation
- Interdepartmental Capital Improvement Project with Austin Public Library
- Corporate Partnership
- Private donors
- Grant opportunities for museums, arts & culture, or historic preservation
- Parkland Dedication Funds



4. Conclusion