



George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural & Genealogy Center Facility Expansion Plan

Project Background

The context to this project dates to 1998, when bond funding was approved for the Carver Museum and Library expansion. In 2000, a Feasibility Study for the Expansion of the George Washington Carver Museum & Cultural Center was conducted, and a three-phase building program was developed. Of the three proposed phases, phase one has been implemented while phases two and three have not been addressed. Phase one was completed in 2005 and included the development of a lobby with reception, lecture hall/theater, classrooms, dance studio, dark room, conference room, commercial kitchen, storage, outdoor plazas and expanded parking.

History

The roots of the George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center were established in Austin, Texas during the early 20th Century. Austin's first public library was moved in 1933 to an area of Austin east of IH-35, populated by economically disadvantaged and minority citizens. This building would become the City's first "colored" library serving as a central gathering place for the African American community. A larger library was constructed to better serve the densely populated area in 1980. The public advocated and supported the measure to reopen the historic library building as the George Washington Carver Museum in 1980.

The Carver Museum began receiving family collections in 1979. The year 1998, brought huge change with the passing of a bond to build a "state of the art" complex that includes galleries for exhibitions, a collections facility, classroom space and a theater adjacent to the historic Carver library. This new complex opened its doors in 2005 and has since seen the successful completion of several core exhibits, as well as hosted many performances, workshops, and family programs. Today, the Museum's Collection has over 8,000 items of artistic and historical significance.

Project Description and Objectives

The City sought to revisit and review the improvements that were proposed previously for phases two and three and develop a new plan that is in line with current requirements. The objective of this project was to develop a facility expansion plan that takes into consideration the site's current usage and changes to the surrounding area. Extensive community engagement helped inform the planning, design and development of a facility that reflects community sentiment.

Community Engagement

Following the execution of the contract with Smith and Company, the Parks and Recreation Department worked collaboratively with the consultant team to develop a Community Engagement Plan. The project team identified stakeholders and groups to target and connect with throughout the engagement process. Community engagement was anticipated to begin in spring 2020 and were altered by the

COVID-19 pandemic. The project and engagement efforts followed in accordance with the City of Austin's continuous measures for public health and safety.

- Community Engagement through Small Group Discussions, Community Meetings, and Surveys** — The community was engaged through virtual small group discussions that included different cultural and art groups, Black civic leadership groups, Carver advocates, and Carver staff. In addition, three virtual community meetings were held during the months of August, October, and November of 2020. The project team also convened a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) at critical planning stages to provide technical expertise. The TAG was comprised of City staff from relevant Departments such as Watershed Protection and Austin Public Library, as well as stakeholders Austin ISD and Kealing Middle School. Additionally, the team presented to the African American Resource Advisory Commission with periodic updates for input.

2021 Board and Commission Dates:

Briefings, discussion, and action on a recommendation to the City Council on the George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural & Genealogy Center Facility Expansion Plan	
African American Resource Advisory Commission	April 6
Design Commission Briefing	April 26
Library Commission	April 26
Parks and Recreation Board	April 27
Arts Commission Briefing	May 17
City Council	June 10

Advisory Body	Feedback Received	Addressed in the Plan
African American Resource Advisory Commission	Stressed the urgency and priority needed for this expansion effort	This comment is addressed on pg. 55 of the plan which outlines Capital Funding Strategies for Implementation. The Commission intends to forward a memo to Council stressing the urgency for funding this expansion.

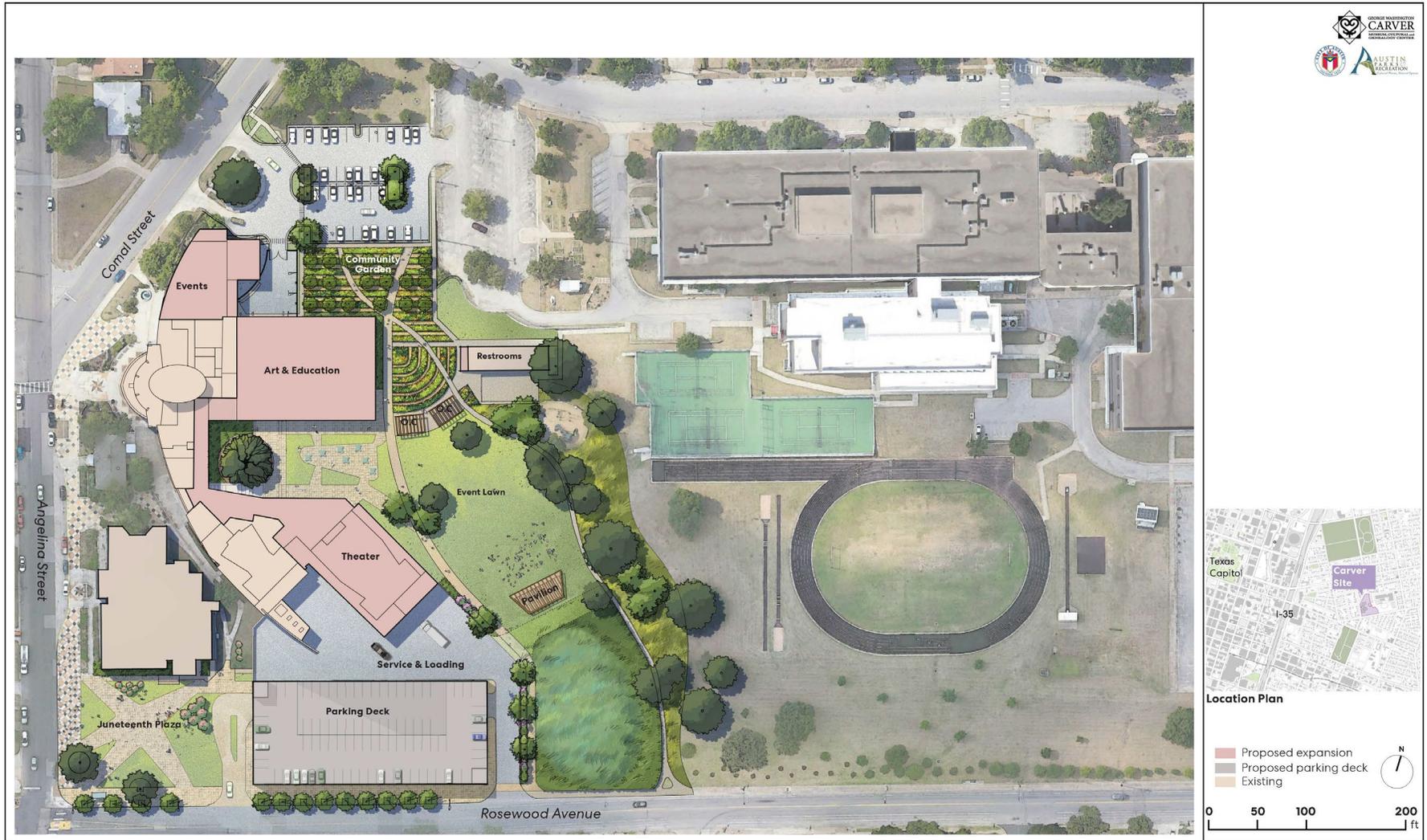
<p>Design Commission</p>	<p>Were provided a briefing and took no action on a recommendation, but provided the following comments:</p> <p>Opportunity for local/Black-owned business to serve as temporary vendors (food trucks) off of the event lawn</p> <p>Pedestrian access and enhancements from surrounding streets and within the Carver campus</p>	<p>Intended layout of the outdoor space lends itself to those opportunities but the design phase will allow for further investigation and community feedback of such programming (pg. 52).</p> <p>Existing bus stop on Rosewood Avenue provides direct access from public transportation. Existing network of sidewalks around the neighborhood provides access. Bike lanes on Rosewood Avenue going east and west provide access to the site. Tree plantings on the west side of site and along walkways will be part of the design phase (pg. 47 & 48). Integration of pedestrian connections throughout the site are illustrated on pg. 44. Once on site, wayfinding signage will inform the visitor and will be incorporated during the design phase (pg. 48).</p>
<p>Library Commission</p>	<p>Recommended the plan and had no other comments.</p>	<p>Library staff participated in the planning process and were an active member of the team.</p>
<p>Parks and Recreation Board</p>	<p>Opportunity for flexibility of upper deck of parking garage for more parkland</p> <p>Bicycle parking and facilities</p>	<p>The size/amount of spaces in the parking structure will directly reflect the amount required by the facility's footprint. The design and layout of the parking garage may be explored during the design phase as shown on pg. 44.</p> <p>Bike connectivity to the adjoining neighborhood as well as on-site bike parking will be incorporated during the design</p>

	Natural elements and biodiversity aside from community garden	phase per the Land Development Code. Opportunity to enhance the existing detention pond into a natural element is part of the plan in Phase 2 shown on pg. 54.
Arts Commission	Were provided a briefing and took no action on a recommendation.	
Office of the City Manager	Opportunity for local/Black-owned business on pedestrian level of parking garage	Pg. 37 of the plan offers language to explore inclusion of concessionaires in lower-level of parking structure.
Mayor Pro Tem/Council Office District 1	Opportunity for underground parking Opportunity for revenue generation from pedestrian traffic on Rosewood	Further detailed building design will be explored for an underground parking structure, funds permitting, as well as further study of existing underground utility infrastructure (pg. 38). Potential to explore concession opportunities that are compatible with the site (pg. 37).
Mayor's Office	Independent operation of theater outside the hours of the Museum	The plan recommends enhancement of the existing entrance into the theater south of the drum. Expansion of this entrance may provide access through the building or directly to the exterior courtyard (pg. 44). This may be explored during the design phase.

Project Lead: Gregory Montes, CNU-A | Program Manager, Park Planning Division, Parks and Recreation Department

Carver Facility Expansion Plan Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/CarverATXplanning>

Final Facility Expansion Plan



Proposed Expansion Plan

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER MUSEUM, CULTURAL & GENEALOGY CENTER