



PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
February 27, 2023 – 6:00 PM
City Hall Chambers, Room 1001
301 W. Second Street, Austin, Texas 78701

Item 2: Staff Briefing on the draft Zilker Park Vision Plan
Questions and Answers Report

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEMBERS:

Laura Cottam Sajbel (D-9), Chair
Sarah Faust (D-5), Vice-Chair
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Item 2: Staff Briefing on the draft Zilker Park Vision Plan

Question 1: *I am mainly concerned about the lack of private citizen participation in the working group. (Asked by Board Member Barnard; Draft ZPVP page 9)*

Response 1: Language in the Council approved Scope of Services designates the creation of a Working Group: Page 9, “Initial Information 1.2: Create a Technical Advisory Group/Working Group to assist Design Workshop with relevant city departments' goals, policies, plans, and constraints.” Parks and Recreation Board Members serve as appointed representatives of their districts and select members for the Working Group. Community members were not excluded from working group participation. As the scope is written, it is the planning team’s interpretation that community members are invited by Working Group members.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Approved Scope of Work, Pg. 9, "Initial Information" 1.2

Question 2: *What is the expected benefit from the vision plan - what is its purpose? Is it to increase visitation to Zilker? Some other goal? (Asked by Board Member Moore; Draft ZPVP pages 39-42)*

Response 2: Refer to plan goals on chapter 3 “Guiding Principles, Vision, and Goals” (pp. 39-42).

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 3: *Whatever the response is, and given how the topic of transportation to/from is one of the more complex issues discussed, how is it a more effective use of what will be a very large sum of money to concentrate funding in this location, vs conducting improvements at other parks like Guerrero, Walnut Creek or Walter E. Long?*

From the Chair: Spread the wealth: Instead of pumping up expensive construction projects in Zilker, we should consider investing more heavily in other parks. (Asked by Board Members Moore, Hugman and Cottam Sajbel)

Response 3: The primary method for developing or updating district and metropolitan parks in the parks system begins with creating a vision plan (formerly "master plan"). Vision plans are high level concepts that often include implementation suggestions. Vision plans are necessary to determine broad funding needed for implementation and strategies for obtaining funding. The development of vision plans and phasing implementation are industry best practices. This approach allows for investment throughout the entire park system over multiple years. The phased approach allows the Department to address the most significant needs at multiple parks throughout the system rather than completing one full park before starting the next. Phased implementation also allows for funding identification and leveraging investment and work to secure alternative funding.

Recent history of park vision plans and implementation includes:

- Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River (adopted 2000),
- Holly Shores at Edward Rendon Sr. (adopted 2014),
- Emma Long (adopted 2017), and
- Givens District Park (adopted 2018).

These vision plans provided guidance on funding, leading to millions of dollars of investment in each park through implementation. Walter E. Long (adopted 2020) and John Trevino (adopted 2020) are expected to begin preparation for implementation this year with between \$3 to 5 million. The vision plans are for long-term investment and sustainability of the parks system, and Zilker Park needs a vision for this purpose. Future metropolitan parks will also develop vision plans as guided by the Long-Range Plan.

Responsible Party: PARD Leadership

Supporting Documents: PARD Long Range Plan

Question 4: *If we can get delineate between aspects that are included in the plan that did not have significant public support, vs those that did, and why those decisions were made. Examples that come to mind are the visitor center and reducing Barton springs to 1 lane - were those clear wishes communicated by a majority of the public? (Asked by Board Member Moore)*

Response 4: The planning team can work to identify aspects with significant support. Feedback regarding desired improvements spanned multiple concepts over 2 years. As noted in the presentation, some community members do not want change at Zilker Park, which is not uncommon in Austin. However, consensus exists that improvements to Zilker Park are needed or desired, despite conflicting priorities. The Plan attempts to respond to the multiple priorities. In addition, some questions, such as the Hillside Theater relocation, identified interest in possibilities but no consensus in what the particular decision should be. This type of consultative input influenced decisions by the planning team along with the guiding principles and input from stakeholders such as the Zilker Hillside Theatre organization, which identified extensive needs for the space. There are operational challenges with the current location of the theater. The Zilker Hillside Theater recommendation was also made considering the negative impact on Barton Springs in its current location (amenity access, environmental impacts, parking, etc.). Both Barton Springs Road and the theater recommendation also considered safety and access as key factors. For more information on the community engagement process and methodology, please refer to the Memorandum to PARB, December 22, 2022.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 5: *The initial community engagement skewed white and wealthy. (Asked by Chair Cottam Sajbel)*

Response 5: This is a common result when working on COA projects and other projects from other entities, which is why the planning team worked hard to connect with communities throughout Austin, especially areas that have historically been ignored and underserved. For this reason, community engagement processes are not about “majority” votes. The planning team developed additional methods such as small group discussions, community ambassadors, and pop-ups. For the City of Austin, community meetings and surveys rarely are representative of overall demographic information (they typically skew between 70-90% white for citywide projects), but they can still be helpful to get information and stories and to inform people of the project. Recognizing the challenges of representation in these common methods, the planning team also explores the data by disaggregating the data to explore what groups who are underrepresented have to say, ensuring their input is not lost in the full data sets. We explore results through various Districts, race/ethnicity, income levels, and others. For more information on the community engagement process and methodology, please refer to the Memorandum to PARB, December 22, 2022.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 6: *The community input received at the pop-ups was not documented or preserved. (Asked by Chair Cottam Sajbel)*

Response 6: As the planning team has expressed previously, information and input was received at all 101 pop ups. It was documented and preserved. During the first round of pop-ups, the goals were to inform the community of the ZPV Plan, share the survey, and provide paper and digital survey opportunities to community members. Participants’ input was recorded through their completed surveys. Visitors to the pop-ups who wanted to leave a quick comment were encouraged to share it on the survey so that it could be recorded in their own words. Future pop-ups also collected information through planning team members writing down comments on post-it notes while also encouraging individuals to share their thoughts on the surveys. Each pop-up allowed the community to connect with the project team and get additional information and ask questions. Subsequent pop-ups connected closely with each community meeting and continued to focus on promoting the ZVP, especially in underrepresented areas with 55% of the pop-ups taking place in Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, and strategically selected locations in other districts.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 7: *Vendors, non-profits and partner organizations like the Zilker Collective have a financial interest in Zilker Park and this plan will give them unfair influence, while taking decision making power away from the City of Austin and community members. (Asked by Chair Cottam Sajbel)*

Response 7: All nonprofits and businesses operating in or around Zilker have a financial interest, including advocacy groups. These groups have significant interest in ensuring

sustainability of Zilker and the best experience for all park visitors. The Department disagrees with the claim of “unfair influence.” Each entity working in Zilker is subject to the City Council-approved processes. Please refer to additional responses below. To be clear, there has never been a plan to cede control to LiveNation/Ticketmaster/C3 Presents. Any messaging to the contrary is inaccurate and has damaged the process.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 8: *Disability concern: Landbridge requires pushing a wheelchair up and over a substantial slope. (Asked by Chair Cottam Sajbel)*

Response 8: One of the goals focused on Accessibility, and the Vision Plan reinforces the resolve to go above and beyond state and national law to provide for accessible routes. The Land Bridge walkways (and all walkways within the park boundaries) will have an accessible route that meets or exceeds legal requirements.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 9: *Parking along Barton Springs Road will add to congestion in one of the rare east-west thoroughfares across Austin. If we are elevating foot-traffic, why the need to narrow the roadway and cause more congestion and fender-bender? (Asked by Chair Cottam Sajbel; Draft ZPVP pages 163-164)*

Response 9: As we see now, many pedestrians choose not to cross at designated crossing points. Even when not following these routes, the planning team is prioritizing safety of individuals. Throughout the decades, Zilker Park was designed and improved around cars. The vision plan aims to reclaim the park for enjoyment by people and prioritizes pedestrian and bike mobility and safety. In addition to changing internal park roads to pedestrian/bicycle areas, the draft Vision Plan proposes to reduce Barton Springs Road from two lanes each direction to one lane each direction with on-street parallel parking, protected bike lanes and a center median that would include drainage enhancements recommended by Watershed Protection Department.

Barton Springs Road divides Zilker Park and presents challenges to the safety and enjoyment of the park. Due to the current nature of Barton Springs Road which includes high vehicle speeds, there is support for slowing vehicles as they travel through the park. The planning team has worked with the Austin Transportation Department on this proposal to identify ways to slow high-speed traffic through the park.

The planning team is also working with CapMetro to identify public transit solutions as well as other solutions for circulating from nearby offsite parking areas and internal park circulators. Other streets in Austin are undergoing similar reductions in accordance with the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, including Manor Road. Barton Springs Road speed between South Lamar and Azie Morton Road was recently reduced from 35 to 30 mph as well.

Other projects outside of the scope of the Zilker Park Vision Plan that coincide with the Barton Springs Road proposal in the plan include Azie Morton and Barton Springs Road intersection, Barton Springs Road bridge, and improvements from Azie Morton to Lamar along Barton Springs Road, and enhancements to pedestrian and bike paths on Barton Springs Road and Stratford Drive around the Botanical Garden. Each of these projects is or will influence the final outcomes of the plan's proposed Barton Springs Road improvements.

Enjoyment of the park is a key component throughout the plan along with pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The reduction of Barton Springs Road is a significant step toward accomplishing these goals. Before any permanent changes to the road are made, a traffic study and pilot program conducted by the city would occur (Draft Zilker Park Vision Plan, 163-164).

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: [Zilker Park Vision Plan FAQ](#)

Question 10: *Why are we considering the move of recently renovated Hillside Theater to the noisier area by Mopac? The public has not asked for that, and most I've heard from prefer the theater not be moved. (Asked by Chair Cottam Sajbel)*

Question 10: The current location does not allow for best practices for current theater productions nor growth of the Theater's programming to share performing arts with the community. The current location creates accessibility, traffic, and parking issues. The proposed relocation will also decrease detrimental environmental impacts seen at the current location. The revised location is close to Barton Springs Road, not MoPac. Community Survey #5 showed the location near MoPac as more favored, but the planning team heard comments about the challenges of the noise from MoPac and consulted with the Zilker Hillside Theatre organization. With the proposed reconfiguration of Barton Springs Road as the Vision Plan recommends, slower traffic would lead to less noise and a better experience for attendees.

The Zilker Hillside Theatre organization leadership was consulted during the process and indicated that they wished to move to better serve the people of Austin. The Theater's recent renovations funded by the organization have helped, but the current structure still requires major upgrades and has complex infrastructure needs. In addition, a significant number of community members were interested in the idea of moving the theater as identified in survey #5. As mentioned above, the more popular option for moving it (near MoPac) was determined to be unfeasible.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 11: *Why are we removing the disc golf course? Why are we removing playing fields that are regularly used for soccer and other pick-up games? (Asked by Chair Cottam Sajbel)*

Response 11: Removing the disc golf course was never a part of the concepts or the draft Vision Plan. The November draft showed a shift of the course to accommodate the sports area. After

listening to the feedback from the community, the latest version of the plan keeps the disc golf course where it is, and the sports area is moved out of the existing disc golf area.

Regarding playing fields, the latest version of the draft plan adjusted the size of the playgrounds, leaving the existing size of the playing fields intact. The sports area was created based on Community Survey #4 expressing interest in activities being organized by nodes in the park.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 12: *Why can't PARD & Design Group work with additional public experts on the rewilding plan? Seems like both the plan and the public are working toward similar ends. (Asked by Chair Cottam Sajbel)*

Response 12: The planning team has been committed to connecting to all key stakeholders and experts throughout the process. The Rewild Zilker group is sponsored by SOS Alliance and Zilker Neighborhood Association with members from Bouldin Creek N.A., Barton Hills N.A., Sierra Club, Austin Master Naturalists, Safe Bike Austin (several members wearing multiple hats). The Rewild Zilker group and its members have had significant influence on the plan and have been involved throughout the process. The planning team has met with representatives of this group or its members more than any other group, including the meetings below:

ZPVP Meetings with ZNA/SOS/Rewild Zilker representatives:

5.3.21 - Small Group Discussion Round 1 "Environment-Water Issues" included Bill Bunch (SOS/ZNA)

[recorded and on website]

Note: several organizations invited, few attended.

5.18.21 - Small Group Discussion Round 1 "Neighbors II" included Robin Rather (ZNA), Melissa Hawthorne (Barton Hills N.A.), Ingrid Weigand (Bouldin Creek N.A.)

[recorded and on website]

Note: several adjacent neighborhood organizations invited, one other attended (City of Rollingwood).

5.21.21 - Coffee meeting included Bill Bunch (SOS/ZNA), Robin Rather (ZNA), Kurt Culbertson and Claire Hempel (Design Workshop)

11.16.21 - Zilker Vision Plan and Rewilding Report Discussion included Robin Rather and Gail Rothe (ZNA/Rewild Zilker), Ana Gonzales and Ingrid Karklins (WPD), Amanda Ross and Greg Montes (PARD)

2.11.22 - Meeting with leaders of neighborhood associations near Zilker included Robin Rather (ZNA/Rewild), Roy Whaley (Rewild/Sierra Club), Elizabeth McGreevy (Rewild Zilker), Gail Rothe (ZNA/Rewild Zilker), Garrett Nick (ZNA), Melissa Hawthorne (Barton Hills N.A.), Bill Bunch (ZNA/SOS)

[recorded and on website]

12.20.22 - Rewild Zilker Meeting with Robin Rather (ZNA), Gail Rothe (ZNA), Ben Thompson (SOS), Design Workshop, Siglo, and PARD

[1 hr at Design Workshop office, PARD representative attended virtually]

1.9.23 - Zilker Site Visit with Gail Rothe (ZNA/Rewild Zilker), Ben Thompson (SOS/Rewild Zilker), and Jonathan Ogren (Siglo)

These individuals and other representatives were at each community meeting and were able to provide input during those events. Additional emails have also been exchanged throughout the process. The suggestions from this collective group have influenced the ecological aspects of the plan among other areas.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 13: *Expense: This plan proposes too many construction projects. (Asked by Chair Cottam Sajbel)*

Response 13: The plan recommendations respond to the goals, guiding principles and calls to action that were established at the onset of the engagement process. Zilker Park is a complicated park with significant competing interests and complex interplay between social, ecological, and historical aspects of Austin. Like much of Austin, this is also a park that has not had any significant updates in decades despite the population doubling every 10 years. Zilker continues to be the most popular park in Austin. We are overdue when it comes to thinking about Zilker's future.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 14: *1) Nonprofit organization. What polling, interviews, discussion, or other community engagement was done to get the public opinion on the recommendation for an umbrella or unified organization to serve as a single point of contact for PARD and activities and interests in the park (Plan page 202-208 approximately). (Asked by Vice-Chair Faust)*

Response 14: The public-private partnership idea has been shared since Community Meeting #1. Community Meeting #2 also shared a budget review that referred to nonprofits and community partnerships. The Guiding Principles and Goals that were reviewed and commented on also state under "Sustainability": "Explore public/private partnerships that extend the reach of the Parks Department to accommodate new opportunities." Polling during several of the virtual meetings asked about the expense vs. income that Zilker Park requires and receives as well as overall attendance. The vast majority of the income is from public (City) sources, specifically the general fund. We also got input via the smaller forums with community/neighborhood groups, nonprofits, and other stakeholders. The recommendation is based on direction from City Council to explore public-private partnerships, Imagine Austin and Our Parks, Our Future: PARD Long

Range Plan (each with significant community engagement), the community-refined Guiding Principles, recommendations from a ULI study that included focus group feedback, best practices in other cities, and pragmatic solutions to achieve the goals of the vision plan.

Zilker has five nonprofit groups that have been working in Zilker for some time via a set of agreements with PARD. Some have been active for decades, others have evolved into bigger partners recently (such as Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy). All raise money and fund programming, improvements and ongoing operations and maintenance. All require agreements with PARD via their partnerships program in order to work in Zilker.

We also met with PARD staff to understand the process of its partnerships program. Any additional organizations that might be formed would need to develop an agreement with the City. Given the long-standing relationships and guidance noted above, the planning team recommends coordinating the work of all of the nonprofits via a coalition is the best way forward. This will help the City manage the projects that they pursue from the Vision Plan. Creating an organization that adds to, but does not replace, the work of the existing partnerships is a complex task. The Parks and Recreation Department believes it is appropriate for the Department to maintain control of operations and maintenance. The draft Zilker Vision Plan proposes a process to develop a partnership with an umbrella nonprofit. Any agreement is subject to hearings and approval by City Boards and Commissions, as well as City Council, like those that have come before the Parks and Recreation Board previously.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 15: *What community engagement was done on the recommendation to cede control of concessions and delegate management to a non-profit? (p206) The justifying language (p206) seems to support the idea that public and competitive bidding for facilities and operations on public land are not useful procedures enacted by our City Council and state government for specific reasons to protect public resources. What consideration and research was done on the importance of public and competitive bidding procedures, having the contracts open and accessible to the public, and other transparency and good government aspects that would be lost if this organization was delegated these responsibilities? (Asked by Vice-Chair Faust)*

Response 15: In addition to the information provided above:

To be clear, there is no recommendation to cede control of concessions and delegate management and operations of the park to a nonprofit. Increasingly, park concessions present an opportunity for revenue generation. Current city revenue policy requires revenue collected by the Parks and Recreation Department to be included as part of the general fund revenue portfolio. In cities across the United States, concessions are being managed by a combination of public agencies as well as nonprofit partners. Exploring policy changes related to revenue collection and uses for direct park benefit is a prudent approach. The Planning Team has updated the referenced language to provide clarity and ensure the text communicates the intent.

The Parks and Recreation Department utilizes the City of Austin Purchasing Department and the City of Austin Legal Department to advise on all things purchasing related, including bidding processes, procedures, contract development, solicitations, and the like. In soliciting concessions, the Department is obligated to follow City of Austin Purchasing competitive bid/solicitation processes.

Via resolution, the Austin City Council has also directed PARD to explore nonprofit partnerships, as such the plan recommends this exploration.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 16: *What about public communication about park interests, what is the recommendation for how the public can know what is happening and provide complaints and comments if management is with a non-profit that is not required to hold public meetings? (Asked by Vice-Chair Faust)*

Response 16: To be clear, there is no recommendation to cede control of concessions and delegate management and operations of the park to a nonprofit. The Vision Plan recommends a collaborative approach between PARD and a unified parks nonprofit that coordinates and streamlines the existing partnerships at Zilker with a focus on advocacy, ecological restoration, ongoing volunteer stewardship of the park, funding, and coordination between the City and the many groups and organizations already working to care for and improve Zilker Park (p. 210). The Vision Plan does not articulate the details of any possible future agreement or structure of said partnership. Any future partnership with a nonprofit associated with and umbrella Zilker Park will have a negotiated agreement unique to that nonprofit's purpose.

In existing agreements, partners are held to similar standards for community transparency and involvement as the Department requires of itself. The Vision Plan proposes PARD would remain responsible for the overall capital projects, operations and management, and overall programming (Barton Springs Pool, Austin Nature and Science Center, etc.) for Zilker Park. Such improvements would be subject to review and approval by City Boards and Commissions and City Council.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 17: *Would the umbrella non-profit able to accept corporate donations? Could it accept donations from C3, Live Nation, or other entities that have contracts for events in the park? Was there community engagement done on recommending a non-profit that can take donations from corporations be allowed to build and maintain facilities in the park? (Asked by Vice-Chair Faust)*

Response 17: Assuming that an organization is created and established as a nonprofit, it could accept donations from any individual or entity for purposes laid out in its charter, by-laws and relevant state and federal laws.

In order for any donations to be spent on improvements to Zilker, the coalition would need to have a partnerships agreement with PARD, mentioned earlier. The approved Zilker Vision Plan is the document that guides capital projects. Any funding would be subject to acceptance by the City through City Council approval. As is standard practice with all parks, construction of facilities or amenities within Zilker Park are expected to be consistent with the Vision Plan. Prior to any structures being built, the Department conducts additional community engagement.

Please see the responses to previous questions related to community engagement associated with nonprofits.

Nonprofits and concessionaires have a history in Zilker of taking donations to manage and maintain facilities, such as the Sunshine Camps or the Hillside Theater. PARD does not restrict nonprofit funding sources, but any new structures would go through City approval processes.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 18: *The recommendation continues that the non-profit would serve as an advocate for Zilker Park. What is the recommendation for how this advocacy agenda will be determined? Will the advocacy agenda be set by a volunteer board self-appointed by the non-profit? (Asked by Vice-Chair Faust)*

Response 18: The Vision Plan's recommendations are high-level recommendations that do not address the specifics of how the day-to-day execution will happen. Austin has a great history of the park, open space and environmental nonprofits working together to advocate for increased funding for parks, open space as well as protecting water quality since the 1990s. Examples of such include advocating for budget increases for PARD as well as advocating for bonds and bond elections. The Vision Plan proposes this as a possible avenue to achieve certain goals. However, like much of the plan, it is a high-level proposal that does not determine specific structures or design of the organization itself.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 19: *2) Barton Springs Road. Has a traffic study been conducted showing travel times through Barton Springs Road if the road is limited to one lane each way with parallel parking? Will one be done? What is the purpose of building a land bridge over the road and slowing the traffic significantly? What has the public engagement indicated about putting in one lane and parallel parking? (Asked by Vice-Chair Faust)*

Response 19: A traffic study has not been completed, since this is not usually part of a vision plan. Current traffic data was referenced to assess current conditions. The Austin Transportation Department would first conduct a pilot study for Barton Springs Rd to confirm that the road reconfiguration would be safe and beneficial. Barton Springs Rd divides the park in half and presents challenges for safety and enjoyment of the park, so

recommendations for reconfiguration of the road and a land bridge have been recommended. Community engagement, like many aspects in Zilker, has revealed community members in support of this item as well as against this proposal. Please see above response related to reducing the road to one lane.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 20: *3) Parking garages. The access to the parking garage on Azie Morton seems that it would be extremely difficult. That is a narrow road very close to the intersection and it would be very hard to get in and out of that area. Has a traffic study been done? We have heard a lot of feedback on the parking garages, mostly negative. Have any changes been made in response to this feedback in the draft? How would the garages be used during ACL festival? Would they be reserved by ACL and Trail of Lights during their events? Would this also be managed by the umbrella non-profit.*

What is the plan for repurposing the garages when they are not needed? There was a mention of offices or cafes on the ground floor. Was there any community engagement on offices and commercial structures in the park? (Asked by Vice-Chair Faust)

Response 20: As stated previously, a traffic study is not part of a Vision Plan. Although there have been comments against the garage idea, there is community support in favor of them, also. Garages are a proposed solution to the tensions of community members wanting more parking while also addressing some of the most pressing ecological needs of the park. With garages, we reduce the amount of impervious cover with the numerous existing parking lots and reduce the internal roads that feed them; unsanctioned informal parking and formal parking lots are removed, decreasing the ecological damage of parking on grass and increasing the amount of greenspace. Festivals/events could possibly use the garages to minimize parking on fields or gravel, but no plan is in place for that. That is a future operational decision that will be the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Department to consider, manage and/or operate.

The plan states that the garages should be designed for the possibility of reduced cars in the park, which would allow garages to be repurposed for park and recreation purposes as meeting rooms, classrooms or offices. This is in recognition from the community and from PARD for the need of additional spaces for education and community gathering.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 21: *4) Moving the Hillside Theater. The current theater has 3,000 to 3,500 people at its summer musicals, but the new theater would hold 1,200 people. How was it decided to build a smaller theater with less parking? What is wrong with the current location? Was there public engagement that supported removing field area from the great lawn for an amphitheater. That side of the great lawn sees intense use on weekends for picnics and soccer. It's hard to imagine taking a square foot out of play. Also that corner seems to*

flood and pool water. If an amphitheater is designed to point down in that corner it would have flooding issues, even with green infrastructure. That can't change gravity. (Asked by Vice-Chair Faust)

Response 21: The Zilker Hillside Theater carrying capacity is not anticipating being reduced. By relocating it to the proposed area in combination with proposed parking solutions, access to the theater and parking will improve. There is support for this recommendation from the Zilker Hillside Theatre organization. Please see response 4. During productions, the Great Lawn will be able to accommodate attendance and still allow plenty of room for other uses to occur. There was community interest for moving the theater from Survey #5. After recognizing the challenges of one of the proposed locations near MoPac and with input from key stakeholders such as the Theatre organization, the planning team has proposed moving it to the Great Lawn. Additional studies and design regarding drainage are not in the scope of the Vision Plan and would be explored more before implementation.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 22: *5) Rock Garden. Why are there no walking trails through the Rock Garden to get from one side of the park to the pool? This seemed obvious to me. Now it is awkward to climb down to the pool and some simple paths would keep people on a trail and reduce erosion. (Asked by Vice-Chair Faust)*

Response 22: The team envisions building pedestrian connections adjacent to existing paved roads as the walkways to get to and from the pool area, Trailhead and restroom structure. This would maintain this space as a natural area.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 23: *6) The Boat Concessions. Given the new information from the Lady Birk Lake Capacity study, it seems that the Rowing Dock is in a good place, because it is spread out from the most crowded area at the mouth of Barton Creek. Now that we have this information shouldn't it stay there? What is the purpose of moving it closer to Barton Creek?*

Response 23: Based on information from the Lady Bird Lake Capacity study and feedback, the latest version of the draft plan has the Rowing Dock remaining on the west side of MoPac.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 24: *7) The South Side of the Pool. The parking should stay next to the pool on the South Side. People come there for the pool. Do not move the surface parking. Did community engagement indicate the need for playgrounds on the south side of the pool? The plan*

indicates this is intended to provide a playground when the main playground is closed for the festivals. This demonstrates whoever stated that has never been to that side during ACL. The police close the street at Azie Morton and Barton Hills Drive. No one could park or access those playgrounds.

Did anyone go ask all the people that are at the drum circle at the Monkey Tree what they feel about these playgrounds? There is a very loud drum circle there on Sundays. It is a very organically developed community experience. The development on the south side feels intended to drive out these uses of the park that are not traditional sports or playgrounds, but are part of what makes Austin unique. On a Sunday afternoon you can hear the drums from the main playground across the pool. It would be way too loud to be next to it with kids.

Response 24: Based on community feedback, paved surface parking will not be removed in the latest draft.

Community Survey #5 showed support for a playground on the south side of the park. Playgrounds can be used every day of the week, not just on Sundays when the drum circle gathers. In a park of 350 acres, multiple areas of play are provided to relieve congestion near the playground at the Pool area. We heard support for the playgrounds primarily from kids and families. We received feedback from participants in the drum circle about some of the challenges, but we also heard from people who were happy to still have the space available at the Monkey Tree for the drum circle.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 25: *8) The bridge over Barton Creek upstream of the pool? Has this been evaluated for flood risk? This seems ill conceived, likely to cause erosion and degradation. Big trees and brush come down the creek and would get caught on bridge pilings and create dangerous conditions. Sadly someone was killed trying to clear the brush from the pool grates after a flood.*

Response 25: Evaluation of flood risk is not in the scope of the Vision Plan, aside from the data that is available from GIS. Any implementation of this would go through additional studies for a design that achieves the goals of increased access and safety.

Responsible Party: Zilker Park Vision Planning Team

Supporting Documents: Zilker Park Vision Plan released 2.24.23

Question 26: *9) What is the feedback you have heard since the release of the Draft Plan on reducing the disc golf area? Has there been much support for the sport courts? What about reducing the playing field area on the South side? What is the feedback been on that? These parts of the plan all seem to reduce the availability of area for sports that seem to be very popular and uniquely appropriate to Austin. Teams and leagues have developed, and this is seeking to uproot these naturally formed communities around recreation and enjoying the park.*

Response 26: The planning team heard extensive feedback from disc golf players that the shifting of the existing course was not realistic and the sports area could be improved with distance from MoPac and nearer the Polo Field. In the latest version of the plan, the sports area is moved out of the existing disc golf area.

Like many aspects of the Vision Plan, feedback about sports area and moving playing fields has been mixed. Families and children have typically been favorable of this area. In the latest version of the draft plan, the size of the playgrounds has been reduced, leaving the existing size of the playing fields intact.

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Question 27: *9) On the community engagement page it does not list individual meetings that took place with ACL. The consultants have stated they communicate with ACL, provided drawings and measurements of the proposed plans, but there is no record of these meetings available with the other individual and small group meetings. Please provide a full list of meetings, calls, or written communications so we can understand what that side of the community engagement has looked like.*

Response 27: As an existing stakeholder in the park, the planning team has met with C3 Presents and other organizations with events in Zilker, primarily for information gathering, understanding the footprint they use and how park management occurs during the events, including external and internal shuttles. To be clear, the planning team has not attempted to hide any of these meetings, and they are now added on the webpage. The meetings are listed below:

5.3.21 - Small Group Discussion "Large Events" included Emmett Beliveau (COO, C3 Presents) and James Russell (Executive Director, Trail of Lights Foundation and Kite Festival Foundation)
[recorded and on website]

Note: Zilker Relays and Blues on the Green representatives invited and did not attend.

1.7.22 - Events meeting with Emmett Beliveau and James Russell [1 hr]

2.7.22 - Events follow-up with Emmett Beliveau and James Russell [1 hr]

3.7.22 - C3 with PARD Events Office [1 hr]

9.15.22 - C3 at their office [1 hr]

The proper channel for all communications between entities is the public information request process.

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