

ZILKER METROPOLITAN PARK VISION PLAN

An Urban Treasure in Need of a Comprehensive Plan

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Prepared by

DESIGNWORKSHOP

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CHAPTER ONE

The chapter will be completed in 2023 when all community engagement is done.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The chapter will be completed in 2023 when all community engagement is done.

SUMMARY

Zilker Park is Austin's oldest and most iconic metropolitan park. Its physical and environmental resources reflect the foresight of the previous owners and citizens who sought to preserve it as a grand park for future generations to appreciate. Two major development phases, completed between 1917 and 1939, established its nuanced and complex character and set the stage for the park we enjoy today. At over 350 acres, it offers a wide range of recreational and natural features to capture the visitor's imagination. It features over 2,000 linear feet of lake frontage. Its Great Lawn features panoramic views of the city skyline. It is the home of world-famous, spring-fed Barton Springs Pool. It is a place of mystery and wonder. And yet many who visit are unaware of the rich history of the place, which is in many ways the basis of its magic.

HISTORY OF ZILKER PARK

CHAPTER TWO

IN THIS CHAPTER

Historic Timeline
Historic Context

HISTORIC TIMELINE

700 - 1530 C.E.

The cultural traditions of the communities in the area included pottery, pigment, pendants, beads, needle and fishhook making

1730

Mission established on the banks of Barton Creek for less than a year

1901

A.J. Zilker makes first land purchase

1913

A.J. Zilker acquires over 350 acres of land surrounding the springs

1923

The Zilker Bathhouse is completed

1926

City of Austin allocates \$15,000 for new parks, appoints new Park Board

1928

Austin City Council passes an ordinance creating the new Austin Recreation Division

1929

The Barton Springs Pool opens with a new concrete dam and an expanded circumference of 2,500 feet

1933

Work begins in Zilker Park through federal New Deal program

1934

Final plot of land is given by A.J. Zilker

The Sunshine Camp is established by the Men's Business League to provide a camp for children with tuberculosis

Completion of the rock garden, with 1,200 shrubs

1939

Completion of the Sunken Gardens

1963

Parks and Recreation Department facilities officially integrated

1969

Japanese-inspired stroll garden is opened along three acres within the Botanical Garden, designed by Isamu Taniguchi

1974

Work begins on a \$200,000 project to provide badly needed parking lots, control traffic, and preserve open green space for activities

MoPac cuts through the park just west of the Zilker Botanical Garden creating a divide through the park

1979

Members of the Austin City Council vote to permit more multiple-family housing and apartments on a 38-acre tract of Barton Creek north of Zilker Park

1982

The Austin Nature and Science Center opens

1986

The McBeth Annex opens

1992

Save Our Springs ordinance enacted in Austin

1997

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lists the Barton Springs salamander as an endangered species

1973

Austin Parks and Recreation Board approves construction of a new natural science center building, a pioneer homestead and nature trails on the west side of the park

1999

Blues on the Green, a free music festival by Austin radio KGSR, moves to Zilker Park from the Arboretum

2002

Austin City Limits music festival begins with over 25,000 attendees and 67 bands playing on five different stages at Zilker Park

1962-1964

The Botanical Garden opens and becomes a hub for local "garden clubs"

1947

The new bathhouse at Barton Springs is completed for \$170,000 to meet the crowded conditions and changing needs at the pool

1953

The City of Austin acquires the Rabb homestead for \$59,000, giving them control of an additional 4,000 feet of creek and bluff overlooking Barton Springs and the park

1960

Black students from Stephen F. Austin High School hold a series of "swim-ins" in protest of the segregation of Barton Springs Pool

1931

A.J. Zilker donates an additional 250-300 acres of parkland to the School Board, which sells it to the City for \$200,000

1928

City planners Koch and Fowler recommend Austin park area improvements including using Barton Springs Rd as a main traffic route, deepening the pool, and evening out the creek bed

1917

The City of Austin and A.J. Zilker's land agreement gives the city access to abundant fresh water of the Barton Springs tract with the condition that the City pay into a trust for educational developments at Austin High School

1839

Austin is founded

1838

Surrounding area of settlement surveyed for the capital to the new Republic of Texas

1837

William Barton moves onto 177 acres of the Henry Hill league, bringing with him 5-12 enslaved people

1835

A league of land (now a portion of Zilker Park) is given to a settler named Henry Hill during the early days of the Mexican government in Texas

1534

Spanish colonizer Cabeza de Vaca reaches Austin by a game trail from Galveston. He makes note of the American Indian population with ties to a riparian environment

7000 B.C.E.

Main Spring at Barton Springs is re-exposed, coming from a deep fault located near the south side of the current pool

HISTORIC CONTEXT

SUMMARY

- 1 Zilker Park is Austin's oldest metropolitan park, providing physical and environmental resources to residents and visitors since before the land was purchased in 1917.
- 2 The park's popularity skyrocketed following Depression-era public improvements.
- 3 This Vision Plan is the first comprehensive effort looking at the park as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

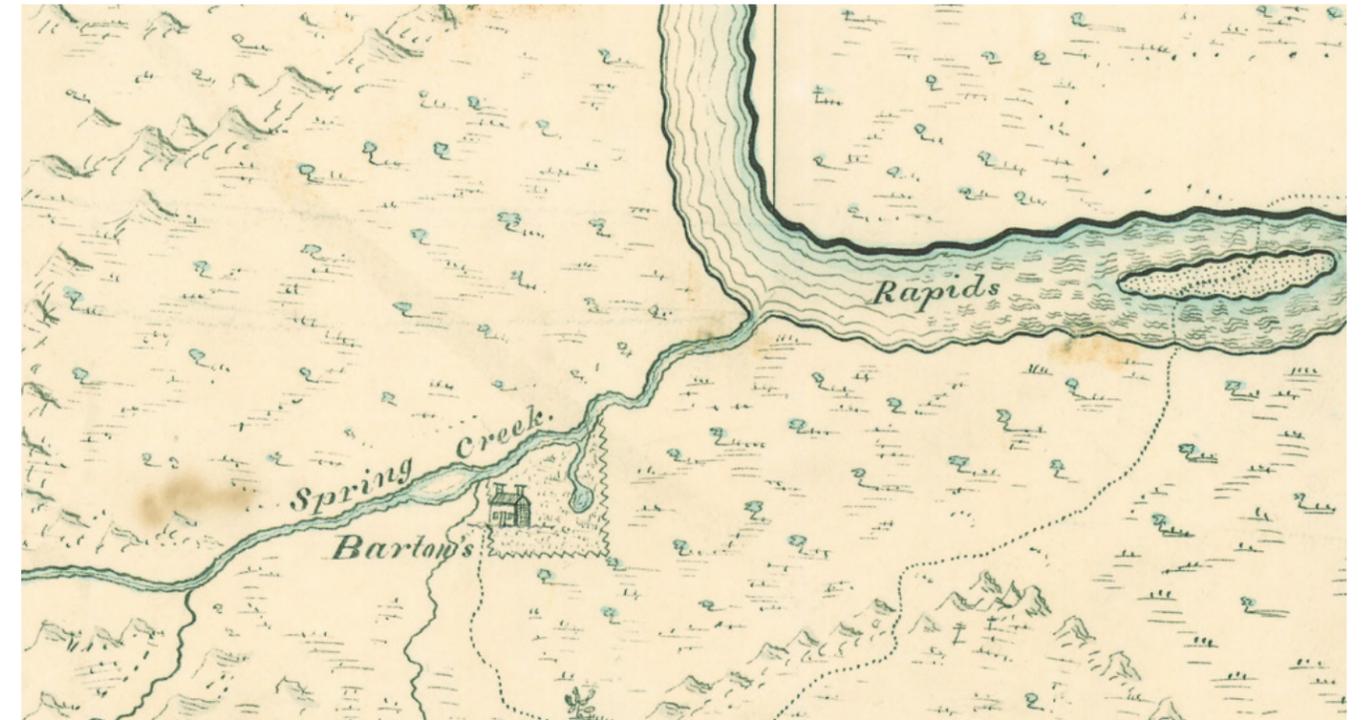
Zilker Park has long been a place of gathering for the people of the Austin area. From a verdant hunting ground for Indigenous peoples, to powering small industries and supporting ranch land, to a well-loved swimming and bathing pool situated within a large metropolitan park. The park's relationship to the springs, creeks, and Lower Colorado River creates a landscape capable of supporting and responding to a myriad of ever-evolving cultural demands.

PREHISTORY

The modern occupation of the area around Zilker Park began at about the time the city of Austin was founded, in 1839. But for a few thousand years before that, the site was familiar to the indigenous people of the region and the natural forces that formed Barton Springs began hundreds of millions of years ago. The springs, actually a group of four springs, are artesian springs, issuing under pressure from a fault line in the underlying limestone formation. The springs, and the abundant plants and wildlife they sustained, and the ready source of stone for toolmaking attracted indigenous peoples to the site.

Archaeological excavations conducted in the area of the springs found evidence of middens, camps and shelters, quarries and butchering sites, as well as tools, artifacts and points. In 1928, a crew led by J. E. Pearce conducted archeological investigations near the confluence of Barton Creek and the Colorado River, with excavations made on the south side of the creek. Pearce was the chair of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Texas and had studied the archeology of indigenous natives of Texas for a decade before. From previous investigations in Central Texas, he had described a nomadic life centered on hunting, fishing and gathering of plants and nuts for subsistence. He located stone points and tools used for hunting and scraping, shells and burned rock middens, which he described as "kitchen middens." He presented his early field research and findings to professional groups and scholarly publications, establishing Central Texas archeology as a major research field. Pearce was later the director of the Texas Memorial Museum.

Although the records of Pearce's investigation in Zilker Park have apparently been lost, more recent studies were completed in the 1980s, 1990s, 2008 and 2010 at what is now called the Vara Daniel Site, prior to installation of a new sewer line in the park. Stratified buried archeological deposits from a span of more than 11,000 years were identified, representing life in the late Paleoindian through the late Prehistoric periods. The sites are deeply buried and were accessed through carefully controlled, deep archeological excavations. The artifacts and features reflect changes in climate and technology over the span of thousands of years. The Paleoindian findings date to about 10,900 years Before Present (BP) and indicate people who hunted large mammals and smaller animals, used dart points and spears and gathered plants. Evidence of Archaic occupations, dating from 8,800 BP to 1,200 BP, suggest that people hunted bison and deer with smaller dart points and spears, gathered nuts, stem and root plants, and cooked food with hot rocks and earth ovens. The excavations also suggest that the location of the river changed over time, and periods of moisture and flooding occurred when snail species were deposited on what is high ground today. Evidence of human occupancy of the site during the Late Prehistoric period from 1,200 BP to 500 BP has also been documented through archeological investigations. People hunted with bow and arrow, farmed to augment gathered plants and used pottery in this time period.



City of Austin and Vicinity, 1839.
Source: Texas General Land Office, Map 3149

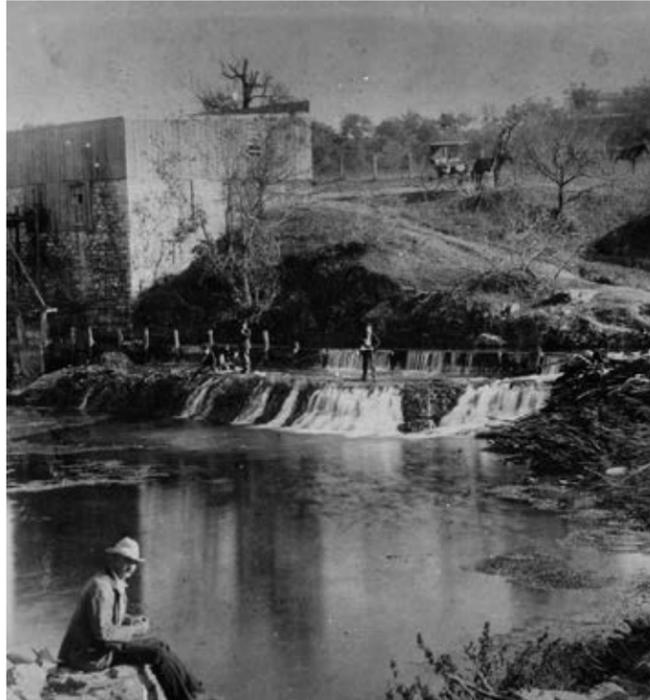
Native American people, including Lipan Apache, Tonkawa and Comanche tribes, also occupied the area around the springs. By the time of the Spanish settlements in 1730, the Tonkawa and Lipan Apache tribes inhabited the area around Austin. A few decades later, the Comanche and Kiowa tribes inhabited parts of Travis County. Barton Springs was a sacred Comanche landmark, on a tribal trail between Bandera County and Nacogdoches. The creek and springs likely were used by the Comanche for bathing. Comanche Marker Trees were used to mark trails and springs and may well have been placed in areas of the park to mark those sites.

SPRING CREEK

For a very brief time in 1730 and 1731, three Spanish frontier missions were located in the vicinity of the springs. The Franciscan missions were originally founded in 1716 in East Texas, and later moved to Central Texas on the Colorado River, in hopes of attracting the participation of local tribes. Conditions in this location were apparently unfavorable, and the missions were soon moved to the San Antonio River in 1731. The brief stop on the Colorado River is commemorated with a historical marker installed on the south grounds of Barton Springs Pool by the Texas Centennial Commission in 1936.

The Spanish also began the practice of making private land grants to individual settlers in the eighteenth century, as a way to populate the vast stretches of land that lay north of the Rio Grande. After winning independence from Spain in 1821, Mexico continued the practice, creating a system of empresarios, or agents, contracted to recruit colonists and allocate land grants. One such empresario, Ben Milam, received a contract to settle 300 families between the Colorado and Guadalupe Rivers in 1826. Milam's Colony included the land surrounding Spring Creek, which is today called Barton Creek. In 1835 League No. 21 in Milam's Colony, a tract at the mouth of Spring Creek, was granted to Henry P. Hill, a twenty-eight-year-old native of Georgia and a lawyer. Hill returned to Georgia within a few years, perhaps during the Texas Revolution, protecting his ownership of League 21 from afar.

Although he was not the original recipient of League 21, William Barton is the settler with the strongest association with the springs. Barton was born in South Carolina in 1782 and lived in Kentucky and Alabama before coming to Texas in 1828, settling a league of land in Stephen F. Austin's Little Colony, in the area near Bastrop, with his wife, five children, and five enslaved people. Barton applied to the Republic of Texas for



English & English Mill, circa 1880.
Source: Austin History Center

additional labor (177.1 acres) of land, which he was entitled to as a head of household living in the republic in 1836. He selected a site on the west bank of the Colorado, at the mouth of Spring Creek and moved there around 1837. But a patent was never actually granted by the General Land Office because it was later determined that the land selected by Barton was on the tract already patented to Henry P. Hill.

Barton built a house on the south bank of Spring Creek near the main spring. It has been claimed that he named two of the springs for daughters Parthenia and Eliza. Barton's cabin and the springs are depicted in an 1839 map of Austin. The spot became known as "Barton's" or Barton Springs, as it is still called today.

As Austin grew, Barton Springs was a favorite spot for fishing, swimming and sightseeing. Barton kept two baby buffaloes at his place, and the tamed animals were part of the attraction. He also leased spring flow and land on the north bank of the creek to a group to erect a saw mill, beginning a pattern of small industrial uses at the spring site.

Barton died in 1840, and due to the confusion over the actual ownership of the labor of land, it took fifteen years before the estate was settled. The question of the ownership of the labor of land was finally resolved by a decree of the Travis County District Court issued in 1855. The labor of land was then sold on behalf of the heirs to A. B. McGill for \$5,044.50. The land changed hands several times, and in 1860 the land and water rights were sold to John Rabb, whose heirs would hold the land for the next century. The Rabbs lived in a log cabin at the springs and raised a herd of cattle on their 50 acres of land. In 1867, Mary Rabb had a two-story limestone house built near the log cabin. Three generations of the Rabb family lived in the limestone house until 1955, when the site was sold to the City of Austin. The house burned down shortly after the city took it over and it no longer stands there today.

After the Civil War, a gradual shift in the land uses around the springs began, as more intensive industrial uses were intermixed with ranching and farming. In addition to the saw mill, a grist mill and ice manufacturing business were built at the springs by Michael Paggi. A large, water-powered flour mill was built on land leased by the Rabbs to English & English Mill. The railroad arrived in Austin in 1871, opening the local markets to reliable transportation, and the interest in harnessing the water power of the springs remained strong through the end of the nineteenth century.



Zilker Amphitheatre at Eliza Spring, circa 1915.
Source: Austin History Center



Stone arch bridge over Barton Creek, circa 1890.
Source: Austin History Center

Newspaper accounts in the 1870s also described the springs as a popular destination for Sunday afternoon carriage rides. Paggi encouraged visitors to the site, building a bathhouse for changing and renting swimming suits for visitors to use. The springs were also a popular spot for military reunions and picnics. In the 1850s, US Army troops camped at the springs on their way to the forts in West Texas, including stops by Robert E. Lee and Albert Sidney Johnston. Union troops also camped at the springs during Reconstruction in the late 1860s.

In 1889 a handsome stone arch bridge was built over Barton Creek, just upstream of the springs, which gave access to the north bank of the creek and the pasture land beyond, and also to the road to the west to Bee Cave. A heavy flood in April 1900 washed the bridge out and it was not rebuilt.

By the turn of the century, the Rabbs owned considerable acreage in portions of the original Henry P. Hill league and beyond the south portion of the Barton labor. They began to sell these lands off to various buyers, and thus began the next major transition at the springs. A.J. Zilker had begun buying land in the area in 1901 and in 1907, Gail Rabb sold the land along the creek, including the main spring to him. Rabb reserved a tract upstream of the main spring for the Rabb residence.

Andrew Jackson Zilker, an Austin businessman, came from Indiana to Austin as an eighteen-year-old young man in 1876. He arrived with only fifty cents in his pocket, but through hard work became a successful businessman, working in the manufacture of artificial ice and eventually owning the entire ice plant. He held other business and political positions, serving as a volunteer fireman, a city alderman for the Tenth Ward, a director of the First National Bank and was the Water

and Light Commissioner in Austin for a time. He was especially interested in education and was on the Travis County Board of Education for many years. He was an advocate of practical education in public schools, including manual training and home economics, and could point to his rags-to-riches story as an illustration of the importance of this training. He married Ida Peck in 1888, and they had two daughters and a son.

In 1901, Zilker began acquiring property around the springs, when he purchased about 350 acres on the south bank of the Colorado. He continued to accumulate property in this area through 1913, acquiring Eliza Spring on the north bank of the creek in 1901 and the Main Spring and Old Mill Spring on the south bank of the creek from Gail Rabb in 1907. Zilker used the land for farming and ranching. He raised feed for horses, which were used in the ice business to pull delivery wagons to homes throughout Austin. He also raised livestock on the ranch and also leased part of the land to the Butler Brick Company.

Andrew Zilker was an early member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Austin Lodge #201, which was founded in 1891. In 1903 Lodge #201 hosted the Elks State Encampment, a convention gathering of lodges from across the state of Texas. Zilker had a stepped amphitheater structure built around Eliza Spring likely in anticipation of the event. The amphitheater is an open-air meeting space, built in a large, stepped oval around the mouth of the spring.

BARTON SPRINGS PARK

The Zilker family used the springs for family gatherings and celebrations. Andrew and Ida Zilker were planning to build a house on the land in about the location of the current Zilker Botanical Garden when Ida Zilker died in 1916. Zilker reconsidered the use of the property in a way that reflected his long-term love of the springs and his firm belief in the value of practical education for young people. At the time there was a water shortage in Austin and the springs were considered a potential source of water for the City.

In 1917, Zilker approached the Austin School Board and the City Council with an offer to donate the tract of land at Barton Springs to the public realm. He proposed to donate about forty acres of land, including the four springs at Barton Springs, to the School Board, on the condition that the city purchase the land from the schools for use as a public park. The purchase price of \$100,000 was to fund an endowment for industrial education and home economics training in the schools, called the Zilker Permanent Fund. Zilker retained ownership and use of the larger, adjacent parcel of land for his livestock. The proposed arrangement included a provision for an easement from Bee Cave Road to the creek, to allow Zilker's livestock access to water. Zilker also allowed for the possibility of an easement across his remaining land in the event the City chose to use the springs as a source of municipal water. This easement would be critical for laying water mains from the springs to a remote pumping station. The proposal was approved by the citizens of Austin in an election held in the fall of 1917, and the warranty deed was accepted in early 1918. The city made the \$100,000 payment in \$10,000 increments, with 6% interest, over the course of the next ten years.

On January 15, 1928, Mayor P. W. McFadden made the final payment, in a ceremony at the Majestic Theater, to J. Harris Gardner with the Austin school board. Gardner presented the mayor with the deed to Barton Springs and read a resolution of appreciation to Zilker from the school board. Andrew Zilker was proclaimed Austin's "Most Worthy Citizen" of 1927. In his remarks, Zilker spoke about his love for the springs, and that it should belong not to an individual, but to all the people of Austin.

Once the City acquired Barton Springs, it had an abundant source of municipal water, if needed. However the rains came, the drought was broken and the water supply was steadied without tapping the springs. Instead, the city leaders began to think of the springs as a municipal amenity and a tourist attraction. By 1920, Austin was dubbed the "Automobile City of Texas" by the *Austin Statesman*, and there were 6,000 vehicles in the county. In 1921, work began on several automobile tourist camps in Austin parks, including one at Barton Springs Park. The tourist camp was touted by marketing brochures and depicted on city maps at the time. Within a few years, the vision for the use and development of the park changed, and the Council voted to discontinue the tourist camp at the site in 1928.

Related to automobile access to the park, Barton Springs Road was extended across the creek with a new concrete bridge constructed in 1926. The road itself was asphalt paved by 1925 and extended across the creek. Bee Cave Road, in its location at that time, extended along the north edge of the Barton Springs Park property, separating it from Zilker's ranch and pasture lands.

In support of recreational uses at the park, the Chamber of Commerce and the Lions Club funded the construction of a public bathhouse on the north bank of the creek by 1923. The building had dressing rooms for men and women on the second floor and a wide promenade on three sides. The two-story wooden structure was designed by Hugo Kuehne, Austin native, MIT trained architect and an organizer of University of Texas School of Architecture. Kuehne established a private architectural practice in Austin in 1915 and completed many projects for the City of Austin. He also served on city boards and commissions, including the Parks Board and the Planning Commission.

Public interest in developing a city parks system came in to full force in the mid-1920s. A 1923 editorial in the *Austin Statesman* decried the limited supply of public parkland, finding the supply of less than one acre for every 1,000 inhabitants deficient. The editorial noted that the city was growing and advocated setting aside large tracts for parkland to avoid the possibility of later having to tear buildings down to create parks. Continued growth in Austin also taxed the existing city infrastructure of utilities, amenities and public services. As a remedy, the City Council instructed the new City Manager, Adam Johnson, to prepare a plan of action to solve the problems.

To assist in this effort, an unpaid advisory board called the City Plan Commission was created in 1926, charged with addressing a list of problems including street conditions, traffic issues, utility routing and civic and public improvements. The commission was also directed to study subdivisions, parks, community centers, zoning and flood protection. To fulfill their responsibilities, the commission recommended the city hire the Dallas firm of Koch and Fowler Engineers to prepare a city plan for Austin.

The firm produced a comprehensive city plan with recommendations to address the problems and issues the City Plan Commission had been asked to solve. The plan was adopted by the City of Austin in 1928 and

BARTON SPRINGS PARK

- 1 The springs were used by the Zilker Family for their gatherings and celebrations.
- 2 As a result of the land deal between Zilker and the City, the land around Barton Springs to the public in 1917.
- 3 As the city grew, so did the public interest in developing a city park system; the City Plan Commission was formed in 1926.
- 4 Over the years, several improvements were proposed including construction of a concrete trap dam.

included recommendations that were essentially a call for the deliberate segregation of the city. By using the premise of “separate but equal” accommodation of the races in the provision of facilities and conveniences, including schools and parks, tacit separation was accomplished without the use of segregation by zoning. It would be decades before Austin parks and schools were finally integrated.

With respect to parks, the document recommended a five-year plan for the development of parks across the city, ranging from small neighborhood playgrounds to large nature reserves. The Koch and Fowler plan spoke favorably of Barton Springs Park and made specific recommendations for improvements that might be made in the park, including a recommendation to expand the park to the east.

Based on the findings of the city plan, the first parks board, actually a committee of businessmen from the Austin Lions Club, was formed in 1928, and a bond election for park and playground acquisition and development funds was passed the same year. Also the City established the Recreation Department and hired its first paid Superintendent of Recreation, James Garrison.

In October, the City Manager presented his program of proposed improvements at Barton Springs to include a dam, retaining wall, storm sewer and other improvements at the pool. The Council approved the proposed improvements and authorized \$50,000 for the work. The drawings for the dam and retaining wall work were prepared by the City Engineer’s office in October 1928. The work included the current downstream dam and a children’s wading pool (later removed) installed in the shallow end of the pool. The drawings also included a sidewalk on the north bank of the creek adjacent to the children’s wading pool. The construction work was completed later that year.

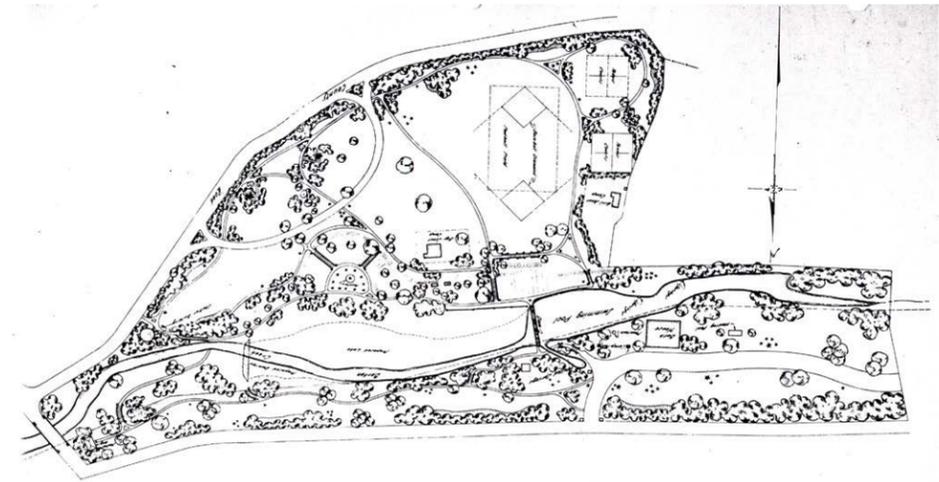
The following year, the Council considered bids for paving, curbs, gutters, and for parkways and driveways in Barton Springs Park. They also approved the plans for a concession stand and caretaker’s cottage, both designed by Hugo Kuehne. The concession stand, designed to suggest the appearance of a wind-powered mill, was built on the north bank of the creek, to the east of Eliza Spring. It was demolished in 1959 when the current concession stand was built. The Caretaker’s Cottage is still in use as an office for park staff.

In late 1929, the Council received bids for the construction of baseball diamonds and bleachers, and the construction took place the following year. The baseball diamonds remain today on the south bank of the creek. At the end of the year, the Parks Board recommended the construction of a concrete trap dam above the children’s wading pool (the current upstream dam), sidewalks on the north and south sides of the pool, retaining walls on portions of the north and south sides of the pool and the removal of accumulated gravel from the pool. The work was completed along with added playground equipment, fences, and backstop improvements. Two huts, or clubhouses, were also built on the south side of the pool for Boy Scout and Girl Scout troop use.

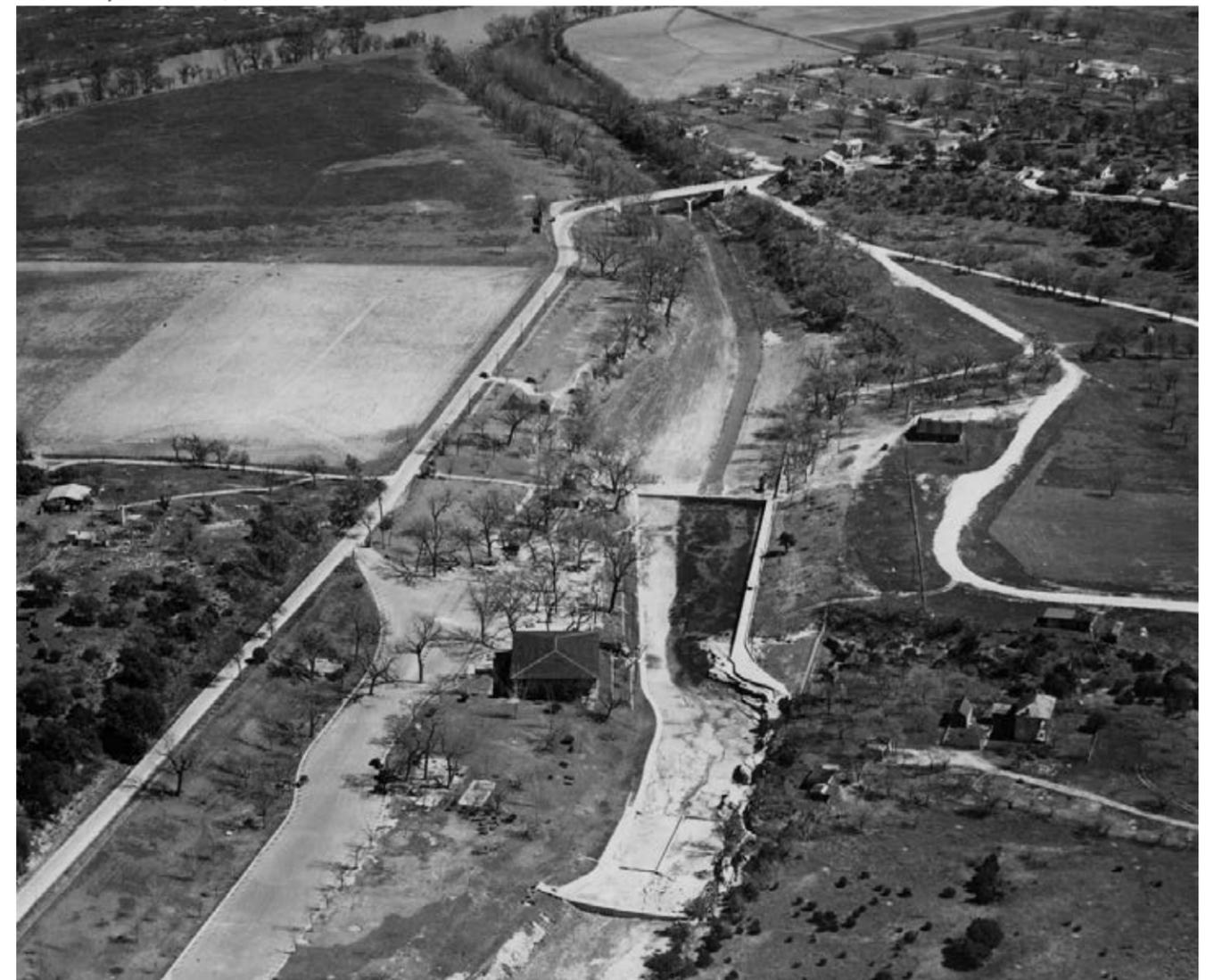
Within a year of the final payment for Barton Springs Park, the grounds were filled with active recreational amenities, many intended for use by children. The concentration of organized recreational facilities – pool, playgrounds, athletic fields, clubhouses – was consistent with park design trends of the early years of the twentieth century. Reform or Playground Movement parks emerged in large urban cities, as a progressive response to the isolation and confusion of city living. Structured play in neighborhood-scaled parks “provided not just recreation but built a stronger sense of community.” In the case of Barton Springs Park, the active recreational facilities were built around the site of an enduring, spring-fed swimming hole, only recently



City of Austin and Suburbs, 1925, Dixon B. Penick. Excerpt showing Barton Springs as a “free tourist camp.” Texas General Land Office, Map 76203



Plan Showing Development of Barton Springs Park, 1928. Source: A City Plan for Austin, Koch & Fowler



Aerial view of improvements at Barton Springs Park Source: Austin History Center



General Plan, Zilker Park, No. S.P. 30, Austin, Texas, October 13, 1934. Drawing by Charles Page
 Source: Austin Parks and Recreation Department

transformed with dams, low walls, and paved walkways into a more structured natural pool.

ZILKER PARK

In 1931, Zilker made a second donation of land to the public under the same arrangement as the first gift. He gave an additional 280 acres of land adjacent to the first gift to the school board on the condition that the city purchase the land for use as a public park for \$200,000. Perhaps beginning to feel the pinch of the Great Depression, the Council asked for more favorable terms, in the form of a reduction on the interest rate to be paid. Mr. Zilker declined, wishing to endow the school fund to the greatest extent possible. The question was put to the voters, who approved the purchase of the new parklands. Ultimately, the Council paid one-quarter of the purchase price in a lump sum, saving the interest expense that way. In 1931, Zilker was again named Austin's "Most Worthy Citizen". The deed for the new park was conveyed in August 1932. In May 1933, the Council passed a resolution creating a single park from the tracts of land, to be called Zilker Park, in appreciation of the generous gifts of A. J. Zilker.

The new parkland required a considerable investment in planning and design to convert the ranch, farmlands, old quarry, and clay pit sites into a beautiful recreational amenity. Once the plans were laid, another investment in the construction of the improvements would be required. For similar projects, such as Shoal and Waller Creek improvements, the city worked together with the Texas Reconstruction and Relief Commission (TRC). The city provided materials, tools, and technical supervision, and the TRC provided labor. The federal government provided the funding, which was administered by the state agency. A similar arrangement would be used for the work at Zilker Park. Throughout the development of the park during the Depression, several different federal relief agencies provided support and funding to the project with administration by companion state and local entities, including the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the National Youth Administration (NYA). The Works Progress Administration (WPA) may also have provided labor forces for work in Zilker Park.



Aerial view, Barton Springs Park and Zilker Park, circa 1934.
 Source: Austin History Center

Charles H. Page, a local architect, was appointed to the Park Board in 1933. Page practiced architecture in Austin since before the turn of the century, and his firm specialized in the design of schools and courthouses. He completed work on the Travis County Courthouse shortly before his appointment to the Park Board. Page prepared the overall design for the development of Zilker Park, which he presented to the Park Board at the end of 1933.

The design of Zilker Park, a much larger and more expansive area than the original Barton Springs Park, reflected current trends in park design. Unlike the structured play areas for active recreation, much of Zilker Park was designed for more passive recreation activities with abundant hiking paths, bridle trails, and curved scenic drives. Striking natural features were highlighted, including rock outcroppings and wooded groves. The structures designed for the new park, including clubhouses, trail houses, overlooks, comfort stations, bridges, culverts, and entrance features,

followed National Park Service's rustic building patterns. Natural materials and forms were used for the construction, typically with rubble limestone, painted wood, broad roof overhangs, and shingled roofs.

The existing circulation patterns through the park were changed in dramatic ways, both to incorporate the current park design trends and to provide access to the large added area. The alignment of Bee Caves Road, which tightly hugged the north edge of Barton Springs Park, was shifted to cross the former pasture lands to the north and east. The new road alignment was curved to provide scenic views of wooded areas, the creek and river courses, and dramatic rock outcroppings. The northwest section of the park, which included a tall promontory overlooking the river, with dramatic views of the city center across the way, was left natural and rustic. This section of the park was designed to be used for hiking and horseback riding as a means of access, in addition to the rustic vehicle lane to the top of the point. Initially, Page worked with the RFC to begin



Sunken Garden, 1993.
Source: Alan Pogue

implementation of the park development plan by the construction of stone picnic units with tables, benches and barbeque grills, as well as pedestrian trails, roadways and bridle paths. He also secured the support and funding of the Civil Works Administration for the project. Funded for \$94,000, the Zilker Park project was the most generously funded CWA park project in the state. CWA workers constructed the stone entrance pylons, new Boy Scout and Girl Scout Huts, the Rock Garden (Zilker Ponds), Sunshine Camp and picnic tables, built park roads, planted trees and shrubs in the arboretum, rehabilitated the old Ashford-McGill House for use as a trail house and began work on the Mirror Pond in the bed of Dry Creek, in the western section of the park.

In the spring of 1934, the CWA was closed, and the Zilker Park project was shifted to the control of the National Park Service, through the Civilian Conservation Corps. CCC Company 1814 set to work in the park at the end of April. The CCC work diaries note that the rustic light standards at the entrance to the Barton Springs

area were built that spring, as was the Mirror Pond. CCC workers also rehabilitated the existing skeet house into a trail shelter and the police department pistol range into restrooms, built Lookout Point on the western promontory and a second lookout (demolished in 1937) at the confluence of Barton Creek and the Colorado River. They paved roads in the park and did general planting and beautification work.

Although the project emphasized the new, undeveloped tract to the north of the Barton Springs Park tract, there were changes and improvements made in the vicinity of the pool. A bandstand was added on the hill above the north bank, and above that a "rock garden" (the Zilker Ponds) was built. The entrance road and parking areas were also reconfigured. As the work was nearing completion, an enthusiastic article in the local newspaper described the project and the rerouting of traffic:



Aerial view, Barton Springs Park and Zilker Park, circa 1934.
Source: Austin History Center

"..... the old asphalt road from the bridge to the entrance of the swimming pool will be abandoned as a roadway. Cars headed for the pool in the future will enter the park, then bear to the left over a hill by the old reptile institute, pass through the old gravel pit and into the pool's parking area at the present exit on the southwest. Returning autos will come out over a short stretch built from the old entrance to the county road. Traffic thus will be moved in a loop with congestion at the point of entrance to the pool eliminated. The old road will not be torn up, Dale said, but will be leveled down for use as a roller skating surface up to the old Barton Springs entrance point. Beyond that, it will be cut away to give a view of Charlie Page's rock garden."

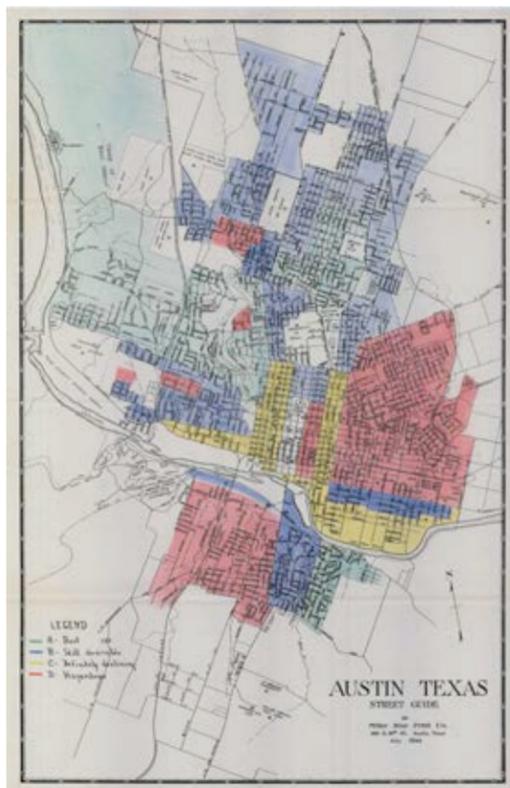
In April 1934, A. J. Zilker made a third gift to the city of 32.5 acres, located west of Barton Springs Park, on the north bank of the creek. Zilker suggested that this new park be called Page Park, in recognition of the work of Charles H. Page, Sr. in the design and construction of the improvements to Zilker Park under the RFC,

CWA, and CCC, but Mr. Page declined the honor. The three tracts make up present-day Zilker Park. This final gift of land was just that, a gift outright, without any money changing hands. The Council was again moved to publicly thank Zilker. Zilker, who had made the gift while ill and bedridden, died a few months later. His funeral was attended by dignitaries from the state, county and city government and the school board. In 1950, Zilker Elementary School was named in his honor.

The park was opened to great fanfare in the summer of 1934. It has been well and faithfully used by the citizens of Austin ever since the grand opening. The major activities of the 1930s were program and activity oriented. A tradition for organized entertainment at the pool was begun in these years, with swim meets, diving exhibitions, holiday pageants, celebrations, and regular dances at the dance pavilion and band stand. Large crowds of spectators looked down on the pool from the north bank. In 1933, the Lions Club petitioned the Council "to have erected at once long rows of cement seats on the north side of the Barton Springs bathing pool in order to better accommodate the large crowds that visit this resort." The City Manager was asked to look into this, and several years later the gallery seats were built.

There were also two big flood seasons in 1935 and 1936, and the pool was closed for extended periods during those years. The flood of June 15, 1935, was perhaps the largest flood on record since 1869. The water coming down the creek and the water rising from the river converged at Barton Springs, ascending to the level of the roofs of the wooden bathhouse and concession stand. The bandstand was completely destroyed and washed away in the flood. It took six days of intensive cleaning by 65 laborers and the entire Recreation Department staff from lifeguards to playground leaders to clean the site and get it open in time for the big Fourth of July celebration at the pool that year.

After these floods, the Recreation Department made repairs to the wooden bathhouse and cleaned the grounds and the pool. Additional assistance was provided by another federal relief agency, the National Youth Administration. The NYA was created in 1935 to provide training and employment to youths 16 to 25 years of age. Again, the city provided supervision, materials, and tools, and the NYA provided funding and labor. In 1936, a new bandstand and comfort station were built on the hillside overlooking the pool. The



Austin Redlining Map, 1937.
Source: NARA II RG 195, Entry 39, Folder "Austin, Texas," Box 153.

AUSTIN REDLINING MAP, 1937

The neighborhoods around Zilker Park were among those 'redlined' in the 1930s by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), meaning they were given a poor rating that prevented their residents from accessing the types of federal loans that allowed other, more highly rated, neighborhoods to build generational wealth. Often poor HOLC ratings were given solely because neighborhood residents were non-white.

bandstand, an open-air platform, was used for the singing and music events held in the park throughout the swimming season. The comfort station, restrooms for men and women at the level below the band stand platform, was a welcome addition to the site.

In 1938, another NYA project was begun at the Old Mill Spring, Austin's first "municipal sunken garden." The project was designed by Delmar Groos, one of the architects who designed the Deep Eddy Bathhouse for the Recreation Department the year before. Groos had worked for the Recreation Department in his youth as a lifeguard and basket boy at Barton Springs and was listed as the manager of the Pool in the 1935 city budget. He studied architecture at the University of Texas and established a practice with Dan Driscoll, an architectural engineer, in 1935. The Sunken Garden, a series of terraced flagstone platforms stepping up from the spring pool, was designed as a gathering and picnicking place. A flagstone stage and picnic tables to seat 300 were built on the stone terraces.

Even with the repairs to the wooden bathhouse made by the Recreation Department, the severe flood damage compromised the building. The floors of the dance pavilion heaved and buckled under the standing water, and dances were no longer held at the building as a result. The park and pool, though, grew in popularity, and 1938 was a record year for attendance.

POST-WAR PARK IMPROVEMENT

During World War II, Zilker Park and Barton Springs hosted large groups of bivouacked troops, with special swimming, musical and recreational events staged for the men. Community singing and musical performances continued at the hillside above the pool. Swimming declined in the summer of 1945 due to a polio scare, but music remained popular, particularly at the end of the summer when gasoline rationing was lifted. In 1946, an enclosed ballcourt (now used as a maintenance facility) was built near the Caretaker's Cottage.

Also in 1946, the old wooden bathhouse was razed, and construction began on a new masonry bathhouse to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the city park. The new bathhouse was designed by Dan Driscoll, with assistance from Delmar Groos and Chester Nagel. Driscoll had worked as a staff architect for the Recreation Department in the late 1930s and was an architect with the City Engineering Department when the bathhouse construction drawings were prepared in 1945. The new bathhouse included a central service office with good views of the approach from the park and entrances to the public restrooms and dressing rooms. Tickets and basket tokens were issued from the service office. The basket rooms were efficient, sanitary rooms, with a custom designed basket-hanger system that took up a minimum of space. The building materials were selected for maximum durability and

minimum absorption. The project was published in *Architectural Record* magazine, a leading architectural journal, and described as a model of efficiency, beauty and durability. The new Bathhouse was dedicated on March 23, 1947, and the highlight of the year for the Recreation Department. A bronze plaque was unveiled with the inscription:

"In memory of Colonel Andrew Jackson Zilker. Friend of the people and of school children of Austin, he gave this beautiful park as a rich endowment dedicated to the happiness of the citizens of his beloved city, and their neighbors."

In the 1950s, attendance at the park and the pool was strong. The Parks and Recreation Board found that more playgrounds were needed in the city, and plans were developed for a play area in Zilker Park in 1952. A permanent, concrete stage was constructed at the Zilker Hillside Theatre in 1952, to provide singing, fine arts, and theatre presentations. Nature and wildlife programs began at the new theatre the following year. A new, permanent band shell and lighting were added to the Zilker Hillside Theatre in 1957. On the south grounds, the parking area at the south entrance to Barton Springs was enlarged and graveled in 1952.

In 1955, the City acquired the old Rabb house and surrounding 29 acres of land on the south bank of Barton Creek. The Parks and Recreation Department had identified this as a vital property acquisition as early as 1953. The Builders Development Corporation assembled the Rabb land holdings and other adjacent parcels to create the new Barton Hills subdivision. The City purchased the property to provide a buffer between the new subdivision and the springs. The old Rabb house had partially burned in 1943, but Rabb family members continued to live there. After the City acquired the property, the remainder of the house was burned in 1956.

The old mill concession stand was demolished, and a new concession stand was built in 1960. The structure is still in use today, located between Eliza Spring and the Bathhouse.

In 1960, students from Austin High School, including a daughter of longtime Parks and Recreation Board member Bertha Means, began holding swim-ins at the Pool to protest the tacit segregation that had occurred in years past. In 1961, Azie Taylor entered the pool for a swim with some white friends, bringing quiet attention to the need for integration. The following year, the tacit policy was officially changed, and the springs were integrated and open to all the citizens of Austin.

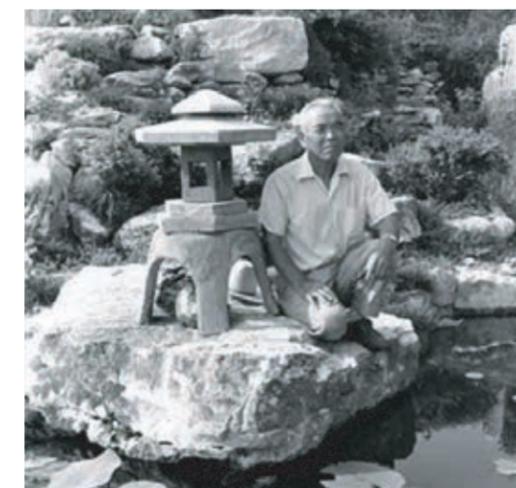
The Zilker Eagle miniature train was put into operation in 1961, a surprising source of revenue for the park ever since. The train station is located near Eliza Spring, close to a large children's playground. The track runs along the south edge of the great lawn, overlooking the creek and river to one side and the rock island and great lawn to the other. The train and track are undergoing



A Baptism at Barton Springs, 1924.
Source: Pipkin and Marshall Frech, Eds. *Barton Springs Eternal*.



Improvements at Barton Springs, 1926.
Source: Austin History Center



Isamu Taniguchi in his Garden, 1970.
Source: Austin History Center



Zilker Christmas Tree, 1970.
Source: Austin History Center

ZILKER HOLIDAY TREE

The Zilker Holiday Tree stands 155 feet tall and is composed of 39 streamers, each holding 81 multicolored, 25-watt bulbs—totaling 3,309 lights. At the top of the tree, a double star measures 10 feet from point to point. The double star displays 150 frosted bulbs. This unique spiral pattern of lights was created by City of Austin electricians. At its circumference, the tree measures 380 feet. The diameter is 120 feet. The base of the tree is made up of 19 utility poles, each 14 feet tall, arranged in a circle around the Moonlight Tower.

Source: Austintexas.gov

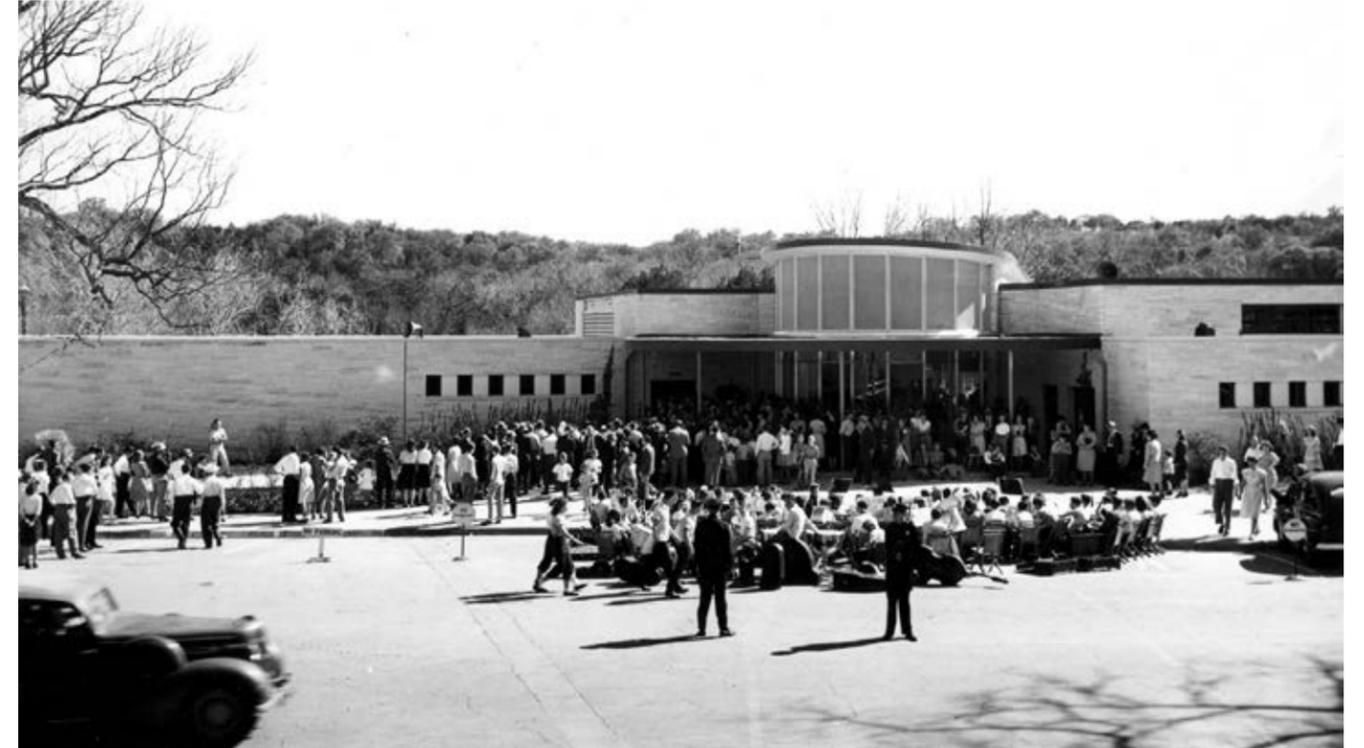
renovation and are expected to be back in operation soon. In 1971, the Zilker Playscape was opened adjacent to the train station.

The Zilker Botanical Garden and Austin Area Garden Center were opened in the northwest area of the park in 1964. The Austin Area Garden Center building sits on a hill overlooking the Zilker Botanical Garden and was designed by Kuehne, Kuehne and Milburn architects. Hugo Kuehne, who had designed some of the earliest buildings erected in the original Barton Springs Park in the 1920s and served on the early Parks Board, designed the garden center as one of his last architectural projects. The handsome, low-slung building uses the rustic material palette of rubble limestone, painted wood, and broad shingled hipped roof planes in an understated, modern building.

The Zilker Botanical Garden is a group of unique, individual gardens representing native and regional plant materials. The original landscape design was done by Parks Department landscape architect Fritz von Osthoff and includes ornamental, cactus, rose, fragrant, native plant, meditation iris, and day lily gardens. The garden design also includes small buildings and architectural relics of cultural and historic significance, which were saved and relocated to the Botanical Garden before the City Historic Preservation Office and preservation ordinance were established. The relocated structures include the Swedish log cabin, the Mamie Wilson Rowe Summer House, the cupola from the Bickler School, a masonry key-shaped window opening from the Michael Butler House, and a small curb footbridge from Congress Avenue. Antique light standards that once stood on Lavaca Street and the Esperanza Schoolhouse were also placed in the Botanical Garden.

The Taniguchi Japanese Garden was opened in 1969, a gift of Isamu Taniguchi, who spent 18 months creating the paths, ponds, bridges, tea house, and planting areas by hand. Taniguchi was a farmer who immigrated to the United States from Japan in 1915. He was moved to create the garden as a gesture of gratitude to the city where his two sons were educated, and as a symbol of universal peace.

The McBeth Recreation Center and McBeth Recreation Center Annex are in two buildings on the western edge of Zilker Park. The recreation centers provide programs for differently abled children and adults. Originally built by the Knights of Columbus as a local chapter building in 1958 and as a state headquarters building in 1960, the modernist buildings are sited in a heavily wooded area of dense tree canopy. The City of Austin acquired the buildings in 1981 and 1988 and renovated them for use as recreation centers.



Dedication Ceremony for the new Bathhouse, 1947.
Source: Austin History Center



Taniguchi Japanese Garden, circa 1970.
Source: Austin History Center



JOAN MEANS KHABELE

ONE OF PEOPLE WHO WORKED TO END SEGREGATION AT BARTON SPRINGS POOL



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

“1960 spring, I went to Austin High School and the principal called me in and said, I consider you to be the leader of the black kids in your class so I want you to go and tell them that none of you can go to the senior picnic because Barton Springs and Zilker Park are segregated...”

They didn’t really have it properly locked off. You just go around this way and you are in. You know how big Barton Springs is. How do you control all the people in there? So we started swimming...

It was spreading like wildfire across the country. Eventually, they changed the city ordinance. I found that almost everything that opened, we had to march, protest petition, and go to the council. These things just don’t open by themselves.”

CONTEMPORARY PARK IMPROVEMENT

The most significant change to Zilker Park since its creation was the construction of MoPac Boulevard over and through the western section of the park. The arterial highway extends from far north to far south Austin on the western side of the city. It flanks the Missouri-Pacific Railroad right of way in the segment north of the river, but the roadway itself continues to the south where the railroad turns to the east on the north bank of the river. The design and public engagement process took almost twenty years to complete, and construction took five years for the first phase of the project, which opened to use in 1974.

The highway bisects the park, with roughly the westernmost quarter of the park separated from the remainder of the park by elevated roadways and grade-level access roads. Barton Springs Road, originally designed as a scenic parkway route, now serves as a high-speed entrance to and exit from the highway.

In recent decades, historic designations and environmental conservation measures have been applied to Zilker Park, to preserve and protect the unique cultural and environmental resources of the place. In 1985 the Barton Springs Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1990 Barton Springs Pool was designated City of Austin Historic Landmarks. In 1992, citizens of Austin led the initiative for the Save Our Springs Ordinance to protect the aquifer and the springs. In 1996, the Austin Nature and Science Center opened a new satellite facility in the Bathhouse, including a gift shop, classrooms and an exhibit hall. In 1997 the Zilker Park Historic District was listed on the National Register. Also in that year, the Barton Springs Salamander was listed as an endangered species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Degradation of the quality and quantity of water feeding Barton Springs was cited as a primary threat to the species. The Parks and Recreation Department and the Watershed Protection Development and Review Department formulated guidelines for the management of the surface habitats of the salamander, changing the operation and maintenance procedures at the Pool to gentler practices. The Austin Nature and Science Center

opened in 1982 and in 1998 the educational exhibit Splash! Into the Edwards Aquifer was opened at the Bathhouse by the Austin Nature and Science Center. The permanent exhibit tells the story of water migration through the Edwards Aquifer ecosystem.

Routes for hiking, biking and jogging were enhanced in recent decades in the park with the completion of the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail at Lady Bird Lake and the Barton Creek Greenbelt. The Butler Trail passes through the north edge of the park, along the bank of the Colorado River and Barton Creek. The Violet Crown Trail begins along the southwest section of the park on the area of Andrew Zilker’s third and final land gift to the citizens of Austin to complete the original Zilker Park.

New elements and features have been added to the Zilker Botanical Garden and Nature Center areas of the park in recent years. A prehistoric garden, with fossilized dinosaur footprints, a small children’s garden and a butterfly garden have been installed, as have sculptures, an arbor and a human sundial feature. A salamander conservation center and an aviary were added to the Nature Center compound.

Adjacent to the park and related to its cultural history, the road along the south edge of the original Barton Springs Park tract was renamed by the City Council in 2018. Once named Robert E. Lee Road, likely an association with the route traveled by Lee when he served in the US Army in the 1850s and was assigned to Texas to help protect the western frontier, the road was renamed Azie Taylor Morton Road. Taylor was the first and only Black person to serve as Treasurer of the United States, appointed by President Jimmy Carter in 1977. Azie Taylor grew up in St. John Colony, a Texas Freedom Colony in Dale, TX near Austin, and came to the city to attend high school and college. She graduated from Huston-Tillotson College with a Bachelor of Science degree in commercial education in 1956. Around 1961, she visited Zilker Park with some white friends and went swimming in Barton Springs Pool, helping to end segregation at the site and open the pool to all citizens of Austin.

SUMMARY

The Zilker Metropolitan Vision Plan’s main objective is to provide a visionary framework to direct the preservation, future development, and care of Zilker Park, a treasured component of Austin’s culture. Austin’s heart is the park and the activities that take place there. Zilker Park needs a vision plan to make sure it is viable and accessible for next Austin residents. It involves identifying the need for recreational amenities, recommending improvements to the park’s current facilities and programs, and putting an emphasis on the historic, cultural, and ecological characteristics.

Sustainability, equity, diversity and inclusion, nature and ecology, history and culture, and accessibility are the five driving concepts for the goals.

**GUIDING
PRINCIPLES
VISION
AND GOALS**

**CHAPTER
THREE**

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Purpose and Vision of Plan
- Central Issues
- Guiding Principles and Goals

PURPOSE AND VISION OF THE PLAN

THE SIX INFLUENCES ON THE VISION PLAN

- 1 Balancing Competing Interests
- 2 Urbanizing Recreation Within a Historic Context
- 3 Ensuring Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity
- 4 Linking Programming, Funding and Maintenance
- 5 Improving Mobility to and Inside the Park
- 6 Protecting the Ecological Heritage of Zilker



THE PURPOSE AND VISION OF THE PLAN

The primary goal of Zilker Metropolitan Vision Plan is to develop a visionary framework to guide the restoration and future improvement and stewardship of Zilker Park, which is a cherished part of Austin's culture. The location is synonymous with everyday outdoor recreation – by people who swim, picnic, or enjoy walking the trails – to large festivals and events that are iconic and economic drivers for the city, including the Kite Festival, Austin City Limits, Blues on the Green, and Trail of Lights. Zilker Park is the setting for people's memories of childhood birthday parties, evenings under the stars watching a play at the Hillside Theater or cooling off on a scorching summer day at Barton Springs. These pieces of the park and the events that occur within them make up the heart of Austin, and Zilker Park is well-deserving of undergoing a vision plan to ensure that the Park remains viable and accessible for future generations of Austinites. The Vision Plan process started from understanding of

urban park challenges and opportunities in similar cities, stakeholder project goals, larger City goals and the familiarity with critical stakeholders and park trends.

The vision plan is for developing a visionary framework to guide the restoration and future stewardship of Zilker Park. It includes recommending enhancement of the park's existing facilities and programs, determining recreational and amenity needs, and focusing on the historic, cultural, and ecological features. The recommendations are with a comprehensive lens including but not limited to: programming, maintenance, environmental features and ecology, historical preservation and cultural resources, transportation, circulation, and parking, as well as the operations and management of concessions in the park.



CALL FOR ACTION

As the population of Austin grows, so does visitation to Zilker Park. The environment has suffered, including degraded banks along the creek and erosion at points of stormwater runoff. Some of the facilities within the park need upgrades and have access issues, making it difficult for school groups to visit and navigate between the various things to do within the park without vehicles.

EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF ZILKER PARK



Sunshine Camp

FIELD TRIPS

With its abundance of natural resources, Zilker Park today serves an educational function – from the Barton Springs University program to the abundance of science and nature camp programs at the Austin Nature and Science Center (ANSC). However, there are many desired updates and improvements to the educational aspects of Zilker Park that this plan will recommend.

First, in terms of physical planning, Zilker Park should provide improved and safer access for school groups taking field trips to the park. This includes bus drop-offs, bus queuing, and efficient, safe connections between the various Zilker Park facilities. During the regular school year, school groups often visit the ANSC and the area by Barton Springs Pool. The community feedback informed the team of some of the bigger challenges for these groups.

INCLEMENT WEATHER ALTERNATIVES

If storms or rain events occur during the field trip, class groups do not currently have a place to shelter. A centralized place for welcoming groups to the Park and accommodating shelter for inclement weather events is envisioned as a program within the Welcome Center.

MOVING BETWEEN FACILITIES

Currently there are not safe, comfortable connections between Park facilities such as Barton Springs Pool, the ANSC, Zilker Botanical Gardens (ZBG), etc. Connections should facilitate class-size groups to move from facility to facility to expand the programming of a field trip day at the Park. Shaded sidewalk connections that avoid vehicular traffic are provided for in the plan, and an internal shuttle circulator, paired with the Zilker Eagle, would allow even large groups to spend a longer day in the Park and experience multiple Park venues.

Along with improved spaces for school groups, additional restroom facilities will be needed to accommodate more frequent groups. New restrooms are located within the plan, arranged to provide access throughout the park.

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

PARD should explore partnerships with grade-level schools (public, private, charter and homeschools), higher education institutions, and early care facilities like pre-K and daycare programs. With improved access and circulation to and within the park, school programs may be better able to plan for and accommodate learning within Zilker Park and in this way new sidewalk connections can be dotted with interpretive story. Outdoor learning spaces, too, will be a new way to accommodate educational opportunities within Zilker Park's natural spaces.



Barton Springs University

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Zilker Park's educational programs today create memorable, unique ways for Austin's students to learn about their natural environment. These programs are successful despite having "shoestring" budgets. The plan recommends building upon the long-lasting success of the existing programs and expanding programs to add more park rangers or other docent-type staff or volunteers that can orient visitors to the park, assist those with disabilities and create an inclusive environment, lead tours and provide interpretive oral storytelling of the park's history.

SHARED STORY ABOUT ZILKER PARK FROM COMMUNITY SURVEY I

"Zilker Park is an incredible teaching venue. Students from kindergarten to college visit to learn about hydrogeology, endangered species, and development. Educational components like the Splash! Exhibit are a critical part of the visitors' experience."



Girl Scout Cabin

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES



LACK OF PARKING

For visitors to Zilker Park that do not live directly adjacent to it, getting to the park and circulating around it are some of the top challenges today. Cars are the way that most people access the park today. On an enjoyable day, the permanent and temporary parking lots are often full, causing cars to circle around the park in search of a space. With park roads that were not intended for thousands of car trips during normal trips, there can be major traffic congestion on Lou Neff Road, Stratford Drive and Barton Springs Road.

The plan accommodates for the number of parking spaces that can be found in Zilker Park today (counting both surface and temporary condition parking spaces), but in an updated configuration. Whereas the parking lots that exist today were built to serve a much smaller and car-centric city, the plan removes parking from the core of the park and moves parking to the perimeter, except for the underground parking garage on the southern side of the land bridge and on-street parking along Barton Springs Road. As Austin grows, the number of parking spaces will remain the same, and over time, could even diminish to accommodate only those with disabilities or other needs.

Options for off-site parking include many privately-owned garages and surface lots. While ownership and management structures make contracting with the private entities difficult, there are now third party platforms that feature emerging parking management solutions and technology such as phone apps connected with private parking lots at the Q2 Stadium. Other large facilities and event programmers in Austin are using this platform to be the contracting and insurance-carrying entity for contracting parking spaces, including both surface lots and parking garages.

Today the ANSC and ZBG struggle with access and parking to their facilities. ZBG's singular vehicular entrance off of Barton Springs Road can be challenging to enter, and traffic is restricted when turning out of the ZBG going out to the park, making someone who doesn't find parking in ZBG circle a complex route to find an alternative parking area. The ANSC has very little parking, and access is mostly accommodated from Stratford Drive and the gravel lot under and to the east of MoPac. Both of these facilities heavily rely on the gravel lot on the landfill for visitor parking, and the ANSC must also use the gravel lot for preschool drop-



offs. Buses dropping off groups to these facilities use the gravel lot to park while the field trip occurs.

The Butler Landfill and the Polo Field are degraded landscapes that have been used for years for parking, construction laydown sites and setup areas for Austin City Limits (ACL) and overflow parking lot for other major events. The plan shows an ecological uplift of these sites, growing the usable parkland area and allowing for more use of the park, even during large events like ACL.

REMOVAL OF PARKING

Personal vehicles have only been around since the 20th century, so we can only imagine what people will be using to travel in the future. It is not unreasonable to imagine that the need for parking could diminish as better transit options, micro-mobility and other modes of transportation become more popular and used more frequently in Austin, it is realistic that parking lots in the park could be converted back to a park use. The following are 'triggers' that the City should monitor so that as certain mobility milestones are achieved, parking can be converted to park use:

- » Frequent bus route (every 15 minutes or less) that serves of the population and requires no transfers
- » Project Connect line has a station within a 10-minute bike ride or 3-minute shuttle ride of the park
- » Internal Zilker Park circulator
- » Pavemint or similar platform has years long contracts with same amount of spaces getting removed
- » Completion of Violet Crown Trail to land bridge to the Butler Hike and Bike trail connection has been made.

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990

1 The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that was enacted on July 26, 1990. The ADA guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications.

2 Austin, as one of the most accessible cities in the United States, the Austin ADA Program Office ensures that all city services and programs are accessible to all people, including those with disabilities.

ACCESSIBILITY

In 2015, the City conducted an audit of accessibility issues within Zilker Park. Many of the recommendations have yet to be completed due to budgeting issues. The plan recommends revisiting this report and prioritizing improvements to those facilities that are not near-term suggested improvements or projects as part of this plan.

BUSES TO ZILKER

There is a bus line but it is infrequent and does not provide efficient, easy access for most Austinites. Even if a visitor takes the bus, once one steps off the bus, there are minimal to no sidewalk connections to get to most of the major destinations. The bus stops themselves are not shaded and most do not even have a concrete pad.

INTERNAL CONNECTIVITY

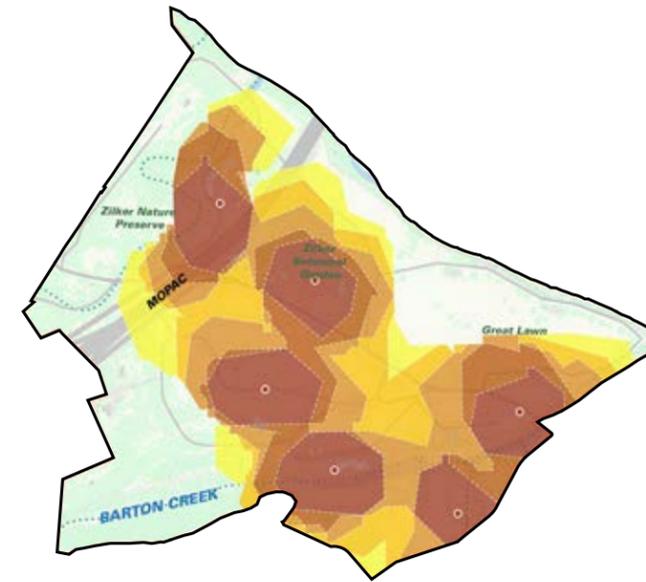
Barton Springs Road is a major divider of the park and with minimal signed crossings, is very dangerous to cross as a pedestrian or cyclist.

Zilker Eagle has limited circulation today but has been envisioned to take on a broader role in the park's future. Given the limitations of the Zilker Eagle's current location (steep grades, pedestrian/train conflicts, narrow space under Barton Springs Road), the plan envisions a future for the Zilker Eagle that moves the loop to the north side of the park. This loop would have stations at a handful of locations – the land bridge, the parking area near the ZBG/ANSC, and the Toomey Road connection – allowing visitors to cover more areas of the park without having to walk the entirety. By moving the line to the north side of the park, the limitations that dictate the type of car that runs today are gone, meaning that other electric car models can be considered, allowing for traversing of steeper grades, running multiple trains on tracks, etc.

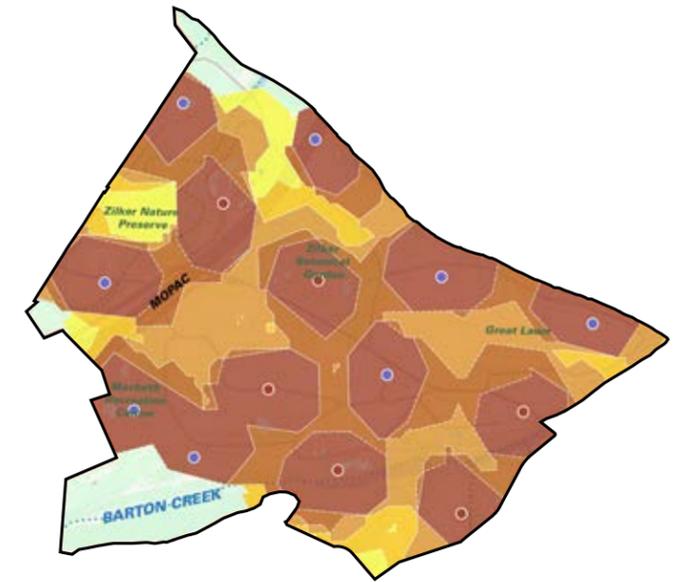
Paired with the Zilker Eagle as a park circulator is the idea of an internal shuttle, that would use the existing roadways and wide shared use pathways to bring visitors and employees from a parking area/bus stop to a distant location. The shuttle would serve the ANSC, athletic field complex, the ZBG, pool, etc.

INADEQUATE RESTROOMS

RESTROOMS



EXISTING RESTROOMS



PROPOSED RESTROOMS

There are 6 locations for public restrooms, excluding potable restrooms, in Zilker Park currently which is not enough to serve over 350-acre park. The diagrams above are showing 1 minute to 5 minutes walking radius from the restrooms and how many restrooms are needed to serve the entire park. Based on the analysis, Zilker Park needs at least 8 more restroom locations to cover most of the park land within 5 minutes walking distance.

LEGEND

- 1-min Walking Radius
- 2-min Walking Radius
- 3-min Walking Radius
- 4-min Walking Radius
- 5-min Walking Radius

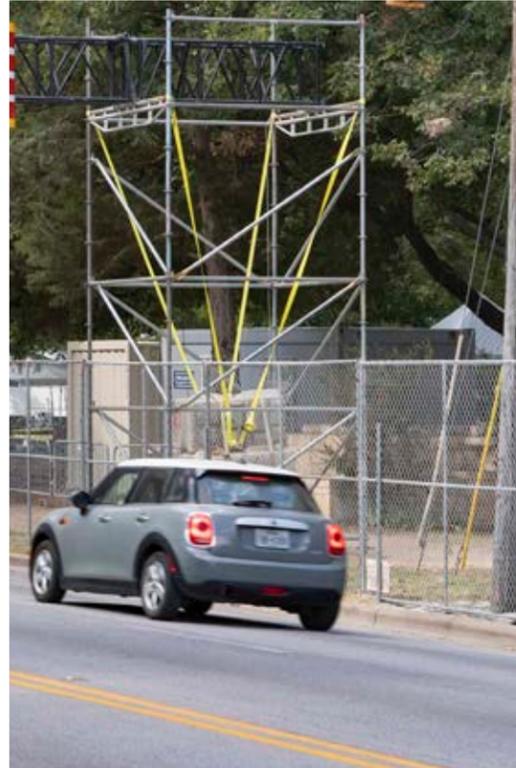


Zilker Park Trailhead Restrooms



Zilker Restroom on the South Side of Barton Springs Pool

PROGRAMMING CONFLICT



Fenced Great Lawn



Metrobike Station along Barton Springs Road

EVENTS

Austin City Limits, Blues on the Green, Kite Festival, Zilker Summer Musical, Zilker Botanical Garden Events, and Trail of Lights are beloved events that occur in Zilker Park. 76% of respondents, from Zilker Park Vision Plan Community Survey #2, responded they enjoy all of the events in the park or at least one of the large events. However, there are programming conflicts caused by them and they need better synchronization.

The biggest issue from the public is that the large events close to the park in the prime weather time. Austin City Limits happens only for two weekends but the park is closed before setting up and after to clear up. This conflict means the visitor cannot use the park properly. Therefore, the plan needs to investigate how to balance the issue so that park can be used even during major events.

Also, the events in Zilker Park should set an example for green best practices. Events cause an impact on the environment through intense human activities such as the construction of stages, energy use, transportation, and waste. Decisions in the early stages of planning can have a significant impact on the nature of the environmental impact an event will have. It is therefore advisable to put environmental sustainability at the heart of all decision-making and to develop a basic environmental assessment and event execution plan at the beginning of the preparation phase. Policies to address environmental issues should also take into account supplier behavior, such as through green procurement policies.

LACK OF SUPPORT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Lacking appropriate infrastructure for park programming is causing issues also. For instance, Zilker Hillside Theater is having trouble to growing due to the lack of utility support. Therefore, it is necessary to review location of major utilities within park for the appropriate site uses. Also, if more infrastructure supports Zilker Park, it can reduce the reliance on generators which impact the environment more.

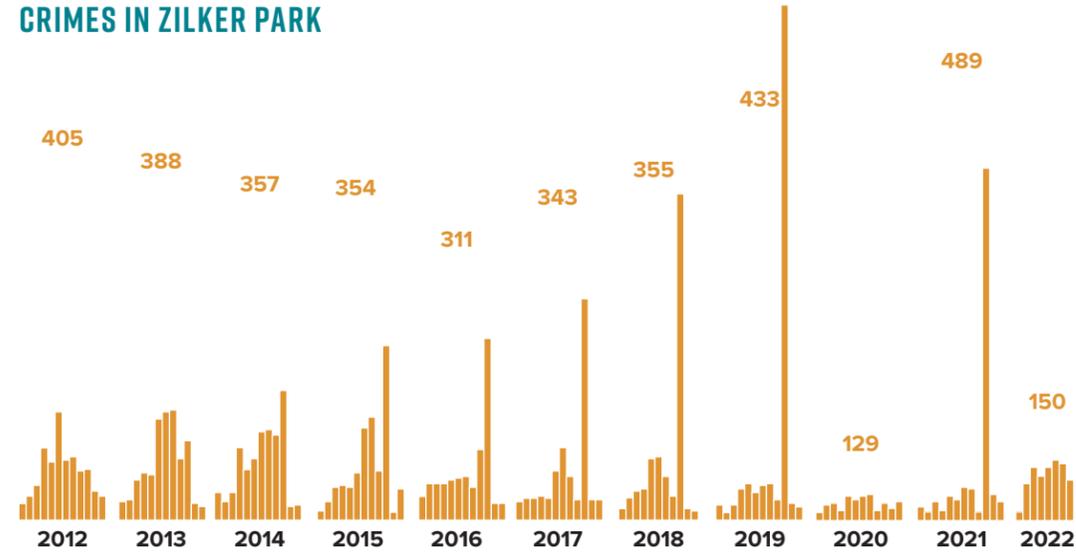
Furthermore, there is the bigger need for better, safer, and wider connections into the park without cars. There are only two MetroBike stations within the park and 7 bus stops. The park needs various ways to access from each part of the city or beyond.



SAFETY

This graph is based on Austin Police Department Crime Dashboard for Park and Recreation Department, showing total number of crimes by month.

CRIMES IN ZILKER PARK



Zilker Park is not a crime-free area, unfortunately. There are an average of 383 crimes per year in the past 10 years. 49.9% of the crimes are thefts and mostly happen during weekends. One fact worth noting is that most of the crimes happened in October, especially during Austin City Limits. For instance, in 2019, there were 355 crimes overall but there were 322 crimes in October, and 309 of them are during Austin City Limits weekends. However, it is obvious the total number of crimes are increasing since 2016, except in 2020, with the influence of COVID-19.

The lack of enforcement at present is part of the reason but the Vision Plan should include strategies to improve sight lines, create greater visibility, and encourage visitor traffic in high-risk areas to decrease crimes in the park.

LIGHTING IN THE PARK

A brighter park does not necessarily mean a safer park based on recent studies. However, it certainly makes people who use the park feel safer. Lighting is critical to improving the perception of safety by maximizing visual and physical access to spaces.

PARD had a project called 'Park Security Lighting Project' to increase safety and security at parks by installing solar-powered LED lighting without grid-supplied power. However, 'Lack of lighting' was ranked 6th for the list of what keeps people from using Austin parks from PARD Long Range Plan and 'Crime or safety concerns' was 1st. People still do not feel safe in Zilker Park, especially at night.

An overall increase in lighting for the park is beneficial to the environment by daunting crime and encouraging after-dark community activities while respecting the nature experience and park aesthetic.

ECOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION

Zilker Metropolitan Park (Zilker Park) is central to the history, culture, and ecology of Austin, Texas. Ecologically, the site includes a diversity of plant communities influenced by topographic changes, variation in soils, hill country geology, impacts from a long history of site use, and periodic flooding that have shaped the landscape. These communities range from riparian habitat by the water's edge to woodlands on steep slopes. Zilker Park plays an indispensable role as a refuge for residents and wildlife. Lying along the eastern boundary of the Edwards Plateau ecoregion, Zilker Park contains four major springs and shoreline for three waterbodies; is home to two endangered salamander species; offers habitat for 33 bird Species of Greatest Conservation Need; and supports over 600 species of native flora and fauna.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2012, the City of Austin adopted the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, which included Priority Program #4: Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. It also established a definition of green infrastructure as a strategically planned and managed network of natural lands, parks, working landscapes, open spaces, and green stormwater controls that conserve and enhance ecosystem services and provide associated benefits to human populations.

As climate change intensifies and results in higher temperatures and more extreme weather events, the many forms of green infrastructure will become increasingly important. A map of climate vulnerability and tree planting priority in Austin from the City of Austin Green Infrastructure Assessment shows areas that are climate vulnerable as a result of urban heat island temperature increases, lack of urban forest, and lack of shade over impervious cover. In addition, these areas coincide with higher levels of social vulnerability and worse health outcomes. The result is a park system that is adapting to and mitigating climate change. These same concepts must be integrated into the Zilker Park Vision Plan to create a sustainable park that addresses climate change.

WATER QUALITY IMPACT

The ecology of Zilker Park is defined by its waters. Good water quality is a top priority for Barton Springs Conservancy because that water supports the park's endangered salamanders and the park's overall ecological health. Zilker Park faces several critical water quality issues such as controlling and reducing stormwater runoff from impervious cover, reducing the impacts of users on waterways, and protecting the spring areas. These issues can be addressed in part by adjusting land management practices within the park.

AREAS OF POTENTIAL CONTAMINATION

Zilker Park has three main areas of environmental concern—the Butler Landfill, the Pistol and Skeet Range, and the West Butler Landfill. In anticipation of future renovations planned for various areas on site, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed for Zilker Park in 2019 by TRC Environmental Corporation. The following Site Analysis and Need Assessment sections detail the type of contamination present in each of these three areas. This information can be used to plan future mitigation and restoration actions.

ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS



Barton Creek

INVASIVE SPECIES AND SOIL DISTURBANCE

Invasive species and soil disturbance are the primary threats to ecological health in Zilker Park. Invasive species were introduced from other countries or regions and cause economic and/or ecological harm. They are one of the primary ecological threats in Zilker Park. Their aggressive growth threatens native plant communities by altering soil chemistry, direct displacement (“crowding out”), and changing the light in or below the canopy. In doing so, they also impact native animals and insects by interfering with their food, shelter, and protection. Any action or infrastructure that removes, compacts, or covers soil will have an impact on a site’s ability to support a healthy ecosystem. The primary causes of soil disturbance in Zilker Park are stormwater flow, poorly functioning or absent infrastructure, mowing and use of other heavy machinery, off-trail recreation, formal recreation without suitable supporting infrastructure, and erosion of trail material. Soil disturbance is problematic in all areas but is particularly concerning along environmentally sensitive waterways.

INTEGRATE ECOLOGY WITH THE PARK USE

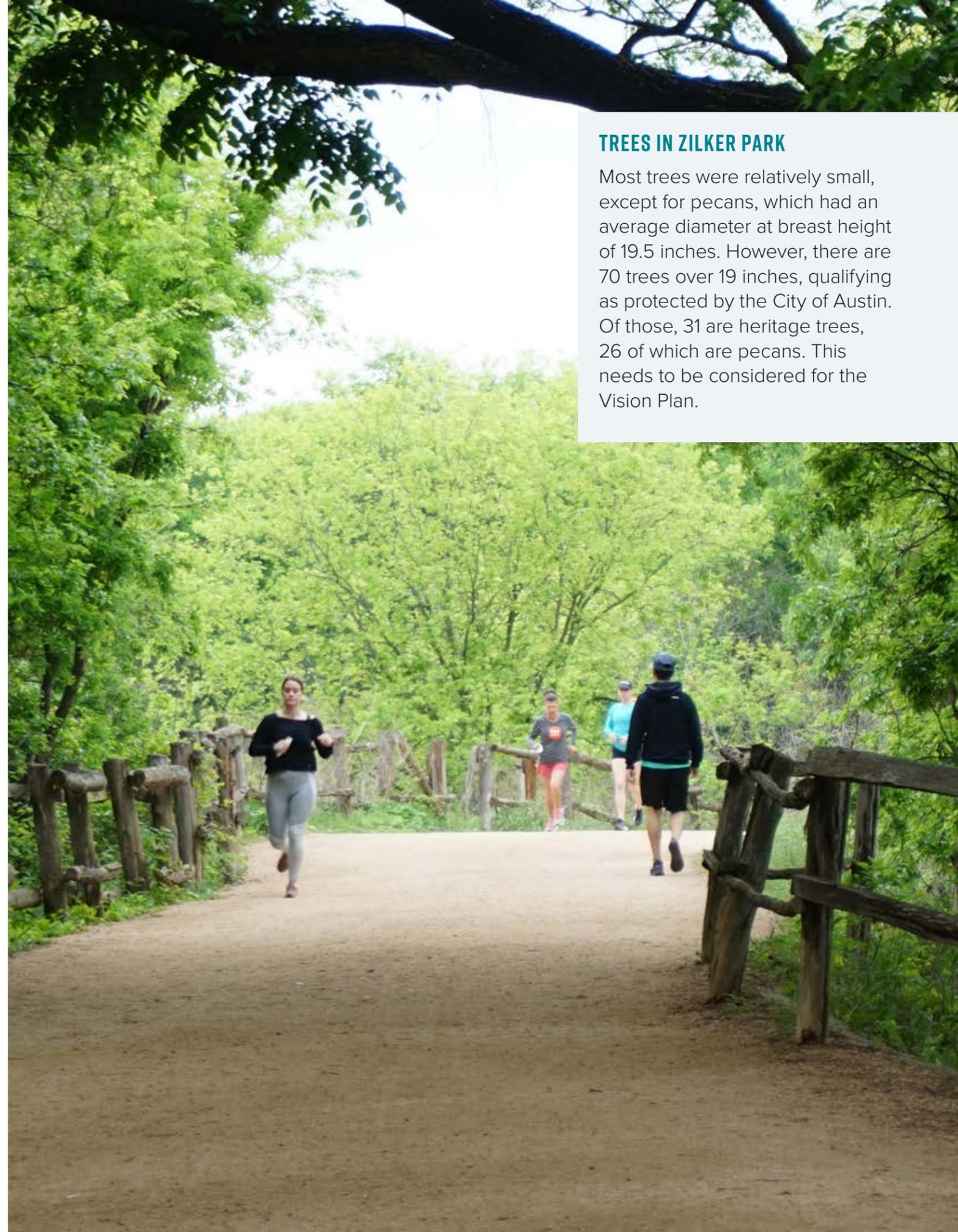
Unfortunately, Zilker Park is being degraded by the volume of users coming to enjoy the park without adequate infrastructure or design to support them. Off-trail recreation, water access, and trail conditions are impacting Zilker Park’s natural areas. Many of these problems can be addressed by providing infrastructure that meets the needs and volume of park users. The upcoming Zilker Vision plan should address the following needs: trails, water access, gathering locations, trail size and maintenance, as well as physical barriers to environmentally sensitive areas. Here, these issues are addressed as they relate to natural area management and ecological degradation.

HABITAT RESTORATION

Zilker Park serves as a refuge and migration corridor for wildlife in the highly developed Austin area. More than 260 wildlife species have been observed in the park, including 6 amphibians (2 of which are endangered salamanders), 2 fish, 1 mollusk, 224 birds, 9 mammals, and 20 reptiles. The proposed plant communities described in the The Vision Plan have habitat features that support a variety of wildlife. For example, the 16 acres of enhanced and expanded meadows feature native grasses and wildflowers to attract pollinators. The meadows will create prime conditions for the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and Eastern Meadowlark, both of which are classified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) by the Texas Department of Parks & Wildlife (TPWD).



Barton Springs Pool Area



TREES IN ZILKER PARK

Most trees were relatively small, except for pecans, which had an average diameter at breast height of 19.5 inches. However, there are 70 trees over 19 inches, qualifying as protected by the City of Austin. Of those, 31 are heritage trees, 26 of which are pecans. This needs to be considered for the Vision Plan.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND GOALS



SUSTAINABILITY



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



NATURE AND ECOLOGY



HISTORY AND CULTURE



ACCESSIBILITY

There are five main pillars for guiding principles and goals for the vision plan. Those are sustainability, diversity and inclusion, nature and ecology, history and culture, and accessibility. Guiding principles are fundamental guidelines driving the project. They are big statements meant to describe the big picture. They are overarching statements meant to describe the big picture. They also aid decision-making when competing ideas or interests are considered. When this happens, referencing the Guiding Principles can help determine the direction forward. Additionally, goals are tied to action. They are specific, measurable, attainable, and time-bound.



Sustainability

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- » The plan should champion sustainability best practices for the park.
- » The plan should be forward-looking and should embrace both its challenges and its opportunities for future generations.
- » Zilker Park should serve as an example of sustainability, protecting and enhancing our natural spaces and assets.

GOALS

- 1** Implement adaptive management strategies to create a resilient landscape in the face of climate change and dynamic user needs.
- 2** Achieve balance between metropolitan use and ecological/environmental concerns.
- 3** Balance revenue and ecological/environmental health with operations and maintenance of the park.
- 4** Provide equitable opportunities for access to the park and enjoyment of amenities.
- 5** Explore new and harness existing partnerships that extend the reach of the Parks Department to accommodate new opportunities.



Diversity and Inclusion

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- » Zilker Park should serve the entire community of Austin.
- » Programs should be aligned with community interest.

GOALS

- 1** Design park elements that are welcoming to individuals and small groups and able to accommodate large groups.
 - Clear circulation, entryways, gateways, and connectivity between facilities within the park
- 2** Support equitable access, with special focus on:
 - Safety
 - Accessibility
 - Events and programs for diverse cultures
- 3** Support new and enhance existing learning opportunities within the park.
- 4** Sustain the implementation and maintenance of the park and stewardship of the park utilizing volunteers and partner organizations.



Nature and Ecology

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- » The Plan should treat the Park as an ecological treasure.
- » The plan should recognize the park’s relation to water and explore opportunities for interaction with the lake without compromising environmental integrity.

GOALS

- 1** Protect, enhance, and restore land and waterscape elements that are imperative for ecological function.
- 2** Establish an interpretive program to educate visitors, especially for the youth about the park’s sensitive features. Public stewardship should be developed as part of the interpretive program.
- 3** The Plan should champion best practices in green design, planning and land management.
- 4** Ensure safe and sustainable access to the water including entry to Lady Bird Lake and protection of Barton Creek.
- 5** The Plan should protect Zilker’s natural resources for generations to come.
- 6** Support and rehabilitate native plants and species.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- » The park is a metropolitan park which has a regional draw and focus.
- » The Plan should treat the Park’s historic and cultural resources as a valued legacy to be celebrated for future generations.

GOALS

- 1** The Plan should honor and respect the Park’s historic and cultural resources and should integrate them into the future life of the park.
- 2** The Plan should offer a framework that provides a successful balance between historic preservation and current/future needs.
- 3** The Plan should tell the deeper and complete stories of the people and the history of the park to better enrich the visitor experience and to elevate a sense of public stewardship.
- 4** The Plan should create opportunities for local artists and art to be a part of park spaces. These opportunities may include music, performance, and temporary exhibits.
- 5** Celebrate the stories of the people that lived on the land throughout history, including the indigenous people, and bring to light those stories that are not often heard.
- 6** Establish and integrate education components such as an education center to encourage and convey cultural and historical aspects of the park.



Accessibility

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- » The plan should knit the segmented pieces of the park together, ensuring a more accessible, safe, and connected park.
- » The park should be a place you can reach with multiple travel options.

GOALS

- 1** Ensure there are multiple safe, enjoyable, and convenient modes of transportation to access the park.
- 2** Improve and incentivize non-automobile mode access to, from, and within the park, in support of the City’s ambitious mode split and climate goals.
- 3** Improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation between the north and south side of Barton Springs Rd. Make travel through the park and to various parts of the park intuitive, safe, and easy by foot, bike, and accessible paths.
- 4** Examine the surrounding trail network to create and extend safe active travel within and through the park.
- 5** Create accessible multi-modal transportation networks within the park.
- 6** Improve the wayfinding to and from different park destinations. Provide clear circulation, entryways, gateways, and connectivity between facilities within the park and throughout the park elements.
- 7** Use transportation assets efficiently, to preserve park space for ecological and recreation systems.
- 8** Collaborate with CapMetro and TxDOT to review, analyze, and recommend the transportation system to and around the park.
- 9** Achieve a high level of ADA accessibility within the park.

SUMMARY

Zilker Park has been shaped through the years by its hydrology, history of land use, and the needs of the city that now surrounds it. As the city grows so does its impact on Zilker Park. In planning for the future of this park, 15 prior master plans, site assessments, and reports were consulted. These documents covered topics ranging from the environment and climate change within our urban context, to transportation and accessibility goals, and the cultural landscape of the park. The results of these studies were folded into the process of studying the geographic, demographic and environmental context of the park.

By studying the park through its interaction with Austin's transportation network, its ability to be sustained and funded over time, and its place as a home for some of the city's largest events we can see the park as an anchor within this vibrant city. This vision plan seeks to improve people's access to this vital park, identify funding for necessary maintenance, and provide proper infrastructure for its millions of annual visitors, all while preserving its natural features. There is a healthy foundation of existing policy that can be built upon to protect this ecological and recreational treasure.

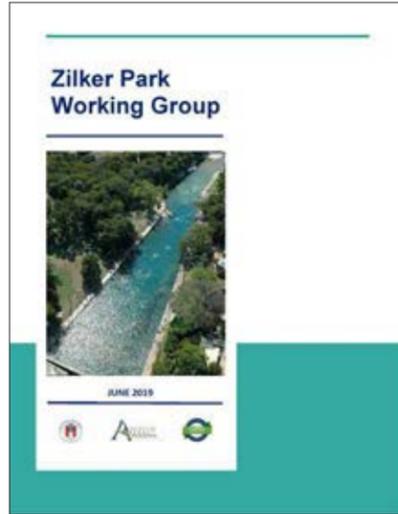
CHAPTER FOUR

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Relevant Vision Plans
- Regional Context
- Event Calendar
- Transportation/Mobility
- Ecology
- Regulations
- Utility
- Financial

SITE ANALYSIS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

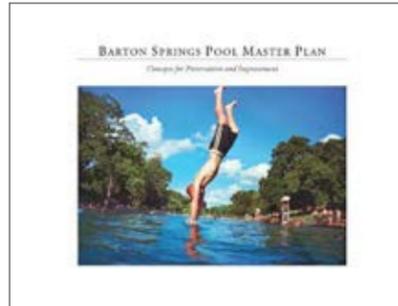
RELEVANT VISION PLANS



Zilker Park Working Group

CITY OF AUSTIN 2019 ZILKER PARK WORKING GROUP REPORT

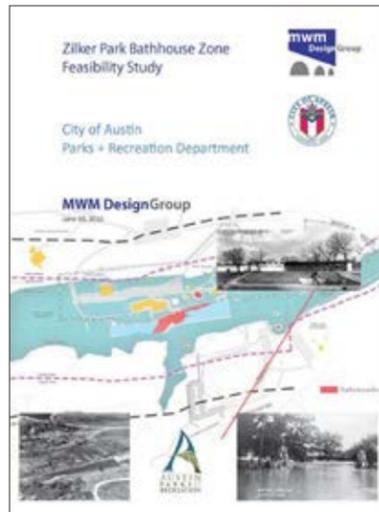
The Working Group issued its report in June, 2019. Its purpose, as outlined by Austin City Council resolution, was to: 1) Determine the viability of proposed improvement plans to fortify the landfill cap along Stratford Drive and make recommendations of terms for implementation of the improvements, including pilot solutions. 2) Evaluate immediate options and opportunities for parking outside of the park area and strategies for reducing traffic in Zilker Metropolitan Park and at surrounding amenities with a goal of piloting options by October 2018.



Barton Springs Pool Master Plan

CITY OF AUSTIN BARTON SPRINGS POOL MASTER PLAN - CONCEPTS FOR PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Adopted in 2009, the plan's goal is to return the site to its rightful glory, where the water was cleaner and the experience of the pool was more enjoyable. This plan proposes appropriate additions and renovations to the swimming pool, its buildings and its grounds that respect the fragility of this unique natural and historical setting, and accommodate the significant user demands on Austin's most popular park amenity. In recent years, this 22-acre site has over a million visitors per year. The project worked with a complex array of historical, environmental and public-use issues. Major considerations were park planning, federal permitting, pool and watershed hydrology, historic preservation, sustainability and landscape.



Zilker Park Bathhouse Zone Feasibility Study

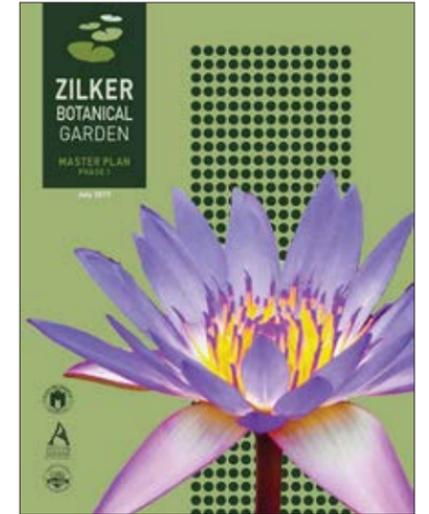
CITY OF AUSTIN ZILKER PARK BATHHOUSE ZONE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Adopted in 2016, This study examines the feasibility of various improvements to grounds and facilities in the Barton Springs Pool area. Its recommendations incorporate the goals of the 2008 Barton Springs Pool Master Plan as well as the challenges of the numerous environmental, historical and local regulations that apply to this area. Move forward with planned and funded projects including:

- Install parking meters
- Daylight the Eliza Springs outlet
- Build the Violet Crown Trailhead restrooms
- Remove and relocate the existing maintenance facilities.

CITY OF AUSTIN 2019 ZILKER BOTANICAL GARDEN MASTER PLAN

Issued in July of 2019, the Zilker Botanical Garden Vision Plan is highly relevant to the Zilker Park Vision Plan and makes recommendations related to event facilities, wayfinding, mobility, and more.



Zilker Botanical Garden Master Plan

CITY OF AUSTIN ZILKER PARK NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Zilker Park Historic District was entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. The National Register Historic District (NRHD) encompasses the entire area of Zilker Park, approximately 350 acres. The historic district designation is based on two of the four applicable National Register criteria for designation. Under Criterion A, for association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, the park is noted for conservation and entertainment/recreation at the local level of significance for its association with the development and design of municipal parks in Austin during the early 20th century. Under Criterion C, for a property that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, the park is noted for architecture and landscape architecture, again at the local level of significance, for numerous elements built within the park that represent the Reform Park Movement design philosophy and Depression-era public works programs. The Zilker Park NRHD describes a total of 69 resources within the district boundary, including buildings, objects, sites and structures.



Zilker Park National Register Historic District

CITY OF AUSTIN ZILKER PARK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Prepared by Julie McGilvray in 2012, the Zilker Park Cultural Landscape Report recommends the creation of a preservation management plan with appropriate treatment planning for historic buildings, structures, and sites within Zilker Park and states that an integrated approach to site management, preservation, and conservation is necessary. The report also suggests pursuing SITES certification in the future as many of the requirements are already in place, including an inventory of resources, the site history, native plants preference, recreational land use, educational land use, and integrity of hard and softscapes.

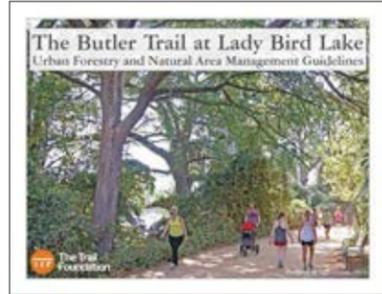


Zilker Park Cultural Landscape Report

RELEVANT VISION PLANS



Zilker Park Natural Resources Inventory & Management Guidelines



The Butler Trail at Lady Bird Lake



Environmental Site Assessment



Austin Parks & Recreation Long Range Plan

SIGLO GROUP ZILKER PARK NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY & MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

This report was finalized in April 2021, and a summary can be found in the “Environmental” section of this report.

THE TRAIL FOUNDATION THE BUTLER TRAIL AT LADY BIRD LAKE

The Butler Trail Urban Forestry and Ecological Restoration Guidelines Environmental Site Assessment presents thorough research of the history, plant and animal species, soil, and erosion in the area where Zilker Park meets Lady Bird Lake.

TRC COMPANIES, INC. ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT PHASE I

The assessment’s purpose was to identify Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) at Zilker Park as defined by the ASTM E 1527-13 standard. Three RECs were identified: 1) Butler Landfill, due to the constituents of concerns at levels above their respective Protective Concentration Levels exceedances and the potential from comingling of groundwater within the landfill with surface waters at Lady Bird Lake. 2) Pistol and Skeet range area, including the wooded area to the north due to the presence or likely presence of lead at levels which indicate an impact to environment. 3) Area at the northwest portion of Zilker Park currently used as the West Butler Landfill, due to the storage of the asphalt, electric powered carts and small vehicles with lead-acid batteries, surplus lawn-maintenance equipment, and chemical containers without cover and/or impervious pavement, which represents a material threat of a release of hazardous substances and/or petroleum products to the environment.

CITY OF AUSTIN, AUSTIN PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT PARD’S LONG RANGE PLAN FOR LAND FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

The Long Range Plan for Land Facilities and Programs contains maps and data about the City of Austin’s overall park system and makes a number of citywide recommendations. Recommendations specific to Zilker include upgrading and improving site conditions at the Zilker Clubhouse, continuing the Zilker Loop Trail development and Barton Creek Crossing upstream from the pool, constructing a loop trail extension and bridge, and implementing a master plan.

CITY OF AUSTIN PARKLAND EVENTS TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

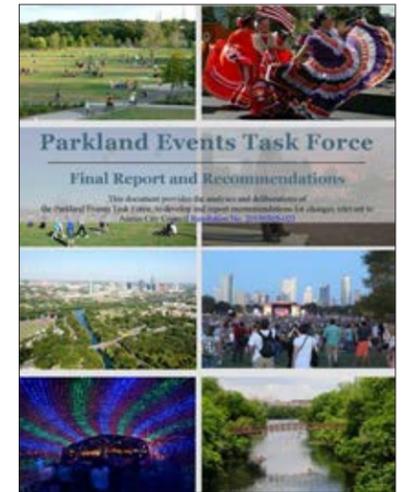
The Parkland Events Task Force convened in 2015 and 2016 to make recommendations for events in heavily used parks, such as Zilker Park, Auditorium Shores, and Festival Beach. They have all been subject to caps in the past. The Task Force recommended reducing the number of event days from 29 days to 24 days and suggested other parks such as Bolm Road, John Trevino, Onion Creek, and Walter Long as venue alternatives. The City should ensure all city costs are covered (fees, fines, etc.) for hosting large events. The report recommends developing and using a standardized pre-event and post-event evaluation matrix, ensuring vegetation, trees, and environmentally sensitive areas are protected, and that events are green.

THE CITY OF AUSTIN, ADA OFFICE 2015 ADA IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

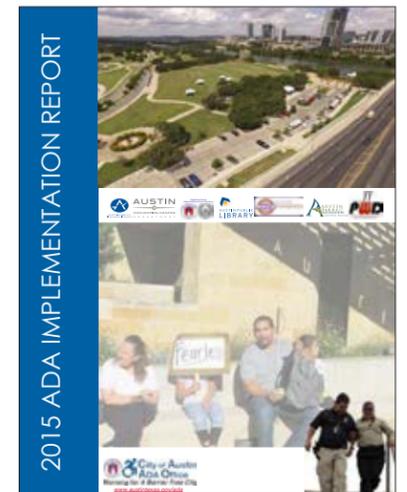
According to the 2015 PARD Public Facility ADA Self-Assessment Survey, programs and services provided by both PARD and third-party vendors should be accessible to people with disabilities. Several Zilker park facilities are historic and will require creative design modifications to ensure accessibility.

THE CITY OF AUSTIN AUSTIN STRATEGIC MOBILITY PLAN

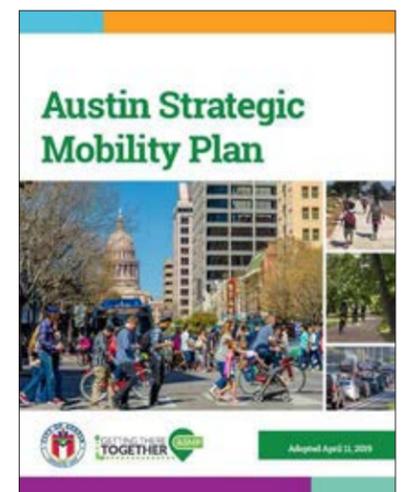
Issued in April of 2019, the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan outlines recommendations related to placemaking, economic prosperity, sustainability, and health and safety. The plan calls for the construction of a transportation network that encourages social interaction through quality urban design and connects users to the many places that make Austin unique. With regards to economic prosperity, economic growth for individuals and the city should be promoted through strategic investments in transportation networks that meet the needs of the 21st century. Integrated designs and quality additions to the built environment that reduce impacts and promote efficient use of public resources should be promoted. Lowering the risk of travel-related injury and promoting public health will protect Austinites. Active transportation access for all ages and abilities on sidewalk, bicycle, and urban trail systems should be built. Active transportation initiatives should be advanced and Austinites should be connected to services and opportunities for better health.



Parkland Events Task Force Final Report and Recommendations

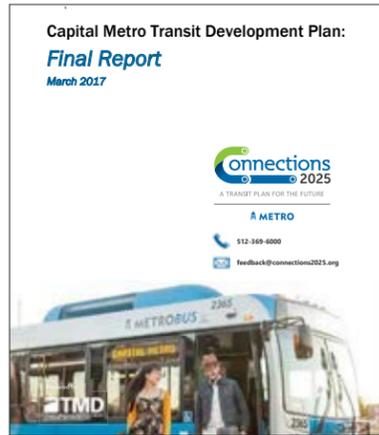


2015 ADA Implementation Report



Austin Strategic Mobility Plan

RELEVANT VISION PLANS



Capital Metro Transit Development Plan

TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT & DESIGN, INC. CAPITAL METRO TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Route 30 (which serves Zilker Park) was proposed to operate every 30 minutes (on weekends and weekdays) (pg. 53). Proposed changes in this route would affect ADA paratransit coverage for customers served by route 30.

Connections 2025 also proposes a Mobility Innovation Zone, Zone H (Zilker/Barton Hills), located near Zilker Park. Mobility Innovation Zones pilot mobility solutions (such as shuttles, car sharing, and vanpools), especially where traditional fixed-route transit is difficult to implement.

ZILKER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION ZILKER NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Zilker and some surrounding neighborhoods do not currently have a formal neighborhood plan adopted by the City to guide land use decisions. However, in other planning documents the Zilker Neighborhood Association has prepared, there is an emphasis on decreasing the amount of parking in Zilker Park now, and instead using current parking areas for park use. There is also a desire for more public transit and bike options, and a wish to avoid privatization of park elements. The ZNA would like the issue of climate change mitigation addressed as part of the Zilker Park Vision Plan.

ROLLINGWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Although it is not included in any formal discussions, the City of Rollingwood has previously mentioned interest in 1) purchasing the Zilker Preserve, 2) being involved with decisions related to any activity that will affect traffic through the city, and 3) potential improvements to trails that connect Rollingwood and Austin.

THE TRAIL CONSERVANCY SAFE AND MOBILITY STUDY RESULTS FOR THE BUTLER TRAIL 2021

The Safety and Mobility Study Results for Butler Trail include several recommendations, including the creation of a trail head in Zilker Park and incorporating a trail loop within the park that includes the Butler Trail as a segment. It also suggests making Zilker Park feel like an extension of the trail space. The study recommends considering adding a bridge across Barton Creek and closer to Lou Neff Point that can connect from the higher elevation both sides. Also, the study outlines recommended trail widths and surface material standards. These standards are under review with permitting and the update of the master urban trails plan for the city.

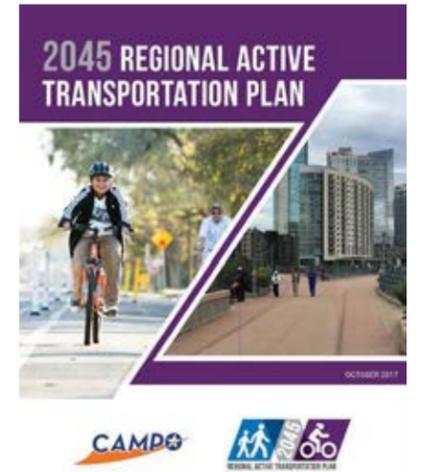


TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION MOPAC EXPRESSWAY SOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

In 2013, TxDOT and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority started an Environmental Study for the MoPac Expressway, from Slaughter Lane to Cesar Chavez. This study determined the Express Lane(s) Alternative as the Recommended Build Alternative. These include the addition of two new Express Lanes in each direction from Cesar Chavez Street to Slaughter Lane.

CAMPO CAMPO 2045 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

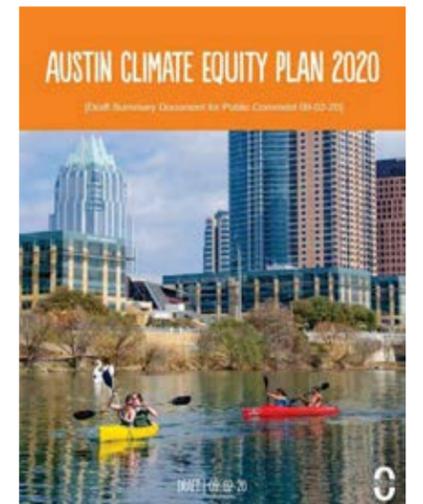
Appendix A of the 2045 Plan Document, the Regional Transportation Plan Projects Lists, includes the following MoPac Expressway South Improvements near Zilker Park.



CAMPO 2045 Regional Transportation Plan

THE CITY OF AUSTIN AUSTIN CLIMATE EQUITY PLAN 2020

It is clear that Austin is experiencing climate change and the natural system has significant role to handle this change. This report outlines goals and strategies to keep Austin's natural lands and farm land and reduce carbon emissions for a climate equity.

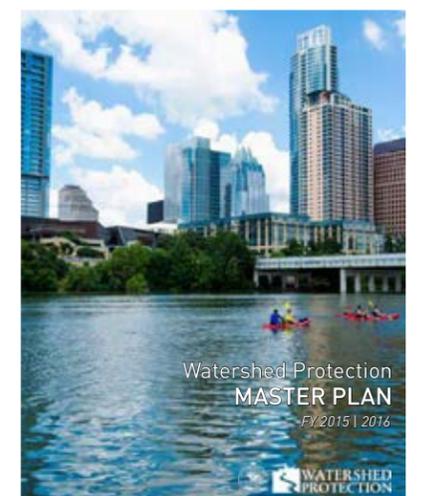


Austin Climate Equity Plan 2020

THE CITY OF AUSTIN, WATERSHED PROTECTION WATERSHED PROTECTION MASTER PLAN

The plan calls for reducing the impact of flooding, erosion, and water pollution to the communities. The detailed goals are below:

- Protect lives and property by reducing the impact of flood events.
- Protect channel integrity and prevent property damage resulting from erosion.
- Protect and improve Austin's waterways and aquifers for citizen use and support of aquatic life.
- Improve the urban environment by fostering additional beneficial uses of waterways and drainage facilities.
- Meet or exceed all local, state, and federal permit and regulatory requirements.
- Maintain the integrity and function of Utility Assets.
- Optimize City resources by integrating flood, erosion, and water quality control measures.



Watershed Protection Master Plan



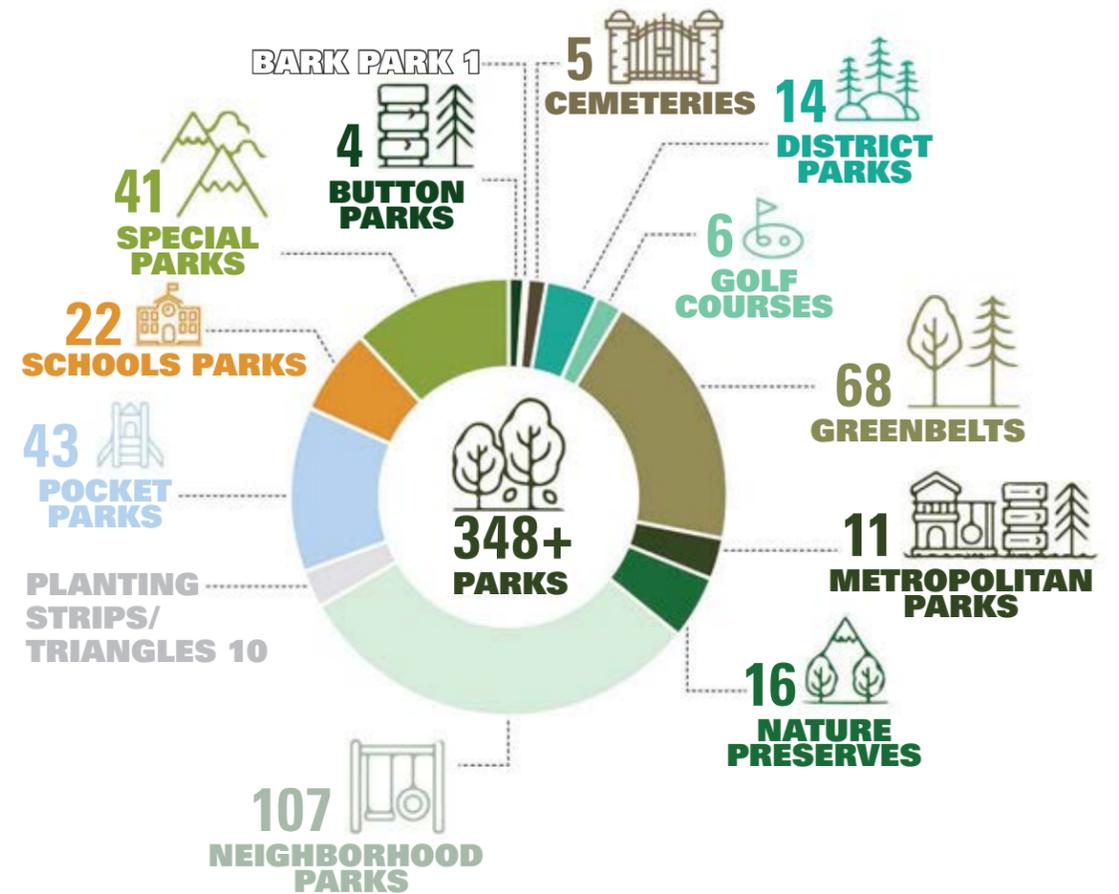
AN URBAN OASIS



Downtown and High-Density

Zilker Park sees about 2.6 million visitors annually with an average of 7,200 people visiting per day. Located in the heart of Austin, this park is one of the most visited places in the city. Many of these visitors are drawn to the hiking and swimming options within and near Zilker Park. The Park is connected to the Roy and Anne Butler Hike and Bike Trail, the Violet Crown Trail, the Barton Creek Greenbelt, and Ladybird Lake. Barton Springs Pool is not the only swimming hole within this recreational area. Campbell's Hole, Sculpture Falls, Twin Falls, and Gus Fruh are all popular places to get into the water. On nice days these swimming holes are filled with Austinites of all ages and backgrounds united by the urge to swim in cool water on a hot day.

ZILKER PARK WITHIN THE AUSTIN PARK SYSTEM



ZILKER METROPOLITAN PARK

- Size: 307.85 Acres
- Address: 2100 Barton Springs Road, Austin, Texas (78746)
- Facilities: Zilker Botanical Garden, Austin Nature and Science Center, McBeth Recreation Center, Austin Sunshine Camps, Barton Springs Pool, etc.

Zilker Park is classified as a Metropolitan park in Austin Park System. It means the park serves city wide population and has access to major arterials with more large and specialised features and facilities.

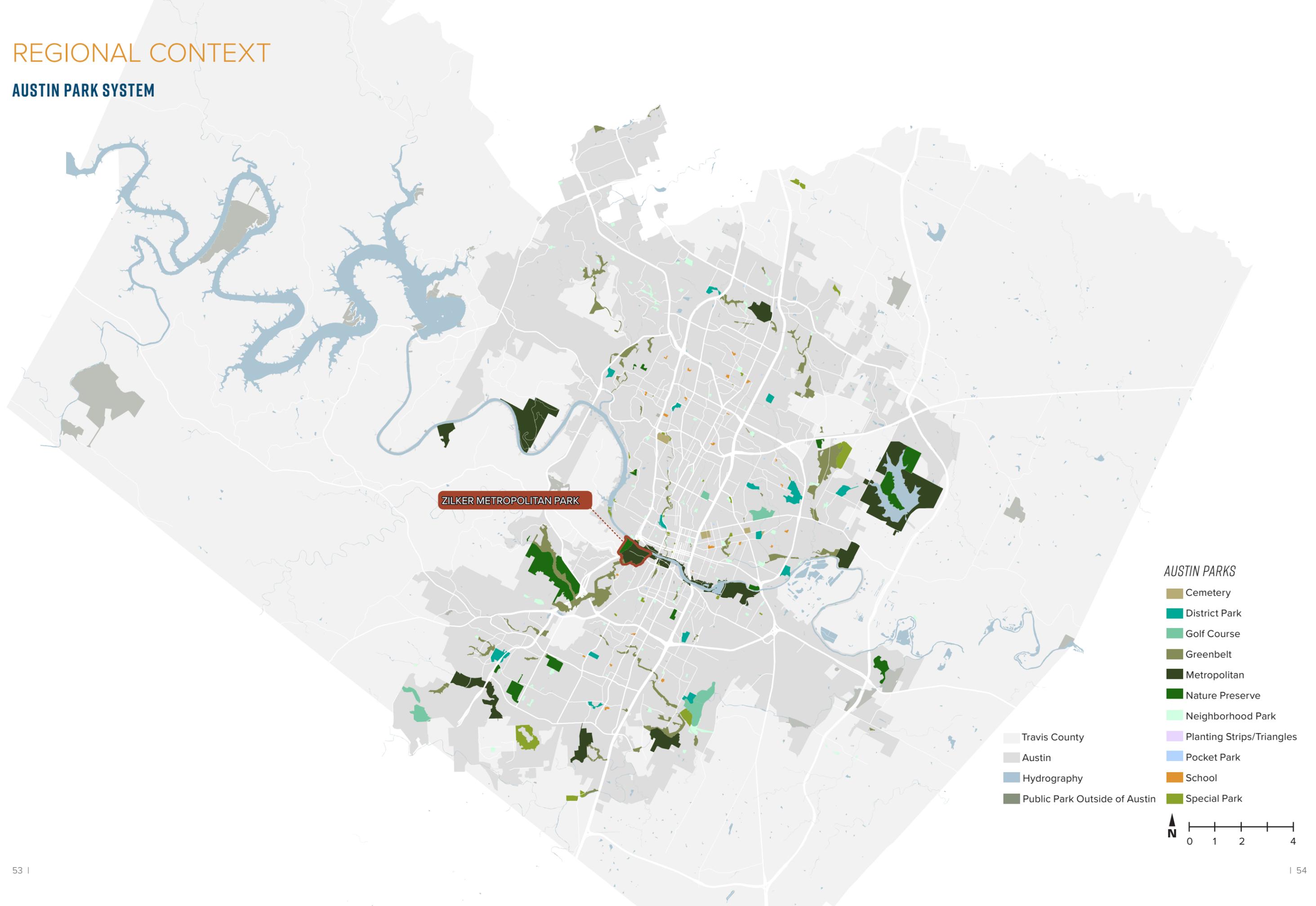
METROPOLITAN PARK

This type of the park focuses on natural resource values and recreational diversity. Often include water-based recreation and environmental education.

- Size: 201+ Acres
- Service Area: Citywide
- Access: Major Arterials (All Transport Modes)
- Feature: More Large, Specialized Features and Facilities

REGIONAL CONTEXT

AUSTIN PARK SYSTEM



REGIONAL CONTEXT

CONTEXT OF ZILKER PARK



LEGEND

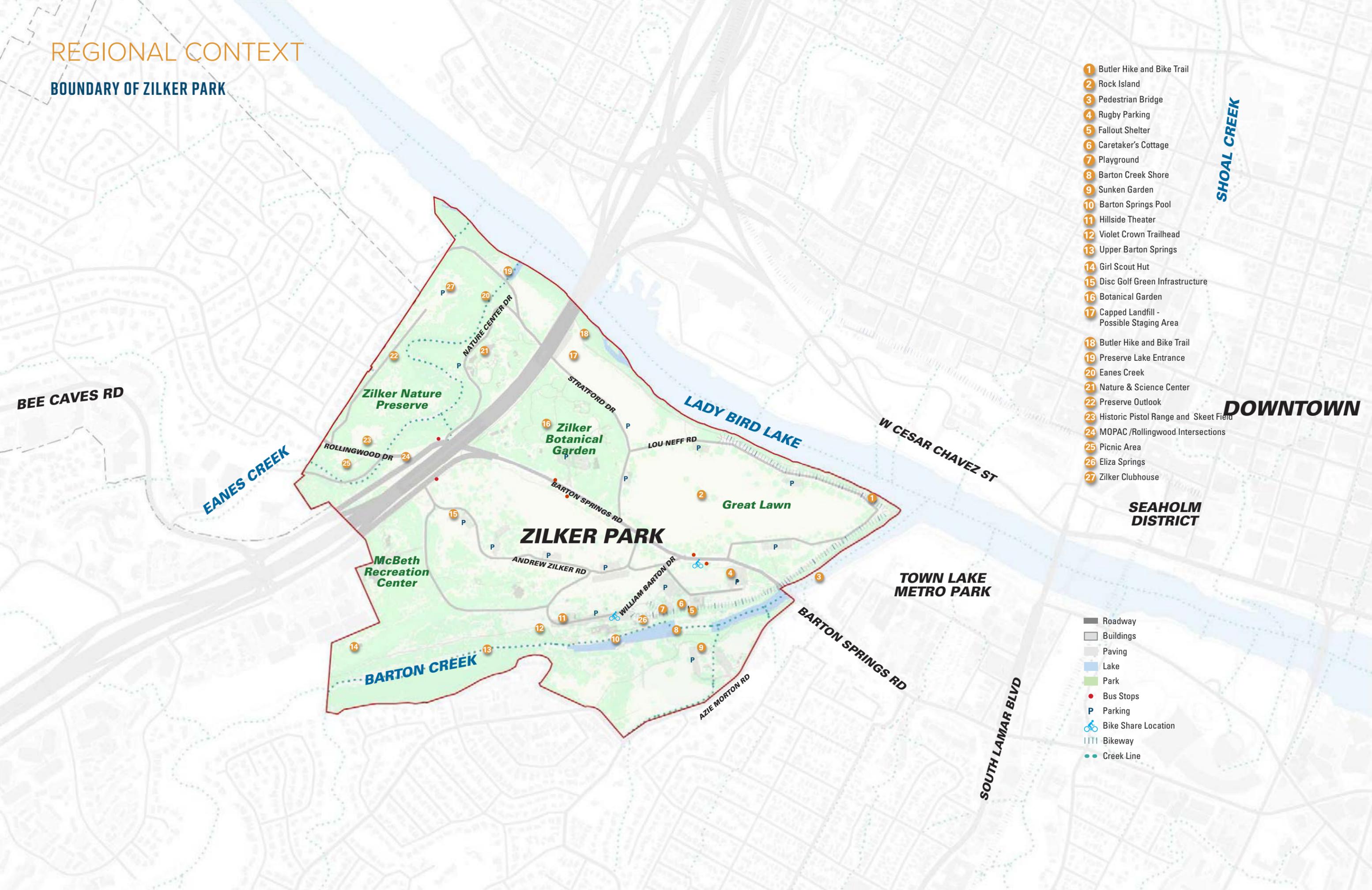
- City Limit
- Roadway
- Buildings
- Bus Routes
- CAMPO Bikeway
- Creek Line
- Lake
- Park
- 100-year Floodplain

Scale: 0 1,000 2,000 4,000 ft

North Arrow: N

REGIONAL CONTEXT

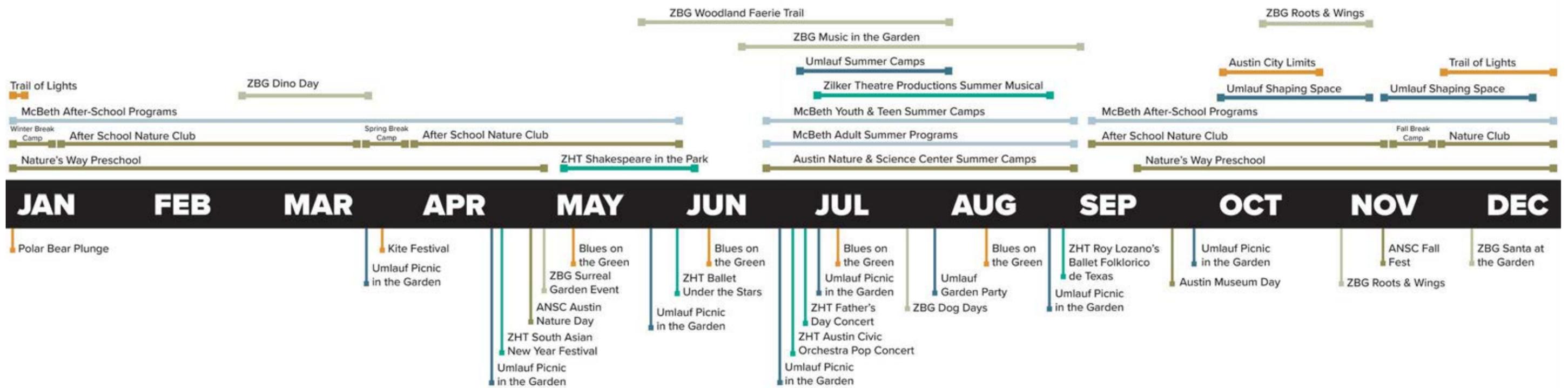
BOUNDARY OF ZILKER PARK



- 1 Butler Hike and Bike Trail
- 2 Rock Island
- 3 Pedestrian Bridge
- 4 Rugby Parking
- 5 Fallout Shelter
- 6 Caretaker's Cottage
- 7 Playground
- 8 Barton Creek Shore
- 9 Sunken Garden
- 10 Barton Springs Pool
- 11 Hillside Theater
- 12 Violet Crown Trailhead
- 13 Upper Barton Springs
- 14 Girl Scout Hut
- 15 Disc Golf Green Infrastructure
- 16 Botanical Garden
- 17 Capped Landfill - Possible Staging Area
- 18 Butler Hike and Bike Trail
- 19 Preserve Lake Entrance
- 20 Eanes Creek
- 21 Nature & Science Center
- 22 Preserve Outlook
- 23 Historic Pistol Range and Skeet Field
- 24 MOPAC/Rollingwood Intersections
- 25 Picnic Area
- 26 Eliza Springs
- 27 Zilker Clubhouse

- Roadway
- Buildings
- Paving
- Lake
- Park
- Bus Stops
- P Parking
- 🚲 Bike Share Location
- Bikeway
- ... Creek Line

EVENT CALENDAR OF ZILKER PARK



<p>FREEPLAY RECREATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PLAYGROUND SWIMMING KAYAKING PADDLE BOARDING PADDLE BOATS TRAILS SLACKLINING 	<p>INFORMAL RECREATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DISC GOLF FITNESS AREA INFORMAL FIELD SPORTS VOLLEYBALL ADAPTIVE SPORTS RUGBY 	<p>PASSIVE RECREATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BOAT LAUNCH MINI TRAIL GREAT LAWN RIVER OVERLOOK PICNIC AREAS 	<p>EVENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KITE FESTIVAL AUSTIN CITY LIMITS BLUES ON THE GREEN TRAIL OF LIGHTS SUMMER CAMPS TREE LIGHTING EDUCATIONAL TOURS ZILKER SUMMER MUSICALS AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS GOOD NEIGHBOR ADVENTURE CLUB 	<p>ENTERTAINMENT & CULTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HILLSIDE THEATER ZILKER TRAIN 	<p>DESTINATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ZILKER BOTANICAL GARDEN AUSTIN NATURE & SCIENCE CENTER UMLAUF SCULPTURE GARDEN & MUSEUM GIRL SCOUTS CABIN POOL SNACK BAR GREENBELT ENTRANCE BARTON SPRINGS POOL SHEFFIELD EDUCATION CENTER MCBETH RECREATION CENTER ZILKER CLUB HOUSE 	<p>OPERATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PARKING CARETAKER'S COTTAGE STORAGE & MAINTENANCE RESTROOMS 	<p>NATURE EXPLORATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UPPER BARTON SPRINGS EANES CREEK VIOLET CROWN TRAIL ZILKER NATURE PRESERVE NATURE'S WAY PRESCHOOL
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Zilker Park hosts a variety of events year round, the largest of which are Austin City Limits, the Trail of Lights and the Kite Festival. ACL and the Trail of Lights impact roughly 135 acres of the park, closing the Great Lawn and surrounding roads and using adjacent areas like the polo fields for supporting infrastructure. Both of these events bring over 400,000 visitors to the park while the Kite Festival brings in another 20,000. All three events draw visitors from throughout the state of Texas with ACL being the biggest draw nationally.

There are also many smaller events at the park throughout the year. Primary hosts include Zilker Botanical Garden, Austin Nature and Science Center,

Zilker Hillside Theater, Umlauf Sculpture Garden, the City of Austin, and the McBeth Recreation Center. Most hosted programming is offered to all ages with the remaining programming being geared towards youth and children. The summer is the busiest time of the year for these events with the first quarter of the year being the least programmed.

Destinations such as the Zilker Botanical Garden would like to expand their programming to offer more evening or longer running events and to incorporate more artist collaborations or traveling exhibits. Much of their expanded programming is limited due to concerns

over the creation of parking or circulation issues that a popular or well attended event might bring.

Self-guided recreation, nature exploration activities, and visits to Barton Springs Pool make up the bulk of consistent year-round visitation to Zilker Park. Visitors come the park to swim, paddle, bike, enjoy the Great Lawn, and use the trail network within and connected to the park. Zilker Canoe and the Rowing Dock reported a combined total of 24,581 rentals and Barton Springs Pool saw a little over one million visitors in 2019. There are various sports that take place within the park including Little League, disk golf, rugby, youth soccer, and informal yoga and volleyball. The Great Lawn is

the largest unprogrammed field for active or passive recreation and is a prominent destination within the park.

There was support for more restrooms, shade and increased ADA accessibility from the community when surveyed. Traffic, congestion, and lack of parking were indicated as the largest barriers to enjoying the park.

TRANSPORTATION/MOBILITY

MOBILITY OF ZILKER PARK

1 Although visitors today can access Zilker Park through a variety of transportation options, not all modes of travel to the park are equally convenient or safe. Because of this, most park visitors arrive via private automobile.

2 The busiest park amenities are located west of Barton Creek, and with Barton Springs Road providing the only vehicular connection across the creek and connecting to MoPac Expressway, it is the primary multimodal gateway into the park for most visitors.



GETTING TO THE PARK

Visitors have multiple transportation options for getting to Zilker Park. The park is served by the City of Austin's public transit system, connected to public hike and bike trails, and offers parking within the park for personal vehicles.

TRANSIT

Zilker Park is currently served by one Capital Metro Route – Route 30 (Barton Creek Square route), which connects the Westgate Transit Center at US 290/SH 71 and Manchaca Road and Barton Creek Square Mall in Southwest Austin to Downtown Austin, stopping as far north as 12th and Guadalupe. Within the park, Route 30 operates on the MoPac Expressway frontage roads and Barton Springs Road. The route serves seven stops within the park. It needs to be noted that there are no ADA compliant bus stops. Coming from Downtown, Route 30 stops at the following locations:

- At signalized pedestrian crossing of Barton Springs Road near Lou Neff Road
 - At the entrance of the Zilker Botanical Garden
 - At the Nature Center Access Road
- Coming from Southwest Austin, Route 30 stops at the following locations:
- Along the MoPac Expressway frontage road near the McBeth Recreation Center
 - Along the MoPac Expressway frontage road near the Disc Golf Course
 - Across from the entrance of the Zilker Botanic Garden
 - At signalized pedestrian crossing of Barton Springs Road near Lou Neff Road

The following map shows the alignment of Route 30 and ridership at stops near and within the park.

The busiest bus stop within the park is the stop pair located at Barton Springs Road near Lou Neff Road, which serves several of the park's primary amenities including the Great Lawn and Barton Springs. In February 2020, eight people used this stop on a typical weekday, while 25 people used the stop on a typical Saturday. However, it should be considered that 2020 was not a typical year, with the City taking official COVID-19 precautions starting in March 2020.

Route 30 typically operates approximately every 30 minutes, both during the weekdays and on weekends. Capital Metro temporarily increased the frequency of Route 30 to every 15 minutes during weekends in the summer months in 2019 as part of a pilot project.

Origin/Destination survey data collected by Capital Metro provides a snapshot of how transit users are accessing the park. Since Route 30 does not travel north or east of Downtown, nearly half of riders that use a stop within the park transfer to another route. Most transit riders walked to the bus and few riders took a bike with them on the bus, meaning that transit users are primarily on foot once they arrive at the park. Zilker Park is served by several of the city's highest profile trails – including the Butler Trail along Lady Bird Lake and the Barton Creek Greenbelt & Violet Crown Trail. Despite this trail access, getting to Zilker Park can be challenging by active modes (biking, walking, scootering).

BICYCLE

Several existing park streets are commonly used by cyclists despite a lack of dedicated bicycle facilities given their generally low speeds, including Stratford Drive and Andrew Zilker Road. The park also features two MetroBike docks within the park boundary – one at the Capital Metro bus stop near Lou Neff Road, and the other at the entrance to Barton Springs – with several additional docks located near the park.

MICRO-MOBILITY

Dockless scooters and bicycles – known as micromobility – are a popular way to access Zilker Park. Usage data shows that by and large, the peak of access to Zilker Park falls in the late afternoon to early evening, with the highest usage around 7:00PM. Access is about twice as high on weekends than at the same time on weekdays, and access dips significantly in the early morning hours. Weekly usage follows the trend

of most parks, with the bulk of access occurring on the weekends and the dip occurring mid-week.

PEDESTRIAN

Other than the Butler Trail and Barton Creek Greenbelt Trail, dedicated pedestrian facilities within Zilker Park are very limited. There is a paved, off-street sidewalk called the "Zilker Metro Park Loop" located to the east of the MoPac Expressway frontage road and south of Barton Springs Road. There is also a short segment of paved sidewalk between the Capital Metro bus stop and the Butler Trail on the north side of Barton Springs Road.

PARKING

Parking opportunities within Zilker Park are dispersed throughout the park, primarily in off-street parking lots that accommodate between 50 and 100 vehicles per lot. Between formal parking lots, on-street parking on Lou Neff Road, and informal lots such as the former landfill gravel lot between Mopac and Lou Neff Road, there are almost 2,450 parking spaces within the boundary of Zilker Park. Of those spaces, approximately 875 of the spaces are located in formal lots (lots with marked spaces) and on-street parking stalls that serve general park attendees and are not limited to specific park facilities. These spaces require payment on approximately 57 days of the year on weekends and holidays from March through September. Of these spaces, approximately 230 are on-street spaces along Lou Neff Road.

SAFETY

The highest incidences of crashes in the Zilker Park area were found at major intersections near the park, including:

- » MoPac Expressway / Bee Cave Road
- » MoPac Expressway / Barton Springs Road
- » Barton Springs Road / South Lamar Boulevard

Among crashes involving a cyclist or pedestrian, many of the incidents occurred primarily along South Lamar Boulevard, South Congress Avenue, and in the Downtown core. While there were crashes that occurred on Barton Springs Road and within the park itself, there were no recorded fatalities between 2016 and 2020 near or in the park.

EXISTING MOBILITY

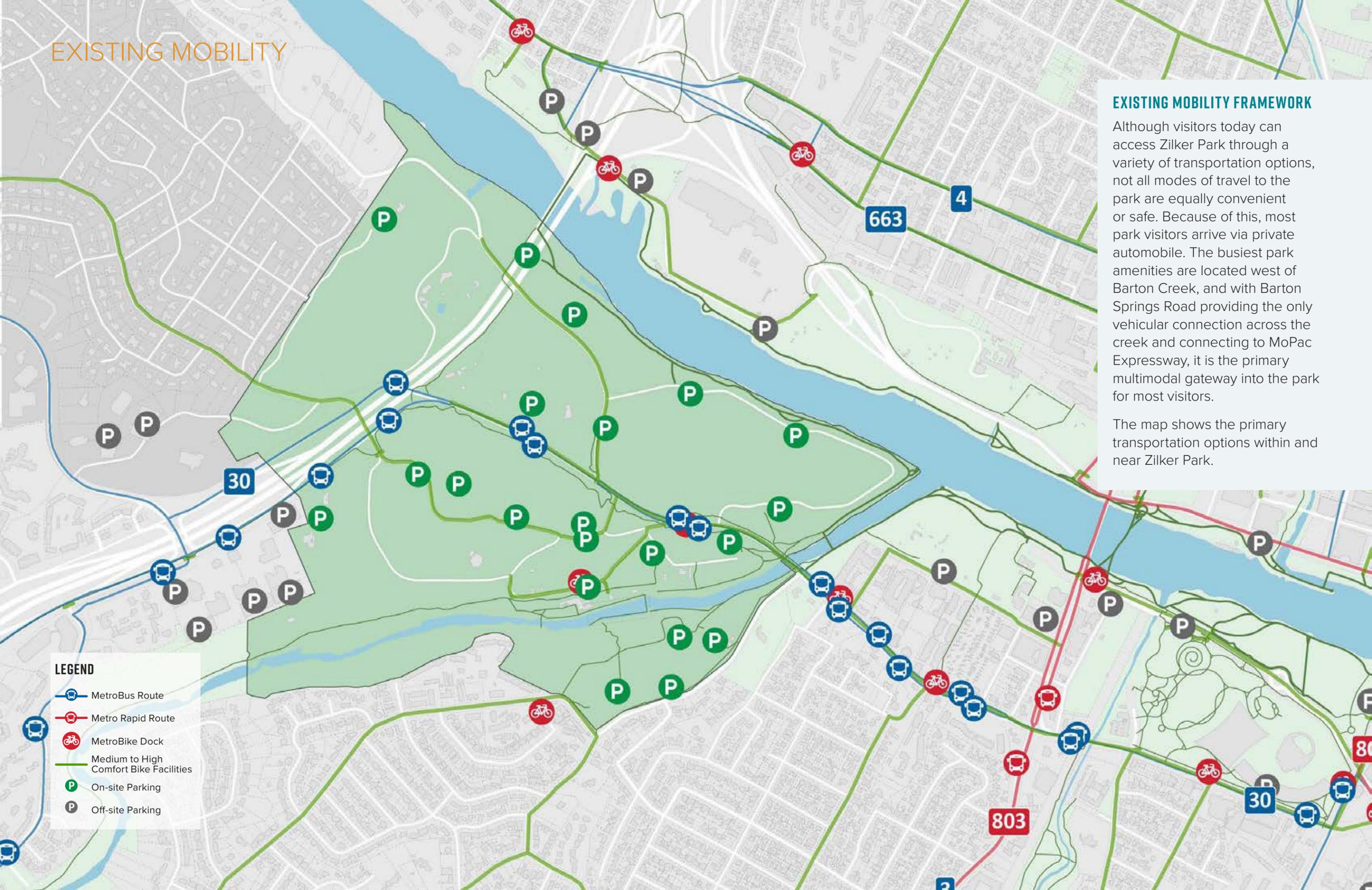
EXISTING MOBILITY FRAMEWORK

Although visitors today can access Zilker Park through a variety of transportation options, not all modes of travel to the park are equally convenient or safe. Because of this, most park visitors arrive via private automobile. The busiest park amenities are located west of Barton Creek, and with Barton Springs Road providing the only vehicular connection across the creek and connecting to MoPac Expressway, it is the primary multimodal gateway into the park for most visitors.

The map shows the primary transportation options within and near Zilker Park.

LEGEND

-  MetroBus Route
-  Metro Rapid Route
-  MetroBike Dock
-  Medium to High Comfort Bike Facilities
-  On-site Parking
-  Off-site Parking

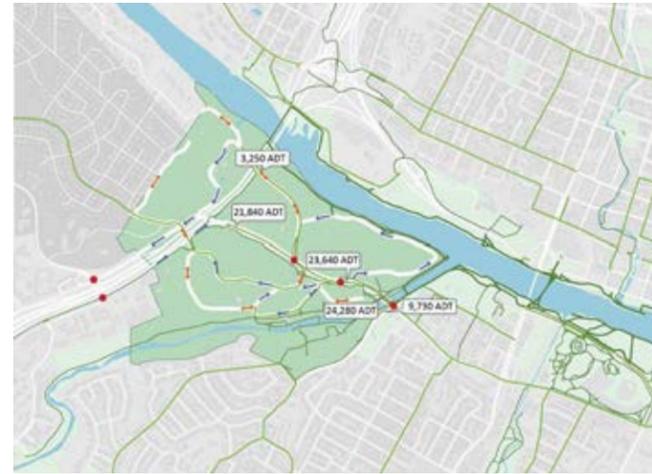


SITE CHARACTERISTICS

SUMMARY

- 1 Vehicular circulation within the park is dominated by Barton Springs Road, which travels east/west through most of the park. Most of the park's parking lots and major destinations that are accessible by vehicle are accessed through park roadways.
- 2 During major events, Barton Springs Road and Stratford Drive are closed to general vehicle traffic, although closures are limited to event-hours for all events other than Austin City Limits.
- 3 Parking opportunities within Zilker Park are dispersed throughout the park, primarily in off-street parking lots that accommodate between 50 and 100 vehicles per lot.
- 4 Most transit riders walked to the bus and few riders took a bike with them on the bus, meaning that transit users are primarily on foot once they arrive at the park.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION



LEGEND

- One-way Traffic
- Two-way Traffic
- Pedestrian Signal
- Adjacent Trails
- Butler Trail
- ADT Average Daily Traffic

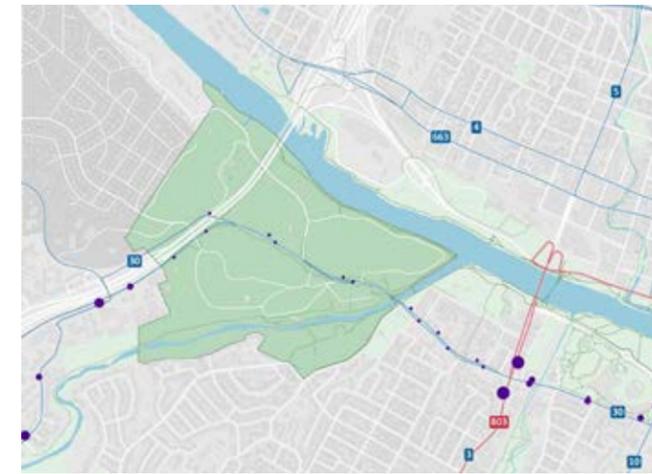
SAFETY



LEGEND

- High Density of All Crashes
- Low Density of All Crashes
- Fatality levels of Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes
 - Unknown
 - No Injury
 - Potential Injury
 - Non-Incapacitating Injury
 - Incapacitating Injury
 - Fatality

TRANSIT



LEGEND

- MetroBus Route
- MetroRapid Route
- Average Daily Rider Activity
 - Low
 - High

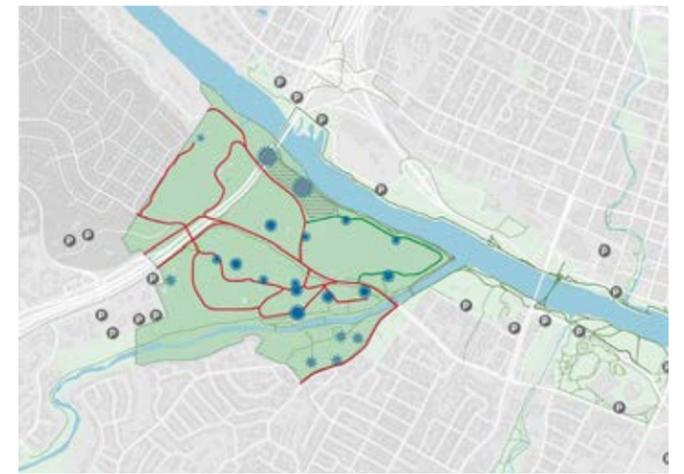
BIKE



LEGEND

- MetroBike Dock
- Bike Repair Station
- Adjacent Trails
- Butler Trails
- Urban Trails Planned
- Level of Comfort for Bike
 - High
 - Medium
 - Low

PARKING



LEGEND

- Total Spaces
- Paid Lot
- Free Lot
- Informal Lot
- Off-site Parking
- No On-Street Parking
- On-Street Parking

PEDESTRIAN



LEGEND

- Sidewalk
- Crosswalk
- Stairs
- Pedestrian Traffic Signal
- Adjacent Trails
- Butler Trails
- Urban Trails Planned

ECOLOGY

SUMMARY

- 1 The land known today as Zilker Park has been an important gathering place throughout human history.
- 2 There are three Recognized Environmental Conditions in the park that require remediation.
- 3 Zilker Park is an important part of the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone and presents opportunities for green infrastructure implementation.
- 4 Erosion within the park is primarily caused by unmanaged stormwater and human disturbance.



ECOLOGY OF ZILKER PARK



Large numbers of visitors and lack of proper infrastructure for them increases soil compaction and erosion issues.



Barton Springs Pool is an amenity for the community and also a habitat for endangered species and an important park of Austin's local hydrology.



50% of the park trails do not currently offer adequate shade.

HISTORIC LAND USE CONTEXT

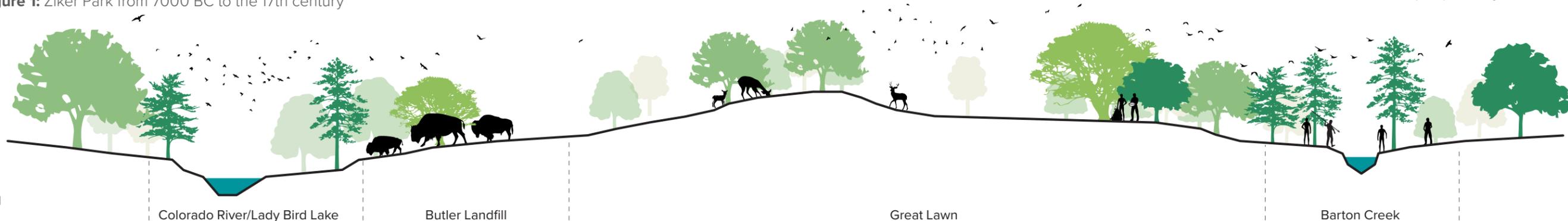
For the purposes of this report, Zilker Park's landscape history can be roughly divided into three periods—Forest, Savanna, & Springs; Industrial & Agriculture; and Recreational. The Forest, Savanna, & Springs period (7000 BCE–17th century) shows the landscape before widespread colonial settlements and represents thousands of years of Indigenous habitation. It highlights some of the tribes who frequented the springs—including the Tonkawa, Lipan Apache, and Comanche. This landscape was characterized by a

naturally dense forested landscape, a low and wide undammed Colorado River, plentiful wildlife, and naturally flowing spring water in Barton Creek. The Industrial & Agriculture period covers the 18th–19th centuries and ends approximately 300 years after colonists first arrived. This time period in Zilker Park was characterized by highly extractive activities, such as mining, farming, and milling along Barton Creek's banks. These intensive land use changes removed tree canopy, decreased wildlife, and increased erosion. The final Recreational period (20th–21st century) shows

land use up to today, which shows Zilker Park as a city-owned public space. The modern landscape in Zilker Park is characterized by a higher and more consistent water level on the north side of the park, created by the damming of the Colorado River and formation of Lady Bird Lake. Additionally, heavy public use, soil compaction, trampling, and contamination is also present throughout the park. These sections highlight not only Zilker Park's accelerating landscape changes, but also how land uses have changed and why. Themes that have emerged from these three historic periods include:

- » A transition in land uses from a natural landscape to agricultural and finally to recreational;
- » A landscape where the proportion of wild lands decreases steadily over time;
- » A decrease in wildlife abundance and diversity over time, especially a decrease in megafauna; and
- » A transition from tribes camping along Barton Creek, to a few independent mill owners and homesteaders, to a modern landscape visited by hundreds of people daily.

Figure 1: Zilker Park from 7000 BC to the 17th century



ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION



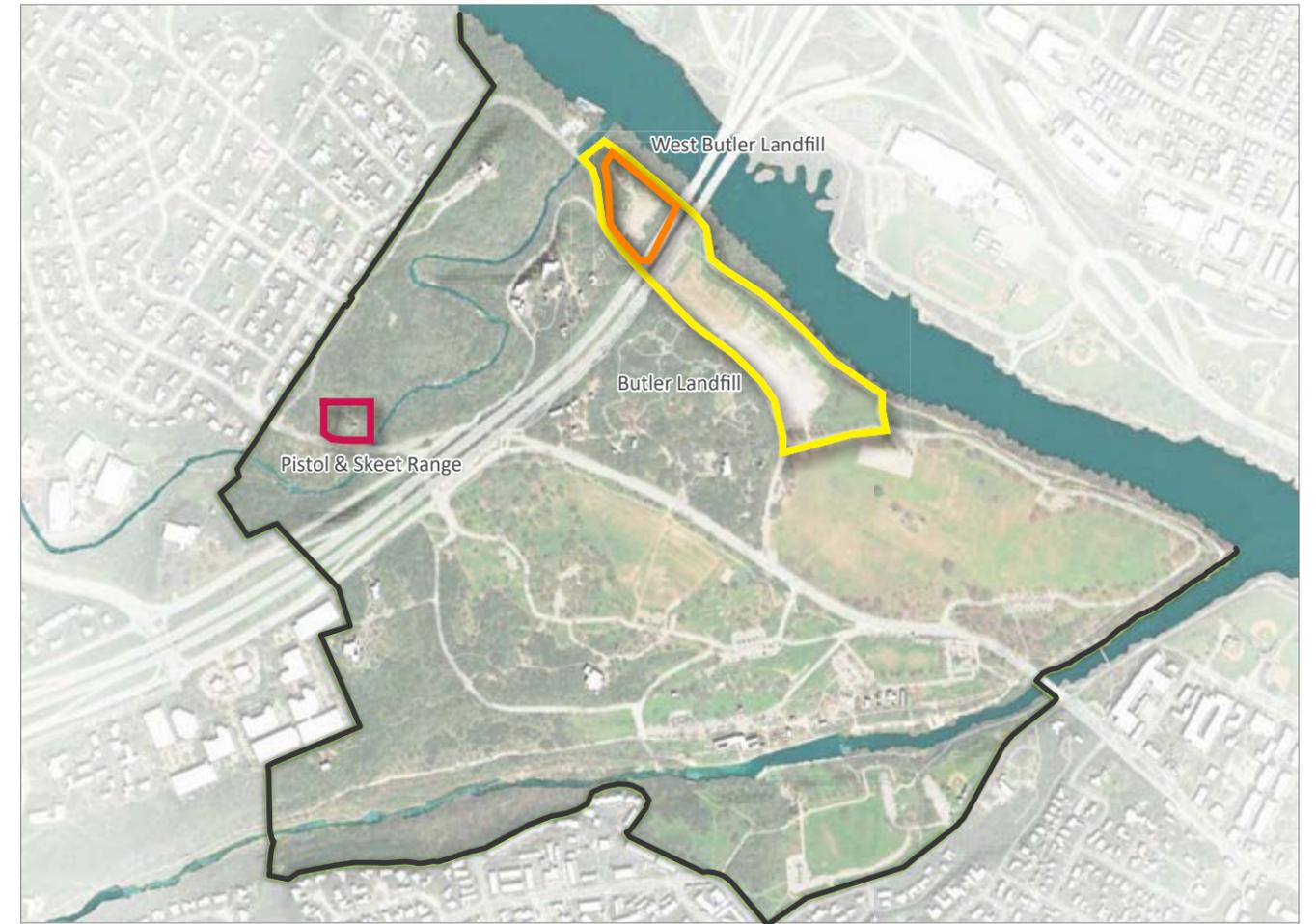
Zilker Park has three main areas of environmental contamination concern—the Butler Landfill, the Pistol and Skeet Range, and the West Butler Landfill. In anticipation of future renovations on site, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed for Zilker Park in 2019 by TRC Environmental Corporation.

BUTLER LANDFILL

The 25-acre Butler Landfill has a maximum depth of 30 feet. This location originally served as a clay quarry for the Butler Brick Factory through the early 1900s, but after termination of quarry operations, the location was operated as a municipal landfill by the City of Austin from 1948 to 1967.¹

Several investigations and groundwater monitoring events have been conducted. While the earlier events did not find constituents of concern (COCs), later monitoring events did detect them. These later investigations found that waste materials were exposed in several areas throughout the landfill and that the lower portion of material within the landfill is saturated by the waters of Lady Bird Lake. A range of contaminants exceeded recommended maximum levels including arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, magnesium, lead, iron, and manganese. Due to this, the 2019 Environmental Assessment classified Butler Landfill as a recognized environmental condition (REC).¹

As an aside, wetlands border the capped Butler Landfill on the eastern and northern sides. The Watershed Protection Department (WPD) advises that ponded areas should not exist over closed landfills. Based on the 1998 Task 5 Report, the boundary of the fill extends eastward towards the Zilker Zephyr tracks and under



the eastern ponded area. As of 2019, when the Zilker Park Working Group completed their report on the park, Watershed Protection Department and Parks & Recreation Department were planning to assess this area and consult with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to determine if additional action is necessary relative to this pond.²

PISTOL AND SKEET RANGE

The 2.5-acre Pistol and Skeet Range was originally developed in the 1930s. Based on aerial photographs and interviews with PARD staff, the western portion was used for skeet shooting (Skeet Range), while the east side was used for pistol and rifle shooting (Pistol Range).¹ The range was likely heavily used on a daily basis by the Austin Police Department and citizens between the mid-1930s and 1970s. The Pistol Range property was used by the Austin Nature & Science Center for archery, equipment storage, and supply storage in portable buildings after the mid-1980s. Historic and recent soil

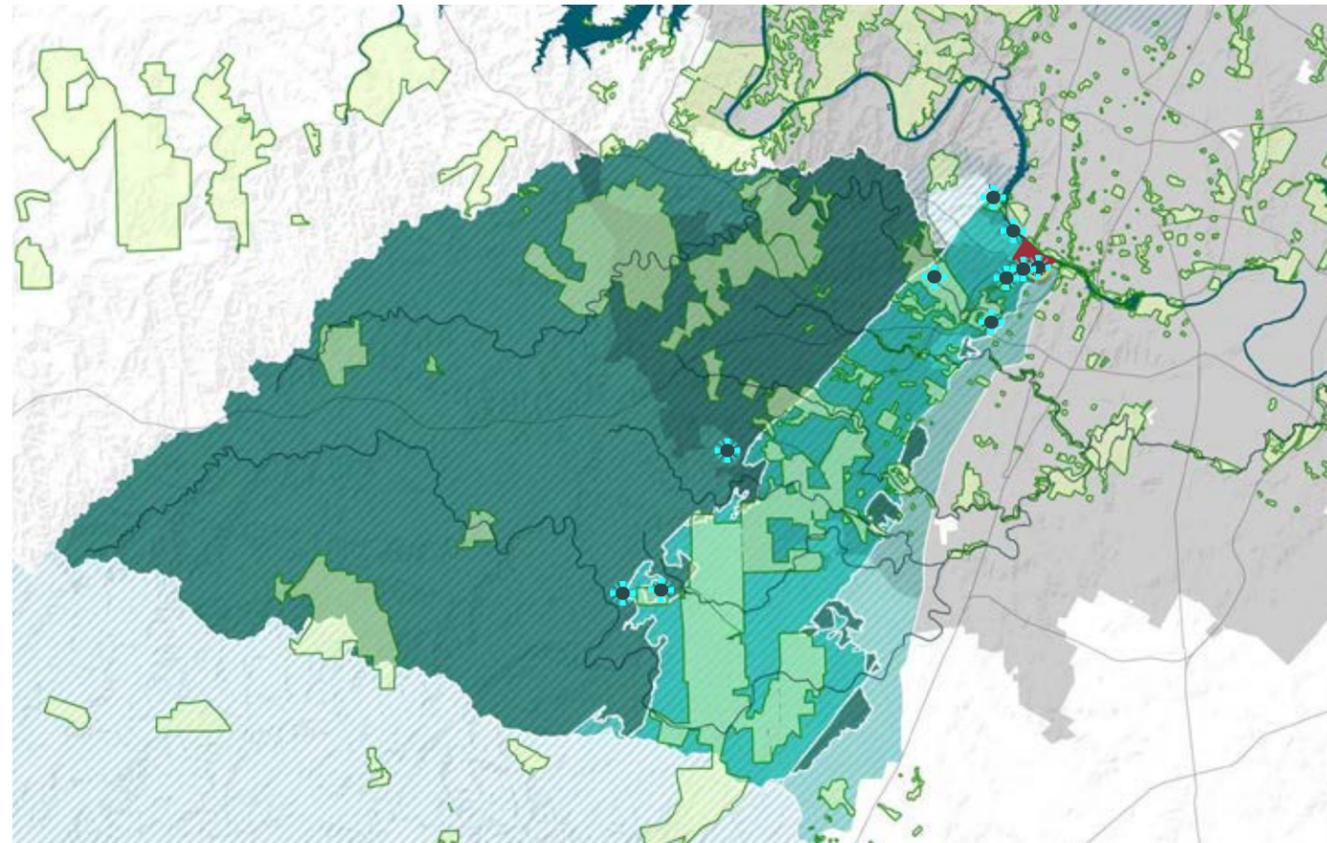
investigations have identified elevated concentrations of arsenic, antimony, and lead. The Pistol and Skeet Range, including the wooded area to the north, is therefore a recognized environmental condition (REC).¹

WEST BUTLER LANDFILL

This area lies atop the northwest corner of the Butler Landfill and is currently used for storage of equipment and landscaping materials such as soil, brush, and gravel. Due to the presence of asphalt, electric powered carts and small vehicles with lead-acid batteries, surplus lawn-maintenance equipment, and chemical containers without cover and/or impervious pavement, this area has a possibility of leaking hazardous substances and/or petroleum products to the environment. This area is a REC, due to the material threat of a future release to the environment.

ECOREGION & EDWARDS AQUIFER

ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT



Zilker Park lies in the transition zone between the Edwards Plateau and Blackland Prairie ecoregions, blending aspects of the two. Hydrologically, Zilker Park sits atop the Edwards Aquifer and within the Colorado River corridor. The park includes sections of both Barton Creek and Eanes Creek and is home to the iconic Barton Springs. These factors combine to create a beloved, ecologically significant landscape in great need of planning and stewardship. This chapter describes the site's hydrology, topography, geology, soils, plant communities, and wildlife. This information is the foundation of the Natural Resource Inventory report's management guidelines.

The Edwards Aquifer lies under the eastern and southern borders of the Hill Country and gives rise to the iconic springs of Central Texas. The Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer covers 250,000

acres and includes the Barton and Eanes Creek watersheds. The recharge zone is the critical area where water enters the aquifer through cracks and pores in the limestone. The recharge zone covers over 56,000 acres including 387 acres in Zilker Park. Water from the recharge zone flows out in the prolific Barton Springs system that feeds Barton Springs Pool and creates habitat for the endangered Austin Blind Salamander and Barton Springs Salamander. Because the limestone—through which water enters the aquifer—does not filter out contaminants, this critical, fast-moving water system is impacted by resource management decisions throughout the contributing and recharge zones. Activities in the park can also impact the recharge zone and areas immediately adjacent to the springs.

LEGEND

- Springs
- Major Roads
- Ecoregion Boundary
- Lakes and Waterways
- Conserved Land
- Edwards Aquifer
- Contributing Zone
- Recharge Zone
- Transition Zone
- Zilker Park
- Austin City Limits



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2012, the City of Austin adopted the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, which included Priority Program #4: Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. It also established a definition of green infrastructure as a strategically planned and managed network of natural lands, parks, working landscapes, open spaces, and green stormwater controls that conserve and enhance ecosystem services and provide associated benefits to human populations.

As climate change intensifies and results in higher temperatures and more extreme weather events, the many forms of green infrastructure will become increasingly important. A map of climate vulnerability and tree planting priority in Austin from the City of Austin Green Infrastructure Assessment shows areas that are climate vulnerable as a result of urban heat island temperature increases, lack of urban forest,

and lack of shade over impervious cover. In addition, these areas coincide with higher levels of social vulnerability and worse health outcomes.

While the general area around Zilker Park exhibits a low to moderate tree planting priority, this park serves as a city-wide refuge to enjoy the outdoors in a location that has relief from higher temperatures as a result of the urban forest, shading, and water related cooling. In addition, the changes suggested in the Zilker Park Natural Resource Inventory and Natural Area Management Guidelines recommend the improvement of canopy in the park and addition of green stormwater infrastructure. The result is a park that is adapting to and mitigating climate change. These same concepts are integrated into the Zilker Park Vision Plan to create a sustainable park that addresses climate change.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

TOPOGRAPHY

Zilker Park is comprised of low-lying lands near waterways and steep cliffs carved by creeks. The lowest points in the park are at roughly 428' in elevation and the high points in the park are between 554' and 562' in elevation.

GEOLOGY

Zilker Park includes 6 types of geology. The geologic layer is often exposed at the surface and lies on top of the Hydrogeology layer.

SPRINGS AND SEEPS

Zilker Park not only plays a role in the recharge of the Edwards Aquifer but is also home to the 4 springs complex and an additional 10 smaller springs and seeps. The park also accepts flood waters on it's 106.6 acres within the 100 year floodplain.

SOIL

Zilker Park includes 15 soil types. These soils have been heavily impacted by agriculture and urbanization over the past 150 years as well as ecological changes in climate and topography.

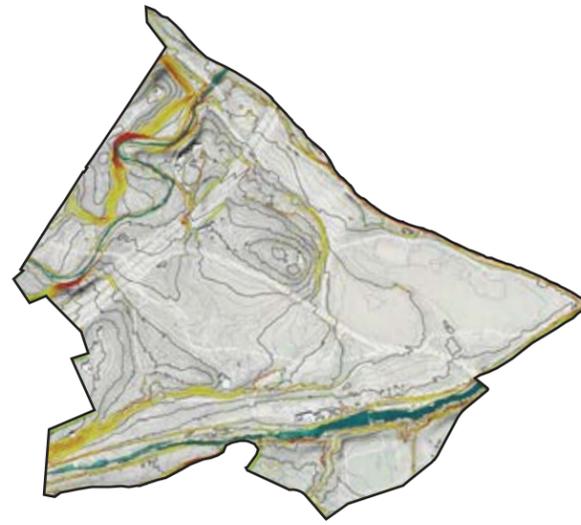
HYDROGEOLOGY

These are the geologic elements that define the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer. These layers dictate subsurface movement of water. The only hydrogeologic member within Zilker Park that does not define the recharge zone is Del Rio Clay.

HYDROLOGY

Floodplains play an important role in regulating water quality, because they filter water through their soils. The extra moisture creates denser plant growth, providing important wildlife habitat. Floodplains can be harmed by trampling and high runoff during storms that erode soil and wash away plants. At Zilker Park, both problems are visible, especially along Barton Creek where visitors compact creekbank soils in search of water access.

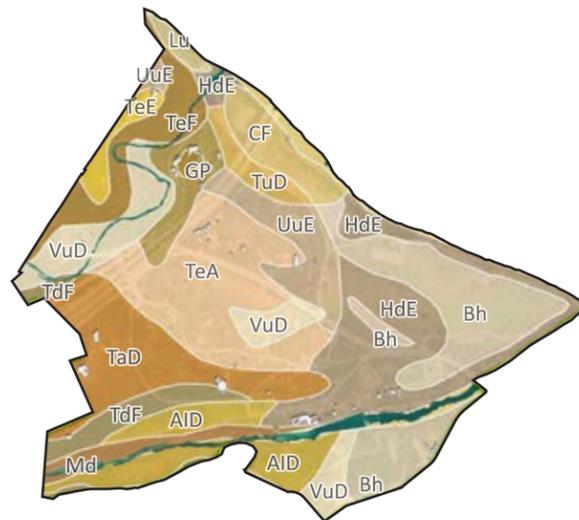
TOPOGRAPHY



LEGEND



SOIL



LEGEND



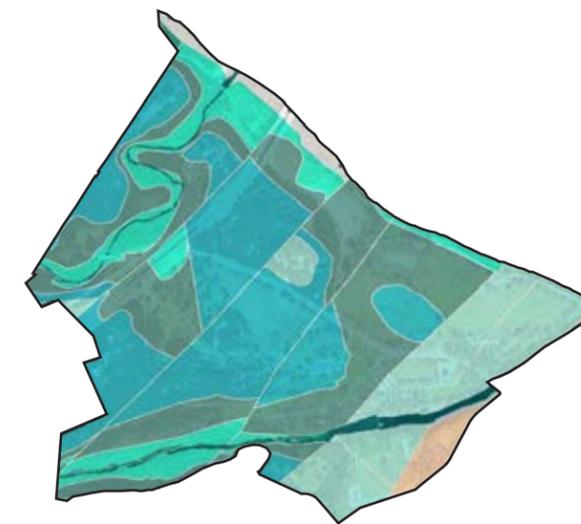
GEOLOGY



LEGEND



HYDROGEOLOGY



LEGEND



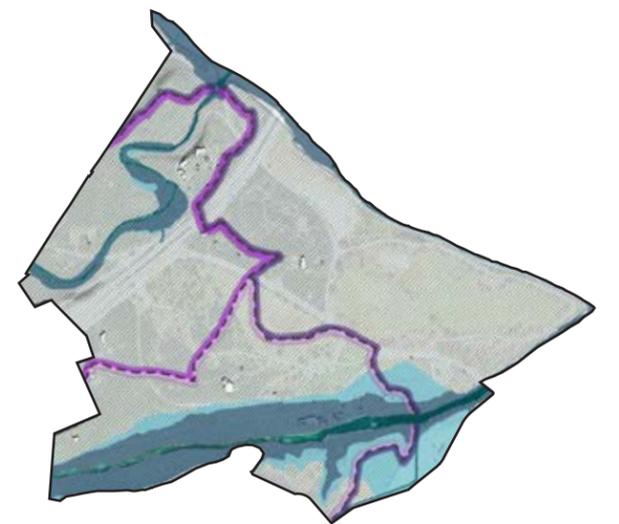
SPRINGS & SEEPS



LEGEND



HYDROLOGY



LEGEND



PLANT COMMUNITIES

EXISTING PLANT COMMUNITIES



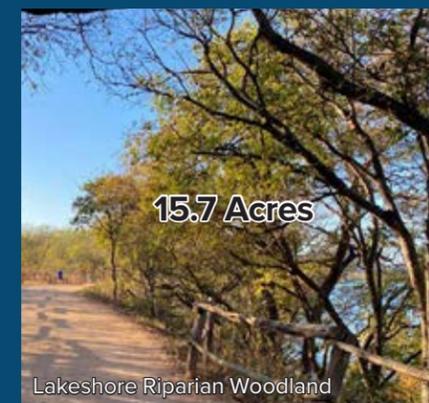
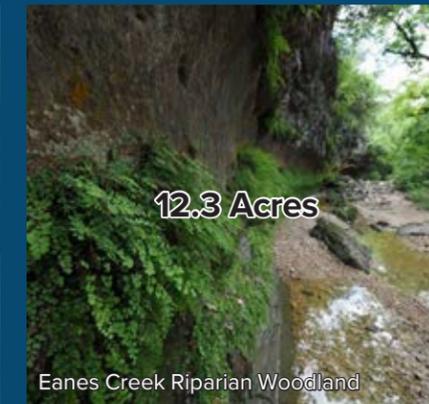
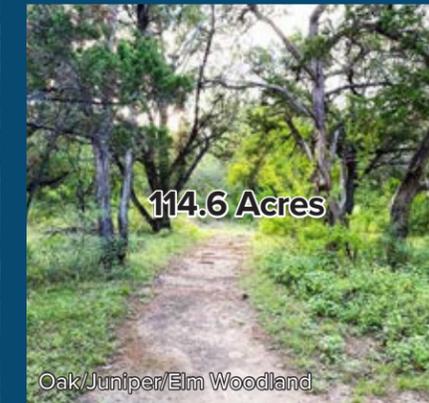
Zilker Park's habitats were grouped into 16 plant communities which are influenced by the park's soil and geology, as well as the history of human disturbance. These plant communities include over 380 plant species. The Oak/Juniper/Elm Woodland has 173 native plant species and 34 invasive and exotic species. The Barton Riparian woodland is inundated during floods, and in the lower areas, these plants must stay underwater for months. This woodland has a diverse canopy, understory and herbaceous layer with 78 native species and 15 invasive and exotic species. The plant diversity within the Intermittent creek bed is generally low. The Eanes Creek Riparian Woodlands

has 65% more species than the Barton creek Riparian woodland which is likely a result of less human impact. The Degraded Barton Riparian Woodland lies downstream of the pool and sees a high amount of human impact. The Degraded Barton Creek Shoreline could be one of the most robust plant communities in the area but overuse and upslope storm water outfalls prevent this. The Lakeshore Riparian Woodland is one of the few areas along Ladybird Lake that has not been cleared in the last 100 years. The Open Meadow is currently mowed at a rate that prevents native grass and forbs from being able to flower and seed. There are no invasive species in the springs or aquatic plant communities.

LEGEND

- 1 Spring
- 2 Oak/Juniper/Elm Woodland
- 3 Barton Riparian Woodland
- 4 Intermittent Creekbed
- 5 Eanes Creek Riparian Woodland
- 6 Degraded Barton Riparian Woodland
- 7 Degraded Barton Creek Shoreline
- 8 Barton Springs Pool
- 9 Permanent Water
- 10 Lakeshore Riparian Woodland
- 11 Wetland
- 12 Open Meadow
- 13 Disc Golf Course
- 14 Zilker Botanical Garden
- 15 Austin Nature & Science Center
- 16 Maintained Parkland & Infrastructure

EXISTING PLANT COMMUNITY TYPOLOGIES





INVASIVE SPECIES

Over 70 non-native species were recorded during the plant survey, with 38 species considered invasive due to their aggressive growth and spread. Of these, 20 species were included in at least one of these three lists —Texas Invasives, the City of Austin’s Top 24 Invasive Species list, or list from Natural Resource Inventory by Siglo Group. The high priority species from this list include Arundo, bamboo, bastard cabbage, Bermudagrass, catclaw vine, Chinaberry, Chinese parasol tree, Chinese pistache, Chinese tallow, Nandina, hedge parsley, Japanese honeysuckle, Johnsongrass, King Ranch bluestem, Ligustrum, Malta star thistle, paper mulberry, sweet autumn clematis and tree of heaven.

SOIL DISTURBANCE

The primary causes of soil disturbance in Zilker Park are stormwater flow, poorly functioning or absent infrastructure, mowing and use of other heavy machinery, off-trail recreation, formal recreation without suitable supporting infrastructure and erosion of trail material. Soil disturbance is problematic in all areas but is particularly concerning along environmentally sensitive waterways. Field data were taken on soil erosion issues at 140 points throughout the study area.

EROSION AND SOIL IMPACTS



TREE SURVEY MAP



LEGEND

- | | |
|---|--|
| ● Hackberry | ● Huisache |
| ● Live Oak | ● Black Willow |
| ● Pecan | ● Cottonwood |
| ● American Elm | ● Green Ash |
| ● Cedar Elm | ● Red Oak |
| ● Juniper | ● Honey Mesquite |
| ● Box Elder | ● Other Oaks |
| ● Bald Cypress | ● Invasive Species |
| ● Sycamore | ● Other |
| ● Gum Bumelia | |

Table 1: Erosion Types

TYPES	DESCRIPTION
● Informal Trails	Informal trails are paths created by foot traffic and are not created or maintained by park staff. Informal trails with trampled vegetation and compacted soils often lead to sheet erosion, rills, or gullies.
● Trampling	Trampling is a result of off-trail foot traffic not confined to a trail. It destroys vegetation and prevents its reestablishment.
● Compaction	Compaction is a loss of soil porosity. It inhibits plant growth and can lead to erosion.
● Sheet Erosion	Sheet erosion is the removal of thin layers of soil due to precipitation and shallow surface flow.
● Rill and Gully Erosion	Rill erosion is the formation of one or more small channels less than 1 ft deep; gullies are deeper than 1 ft.
● Bank Erosion	Bank erosion is found along both creeks and the Lady Bird Lake shoreline. It is a result of their urban setting and the powerful force of water after major rain events.
● Erosion on Formal Trails	In some areas, decomposed granite is leaving the trail and entering either natural areas or waterways. This material can bury native plants and make the soil more susceptible to erosion, thus lowering the quality of the natural area.

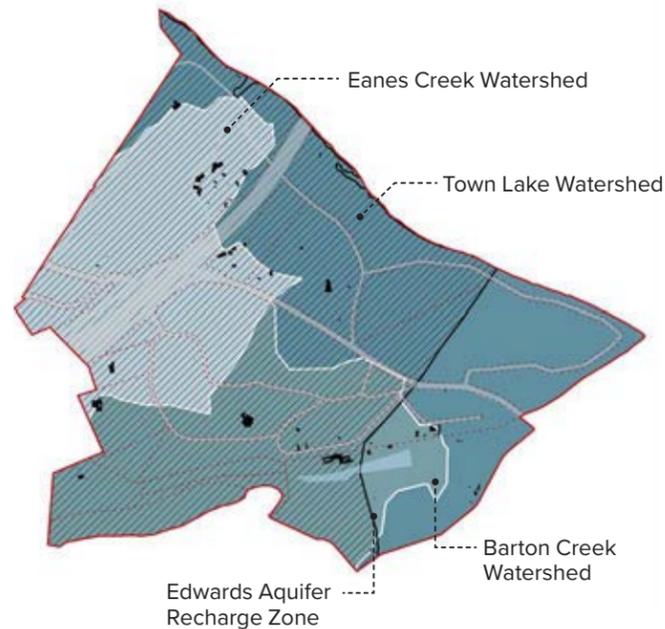
Source: Zilker Park Natural Resources Inventory & Management Guidelines. Siglo. 2021

REGULATIONS

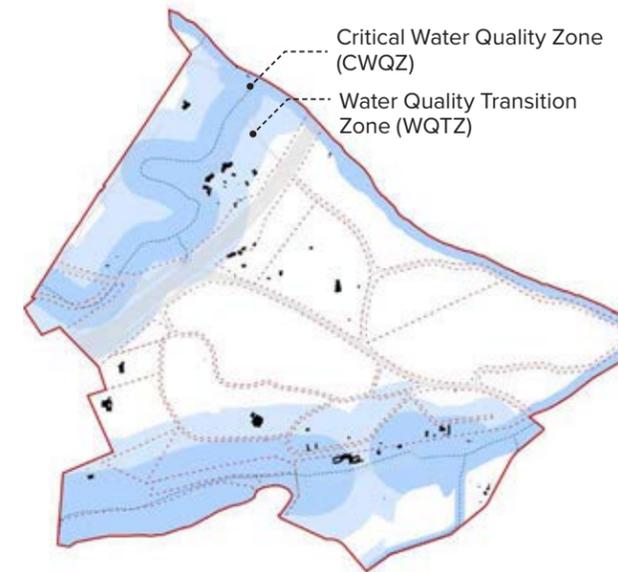
CWQZ, WQTZ, AND CEFS

Critical Water Quality Zones and Water Quality Transition Zones setbacks limit development. CEFS or Critical Environmental Features require that an Environmental Resource Inventory be obtained prior to site design.

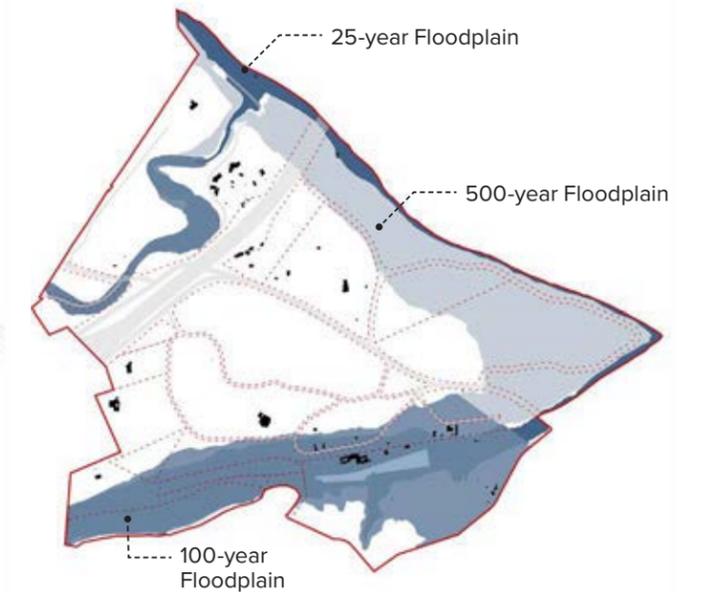
WATERSHEDS



WATER QUALITY BUFFERS



FLOODPLAIN



Most of the Zilker Park Vision Plan area is located within the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone, which will require review by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Additionally, if applicable, development may be subject to §25-1-84 if development is proposed on top of previous landfill sites.

Many of the tracts contain Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ) and/or Water Quality Transition Zone (WQTZ) setbacks, which restrict most development. Obtaining an Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) is recommended prior to site design due to the presence of existing Critical Environmental Features (CEFs) on many of the parcels. Additional features and or revised buffer areas may be established that could impact site layout and development. Any proposed development should be located outside of these protected areas. Many of the tracts are also encumbered by the 100-year floodplain.

Generally, development applications may not be approved if a proposed structure encroaches on the 100-year floodplain. A variance may be granted if the following is determined:

- The finished floor elevation of a proposed building is at least two feet above the 100-year floodplain;

- Normal access to a proposed building is by direct connection with an area above the regulatory flood datum;
- A proposed building complies with the requirements of Flood Resistant Construction and Flood Loads;
- The development compensates for the floodplain volume displaced by the development;
- The development improves the drainage system by exceeding the requirements of Criteria for Approval of Development Applications, as demonstrated by a report provided by the applicant and certified by an engineer registered in Texas;
- The variance is required by unique site conditions; and
- Development permitted by the variance does not result in additional adverse flooding impact on other property.
- There is an exception for existing historic buildings within the flood plain to remain.

Additionally, development applications with a proposed building or parking area that encroaches on the 100-year floodplain may be approved if the encroachment is:

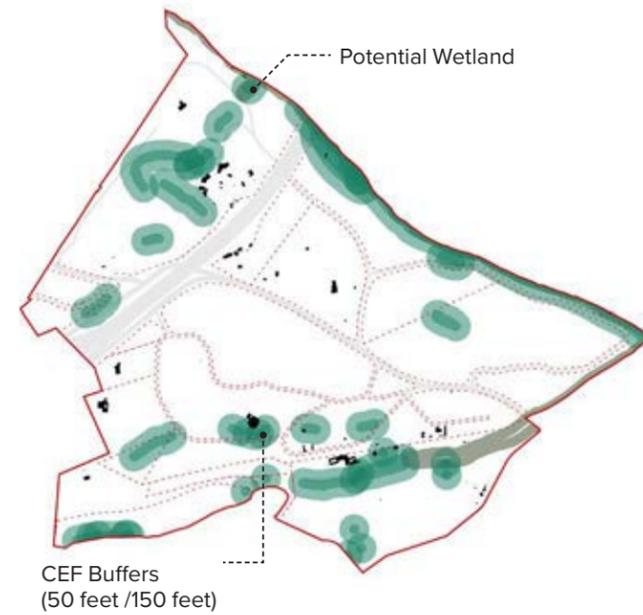
- A parking area that is smaller than 5,000 square feet or an unoccupied structure that has an area of less than 1,000 square feet, and the director determines that the proposed development:
 - » will not have an adverse effect on the 100-year floodplain or surrounding properties; and
 - » otherwise complies with the land development code requirements;
- A new building for residential use that replaces an existing legally constructed building for residential use on the same property and that does not increase the number of legal dwelling units on the property;
- A building authorized by a waterway development permit issued under Chapter 9-10 before September 25, 1983; or

- A building in the 100-year floodplain of:
 - » Lady Bird Lake;
 - » The Colorado River downstream from Longhorn Dam;
 - » Lake Austin; or
 - » Lake Travis.

To be approved, development in the floodplain must be no lower than 2 feet above the 100-year floodplain, as measured from the lowest elevation of any proposed building; comply with the requirements of Flood Resistant Construction and Flood Loads sections; compensate for the floodplain volume displaced by the development; and result in no adverse flooding impact on other properties.

REGULATIONS

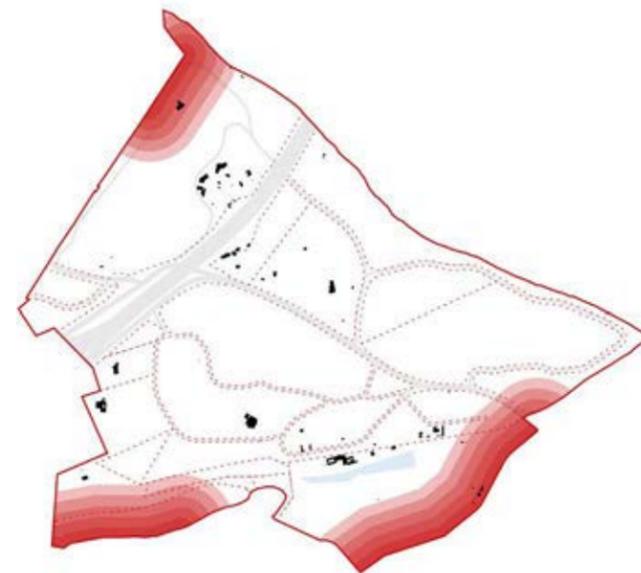
CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURE (CEF) BUFFERS



CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURE BUFFERS

Based on Austin city code, a Critical Environmental Feature (CEF) buffer is most critical to preserving the function and characteristics of a CEF. This area should be covered by vegetation and any construction must be low-impact. Hiking trails are allowed within the buffer if they are at least 50' from the CEF.

COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS

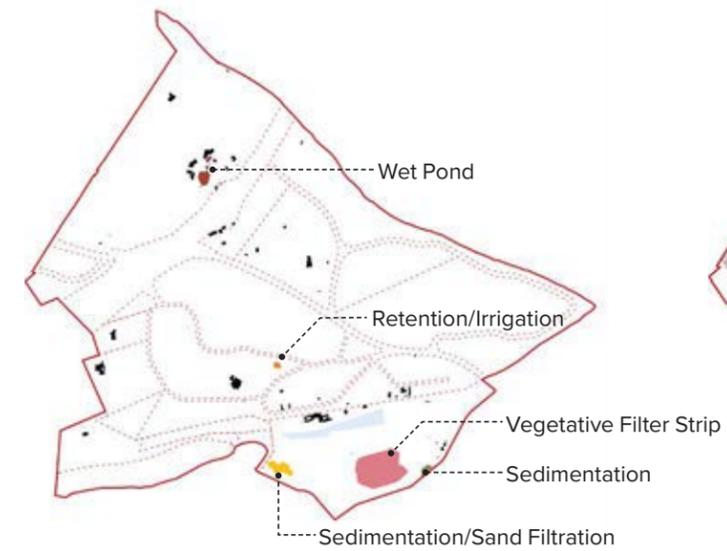


COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS

The Property along the southern and northwestern boundaries is subject to Compatibility Standards. These regulations may have a direct impact on the development or redevelopment of Tracts 1, 14, 17 and 18.

Any development in an SF-6 or less restrictive zoning district located 540-feet or less from property in an SF-5 or more restrictive zoning district/use will be subject to compatibility development regulations. A formal compatibility analysis is recommended.

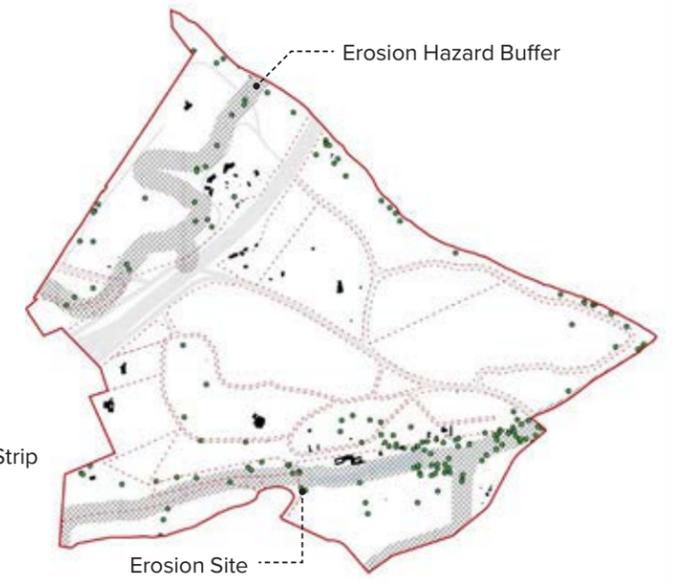
STORMWATER QUALITY CONTROLS



The following building setback and height step-back requirements are triggered because the property is 540 feet or less from property in an SF-5 or more restrictive zoning district/use

- 25 feet from triggering property = No Structures
- 25 feet to 50 feet from triggering property = Two stories or 30 feet, whichever is less
- 50 feet to 100 feet from triggering property = Three stories or 40 feet, whichever is less

EROSION



- 100 feet to 300 feet from triggering property = 40 feet plus one foot of height for each additional 10 feet in distance from triggering property
- 300 feet to 540 feet from triggering property = 60 feet plus one foot of height for each Four feet in addition to 300 feet from property



TRANSPORTATION

Consultation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and/or Austin Transportation Department will be required for any development that is proposed within State-controlled or City-owned right-of-way.

Portions of Barton Springs Road, Lou Neff Road, and Stratford Drive may not be considered Public Right-of-Way (ROW) by the City of Austin, but rather a park roadway. This has design implications on impervious cover and thus detention and water quality treatment requirements, among other things (public ROW is not considered when calculating impervious cover, but park roads are not exempt from the impervious cover calculations). It is suggested that Parks and Recreation Department provide definitive information regarding the categorization of these roads and the physical extents of the portions of these roads that are considered park roads.

TREE PROTECTION

Any proposed development or redevelopment will be subject to the current heritage and protected tree regulations per LDC §25-8, Division 3 (above 19 feet height Heritage Trees). A permit granted by the City of Austin Arborist is required to remove protected and heritage trees. An administrative variance is required to remove heritage trees 24-30 inches in diameter; Land Use Commission approval is required to remove heritage trees 30 inches in diameter or greater.

Obtaining a tree survey is highly recommended prior to any site design to determine the size, species, and health of existing trees on the property.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

A number of parcels also contain existing structures of 50 years in age or older; demolition of such structures, along with any structures on the two parcels with the Historic Landmark Combining District in the zoning designation, will require approval by the City of Austin Historic Preservation Office and potentially the Historic Landmark Commission. A Certificate of Appropriateness will be required should any changes to existing structures in Historic Landmark Combining Districts be proposed.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Coordination with the Austin Fire Department early in the site design process is recommended to determine if any of the underground storage tanks indicated on the site by City of Austin GIS data contain hazardous materials that require additional buffering, relocation or removal.

SUBDIVISION AND PLATTING

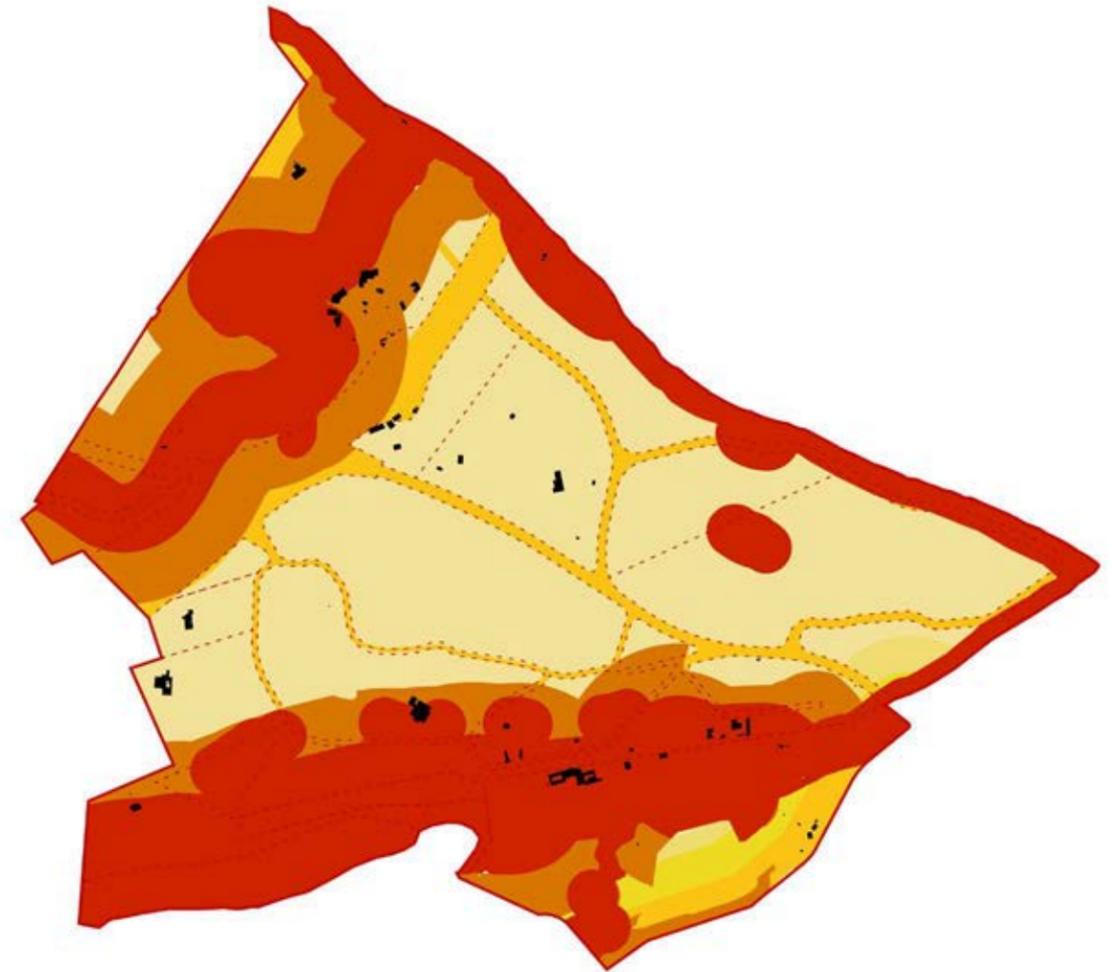
The majority, if not all, of the Property does not appear to be subdivided. Correspondence with the Program Manager in the Land Use Review Division indicates that the City of Austin and its property, including Zilker Park, is exempt from the requirements of platting. Legal lot determinations and the requirement to subdivide to develop or redevelop, therefore, are not required to obtain the majority, if not all, permits.

In the past, the development or redevelopment of City of Austin-owned parkland encountered one issue related to the subdivision of land regarding Austin Water Utility and/or Austin Energy utilities crossing lot or tract lines. Although not platted, Zilker Park is made up of multiple tracts of land. Historically, a solution to this issue has been to use a Declaration of Easement, granted by the City of Austin to itself.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Per §25-2-625(D), for tracts with "P" base zoning that are less than 1 acre in size, the site development regulations of an adjoining zoning district apply for a distance of 100 feet into the site. The minimum lot size requirement of an adjoining zoning district does not apply to a use by the City of Austin. For a site one acre in size or greater, site development regulations are established by the approval of a conditional use site plan, which require approval at the Land Use Commission. For a parks and recreation services (special) use, per §25-2-625(E), the minimum site area is 10 acres. Site plans must include the locations of sale of beer and wine, if applicable. The Land Use Commission may not consider a site plan for approval until it receives a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Board.

Some tracts within the Zilker Park Visioning Plan boundary contain one or multiple site plans in review or approved. It is recommended that a civil engineer review existing site plans for total impervious cover proposed and/or built on each tract to determine how much, if any, impervious cover remains for future projects.



This map shows the intensity of the regulations which apply to Zilker Park.

The regulations, if overlaid in their entirety on one map, indicate that areas that can be developed more than today's condition are limited. This indicates that variances, updates to ordinances, and/or a development agreement for Zilker Park should be examined.

LEGEND

-  This area has multiple regulations prohibiting most of development. It is determined as Critical Water Quality Zone, 25-year floodplain, or erosion site.
-  This area has a regulation prohibiting development which is Water Quality Transition Zone (WQTZ).
-  This area can be developed but has several regulations or under other jurisdiction which needed additional approval.
-  This area can be developed but has several regulations such as compatibility standards.
-  All of Zilker Park site is within the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone or Barton Springs Zone. This limits impervious cover to 40% for commercial and/or multifamily projects.

WATER WITHIN THE PARK

- 1 There is no reclaimed water system within the park at this time. City code does not allow for these systems in the ecologically sensitive areas of the park.
- 2 There are 13 abandoned wastewater lines and 2 abandoned lift stations within the park. Wastewater outflows into Barton creek are in disrepair and have caused erosion.
- 3 There is no formal storm sewer system within the park. Stormwater is primarily directed to outflows directly connected to Lady Bird Lake or systems adjacent to the park.

Summary provided below is based on the information available at the time of this report. All existing utilities should be verified prior to actual development of the subject property.

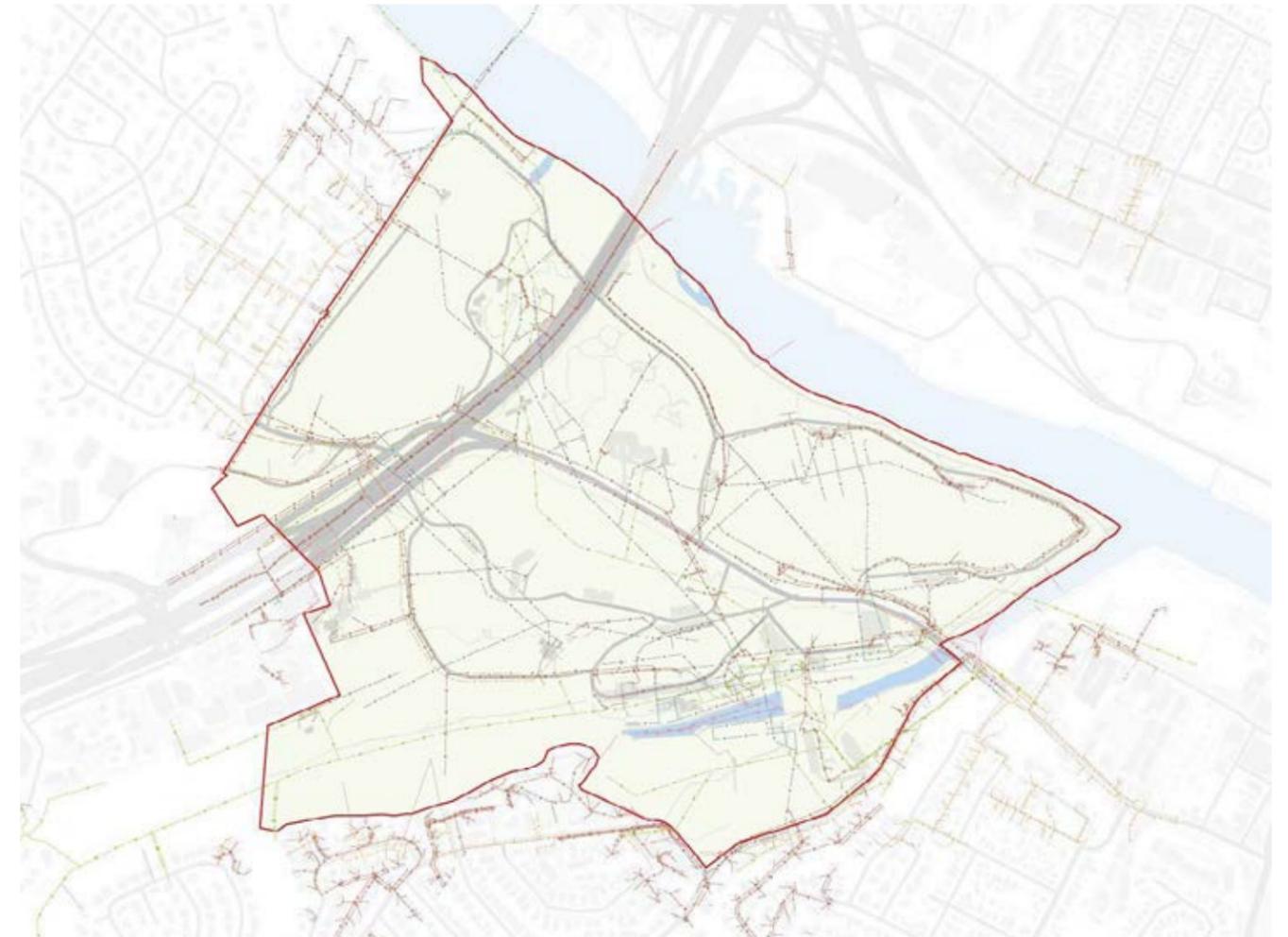
WATER

Austin Water Department (AWD) is the water and wastewater service provider for the Zilker Park development. The area of interest is located within the Central South pressure zone. Several AWD water and wastewater lines run through and around the park of the proposed site boundaries and are as follows:

- The largest mains within the site are an existing 12-inch Ductile Iron (DI) and 12-inch Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) water mains associated with project W-1987-2018 and W-1987-1500, respectively that run along South MoPac Expressway Northbound then turn east through the park. The 12-inch PVC main is currently proposed to tie into a proposed 12-inch DI main running along Andrew Zilker Road.
- There exists a 2-inch Cast Iron (CI) watermain associated with Project W-1971-0053 that runs through the park from the Southwestern portion of the park to tie into the existing 3-inch CI watermain located in the central portion of the park. The main ties into the existing 6-inch CI running from the southeastern side of the park to northeastern side park to connect to the existing 12-inch DI running along Barton Springs Road.
- There exists a 6-inch CI proposed for abandonment running from the center of the park to the southeastern portion of the park and ties into the existing 6-inch CI currently proposed to be abandoned and replaced with a 12-inch PVC main associated with Project W-2021-0014 at the Water Intersection 3305 located within Azie Morton Road.
- There exists an 8-inch CI watermain that runs along Stratford Drive from the northwestern to the northeastern portion of the park with an associated project W-1964-1064.
- There exists an abandoned 8-inch CI line located in the northwestern portion of the park running north across the Colorado River from Stratford Drive to Atlanta Street.
- There exist several interconnecting lines throughout the park that services the existing development.
- There are several existing fire hydrants within the site area.

WASTEWATER

All wastewater located within and around the project study boundary is collected to the South Austin Region Wastewater Treatment Plant through the AWD collection system and is maintained privately or by AWD.



- There exists an 8-inch Concrete (Conc) gravity main located in the northwestern portion of the park which collects into the Bluffington #1 Lift Station.
- Bluffington #1 Lift Station waste is collected through an existing 8-inch CI force main associated with project A5811 running southeast to tie into an existing 15 PVC gravity main associated with Project A5810.
- There also exists a privately maintained lift station (Rollingwood #1), with a 6-inch (UNK) pipe material associated with Project No. 2002-0609 running north from the southwestern portion of the site area and ties into the existing 15-inch PVC associated with project A5810.
- The existing 15 PVC associated with Zilker Park A5810 ties into an existing 12-inch PVC, which ties into a 12-inch Concrete gravity main associated with Project A5809, which ties into a 10-inch Concrete gravity main associated with project A5808.
- The 10-inch concrete gravity main associated with Project A5808 ties into an existing 10-inch DI gravity main with associated Project S-1992-2011, which ties into the existing 33-inch FRPM gravity main at wastewater manhole (WWMH) number 29127.
- There exists a 36-inch Fiberglass (FG) gravity main located in the southeastern portion of the park with the associated Project W-2001-0036 running northeast through the park and ties into an existing 42-inch Vitrified Clay (VC) gravity main, which ties into the existing 42-inch Conc gravity main which ties into the existing 33-inch Fiberglass-Reinforced Polymer-



951
feet of the Zilker Loop Trail lies within an erosion hazard zone

1007
feet of the Butler Trail lies within an erosion hazard zone

8
of 10 pieces of stormwater infrastructure lie within an erosion hazard zone

Mortar (FRPM) gravity main associated with Project W-2005-0003 and S-2005-0006 at WWMH # 29127.

- There exist a 24-inch Conc and an 8-inch VC gravity main running along Azie Morton Road along the eastern side of the site area that collects waste from surrounding developments from the southeastern portion of the park.
- There exists a 10-inch Asbestos Cement (AC) main associated with Project A10435 and A10434 that ties into a 10-inch Conc main associated with Project A4430 and A4429 running southeast and ties into an existing 8-inch PVC gravity lines associated with project A4428 and A4427.
- There exists an abandoned 8-inch CI line associated with project A5813 located in the northwestern portion of the park west of South MoPac Expressway Southbound.
- There are several abandoned lines and lift stations located east central of the park and listed as follow:
 - » 4-inch VC abandoned gravity main
 - » 6-inch VC abandoned gravity main
 - » 6-inch Conc abandoned gravity main
 - » 6-inch AC abandoned gravity main associated with project A7344
 - » 6-inch DI abandoned gravity main
 - » 6-inch PVC abandoned gravity main associated with project B440 and A3672
 - » 8-inch Conc abandoned gravity main associated with project A7344
 - » 8-inch DI abandoned gravity main associated with project A7344
 - » 8-inch PVC abandoned gravity main associated with project A4427 and A4428

- » 10-inch CI abandoned gravity main associated with project A2664
- » 10-inch Conc abandoned gravity main
- » 6-inch DI abandoned gravity main associated with Project S-1977-0001
- » 24-inch Conc abandoned gravity main associated with project A2497
- » Abandoned Zilker Lift Station
- » Abandoned Barton Creek Lift Station
- The state of the pipes out-falling into the creek has caused the erosion issues.

RECLAIMED WATER

According to the AWD Maps, there is no reclaimed water associated with or around the site of interest. The nearest reclaimed water service is an existing 30-inch main that crosses Lady Bird Lake and extends to West Riverside Drive on the east side of South Lamar Boulevard, with a proposed service shown to extend towards South Lamar Boulevard. Furthermore, using reclaimed water within the critical water quality zone is prohibited by City of Austin.

NATURAL GAS SERVICE

Texas One Gas is the service company for the subject area. Gas service is presently available within the boundaries of the site area and are described as follows:

- There exists a 6-inch Coated Steel (CS) gas line located in the northeastern portion of the site and has a short run from the east to west along Barton Springs Road. The gas line is tied into a 6-inch Polyethylene (PE) gas line at the southern side of Azie Morton Road and Barton Springs Road intersection. The 6-inch CS gas line continuously runs through the park westward across South MoPac Expressway until it reaches the Stratford Drive and Lou Neff Road intersection and starts running along Stratford Drive located northwestern portion of the site area.
- There exists a 2-inch PE gas line located near the eastern side of the site that runs along Robert E Lee

Road and currently services developments located east of the park.

- There exists a 6-inch CS gas line that runs along South MoPac Expressway Northbound and crosses South MoPac Expressway westward at the Andrew Zilker Road and South MoPac Expressway intersection and runs along Rollingwood Drive to service the developments located west of the site.
- There exists a 2-inch CS gas line running along Dellana Lane with a sharp turn westward at the Dellana Lane and Rollingwood Drive intersection then runs along Rollingwood Drive.
- There exists a 2-inch PE gas line tied into the 6-inch CS gas line, north of the Andrew Zilker Road and South MoPac Expressway intersection that services existing development inside Zilker Park.
- There exists a 2-inch PE gas line tied into the 6-inch CS gas line, north of the Andrew Zilker Road and South MoPac Expressway intersection and runs along Columbus Drive that services existing development inside Zilker Park.

ELECTRIC SERVICE

Zilker Park is located within the Austin Energy service zone. Electric service is presently available within the boundaries of the site area and is described as follow:

- There exists a primary overhead wire located in the western portion of the park that runs north and south along Zilker Clubhouse Road. The primary overhead ties into an existing primary overhead located in Dellana Lane to the south and crosses the Colorado River to the north.
- There exists a primary underground cable that runs along the southern side of Stratford Drive to service the existing development known as Rowling Dock.
- There exists a service overhead wire located in Stratford Drive and Elgin Avenue that services an existing development east of Zilker Clubhouse Road.

UTILITY

- There exists a primary overhead wire that runs eastward from the intersection of Vance Lane and Vale Street to Nature Center Drive that services the existing development enclosed by Nature Center Drive and South MoPac Expressway. The overhead ties into an existing primary underground cable that ties into an overhead that runs along South MoPac Expressway southbound.
- A primary overhead wire is located at the intersections of Zilker Clubhouse Road and Rollingwood Drive running along Rollingwood, which ties into a primary overhead wire running along Dellana Lane and continues running eastward along Barton Springs Road. The primary turns southeast at the Barton Springs Road and Stratford intersection and cuts across the park to tie into an existing primary overhang west of the Barton Springs Pool, then runs north along Barton Creek to tie into an existing primary at Barton Springs Road and Barton Creek intersection.
- There exists a streetlight overhead running through South MoPac Expressway.
- There exists a primary overhead running along South MoPac Expressway southbound and ties into a primary overhead running along Dellana Lane.
- There exists a primary overhead running along South MoPac Expressway northbound and ties into a primary overhead running along Barton Springs Road.
- There exists a primary underground cable that runs along Stratford Drive from the intersection of S. MoPac Expressway and Stratford Drive intersection and crosses Lou Neff Road and ties into an existing primary overhead at the Stratford Drive and Barton Springs Road intersection.
- There exists a primary underground that ties into the primary underground between Park Road and Barton Springs Road on Stratford Drive and runs along Park Road and ties back into Barton Springs Road on the western portion of the park.

- There exists a service underground cable running along Barton Springs Road between Barton Creek and Stratford Drive.
- There exist service underground cables along Park Road.
- There exists a primary underground cable located in William Barton Drive in the western portion of the park.
- There exists a primary overhead that runs along Columbus Drive and ties into and services overhang running along Columbus Drive.
- There exists a primary overhead running along Azie Morton Road and Barton Hills Drive in the southwestern portion of the park.
- There exists a primary overhead running between Andrew Zilker Road and Columbus Drive to service existing development.

TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICE

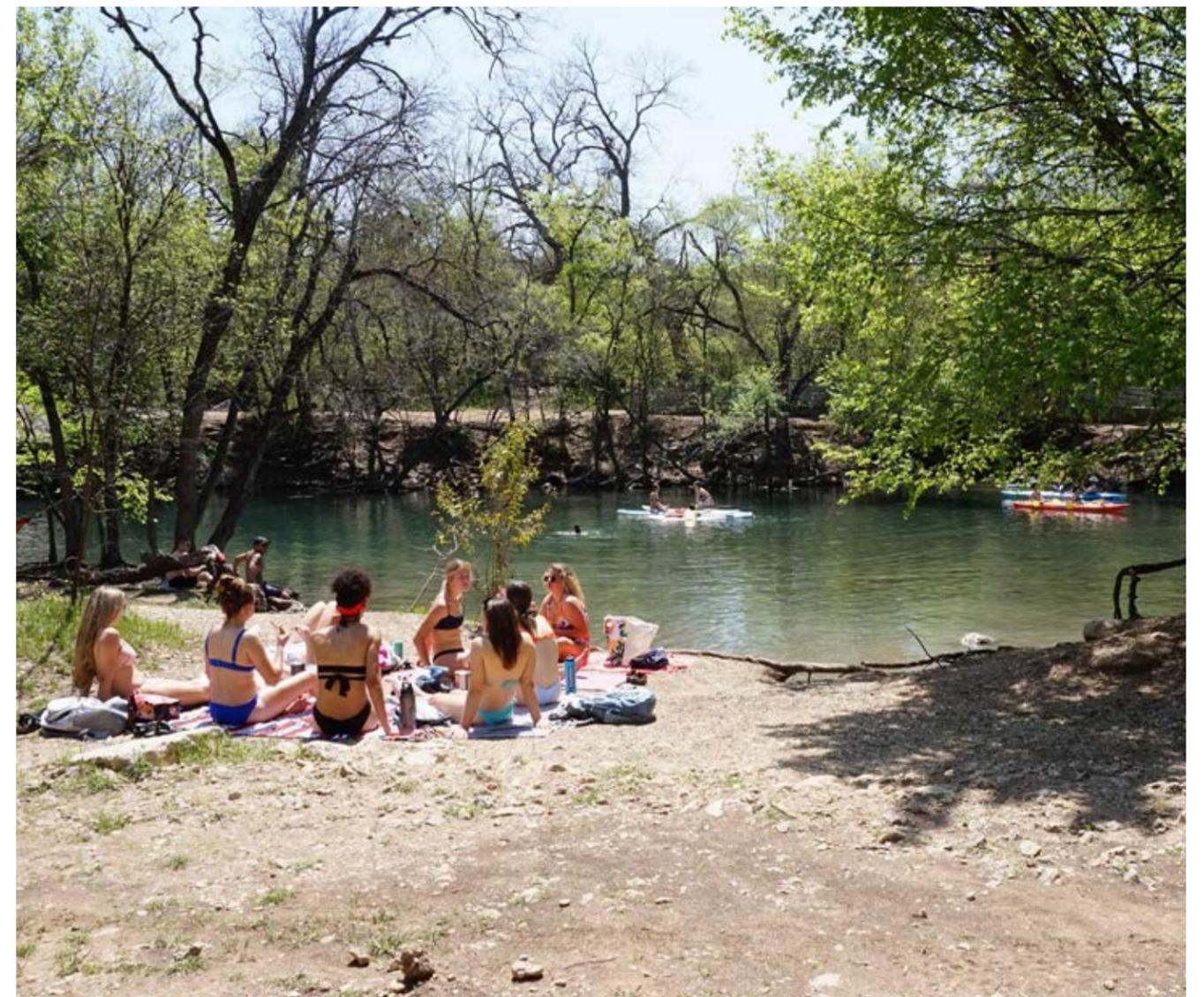
John D. Kougl with MCI has provided an email confirmation that MCI has aerial fiber along Azie Morton Road, however, no service maps were provided. Azie Morton Road is located on the eastern side of Zilker Park and runs north and south between Barton Springs Road and Barton Hills Drive.

STORM SEWER

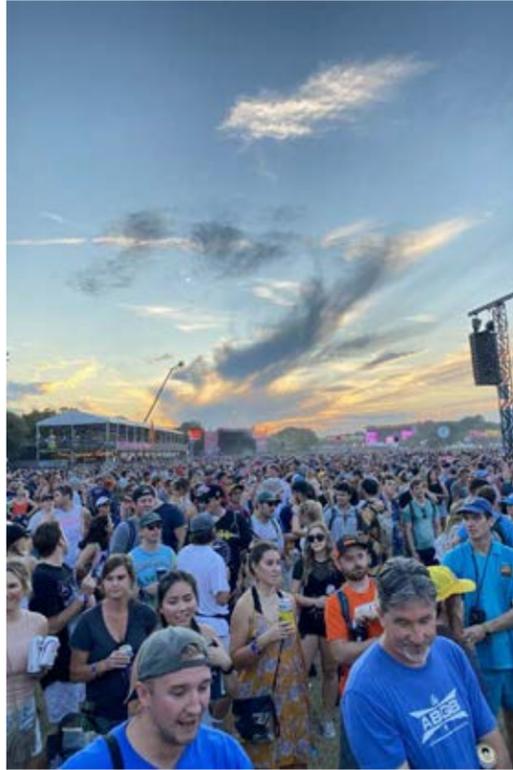
Generally, there is not a storm sewer system within the Park area, but rather, storm sewer infrastructure associated with direct discharges to Lady Bird Lake, culvert crossings under roads, and connections to the storm sewer systems adjacent to the Park. Storm infrastructure are described below as seen in the City of Austin Property Profile:

- There exists storm network running along Barton Springs Road and runs from the east to drain into Barton Creek.
- There exist curb inlets along Barton Springs Road with drainage pipes that runs eastward and drain into Barton Creek.

- There exists a drainage system located in the southeast portion of the park along the development and south on Barton Hills Drive and drainage pipes with header along Azie Morton Road, collecting storm sewer water and discharged into Barton Creek. In addition, the following ponds are identified to be within the Zilker Park area:
- A privately maintained pond identified as a Vegetative Filter Strip (VFS) area located adjacent to Azie Morton Road where it intersects with Lund Street.
- A City of Austin maintained pond identified as a sedimentation only pond area located adjacent to Azie Morton Road east of the VFS mentioned above. west of the VFS area mentioned above.



People enjoying Barton Springs Spillway.



Crowd gathers for ACL

Zilker Park, like many destination parks in cities across the US saw both temporary closures to Barton Springs Pool, the botanic gardens, and the nature and science center, along with drop in revenue. Despite the closures in 2020 and into 2021, visitors returned or moved to other destinations in the park or close by, especially Barton Springs Spillway, along Barton Creek and in Lady Bird Lake. As a result, expenses for operations and maintenance in Zilker increased while revenue remained low due to continuing closures and a lack of events. While events have resumed and the pool, gardens and science center have reopened, record usage at Zilker continues as well.

Funds collected by PARD at Zilker through concession agreements as well as park usage fees (pool admission fees, rentals of picnic sites, event locations like the Zilker Clubhouse or even large multi-day events like the Austin City Limits Music Festival) are paid into the City's general fund, a portion of which are "returned" to the Parks and Recreation Department via annual budget appropriations. The parks department, by and large, does not keep any of the fees collected by city ordinance directly, but shares in them. This is true in most U.S. cities for park fees.

Finally, while nonprofits can raise funds and apply those funds for park improvements, programming and operations, those funds collectively are a small portion of total park spending. Based on research performed by The Trust for Public Land, six percent of annual spending in the 100 largest U.S. cities for parks comes from nonprofit park organizations. For Austin specifically, TPL's ParkScore index reported in 2020 that 13% of funding came from a dozen park nonprofits, totaling \$20.7M, putting Austin #17 out of 100 in terms of nonprofit funding share. The bulk of this spending is for capital projects by the Trail Conservancy, Waterloo Greenway, Pease Park Conservancy and others.

CONCESSION AGREEMENTS

Concession agreements within Zilker park boundaries have not been updated since 2012. Additionally, payment structures are inconsistent and the current agreements present challenges to retaining and acquiring new vendors.

CONCESSION	TERM	ANNUAL PAYMENT
Zilker Canoe & Kayak	Originated: 2/2/06; Four amendments to 2/28/21, Extended 1 yr. to 2/28/22 (four amendments)	Minimum of \$18,000. Amounts reassessed 18 months, 36 months and every 12 months thereafter
Zilker Train	To be announced. (active negotiation with Austin Parks Foundation)	
Zilker Café	10 years (2019-2029)	\$70,000 (\$17,500 due quarterly)
The Rowing Dock	Originated: 11/01/2000, Amended 10 times, expires 4/30/22	Payments monthly during basic period, then annual lump sum during extension period.

This section will detail concession revenue for Zilker Park and event and other fee revenue. Events in Zilker are governed by city ordinances and practices that grew out of recommendations from the Parkland Events report in 2017.

Finally, public parkland has some protections under State law (Chapter 26, Texas Parks and Recreation) that prohibit the rental or lease of public park land as well as provide for elections over a change in disposition. Therefore, fees charged for events or reservable facilities (picnic shelter, Zilker Clubhouse, etc.) are for fair use of those facilities.

PARK CONCESSIONS OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Council authorizes the Parks and Recreation Department to operate "nine permanent concessions" related to boating rentals, rowing, excursion boats, food and beverage sales, short-course golf and a mini train in Town Lake Park/Lady Bird Lake Park area. Town Lake Park is defined as parkland on the north and south banks of Lady Bird Lake (formerly Town Lake) including Zilker Park and Auditorium Shores (City Code Section 8-1-71). Located within Zilker Park are four permanent concessions:

- The Rowing Dock (kayak, canoe and stand up paddleboard (SUP) rentals)
- Zilker Park Boat Rentals (kayak, canoe and SUP rentals)

PERCENTAGE OF GROSS	CAPITAL INVESTMENT	EXTENSIONS	OTHER NOTES
10% up to \$180,000 in income	\$35,000 in site improvements from 2/2/06 to 2/2/13	Reassess every 12 months	Unclear who owns boats, improvements.
			Previous vendor owned train.
8% of the gross, payable in annual lump sum	Any additional equipment required for food services	Up to 2 five year extensions	Pending completion of improvements to café building, expected 2021
8% (basic period), 1% net revenue, 8% of net revenue above \$80K per year.	\$102,000 of improvements (parking, docks, concession enhancements)	Extended 10 times, four were extensions of time up to 4/30/22	Vendor owns all watercraft, supplies, docks, etc

- Zilker Café (temporarily closed) – New contract awarded to vendor
- Zilker Zephyr (new contract with the Austin Parks Foundation, Foundation still working through mechanical and construction issues with the new train.)

As shown in the table below, the concession terms that the city uses are very traditional and the approach has not been altered in many years.

Permanent concession agreements in Austin parks are generally long-term contracts (5 to 10 years on average) and held by long-standing operators who pay a combination of annual payments and a percentage of gross sales to the city. Concessions within Zilker Park are governed by the broader city code chapter mentioned earlier, which limits the total number of concessions.

- Very hard to come by.
- Take years to complete (unless "emergency" actions push the city to do so).
- Use a combination of annual payments and percentage of gross sales in inconsistent ways.
- Are very long term.
- Put the burden of the majority of capital improvements on the vendor.

FINANCIAL

OTHER FEE REVENUE IN ZILKER: RESERVABLE FACILITIES, LARGE EVENT PERMITTING

The Parks and Recreation Department's Event Office manages the reservations, scheduling and fee collection for Zilker Park, as well as other reservable facilities. Due to the pandemic, events are curtailed, but the city has posted rules and fees on its [website: http://www.austintexas.gov/page/special-events-policies-procedures](http://www.austintexas.gov/page/special-events-policies-procedures). Fees, rules and procedures are established by city ordinance and are reviewed annually by park staff and the City Council. This is a best practice that exceeds many other city park systems in terms of fairness (use of a lottery) as well as the ability to use the City's website to conduct business.

In addition to reservable facilities and special events, the parks department benefits from the transportation enterprise fund established by the city. Parking meters have been installed and are managed by the Austin Transportation Department and Zilker Park benefits from the revenue obtained.

Events also draw revenue for the City. By and large, these revenues, paid through the fees for usage established by the Parks and Recreation Department's Event Office, with review and approval annually through the City Manager's office and the City Council, are paid back into the City's general fund. The exception is the parking and gate entry fund, which allows fees collected for seasonal (May to September) and partial week (Thursday-Sunday) parking in Zilker lots to remain with PARD.

Large events, including the Trail of Lights, Blues on the Green, The Kite Festival and the Austin City Limits

Music Festival are subject to the negotiation of an event agreement. Per the parkland event guidelines and ordinances, large events must cover all costs borne by the city as well as provide usage fees as determined by whether tickets are sold and how many days those events take place.

The city has formulas for payment for events that are included in the event agreements, including ticket sales, police, fire, EMS and transportation as well as additional parks costs. Any ticketed events have a variable ticket fee assessed as well, for example between \$1-\$3 per ticket per day, based on the ticket prices as well as length of the event.

For example, the ACL Music Festival in 2019 paid a total of \$2.4 million in city fees, including:

- \$1.62 million to PARD, including \$1.4 million in ticket fees.
- \$500,000 to Austin Police Department (APD)
- \$60,000 to EMS
- \$20,000 to public health
- \$30,000 Transportation fees (including Capital Metro)
- \$110,000 to AFD

These are largely to cover the costs that the City's departments incurred in managing the festival. Additional expenses for security, first aid, etc. inside the festival gates are borne separately by C3 Presents, the operator of the Austin City Limits.

REVIEW OF EVENTS / PROGRAMMING AGREEMENTS / ORDINANCES THAT AFFECT ZILKER PARK (CITY OF AUSTIN)

Special events in city parkland are governed by a set of ordinances passed by Austin City Council and managed by the Parks and Recreation Department's office of special events. Specifically, there are limits to the number of days of events and the total number of unique events that can take place in Zilker Park, as well as other reservable sites such as Auditorium Shores.

The 2015 Parkland Events Taskforce met over the period of a year and made several specific recommendations, many of which were codified in changes in city ordinances in 2016 and 2017.

- For Zilker Park specifically, the recommendation was to reduce a total of 29 event days in Zilker to 24 through gradual attrition. The listed large events include:
 - » The Austin City Limits Music Festival - six days
 - » The Kite Festival - one day
 - » Blues on the Green – four days
 - » Zilker Relays – one day. The performances at the Zilker Hillside Theatre were not considered large events. Generally they have 22 performances per year. The parks department's revised ordinances have existed for some time. They reinforce the cap on large events at Zilker and how they have been managed and regulated.

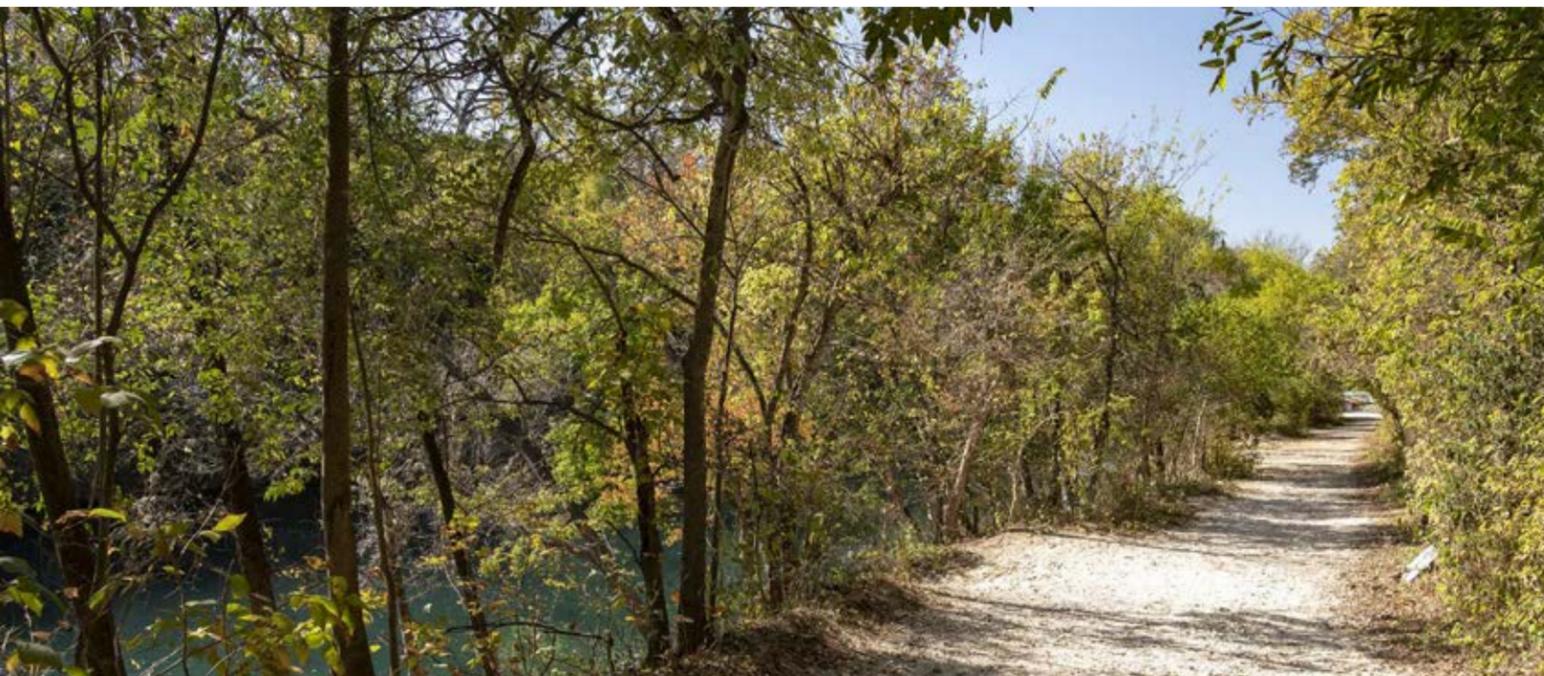
The Taskforce recommendations required that the city have its costs covered for hosting large events, as well as making sure that they have sustainability, transportation and other needs.

The daily usage has increased dramatically at Zilker, even during the pandemic over the course of 2020.

NON-PROFIT PARTNERS OVERVIEW: PARKNERS

Several nonprofits work to provide programming, operations support as well as capital dollars in and around Zilker Park. Most are small nonprofit groups that are volunteer in nature and have specific agreements with the City's Parks and Recreation Department. They are:

- Austin Parks Foundation
- Barton Springs Conservancy
- Friends of Barton Springs Pool
- Girl Scouts of Austin / Girl Scout Cabin
- Hill Country Conservancy
- Sunshine Camp / Young Men's League of Austin
- Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy / Austin Area Garden Council
- Zilker Theatre Productions (Beverly S. Sheffield Zilker Hillside Theatre)



FINANCIAL

PUBLIC FUNDING

With the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic, most city parks agencies as well as nonprofit park partners saw tremendous drops in revenue as most events and in-person programming were curtailed in the past year. While this is slowly changing with the rollout of vaccines, it is unclear how quickly such revenues will recover. Further, as documented by research done by the National Recreation and Parks Association and researchers at Pennsylvania State University, economic downturns cause particular challenges for parks systems. Parks and recreation agencies are the first to see budget cuts and the last to see cuts restored, as documented by studies looking at the period 2003-2013.

CONCESSIONS AND EARNED INCOME

Further, any funds collected through concession agreements as well as park usage fees (pool admission fees, rentals of picnic sites, event locations like the Zilker Clubhouse or even large multi-day events like the Austin City Limits Music Festival) are paid into the City's general fund, a portion of which are "returned" to the Parks and Recreation department via annual budget appropriations. The parks department, by and large, does not keep any of the fees collected by city ordinance directly, but shares in them. This is true in most U.S. cities for park fees.

This section will detail concession revenue for Zilker Park and event and other fee revenue. Events in Zilker are governed by city ordinances and practices that grew out of recommendations from the Parkland Events report in 2017.

As we noted in the SANA issued in spring 2021, the city of Austin uses a traditional concessions model that focuses on very long-term contracts with concessionaires, usually 5–10 year terms. These contracts require a combination of annual payments plus a percentage of revenue from the vendor(s) to the city.

In addition, the concessionaires are required to provide capital improvements in the areas of the public realm in which they operate. This is especially true for the majority of concessions that operate at Zilker or in the encompassing Lady Bird Lake Corridor, primarily focused on water-based recreation, including rowing programs, paddling or stand-up paddleboarding (SUPing). City Code Section 8-1-71 limits the total

number of permanent concessions along the corridor, including Zilker Park. Therefore, any changes to concessions would require changes to city code and related ordinances by action through the Austin City Council.

The City has contracted with Huston-Tillotson University to undertake a (Lady Bird) Lake capacity study through its environmental justice academic program. A plan and recommendations, based on study and analysis of vendors, watercraft usage, and enforcement will be delivered by December 2022, which will provide input on the possibilities and give more information as to the extent of usage and possible capacity of Lady Bird Lake and connected water bodies. While this is larger than Zilker, it does affect the two existing watercraft-focused concessions operating from Zilker.

Apart from the pending Huston-Tillotson study, there are several key messages that we provided in the economic section of the SANA in the spring of 2021 that we want to update and recommend, namely:

Both watercraft concessions operating in Zilker Park will be subject to changes in location, operating facilities, and access, based on elements of the vision plan as approved. Temporary or permanent relocation of amenities and access will likely be required.

The Zilker Eagle, as of this writing, is still in testing and troubleshooting phase(s), but is expected to be operational by the end of 2022. Like watercraft concessions, it will be subject to changes in location, operating facilities, and access, based on elements of the vision plan as approved. Temporary or permanent relocation of amenities and access will likely be required.

There is only a single food vendor with a permanent (and recently improved) location adjacent to the Zilker Café. In a well-publicized set of hearings in 2021, the approved operator was denied a conditional use permit by the Austin Planning Commission to serve beer and wine. The café has not opened, and we do not know the status of the café at this point.

Finally, public parkland has some protections under State law (Chapter 26, Texas Parks and Recreation) that prohibit the rental or lease of public park land as well as provide for elections over a change in disposition. Therefore, fees charged for events or reservable facilities (picnic shelter, Zilker Clubhouse, etc.) are for fair use of those facilities.

CONTRIBUTED INCOME

Finally, while nonprofits can raise funds and apply those funds for park improvements, programming and operations, those funds collectively are a small portion of total park spending. Based on research performed by The Trust for Public Land, six percent of annual spending in the 100 largest U.S. cities for parks comes from nonprofit park organizations. For Austin specifically, TPL's ParkScore index reported in 2020 that 13% of funding came from a dozen park nonprofits, totaling \$20.7M, putting Austin #17 out of 100 in terms of nonprofit funding share. The bulk of this spending accounts for capital projects by APF, The Trail Foundation, Pease Park Conservancy, Waterloo Greenway and others.



SUMMARY

The Zilker Metropolitan Park Vision Plan is for all of Austin. As the first comprehensive planning initiative for the entire park, the planning team recognized a need for comprehensive engagement to all 10 City Council Districts. While the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic limited much of the initial engagement, the planning team completed 4 virtual community meetings with the upcoming final meetings to offer virtual and in-person options. Each meeting has offered Spanish and ASL interpretation. In addition to the community meetings, online surveys, in-person pop-up events, and targeted small group conversations have provided greater access to people across Austin, emphasizing equitable outreach and inclusive opportunities from communities often left out of the conversation of citywide projects. With more than 5,500 participants and more than 8,000 comments received and consulted and an equity-centered approach in exploring the input, the process has connected with people across Austin with a vision for Zilker Park to be a park for all of Austin.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CHAPTER FIVE

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Vision and Goals
- Equity and Inclusion
- What We Did
 - Community Engagement
 - Technical Advisory Group
 - Other Opportunities
- What We Heard
- Who Took The Surveys

THE VISION AND GOALS



Pop-Up Event

VISION

The Zilker planning team sought a transparent and well-documented community engagement process that engaged the city as a whole and also focused on key groups or people involved with the park, emphasizing equity as part of the process. The process was centered on the guiding values and built on community input throughout.

GOALS

The Zilker Vision project team is committed to creating opportunities for the entire Austin community to provide input on the future of Zilker Park, focusing on areas of accessibility, inclusion, history, and ecology.

- » Educate the community about Zilker Park’s history, current City of Austin programs, operations, and future City of Austin operational needs, and provide opportunities for comment.
- » Gather community input, feedback, and stories to develop a plan for the future of Zilker Park that represents the diversity of Austin.
- » Identify and educate the community on environmental considerations and respond to those considerations throughout the project.
- » Utilize equity strategies to develop community connections with and engage traditionally underserved and marginalized communities in Austin.
- » Provide opportunities for engagement that are accessible to all abilities.
- » Identify and engage with PARD Parkners and other organizations, concessionaires, and groups associated with park programming.
- » Connect with communities around interpretive storytelling and placemaking to identify key opportunities in the park.
- » Correct any misinformation about the vision for the park and acknowledge any concerns or challenges identified by community members.
- » Create an environment of excitement for the proposed Vision Plan and future park development.
- » Create community support for the proposed Vision Plan and future park development.



Community Meeting Flyers in Multiple Languages

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

VISION

The key stakeholders were engaged directly. In addition to marketing and outreach being directed to traditionally marginalized communities, community leaders identified who might be willing to share stories and experiences around Zilker Park. In addition, pop-up events that took place across Austin were identified using an equity lens tool. The marketing and outreach used to execute the equity and inclusion strategy was guided by the following principles:

PRINCIPLES

- » Invite community members that are representative of Austin’s demographics, including a wide range of ages, races, ethnicities and hard-to-reach residents.
- » Reduce barriers to participation by creating a fun, culturally sensitive, inclusive and engaging process that allows for honest feedback.
- » Establish a respectful and reciprocal partnership with the community to better understand resident needs and priorities and to inform the development of the Vision Plan.
- » Increase education and understanding through tailored, engaging content that helps communities develop a deeper understanding of the Vision Plan.
- » PARD and the project team should commit to ongoing learning and improving the approach throughout the process.
- » Develop and execute a process that advances systemic equity.

LANGUAGE ACCESS

Language access is a key component in outreach and engagement within Austin. It is well-known that many community members prefer communication in their primary language at home, so the Vision Plan team is committed to providing opportunities for information and feedback to these community members for engagement techniques and events, especially Spanish and ACL.

DIGITAL AND NON-DIGITAL ACCESS

The planning team also acknowledges there is a digital divide when it comes to access to online materials. While many individuals do not have home computers, data shows the digital divide is shrinking, especially when considering smartphone access. Online efforts considered accommodations for smartphones where possible, and in-person opportunities were frequent through pop-ups.

- » Additional Outreach and Communication
 - Community Ambassadors
 - Extra Pop-up Events
 - Flyer in Multiple Languages: English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Hindi



WHAT WE DID



COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The engagement process included a series of five meetings hosted by PARD, to connect with and receive feedback from community members in the City of Austin. To accommodate the special circumstances surrounding COVID-19, each meeting was hosted virtually with one final in-person open house. Each meeting provided information on the status of the planning process and welcomed input that was used in conjunction with feedback from other phases of engagement to help shape the vision plan.

- » Virtual Meeting Format
 - Hosted on Zoom and Facebook Live
 - Live polling and Q&A session
 - Translation and interpretation to Spanish, ASL, and other languages
 - Meeting recording, materials, and polling questions posted to the website
- » In-person Meetings

COMMUNITY SURVEYS

A total of six rounds of surveys were available, starting with the initial survey focusing on what was appreciated about Zilker and gathering baseline information about how people access and use the park. The surveys that followed corresponded to the community meetings and extended the opportunity for input for participants who may not have been able to attend the meetings. The focus of Survey #1 was to obtain baseline information about how the community accesses and uses the park. Surveys #2-5 were available at the start of each community meeting and remained open until the next meeting. Each survey focused on a different topic – Vision Workshop, Programming, Design Concepts, and Master Plan. Participants could respond to the survey questions during the live meeting, online, or in-person at various pop-up events being held in each district.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

SPEAKUPAUSTIN

The project team also invited the public to share stories and experiences as well as brainstorming ways “the future of Zilker can be inclusive to all. on the project SpeakUp Austin! page. Participants had the opportunity to submit stories throughout the entirety of the vision planning process.

STORYMAP

The project team used storymap which is web-based application to share maps and narratives about the context of the site.

PROJECT WEBSITE

<https://www.austintexas.gov/ZilkerVision>

POP-UP EVENTS

Pop-Up stations were organized to connect with members of the community at public facilities and citywide events. These stations provided PARD with an

opportunity to supplement the community meetings, reach a broader audience and receive additional feedback. The first series of pop-up events took place months of July and August and provided at least one pop-up in every district.” second series “October through December and included many highly trafficked events. Overall, the planning team hosted more than 100 pop-up opportunities.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Small group discussions were small-scale, focused conversations around particular topics or subjects. Conversations focused particular interests, such as equity and inclusion, partnerships, ecological uplift, and others. All meetings were posted on the project website for transparency.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP



Site Visit with TAG Members

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was comprised of City of Austin representatives from various departments who provided technical expertise on different elements and concerns in and around Zilker Park. The members of the TAG ensured the planning team understood the relationship with Zilker and other City of Austin goals, policies, plans, and constraints. All meetings were recorded and posted for review by community members.

TAG MEMBERS

- » City of Austin: Parks & Recreation Department, Austin Transportation Department, Public Works, Watershed Protection, Office of Real Estate Services, Marketing and Communications Office, Austin Water, Austin Energy, Housing and Planning, Office of Sustainability, Austin Resource Recovery, and Austin Fire Department
- » Other Governmental Entities: Capital Metro and TxDOT/CTRMA
- » Meetings
 - Meeting #1, March 3, 2021
 - Meeting #2, May 5, 2021
 - Meeting #3, July 7, 2021
 - Meeting #4, August 18, 2021
 - Meeting #5, October 27, 2021
 - Meeting #6, February 23, 2022
 - Meeting #7, October 18, 2022

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Various methods were used to share information on the process and engagement opportunities to reach broad audiences across all 10 districts. All promotional materials and content were translated into Spanish and available in other languages upon request.

MEDIA

Press releases were distributed prior to each community meeting to share details, project background, and to raise awareness about the upcoming input opportunities. Several major media outlets covered and highlighted the planning process.

- Austin American-Statesman
- Fox 7 (Video)
- KXAN
- The Austin Chronicle
- Community Impact
- Austin Monitor
- Austin Culture Map
- Towers
- Patch
- KAZI
- KVUE
- Reporting Texas (The University of Texas at Austin)
- Austin ParksCast
- Univision

SOCIAL MEDIA

The City shared updates, community meeting details, and other opportunities on all of PARD's social media accounts, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor.

EMAILS

PARD staff sent email notices to community members across several mailing lists. The email notices contained information about the project and engagement opportunities including, community meeting schedule and materials, survey links and results, and pop-up event schedules.

SIGNS AND BANNERS

Signs and banners were placed in high-traffic areas throughout Zilker Park to promote the project website and engagement opportunities. Each sign had a QR code for park users to easily access the survey and project website using their phones throughout Zilker Park and in all metropolitan and district parks.

FLYERS

The City distributed flyers with project information at the various pop-up events, parks facilities, and numerous local businesses. reaching all 10 districts in Austin.

PARD LONG RANGE PLAN

- 1 Continue Zilker Loop Trail development and Barton Creek Crossing upstream from the pool.
- 2 Upgrade and improve site conditions at Zilker Clubhouse.
- 3 Construct Loop Trail extension and bridge.
- 4 Zilker Park Vision Plan implementation.

Zilker Park planning did not start from scratch. Some of the stage was set during the Long Range Planning process, which some of you were a part of, and Council's Strategic Direction 23. Community feedback heard during the Parks Long Range Planning process is important to take into account.



WHAT WE HEARD

SUMMARY OF BASELINE SURVEY

- 1 4,062 Participants, 10,253 Views, 4,606 Comments
- 2 Most of the visitors use personal vehicles to get to Zilker Park but mostly walk, jog, or run within the park.
- 3 The biggest obstacle of visiting the park is lack of parking but with better trail connections, the visitors would walk, bike, or use public transit more.

COMMUNITY SURVEY I - BASELINE

The first survey was for setting up the baseline. It opened in November 2020 and has received over 108,000 responses from over 4,000 survey takers. Those who answered were mostly long-term Austinites, mostly white, within income over \$100,000. This determined a baseline of who were needed to reach out more to participate in the process. Below are the answers that had the largest percentages:

- » What would encourage you to walk, bike, or use public transit more to travel to the park? **19% Better Trail Connection**
- » When visiting Zilker Park, how do you get there? **86% Personal Vehicle**
- » Once at Zilker Park, how do you move around the park? **97% Walk, Jog, or Run**
- » What are your favorite recreational amenities or activities? **61% Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail, 61% Barton Springs Pool and Bathhouse**
- » What would you like to see improved at Zilker Park? **56% Restrooms**
- » If you do not visit or avoid visiting, why? **54% Lack of Parking**

COMMUNITY MEETING I - VISION WORKSHOP

This meeting focused on the overall Guiding Principles and Goals of the Zilker Park Vision Plan. During the meeting, the project team introduced the project, reviewed the results of the Baseline Community Survey, shared an overview of the Site Analysis and Existing Needs Report, and asked for feedback through polling questions and a live Q&A session.

WHAT WE HEARD

- » Support for improved access to the park through transit and improved options for parking
- » Comments regarding large events in the park (funding, traffic, operation hours, accessibility, environmental impact)
- » Opposition to Zilker Café Conditional Use Permit

- » Questions regarding equity of engagement efforts
- » Ideas on how to generate funds for the park (pool operations, event days, allocation of funding, food/concessions)
- » Concerns for environmental impacts to Barton Springs Pool

OUTCOMES

- » Input received from Community Meeting #1 showed overall support for the Draft Guiding Principles and Goals from most participants. This informed the next phase of the plan and allowed the project team to develop concepts for potential programs including enhancements, amenities, activities, events, traffic, and parking.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

140
Zoom Participants

125
Live Poll Participation

14
Facebook Live Participation

63
Questions/Comments

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY SURVEY II

- 1 833 Participants, 370 Comments.
- 2 30% of the visitors spend money on pool entry and 24% on parking.
- 3 38% of people visit more than weekly.
- 4 Austin City Limits is the most beloved festival.

COMMUNITY SURVEY II - VISION

The responses received from the second community survey combined the results of the live polling exercise during the meeting and the online survey posted to the website after the meeting. The purpose of this survey was to gain an understanding of the community's top values within Zilker Park, mobility and usage patterns, and overall feedback on the Guiding Principles and Goals and Vision Plan process.

WHAT WE HEARD

- » Barton Springs Pool, ACL Festival, and activities on the Great Lawn are the top favorite experiences for park visitors
- » Traffic congestion and lack of parking are the biggest barriers to enjoying the park
- » There is overall support for the Draft Guiding Principles and Goals; additional feedback helped refine and improve them
- » Comments regarding improvements to transit opportunities

COMMUNITY MEETING II - PROGRAMMING

The focus of the second community meeting was to share information on current park programming and get feedback from the community on future programming considerations. The meeting included information on input received from the first community meeting and survey, an overview of current programming, a review of other similar parks, and a discussion on current funding and strategies.

WHAT WE HEARD

- » Support for additional cultural events and educational programs to make all Austin residents and visitors feel welcome
- » Support to improve park accessibility through transit upgrades

- » Comments and ideas regarding inclusivity in the park
- » Support for improvements to park amenities (restrooms, trails, parking)
- » Comments regarding equity of engagement efforts

OUTCOMES

Input received during Community Meeting #2 showed support for improvements and changes to programming at Zilker Park. During the meeting, the project team expanded the ideas presented through thoughtful discussion about strategy and priorities with the community. The input was used to form recommendations for future programming and design alternatives to support these programs, including enhancements, amenities, activities, events, traffic, and parking.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

100
Zoom Participants

63
Live Poll Participation

15
Facebook Live Participation

102
Questions/Comments

WHAT WE HEARD

SUMMARY OF SURVEY III

- 1 820 Participants, 370 Comments
- 2 Facilities: Provide accessible land and buildings for diverse recreation for all and parks maintenance throughout the city.

COMMUNITY SURVEY III - PROGRAMMING

The purpose of the third community survey was to evaluate current and future programs of Zilker Park through understanding community preferences and priorities.

- » Several comments expressed a preference to move festivals, large events, and parking from the Great Lawn
- » Support for additional restrooms, nature parks, and walking trails
- » Support for improvements to accessibility through ramps, handicap parking areas and paved trails
- » Comments about disapproval of parking as a funding source and requests for more information about anticipated revenue from each funding source

COMMUNITY MEETING III - ALTERNATIVES

The third community meeting focused on design alternatives for improving mobility and transportation, programming, environmental features, historical resources, and more. The meeting gave an overview of activities to date and input received and presented design alternatives that considered programming, accessibility, mobility, transportation and ecology. Participants answered live poll questions and shared comments via chat during the discussion.

WHAT WE HEARD

- » Suggestions and ideas regarding parking and transit improvements such as shared parking garages, increased connectivity through trails and shuttle systems.
- » Support for ecological enhancements such as a buried parking area with a green roof and trees, phytoremediation, and climate change mitigation.

- » Comments about the relocation of Austin City Limits and Trail of Lights.
- » Support for improvements to park amenities such as restrooms, volleyball courts, trails, car, and bike parking; and ideas for additional amenities like lockers, pickleball and tennis courts.
- » Questions regarding the source of funding options are coming bonds, general funds, or community fundraising.
- » Comments and ideas for additional programs such as educational programs and cultural events to make the park more inclusive.

OUTCOMES

The feedback received during Community Meeting #3 provided ideas to refine the design alternatives presented and offered new ideas for accessibility, transit and ecological enhancements, preferred park amenities, and programs, and additional connectivity opportunities.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

127
Zoom Participants

103
Live Poll Participation

7
Facebook Live Participation

107
Questions/Comments

SUMMARY OF SURVEY IV

- 1 955 Participants, 3,902 Views, 1,304 Comments
- 2 Several comments expressed the need for focusing on improvements to the ecological health of the park and reducing parking space and large events.
- 3 Participants support reducing pavement and increasing trees in the park.

COMMUNITY MEETING IV - PLAN CONCEPTS

The fourth community meeting focused on presenting three design concept themes: Stitch, Edges and Regenerate. The meeting gave an overview of activities and community input received to date and presented the elements of the three concepts. Participants answered live poll questions and shared feedback via chat during the discussion.

WHAT WE HEARD

- » Suggestions and ideas regarding inclusion of diverse demographic participation such as additional pop-up locations and alternative public meeting times

COMMUNITY SURVEY IV - ALTERNATIVES

- » Support for utilizing some of the underused parts of the park for park programming, while keeping other spaces for less activity
- » Support for food and vendor options limited to 1 or 2 areas
- » In the Nature Preserve Zone, participants are most interested in exploring new trail entrance(s) to the Preserve
- » In the MoPac Zone, participants are most interested in exploring non-vehicular/active transportation paths
- » In the ZBG Zone, participants are most interested in exploring changes to landfill area by removing waste materials or adding soil
- » In the Great Lawn Zone, participants are most interested in exploring non-vehicular/active transportation paths
- » In the Polo Field Zone, participants are most interested in additional safe crossings on Barton Springs Road.
- » In the Barton Springs Zone, participants are most interested in ways for increasing ecological function
- » In the Trailhead Zone, participants are most interested in increasing ecological function

- » Request for specific details regarding pavement square footage, cost of elements and funding for each concept
- » Support for the land bridge and underground parking
- » Support for preservation of natural and cultural heritage
- » Concern for relocation of the hillside theatre due to traffic noise and location inconvenience
- » Support for dedicated bike lanes for the hike and bike trail

OUTCOMES

The feedback received during Community Meeting #4 helped in the development process of the final Zilker Park Vision Plan. The feedback provided ideas to refine the design concepts and shared views on preferred park elements and overall design.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

177
Zoom Participants

148
Live Poll Participation

27
Facebook Live Participation

235
Questions/Comments

WHAT WE HEARD

SUMMARY OF SURVEY V

1 708 Participants, 858 Comments, 6,485 Views

2 Concept A: 74% of participants like the land bridge concept

3 Concept B: 50% of participants like the additional pedestrian/bike bridge connections across Barton Creek

4 Concept C: 55% of participants support the boardwalk on Lady Bird Lake

COMMUNITY MEETING V - DRAFT PLAN

The last phase of community engagement is still in progress. This part will be filled after all the process is completed.

COMMUNITY SURVEY V - PLAN CONCEPTS

WHAT WE HEARD: CONCEPT PREFERENCE

- » 35% of participants showed support for the idea that Concept A: Stich best meets the overall guiding principles and goals, 27% answered Concept B: Edges best meets the goals, and 21% answered Concept C: Regenerate best meets the goals.
- » Support for keeping the rugby field, polo field, and disc golf course.
- » Support for clearing invasive species, preserving water quality, and restoring the natural environment of Zilker Park
- » Conflicting opinions for the use of parking garages and Zilker Park for large events such as Trail of Lights and ACL
- » Support for the Great Lawn remaining an off-leash dog area
- » Preference for minimal impacts to the park and keeping Zilker Hillside Theater where it is
- » Concern for reduction of car lanes on Barton Springs Road and pedestrian tunnel
- » Preference for the kayak/stand-up paddleboard/canoe access to be near Butler landfill, east of MoPac
- » Preference for keeping Stratford Drive in its current alignment and allowing access to vehicles

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON DRAFT VISION PLAN

The last phase of community engagement is still in progress. This part will be filled after all the process is completed.

WHO TOOK THE SURVEYS

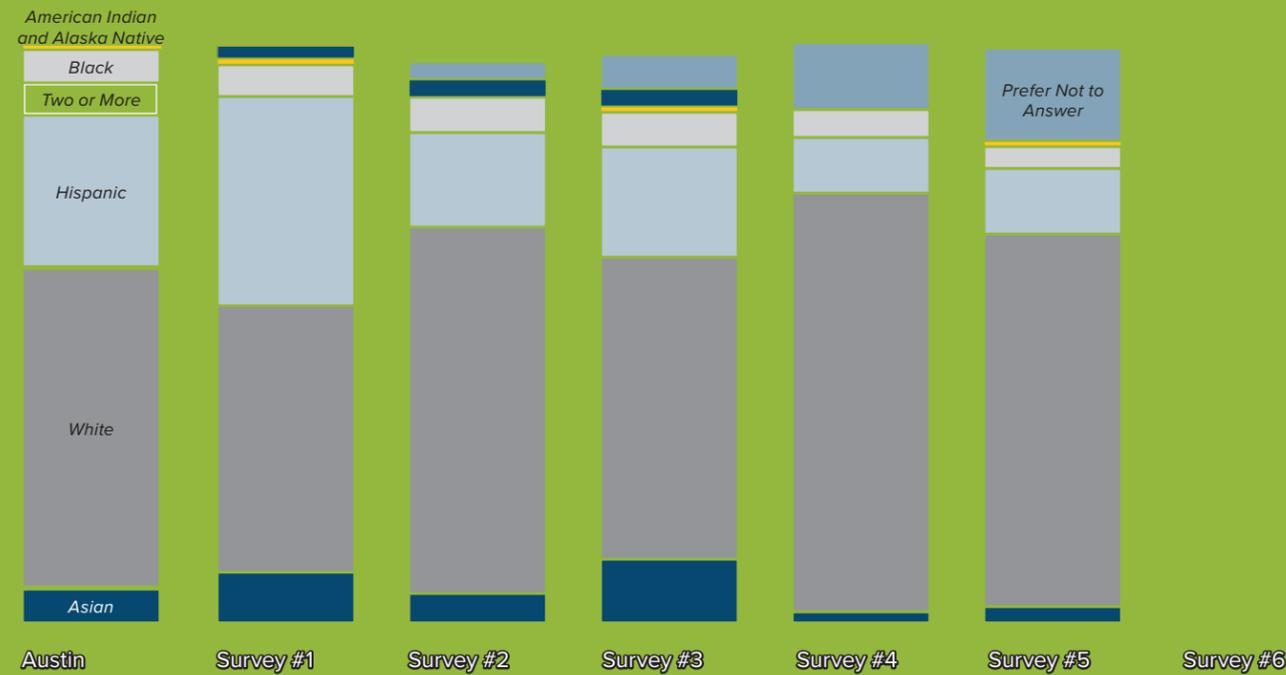
AGE



FEMALE, MALE, OTHER



RACE/ETHNICITY



The last phase of community engagement is still in progress. This part will be filled after all the process is completed.

SUMMARY

One can think of Zilker Park as a complicated puzzle of elements that need to come together to create a holistic park. The decisions made for one element have impacts for the other aspects of the park – from ecological uplift to transportation initiatives to cultural programs and policies. It is also important to acknowledge that the plan needs to solve the challenges faced today, but allow for innovative solutions to address climate change, transportation, and generally being a park for a thriving, growing city. The park has been in existence since 1917; this is the first comprehensive plan for Zilker Park since its inception, so the plan needs to think 100 years forward to plan for a sustainable, thriving park.

This chapter outlines the plan recommendations which are based fully on the community outreach and stakeholder conversations that have taken place over the course of the planning process.

CHAPTER SIX

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Vision Plan Overview
- Benchmarking
- Vision Plan Structure

THE VISION PLAN

OVERVIEW OF THE VISION PLAN

PLAN FEATURES

- 1** Land Bridge to connect north and south sides of Barton Springs Road and more broadly connect with regional trail systems.
- 2** 91 acres of Ecological Uplift to heal back environmentally damaged spaces within the park.
- 3** Improved access within and into the park via shuttles and increased connections across the creek and lake.
- 4** Welcome plaza that repurposes the Caretakers Cottage and Quonset Hut to serve as a hub for visitors.

PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The plan at right represents thousands of individual comments from the community, thousands of hours of work, and a balance of solving for today's challenges while looking into the future for a sustainable park for all of Austin. The park exists physically in the center of Austin, but also at the center of many planning initiatives that will potentially shape the way people get around the city, to the park and enjoy the park spaces.

The Zilker Park plan will potentially take decades to realize the full vision. This serves as a roadmap for City leadership, decision makers, and collaborators as implementation moves forward. The recommendations include projects, policies, programs and partnerships. It is understood that these elements will move forward as opportunities arise – funding opportunities, partnership opportunities, and other tangential City projects.



BENCHMARKING

One way to learn about how we may plan for Zilker Park's future, is looking to other peer parks in other cities. The parks are Hermann Park in Houston, Brackenridge Park in San Antonio, Overton Park in Memphis and Memorial Park in Houston. No one park is exactly the same as Zilker, but each of these parks has something we can learn from – including successes and challenges.

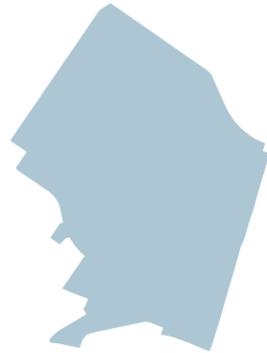
Hermann Park in Houston is located near the Medical District, south of downtown and although larger in land area, has some of the same amenities that Zilker currently has like a garden, train and outdoor theater. An interesting note about Hermann is about its adjacencies and how passive and active programming is distributed throughout the park.

Brackenridge Park in San Antonio is similar in size to Zilker, has a Botanical Garden, hosts many events, and will be important as we study how visitors access the park, through transit, vehicles, etc.

Overton Park in Memphis is similar in size, and what stands out as a comparable is how the park builds upon its important historical features as an attraction to the park.

Memorial Park recently underwent a vision planning process and one of the elements that came from that plan that we may explore for Zilker is connecting pedestrians and bikes in a safer way across Memorial Drive with a land bridge. That bridge is under construction now and connects the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center to the trails and spaces across the street

HERMANN PARK



- » **Size** 527 Acreage
- » **Location** Houston
- » **Visitors** 6 Million
- » **Zoo** 55 Acreage
- » **Amenities** Zoo, Theatre, Kids Train, Pedal Boats, Gardens, Fountains, 18-Hole Golf Course & Driving Range
- » **Trails and Transit** Light Rail, Bus, Adjoins Hospital District, Rice University
- » **Parking** Large Parking Lot
- » **Special Event** Festivals, Events, Programming.
- » **Partners** Conservancy

BRACKENRIDGE PARK



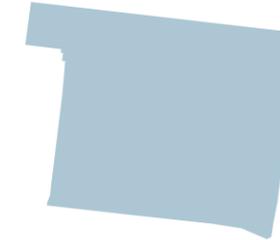
- » **Size** 343 Acreage
- » **Location** San Antonio
- » **Visitors** 2 Million
- » **Zoo** 35 Acreage
- » **Amenities** San Antonio River, Japanese Tea Garden, Sunken Garden, Botanical Garden Nearby, Reservable Facilities, Theatre, The Zoo, Golf Course
- » **Trails and Transit** Parking Lots, Nearby Parking Garages, Transit (Buses), Connection Via Expanded Riverwalk
- » **Parking** Parking Lot and Garage
- » **Special Event** Easter Weekend, Concerts, Festivals.

ZILKER PARK



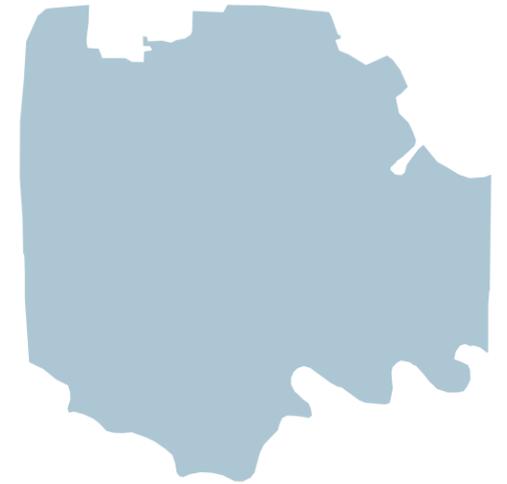
- » **Size** 350 Acreage
- » **Location** Austin
- » **Visitors** 2.6 Million
- » **Amenities** Zilker Botanical Garden, Austin Nature and Science Center, McBeth Recreation Center, Sunshine Camp, Barton Springs Pool.
- » **Trails and Transit** CapMetro, Parking, Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail, Violet Crown Trail, Zilker Nature Preserve Trail.
- » **Parking** Parking Lot
- » **Special Event** Austin City Limits, Kite Festival, Blues on the Green, Trail of Lights, etc.

OVERTON PARK



- » **Size** 342 Acreage
- » **Location** Memphis
- » **Visitors** 2-3 Million
- » **Zoo** 76 Acreage
- » **Amenities** Zoo, Theatre, State Natural Forested Area, 9-Hole Golf Course, Trails, Museum Of Art, Former Art School, Other Kessler Designed Features
- » **Trails and Transit** Interconnected Paved Bike/Trail Main Loop, Old Forest Loop
- » **Parking** Parking Lot
- » **Special Event** Concerts (50 Free Nights), Tournaments, Museum.
- » **Partners** Conservancy

MEMORIAL PARK



- » **Size** 1,500 Acreage
- » **Location** Houston
- » **Visitors** 3 Million
- » **Houston Arboretum** 155 Acreage
- » **Amenities** Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 18-Hole Memorial Park Golf Course, Facilities For Tennis, Softball, Swimming, Track, Croquet, Volleyball, Skating, Cycling, And A Running Course (2.93 Miles)
- » **Trails and Transit** 11 Trails and Loop Drive
- » **Parking** Parking Lot and Garage
- » **Special Event**
- » **Partners** Conservancy

CURRENT CONDITION



ZILKER CLUB HOUSE

NATURE PRESERVE

AUSTIN NATURE AND SCIENCE CENTER

ZILKER BOTANICAL GARDEN

LANDFILL GRAVEL PARKING

MOPAC

STRATFORD DR

ROWING DOCK

LADY BIRD LAKE

STRATFORD DR



NORTHERN AREA

- 1** Parking Garage on the east side or under MoPac will be used for the visitors to Zilker Botanical Garden, Austin Nature and Science Center, the new Rowing Dock, and the Ann and Roy Butler Trail.
- 2** Stratford Drive would be realigned to the east of MoPac, along the Zilker Botanical Garden. If the road were to be built here, a sound wall could be built as part of that project to help mitigate noise.
- 3** The existing landfill area will be restored woodland and meadow with ecological uplift.

ECOLOGICAL UPLIFT ON LANDFILL AREA



CURRENT CONDITION





CENTRAL AREA

- 4** The land bridge will stitch the park back together by joining the north and south sides of the park with an underground parking garage.
- 5** Sports Area is a cluster of active recreation fields, like baseball, volleyball and basketball on the east side of Polo Field Lawn.
- 6** The new Zilker Hillside Theater is integrated with the land bridge.
- 7** Barton Springs Road may be reduced to one lane of traffic each way, with on-street parallel parking and improved bus stops.

ZILKER LAND BRIDGE



ZILKER HILLSIDE THEATER



CURRENT CONDITION



THE VISION PLAN



EASTERN SIDE

- 8** Picnic area with concession and restroom is another gathering spot for the visitors around Great Lawn.
- 9** The new pedestrian and bike bridge is located along Toomey Road, increasing connectivity.
- 10** Lou Neff Road is becoming pedestrian and bike only trail with emergency or maintenance vehicle access.
- 11** The new bridge across Lady Bird Lake provides another crossing point between Roberta Crenshaw Bridge and Pfluger Pedestrian Bridge.

BARTON SPRINGS SPILLWAY



CURRENT CONDITION

POLO FIELD

GREAT LAWN

ANDREW ZILKER RD

MOON TOWER

BARTON SPRINGS RD

SUNSHINE
CAMP

RUGBY FIELD

PECAN GROVE
PICNIC AREA

COLUMBUS DR

ZILKER
HILLSIDE
THEATER

PLAYGROUND

VIOLET CROWN
TRAILHEAD

BARTON SPRINGS SPILLWAY

BARTON SPRINGS POOL

SUNKEN
GARDEN

WRIGHT
FIELD

MONKEY
TREE LAWN

SOUTHERN AREA

12 The parking garage #3 is directly connected to Welcome Plaza with the new bridge.

13 Caretaker's Cottage and Quonset Hut in Welcome Plaza are repurposed to educational purpose such as outdoor/ indoor classrooms.

14 The south side of Barton Springs Pool would remain available year-round with access to new playscapes during large events.

15 Barton Creek will be rehabilitated with controlled water access and erosion treatments.



SOUTH SIDE OF BARTON SPRINGS POOL



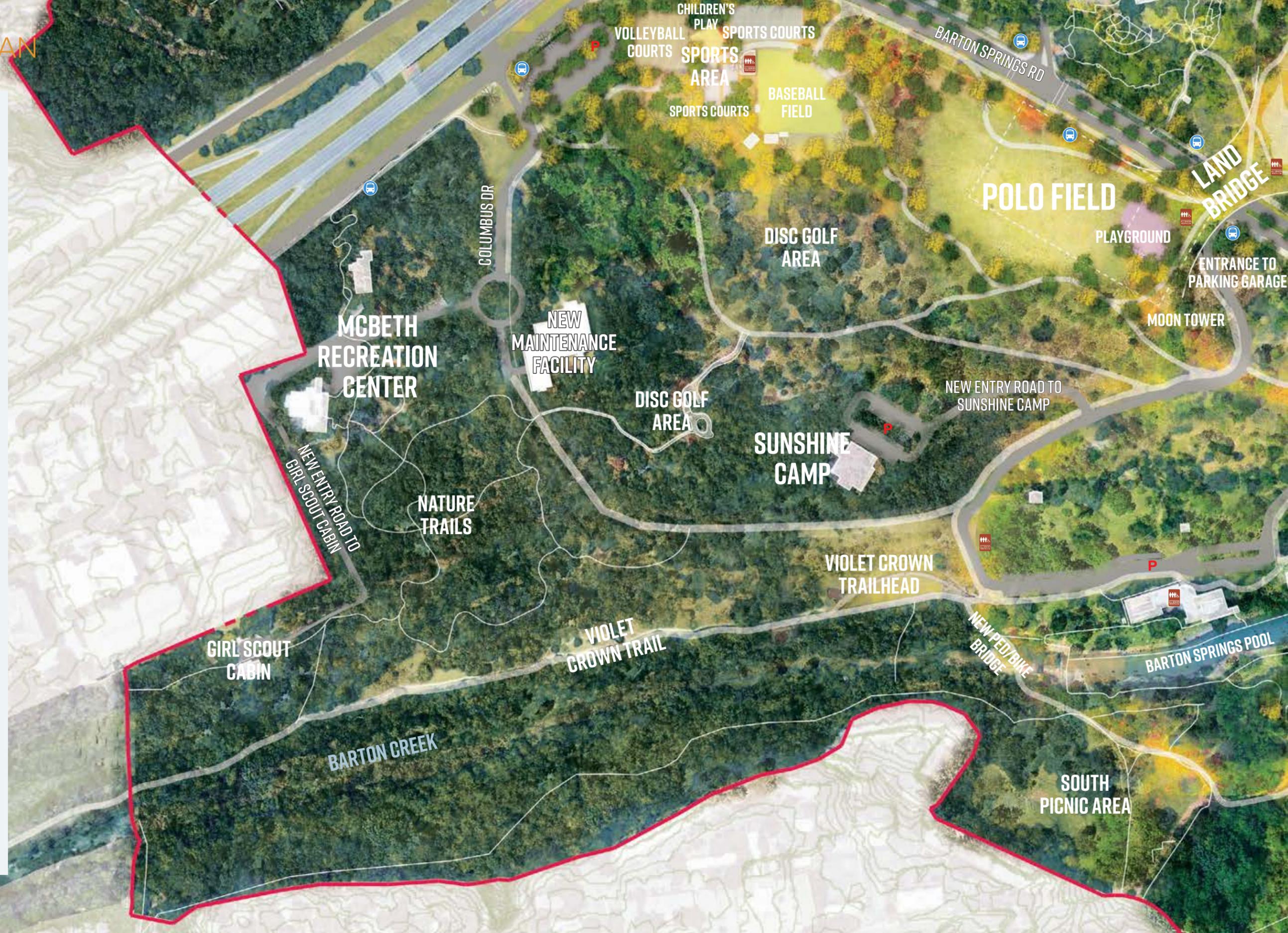
CURRENT CONDITION



THE VISION PLAN

WESTERN AREA

- 16** With the new entry road to the Girl Scout Cabin, the southern part of Columbus Drive becomes a nature trail.
- 17** As Andrew Zilker Road becomes pedestrian and bike only trails, the Disc Golf Area will be extended to the south.
- 18** Columbus Drive will be partially closed with a roundabout. The nature trail will be continued from Barton Creek Greenbelt to Lady Bird Lake over the land bridge.
- 19** The new pedestrian bridge on the west side of Barton Springs Pool will improve connectivity across Barton Creek.



ZILKER SPORTS AREA





THE ZILKER METROPOLITAN PARK VISION PLAN IS A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PLANNING PROCESS



Diversity and Inclusion

During the design process, the design team utilized the feedback, getting from community members from all 10 council districts toward the design. This page shows how what we heard from small groups, pop-ups, surveys and community meetings to design and how the guiding principles were used as a foundation. Here are a few of the elements as examples. Most of the survey results do not have a clear answer for the direction so the team continued to explore and outline the advantages and challenges for each after the surveys.

BARTON SPRINGS ROAD CONFIGURATION OPTION

A-Stitch 2 lanes of travel	-->	Ranked 4th on the Top 5 Element Question from A-Stitch
B-Edges 2 lanes of travel, on-street parking	-->	Ranked 13th on the Top 5 Element Question from B-Edges
C-Regenerate 1 lane of travel, on-street parking	-->	Ranked 10th on the Top 5 Element Question from C-Regenerate

08.18.21 TAG Meeting

Barton Spring Road is one of the main connectors from Downtown to MoPac. For that, it is hard to reduce the number of lanes but is great to have separated pedestrians and bikers.

10.01.21 PARD Leadership Meeting

We need to think to use all options in different locations in the park. The level of crossing being over or underground would depend on a lot of factors.

12.21.21 Austin Transportation Department Meeting

Parking along BSR - parallel only; underpass preferred to land bridge due to cost; support medians and curb extensions.

Community Survey #5 Comments

- » Imagine the traffic due to the people parallel parking.
- » I like:... keeping parking on Barton Springs Rd for disabled parking or unloading spots to naturally slow down traffic...

08.26.22 Austin Transportation Department Meeting

ATD is supportive to reduce Barton Springs Road to one lane each direction with street parking.

PLAN DIRECTION

Move forward with one lane of travel in each direction with parallel parking. Allow flexibility for further considerations with Austin Transportation Department.

PLEASE RANK YOUR PREFERRED BARTON SPRINGS ROAD CROSSING OPTION.

A-Stitch Land Bridge	31%	-->	Ranked 1st on the Top 5 Element Question from A-Stitch
B-Edges Underpass	25%	-->	Ranked 4th on the Top 5 Element Question from B-Edges
C-Regenerate Surface Crossing	22%		
A,B and C Pedestrian Bridge	22%		

Community Survey #1 Comments

- » Consider a land bridge
- » Bury Barton Springs Road and Connect park to the pool area

10.01.21 PARD Leadership Meeting

A 'hybrid' combining under/over might be one way of implementing the land bridge concept.

Community Survey #5 Comments

- » Underpasses for peds/bikes are not inviting.
- » I've been dreaming of land bridge over Barton Springs Rd.
- » I love the land bridge and the additional crossings of Barton Springs road.

08.26.22 Austin Transportation Department Meeting

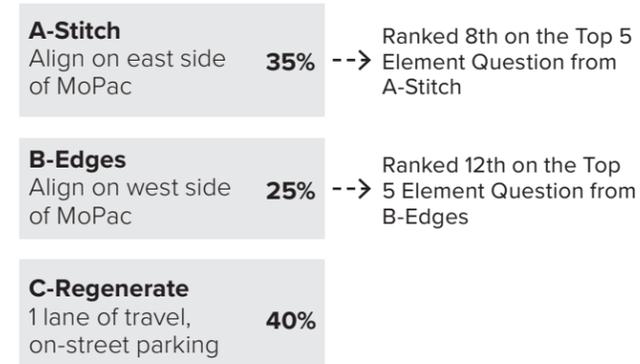
There is not technical issue with the realignment but it will not be mobility priorities cause Stratford Drive is not a major roadway like Barton Springs Road in case of the capacity.

PLAN DIRECTION

Use various types of crossing based on the locations and contexts.

HOW ENGAGEMENT SHAPED THE DESIGN

WHAT IMPROVEMENT OF STRATFORD DR DO YOU PREFER?



08.18.21 TAG Meeting

There are a lot of buses approaching Nature and Science Center along Stratford Dr.

Community Survey #4

- » 45% Leave as it is
 - » 35% Reroute to the west side of MoPac
 - » 20% Reroute to the east side of MoPac
- 55%**

02.23.22 TAG Meeting

Realigning Stratford on west side of MoPac affects the preschool and facilities at Austin Nature and Science Center.

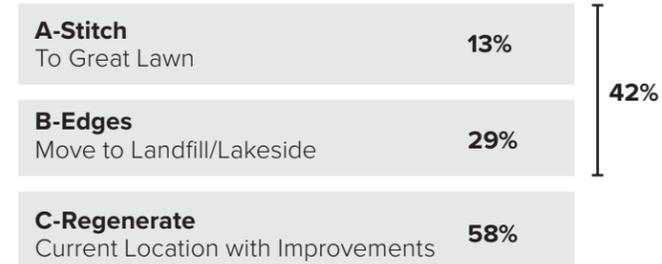
08.30.22 CTRMA Meeting

- » Underground option sounds concerning
 - 36' median current now: Shoulder to shoulder
 - Requirement of air vent, fire department
 - It is costly option and complicated
- » For the alignment on the east side needs more coordination

PLAN DIRECTION

Continue coordinating with CTRMA about the possibility of Stratford Dr realignment.

WHICH LOCATION FOR ZILKER HILLSIDE THEATER DO YOU PREFER?



05.19.21 Small Group Discussion with Park Staff

Don't actually think the existing location is the best place to have a theater due to not enough parking, accessibility, and outdated facilities.

04.14.22 PARD Facilities Group Meeting

Putting Zilker Hillside Theater on the water, people would love that.

Kite Festival Pop-Up Event

Expand Hillside Theater

Community Survey #5 Comments

Moving the theater seems to bring a lot of potential disruption to theater attendees with mixing with people on the Great Lawn, their music, their dogs.

04.08.22 Meeting with CTRMA

We are doing noise analysis and will make the level below 66 decibel with proper mitigation.

06.14.22 Zilker Hillside Theater Production Team

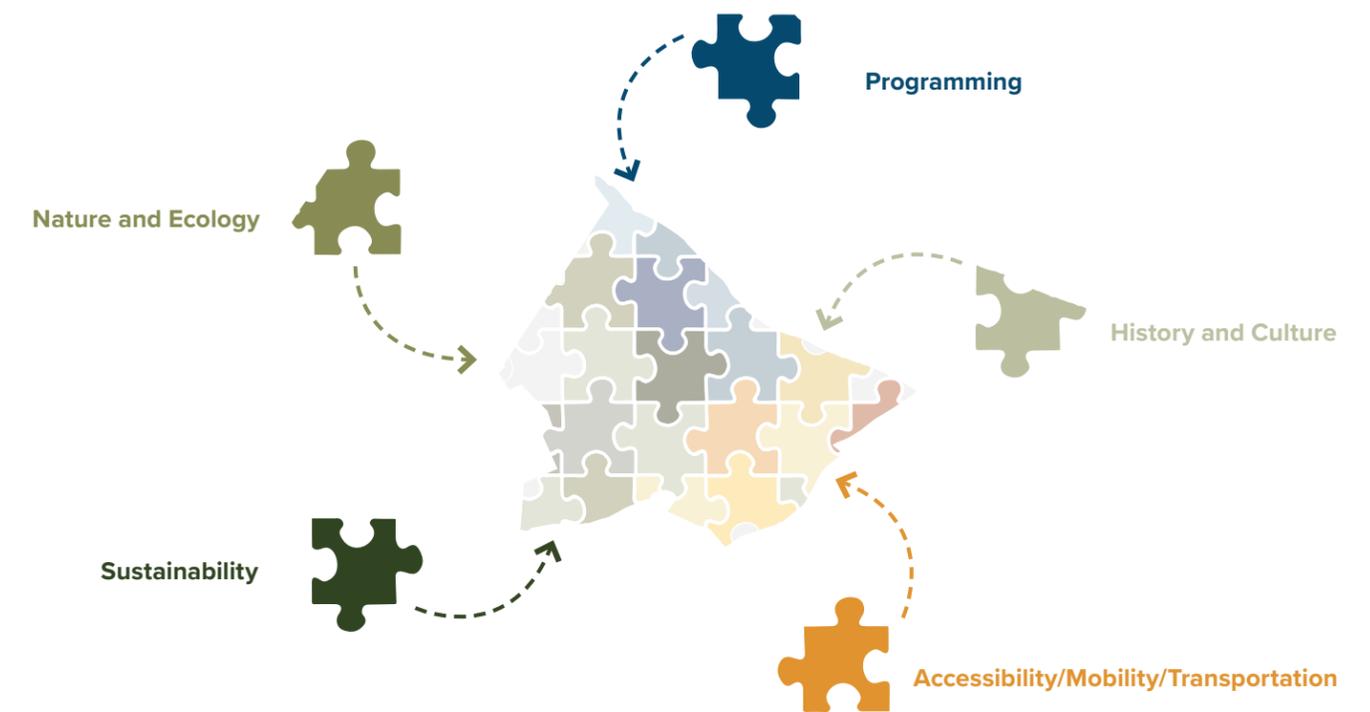
Prefer great lawn location than landfill area due to safety, liability, and noise issue.

PLAN DIRECTION

Show options in greater detail for both locations, detailing the pros/cons with each for more clarity.

PERSPECTIVE OF THE VISION PLAN

ZILKER PARK AS PUZZLE PIECES



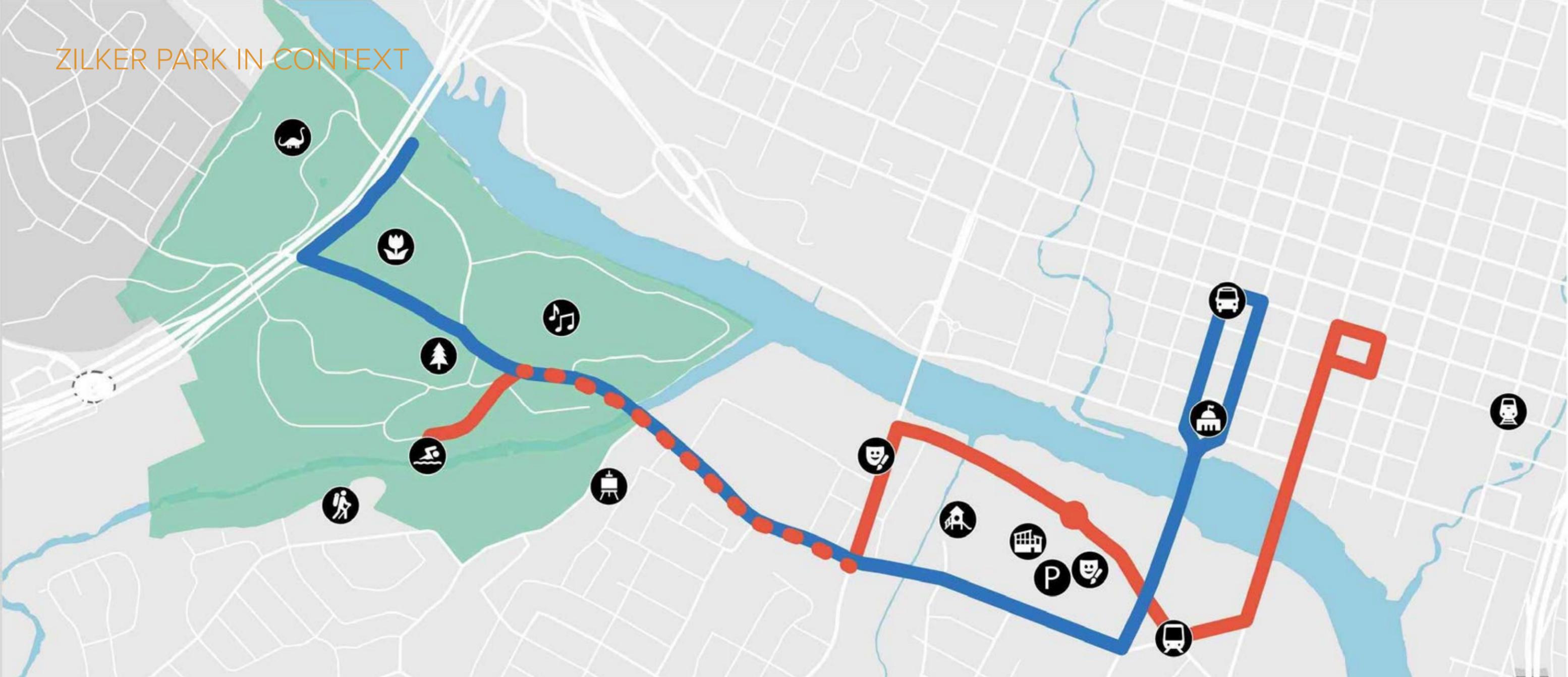
Zilker Park is a complicated puzzle with many pieces - nature and ecology, programming, sustainability, history and culture and accessibility/mobility/transportation. All aspects are considered within the plan, creating a balance of uses. For example, how should the park address Austin's growing population and Zilker's draw as a destination, while respecting the precious ecological systems that exist on site? How should the plan address real access challenges (connectivity within the park, getting to the park) when limitations beyond the City's control (upcoming MoPac Expressway design, CapMetro plans) create potential roadblocks to implementation?

The answer to this question is allowing the community engagement to drive the plan and build in flexibility so the plan's framework can set the established vision on a path to implementation.

DID YOU KNOW?

Where the moontower is now, the Reptile Farm was operating in Zilker Park from 1933 to 1935. Alligators were one of the more than 60 different species of reptiles. Visitors might eat fried rattlesnake sandwiches while watching turtle races.

ZILKER PARK IN CONTEXT



SHUTTLE AND OFF-SITE PARKING GARAGES

An external shuttle could help to decrease the need for parking, especially as Project Connect moves forward.

The purpose of the shuttle is connecting to high-frequency transit station and/or Downtown, bridging to off-site shared parking garages, and support inter-park travel. As a result, Zilker Park will open to broader visitors with better accessibility.

Here are two different alignment possibilities – Route Option A along East Riverside from Downtown to the DAC, along Barton Springs Road into Barton Springs Pool and Violet Crown Trailhead area, and Route Option B is connecting Republic Square and One Texas Center

to Zilker Botanical Garden and Austin Nature and Science Center. Especially, the Route Option A could connect to the nearest future light rail station located at Auditorium Shores, servicing the future Orange and Gold Lines, bringing high capacity transit within 1.25 miles of Zilker – within range of first/last mile options.

Below are the elements that should be considered when evaluating the design of an external shuttle.

- › Bidirectional with clear start and end points (not a continuous loop.)
- › Protection from congestion-related delays.

- › Appropriate speed for context.
- › Vehicles that load and unload quickly.
- › Directly serves most significant flow of people.
- › Permanence of origin and destination.
- › Safety from collision.
- › Appropriate for park users such as dog owners and families.
- › Capacity.
- › Accessibility.

LEGEND

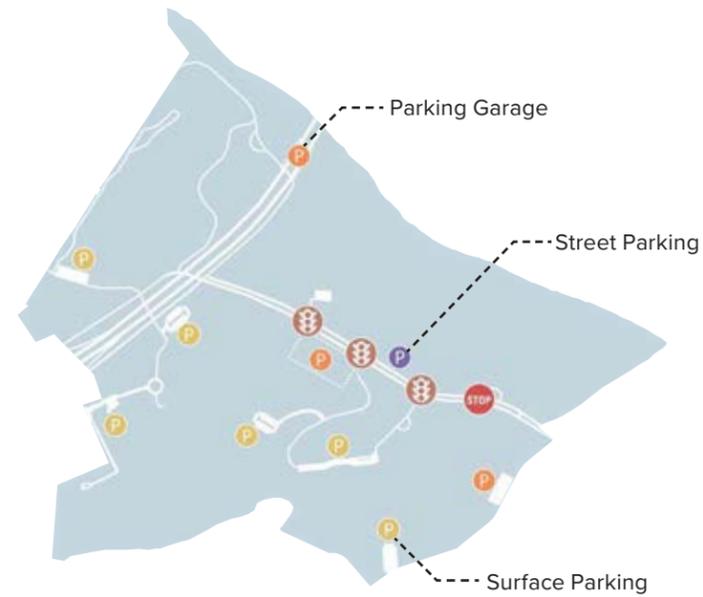
- Zilker Metropolitan Park
- Route Option A
- Route Option B
- Hydrology

FRAMEWORK OF THE VISION PLAN

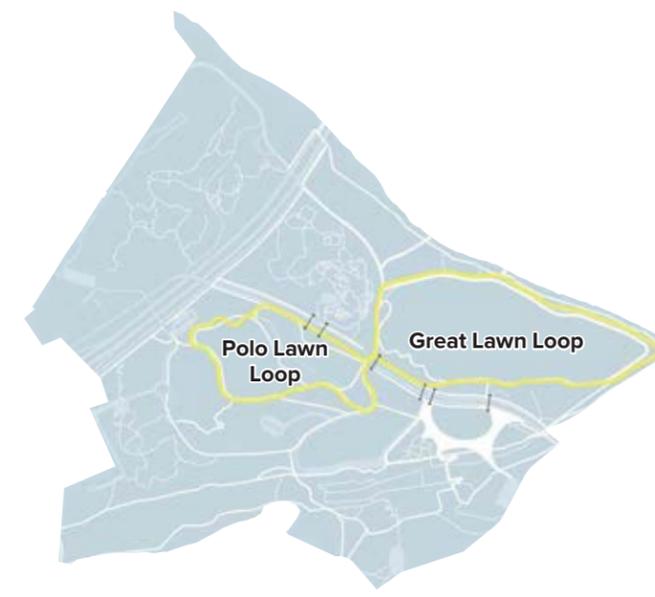
Table 3: Comparison Table

		EXISTING	PROPOSED
Parking	Formal	1,300	2,479
	Informal	1,150	0
	Total	2,450	2,479
Impervious Cover	Roads	20.9	19.9
	Parking	12.52	4.3
	Programs/ Structure	2.5	10.87
	Total	35.92 Acres	27.9 Acres
Ecological Uplift	Upland Woodland	96 Acres	114 Acres
	Riparian Wetland	69.6 Acres	82.6 Acres
	Meadow/ Savanna	47 Acres	47.3 Acres
	Canopy Enhancement	-	10 Acres
	Green Stormwater	-	2 Acres
	Total	166 Acres	256 Acres
Trails	Total	12.6 Miles	19.5 Miles
Programs	Caretakers Cottage	Renovated	
	Quonset Hut	Renovated	
	Sunken Garden	No Change	
	Hillside Theater	Relocated	
	Girl Scout Hut	No Change	
	Zilker Club House	No Change	
	Lookout Point	No Change	
	Playgrounds	Existing + 4 New	
	Volleyball Courts	Relocated	
	Disc Golf	Rearranged	
	Baseball Field	Relocated	
	Rugby Field	Enhanced	
	Informal Parking Lots	Removed	
	Andrew Zilker Road	Partially Closed	
	Columbus Drive	Partially Closed	
	Lou Neff Road	Closed	
	All of the contributing resources for National Register of Historic Places will remain.		

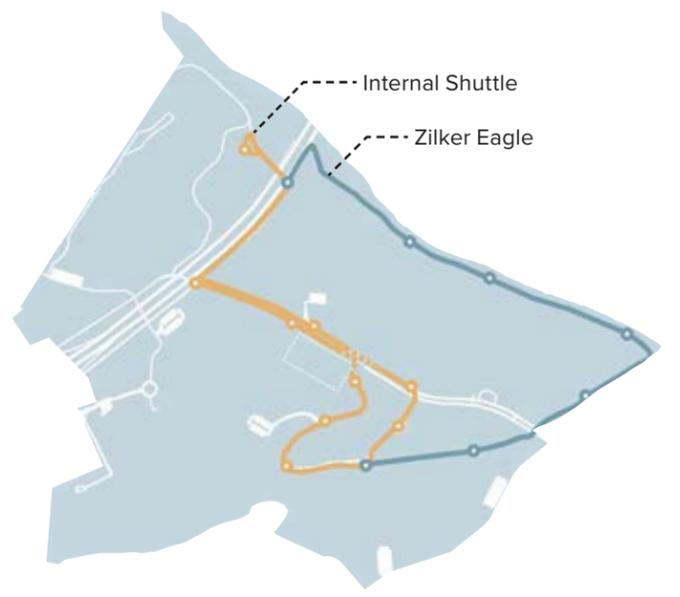
VEHICLE CIRCULATION AND PARKING



PEDESTRIAN/BIKE NETWORK



INTERNAL CIRCULATOR



WAYFINDING / INTERPRETIVE STORY



- Park Entry Sign
- Pedestrian Directional
- Facility Signage
- Park Rule
- Vehicular Directional
- Trailhead
- Interactive Signage

NEW PROGRAMMING



- Playground
- Sports Fields
- New Picnic Area
- Lawn
- Barton Springs Pool
- Welcome Plaza

ECOLOGY



- Upland Woodland
- Canopy Enhancement
- Riparian Wetland
- Green Stormwater
- Meadow/Savanna
- Park Area with Regular Maintenance

TRANSPORTATION/MOBILITY



VEHICLE CIRCULATION AND PARKING

Accessibility was one of the hot topics during the Vision Plan process. It was one of the top obstacles of visitors to avoid Zilker Park. Therefore, it is critical to offer up more attractive multimodal travel options than currently available. At the same time, the plan should be clear that people who choose (or need to) drive to Zilker Park find a straightforward parking system that provides a range of affordable options and directs users straight to their parking space without creating excess circling in the park that endangers park users or creates unnecessary emissions. Road design respects the safety mandate of park users and does not impede an enjoyable experience by those on foot or wheels. Accessible paths help users navigate between destinations once parked and allow visitors to discover more of the park's amenities. For remote parking off-site, a shuttle easily connects parkers into the heart of the park – and better pedestrian connections at park entrances make remote parking connections viable

LEGEND

-  Traffic Light
-  Vehicular Stop Sign
-  CapMetro Stop
-  Internal Shuttle Shop
-  Zilker Eagle Stop
-  Parking Garage
-  Street Parking along Barton Springs Road
-  Surface Parking

and easy. Impervious parking and roadway areas are intentionally chosen, reduced when appropriate, and respect the goal of preserving natural environments in the park.

We accomplish this by:

- » Improving Barton Springs Road, including a road diet, traffic calming, creating a median, and reducing the speed limit from 35 to 25mph
- » Realigning Stratford Drive to the east side of MoPac in order to streamline access to parking and minimize vehicular traffic in the heart of the park
- » Closing parts of Andrew Zilker Road, William Barton Road, and Columbus Drive in order to streamline circulation patterns while maintaining accessibility to parking at key park destinations such as Barton Springs Pool, the Sunshine Camp, and McBeth Recreation Center
- » Closing Lou Neff Road to vehicular traffic to improve the connection between the Great Lawn and Lady Bird Lake/Barton Creek.
- » Building accessible sidewalks adjacent to all roadways and parking locations
- » Consolidating parking lots into 1-3 parking garages at strategic locations throughout the park
 - Parking garage construction can be phased as surface parking to assess demand before investing significant capital in parking capacity
- » Consistently applying parking pricing so that any individual/family qualifying for WIC/CHIP would qualify for free parking
- » Piloting long-term vision recommendations for vehicular circulation to see faster results and understand impact on park usage
 - Pilot road closures to expedite results and showcase their potential, such as Lou Neff closures or Barton Springs Road diet on weekends only in early implementation years
- » Conducting “Car-free park” days as both an interim and long-term measure
 - Example: Conduct temporary road diet of BSR on weekends only as an interim demonstration
- » Create passenger and rideshare pick-up/drop-off zones

- » Introducing a unified wayfinding system to the park

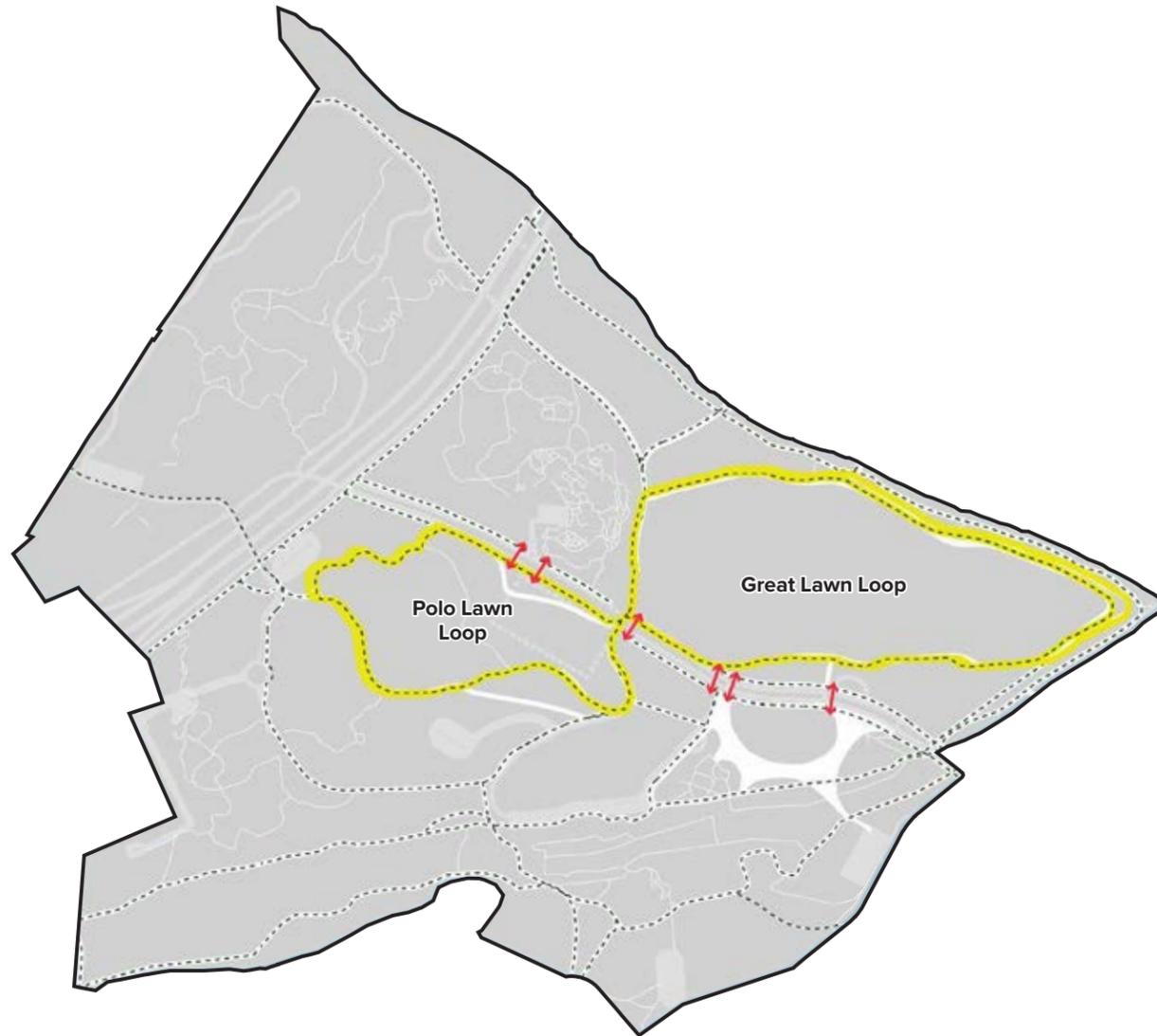
TRANSIT

Transit is a viable and attractive option for a broad range of Austinites to get to and from Zilker Park. There are multiple transit route options with easy transfers when needed that do not overly complicate the trip. Connections to and from the future Project Connect transit system is coordinated and easy. Transit users don't wait long for the next bus, shuttle, or train and multiple travel options mean transit is an option for a wide variety of park users.

We accomplish this by:

- » Creating an internal circulator that provides access to key destinations.
- » Creating an external circulator service that connects to nearby transit and off-site parking assets to serve as a first/last mile access option for Zilker Park, in particular to the nearby future Orange Line station
 - The best service design will likely combine internal and external access goals, providing frequent, linear access.
- » Improving CapMetro service into the park, by redesigning the route to serve more valuable connections for Zilker visitors, better connecting to the transit system, and improving service frequency to ensure CapMetro bus service is a viable option during busy times
 - Park stakeholders have the opportunity to advocate for this service change within the City and CapMetro amid Project Connect service redesigns
- » Improving walking, micromobility, and bike connections – and wayfinding – between internal and nearby transit assets, including a redesigned Zilker route, the nearby 803/3 service and the nearby future Orange Line service
- » Reestablishing the Zilker Eagle for recreational/light mobility purposes, including exploring extension of the route to serve on-site parking near MoPac and Stratford Drive
- » Introducing a unified wayfinding system to the park

TRANSPORTATION/MOBILITY



BIKE

Biking into the park feels easy, fun, and safe, regardless of bike ability. The park entrances are connected to the surrounding and regional bike network and clearly marked. Once inside the park, biking conditions further improve, providing a sense of calm and relaxation that our city's park system provides for all users. Bikeways are protected and suitable even for children who are new to using a bike. Bike access is available to all the major park destinations and ends with attractive bike parking in front of destinations. Zilker Park becomes a major destination for the region's bike network.

We accomplish this by:

- » Building an additional pedestrian/bike bridge crossing Barton Creek

LEGEND

- Vehicular Network
- Loop Trail
- Pedestrian and Bike Network
- ↔ Pedestrian Crossing
- Major Pedestrian/Bike Trail
- Minor Pedestrian/Bike Trail

- » Building an additional pedestrian/bike bridge crossing on Lady Bird Lake
- » Expanding the existing pedestrian/bike bridge north of Barton Springs Road and realigning it to Toomey Rd
- » Improving the Roberta Crenshaw Pedestrian/Bike Bridge, including exploring possibility to partner with TxDOT and CTRMA to include pedestrian/bike path under northbound travel lanes
- » Creating a connected inter-park path system with prioritized pathways and more direct walking connections to make distances between key features and parking easier to manage
- » Incorporate a walking/jogging loop into new trail/path system
- » Creating a Land Bridge Crossing to connect the two halves of park across Barton Springs Road
- » Incorporate a walking/jogging loop into new trail/path system
- » Creating additional safe pedestrian/bike crossings of Barton Springs Road
- » Calming traffic and speeds on Barton Springs Road
- » Enhancing and building new sidewalks – while the pathway system will provide the most direct access points, roadways to parking areas also need sidewalks (which are currently missing in many cases)
- » Extending the Violet Crown Trail/Barton Creek Greenbelt entrance/trailhead to higher visibility and more accessible location
- » Improving connections to the Butler Trail
- » Introducing a unified wayfinding system to the park

PEDESTRIAN

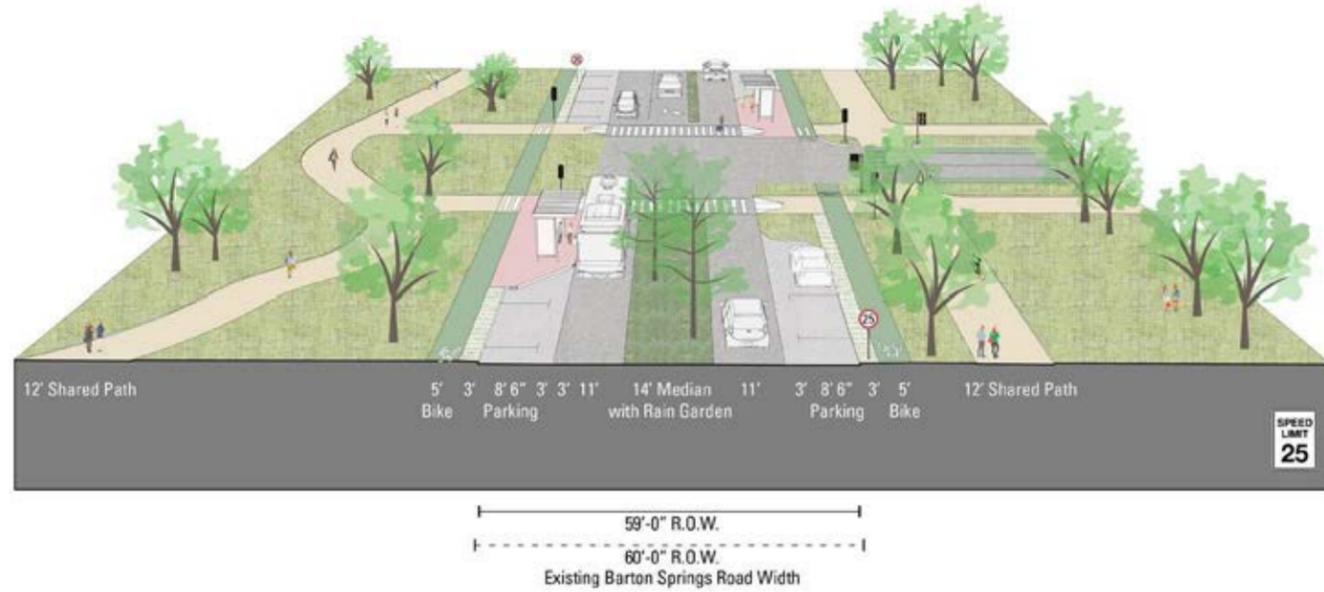
Walking is an easy mode of transportation to choose, with direct, clear connections to enter the park from each direction and also between destinations within the park.

We accomplish this by:

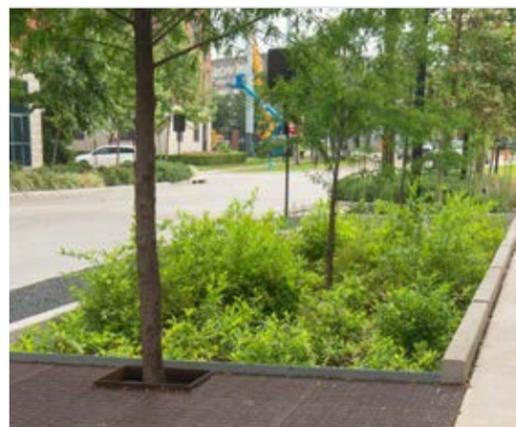
- » Building an additional pedestrian/bike Bridge Crossing Barton Creek
- » Building an additional pedestrian/bike Bridge Crossing on Lady Bird Lake

TRANSPORTATION/MOBILITY

BARTON SPRINGS ROAD CONFIGURATION



Bus Stop with Green Roof

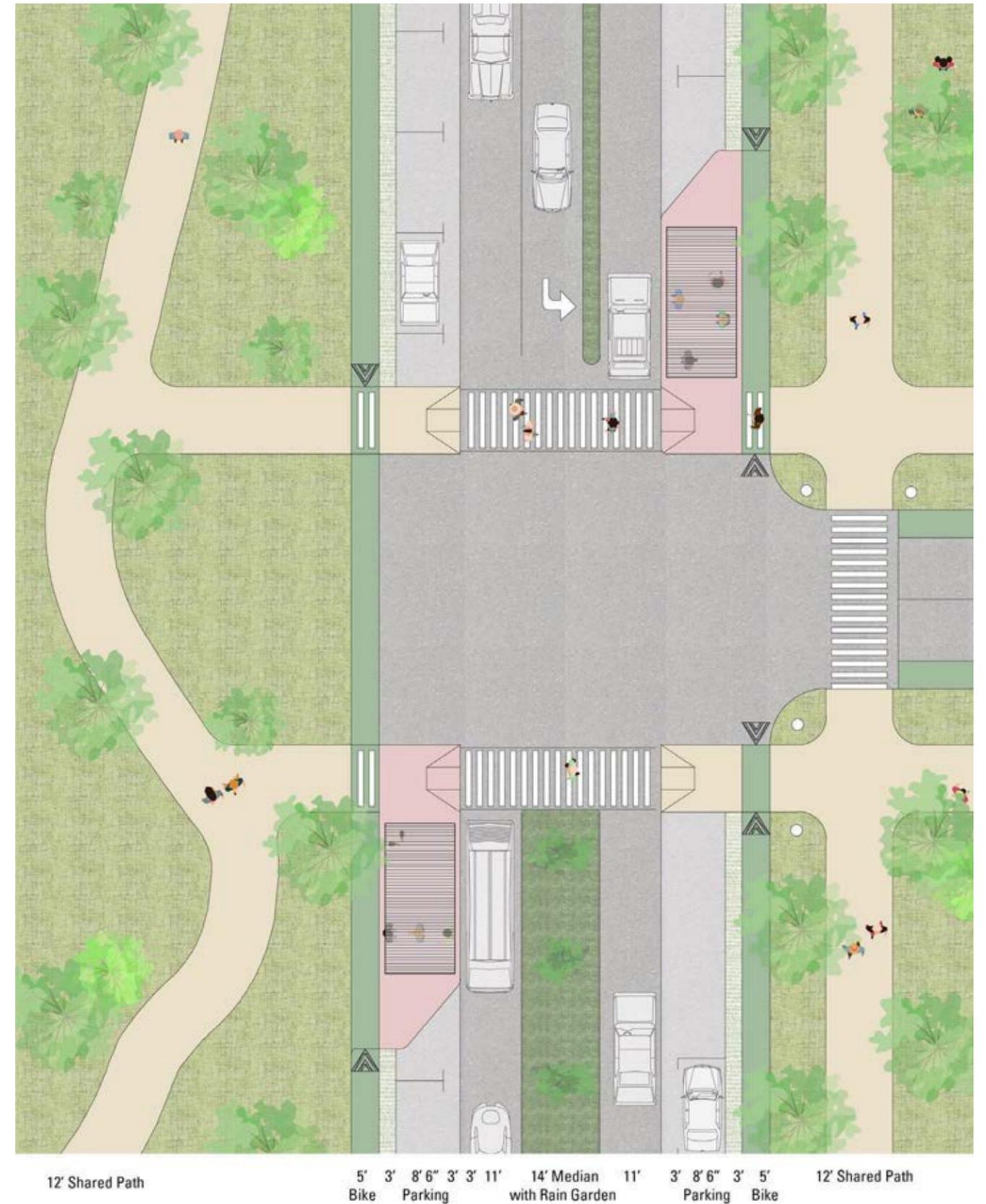


Raingarden in Median

Barton Springs Road is one of the main dividers of the park and there are not many safe way to cross the road. As a result, traffic calming is unavoidable to make the park safer and more enjoyable. Below are the strategies to achieve traffic calming.

Traffic calming means more than reducing speed limit. It means improving the safety of pedestrians and bicycles by slowing down the speed of vehicles through physical design of existing roads, etc.

- The road is consisted with one-lane each way, parallel parking on both side, and protected bike lane with 3' buffer from the road.
- Drainage improvement is recommended, directing stormwater drainage into planting area and it needs to be done in collaboration with Austin Watershed Protection Department.
- The 14' median is not only not only shading the road but also improving safety of the pedestrian crossing. It also can improve drainage system by having rain garden with shade trees.
- Bus stops along Barton Springs Road function not only for transportation but also shelter from the sun. It is recommended to have strategies to reduce surface temperature such as green roof.



ECOLOGY

ECOLOGICAL UPLIFT



Ecological uplift is the result of repairing and restoring natural systems through active management. Ecological uplift can include increased biodiversity, increased soil health, greater water cycling, and more robust human/nature interactions. Manifestations of ecological uplift at Zilker Park can be: increased biodiversity in a parking lot through the planting of pollinator plants, enhancing climate resilience through increases in tree canopy and shade that

mitigate and allow for adaptation to climate change, inclusion of green stormwater infrastructure that allows water to infiltrate into the ground and support photosynthesis, as well as the restoration of complete plant communities into forests with multiple levels of vegetation including tree canopy, understory, and groundcover. Areas of ecological uplift benefit the plants and animals that live there and catalyze stronger and more robust human/nature connections.

LEGEND

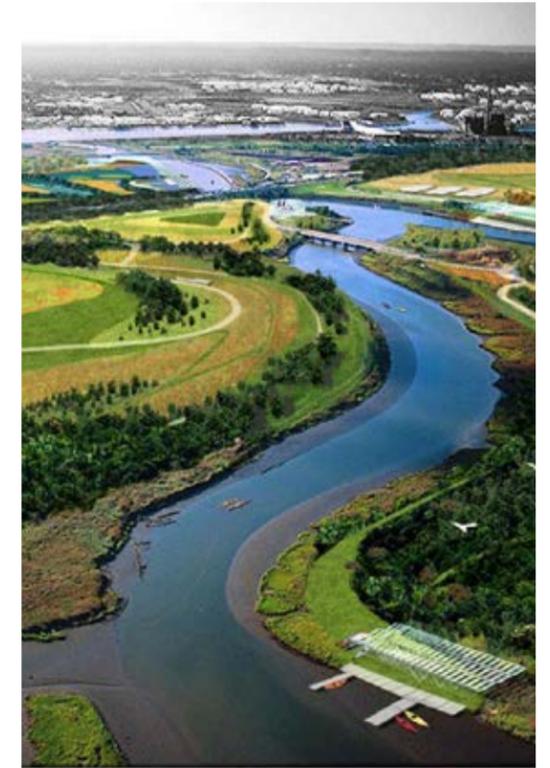
- Upland Woodland
- Riparian Wetland
- Meadow/Savanna
- Canopy Enhancement
- Drainage Enhancement
- Park Area with Regular Maintenance
- Road

BUTLER LANDFILL

- » A 2019 Environmental Assessment classified the Butler Landfill as a recognized environmental condition (REC) due to exceedances of contaminants like arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, magnesium, lead, iron, and manganese.
- » The Butler Landfill presents a great opportunity for ecological uplift and remediation of contaminants. The highest and best use for this area from an ecological perspective—considering its adjacency to the Lake and location within Zilker Park—is to extract the waste material or add additional soil to the top of the cap and restore the area to a woodland and/or savanna. This scenario results in the greatest increase to the ecological health of the park and enhancement of the user experience. The area is one of the last opportunities the city has to create lakeshore parkland that can alleviate pressure on other park amenities and create a robust passive recreation experience to interact with nature. The result could be up to 17 acres of robust plant and wildlife habitat with an integrated user experience. This use takes advantage of topographic changes, as a result of either extracting the landfill debris or increasing soil volume on top of it. While this is the best ecological use for the space, the importance of parking for the Zilker Botanical Garden, Austin Nature & Science Center, Butler Trail, and event facilitation is recognized. Therefore, this recommendation should be taken into consideration when attempting to find a compromise between ecological function and pragmatic use of the park space.

WEST BUTLER LANDFILL (FORMER 'BONEYARD')

- » The Zilker Park Working Group elected to eliminate the West Butler Landfill as soon as possible. This site is not officially considered a hazard, but because of the current use (storage of equipment, batteries, chemical containers, asphalt, etc.) it should be treated as a potential hazard and cleaned up prior to recreational use.
- » The highest and best use from an ecological perspective here is to return the area to woodland. This will widen the riparian buffer along Lady Bird Lake, creating new wildlife habitat, enhanced ecosystem services, and outdoor experiences for visitors. Appropriate recreation opportunities here range from nature trails to low impact play areas (like a climbing wall).



Staten Island, NY



Crissy Fields, CA



Byxbee Park, CA

ECOLOGY

HISTORIC PISTOL RANGE

- » Soil investigations have identified elevated concentrations of arsenic, antimony, and lead within the Pistol Range. This area, including the wooded area to the north, is considered a hazard until remediated, and is not suitable for recreation and/or ecological restoration. Once remediated, this area could be appropriate for light recreation opportunities that do not alter the footprint of the woodland.
- » The first task within the Pistol Range should be to install green stormwater infrastructure downhill from the contaminated area as soon as possible. This will intercept stormwater flows coming off the Pistol Range before contaminated waters reach Eanes Creek.



The Highland, MI

DRAINAGE ENHANCEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

DRAINAGE

- » Green stormwater infrastructure can address the root cause of erosion: fast-moving water often coming off roads, parking lots, and buildings. Rain gardens, swales, berms, and grading changes can slow water flowing across a landscape. When water moves more slowly, it has longer to soak into the soil, reducing erosion, preventing sediment and pollutants from entering streams and springs, and increasing groundwater supplies. Drainage improvements offers other benefits, including increased creek flow and wildlife habitat.
- » At Zilker Park, drainage improvements has already been used to decrease stormwater flows into Barton Springs Pool and in the existing Disc Golf Course. Just over 14 acres have been identified as potential locations for improving and/or installing green stormwater infrastructure (Figure 5.4 from NRI). These areas have standing water after heavy rain, periodically carry large volumes of stormwater, are open with no active recreation, have significant water-related erosion, and/or are near impervious surfaces that create runoff. In addition, a well-planned and designed green stormwater installation can heighten the aesthetics and quality of the user experience in these areas.
- » Rain gardens, swales, and berms: A rain garden is a depression where water can pond after rain and soak in gradually. Swales are linear rain gardens, sometimes with water flowing through them. Berms are earthen mounds that reduce downslope travel of water and allow for infiltration. Swales and Berms are often used together to create an effective chain of rain gardens. Swales can be created from existing erosion paths (unless the erosion is too severe) either by hardening the path and directing water to a depression, or by slowing and spreading water flow to allow it to soak in. Both rain gardens and swales work best over soils that absorb water quickly. They

also require plants that can withstand repeated wet-dry cycles (Table 5.2 from NRI). It should be noted that rain gardens and other types of water quality basins in the Barton Springs Zone may be required to have a liner to prevent infiltration of pollutant-laden stormwater and other contaminants (ECM 1.6.2.C).

UPPER BARTON CREEK:

- » Main areas to prioritize installation of Drainage enhancement by management unit (locations in management unit maps NRI pages 130 – 160):
- » Install drainage improvements south of Barton Springs Pool to intercept water as it moves downhill toward the pool.
- » Install drainage improvements south of Columbus Drive to capture and filter runoff from the roadway before it reaches the creek and pool.

LOWER BARTON CREEK:

- » Install rain gardens between the trail and the streambank on the north side of the creek, near Bark'n Springs, to filter stormwater flows from slope.
- » Install drainage improvements upslope near Azie Morton Road.

BARTON SPRINGS POOL AREA:

- » Substantial green stormwater infrastructure installations are needed in this area to capture stormwater runoff before it enters Barton Creek and reduces runoff from the seven parking areas in the unit.
- » Installation of rainwater catchment systems on existing and new buildings will reduce runoff and create educational opportunities.
- » Install rain gardens in the pool areas to reduce sheet flow into the pool and create a more aesthetically appealing user experience.

- » Goal: capture ½” of each rain even from all impervious cover in Barton Springs Pool and Associated maintained areas using Drainage enhancement.

LADY BIRD LAKE SHORELINE

- » Install green stormwater infrastructure to capture stormwater runoff from Mopac, parking lots/garages, and overflow parking.

ZILKER NATURE PRESERVE:

- » Evaluate potential for drainage improvements to address water from Arnulfo Alonso Way and the Pistol & Skeet Range before it reaches Eanes Creek.

ZILKER SAVANNA & MEADOW

- » Add rain gardens and swales in recommended areas to decrease runoff from roads and parking lots.
- » Incorporate drainage enhancement into new sports fields and/or on the downslope side of all new fields, buildings, and disc golf area.

BUTLER LANDFILL:

- » Build rain gardens that capture stormwater from Stratford, MoPac, and any remaining parking.
- » If the landscape is altered by cutting or filling, incorporate low points for water to collect and percolate into the ground.

GREAT LAWN:

- » Build rain gardens that capture stormwater from Lou Neff road and parking areas.

MOPAC:

- » Where feasible, install rain gardens to capture stormwater.

ECOLOGY

CRITICAL INTERVENTION POINTS

SLOPE FAILURE ALONG BARTON CREEK

- » Riparian woodland enhancement is recommended for this entire area but should not be started until degrading factors including upslope stormwater and trampling are solved. Formal water access, formalizing the trail, and creating physical barriers to plantings in this area is critical. Once these issues are mitigated, invasive species control, woodland thinning of small caliper hackberries, and soil compaction remediation should proceed. This prepares the site for a combination of planting and seeding to enhance this very degraded, very used, and very ecologically significant piece of the park. A vignette for this area has been created to show a potential restoration path forward and its possible outcome.
- » Shoreline goals:
 - Repair and restore erosion and trampling issues along 1,000 linear feet of Barton Creek shoreline between the pool and Lady Bird Lake over the next 4 years.
 - Increase species diversity in this area by a 20 species over the next 2 years.

TREE CANOPY ENHANCEMENT

- » Canopy enhancement adds shade trees in the formal park areas where that expansion does not interfere with park use and improves the user experience. It is recommended where additional tree cover will provide shade, improve water quality, and reduce the impacts of impervious cover on localized heating. There are 66 acres of recommended canopy enhancement along the edges of roads, parking lots, and walkways (Figure 5.7 in NRI). Canopy enhancement should use live plantings whenever feasible with irrigation during establishment. Where possible, trees should be planted at the same time as green stormwater infrastructure is installed, because the additional

water in the soil will create healthier trees. By adding more shade trees, Zilker Park will increase in comfort, contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and create a more naturalistic park aesthetic.

- » All new construction should promote a healthy urban canopy with the goal of at least 50% canopy cover in a 10 year period and should include a diversity of species in the canopy understory and groundcover layers. A list of canopy trees can be found in the Recommended Plant list (Table 5.2 in the NRI) by sorting for "Large Trees". Understory and groundcover layers can be found in Table 5.2 as well.

CANOPY GOALS:

- » Plant at least 200 canopy trees in the next 2 years
- » Increase shade over the Butler and Violet Crown trails to 60% over the next 10 years (currently at 39%).



Swale at Hardberger Park near San Antonio



Limestone terraces along Waller Creek to slow down water flow

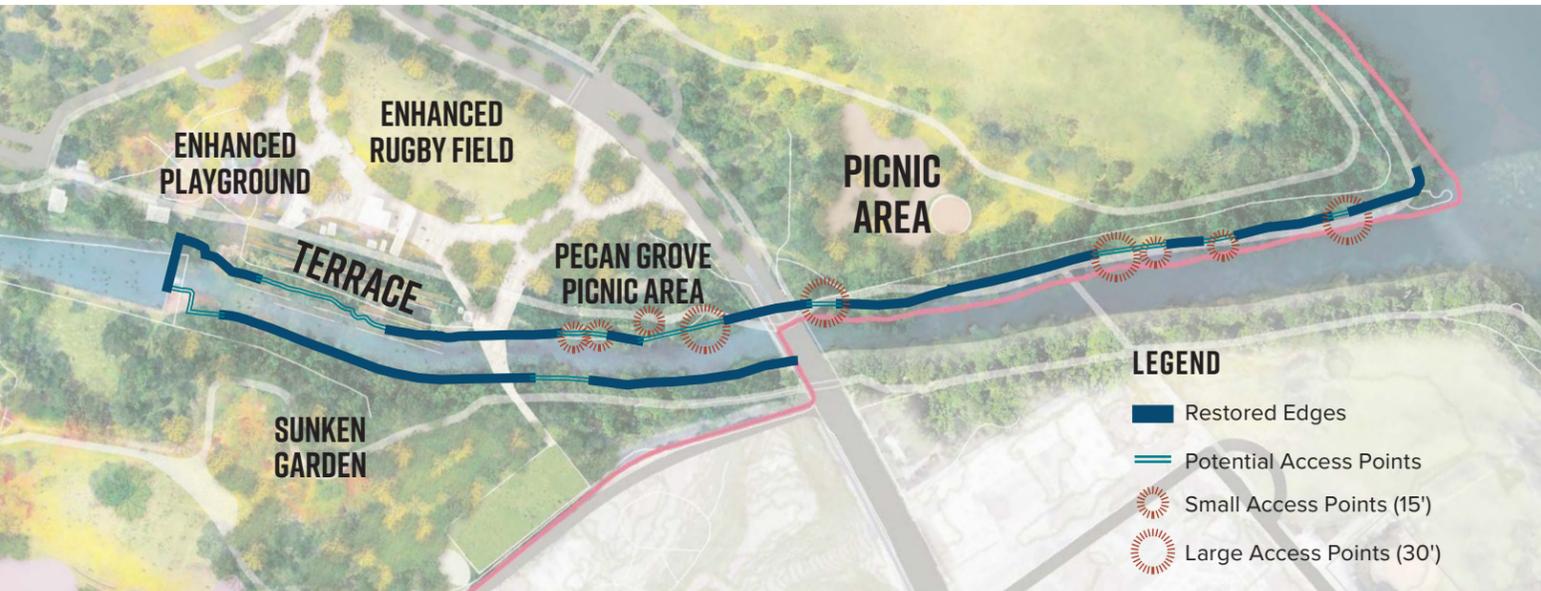


A rain garden at Dell Medical

BENEFITS OF GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

- 1 Benefit to the health of human body, mental, and behavior by encouraging outdoor activity.
- 2 Reduce the risk of soil bed erosion by retaining runoff in landscaped areas and reducing the rate of flow from the catchment region.
- 3 Spend less energy in managing water by reducing rainwater flows into sewer systems.
- 4 Reduce urban heat island effect by planting more vegetations.
- 5 May be used for educational opportunities, raising visitors' understanding of environmental issues

BARTON CREEK ACCESS POINTS



Erosion along lower Barton Creek is severe. It is not only making the area inaccessible and unsafe but the vegetation unstable. To stop visitors from further harming the creek, water access points need to be controlled. This can reduce the impact on water quality and native planting by restricting human impact and allow the environment to recover. This should be also done using low-impact development principles and land sensitivity analysis. Additionally, a personalized Operations and Maintenance Plan is needed to address the issue of economic stability and guarantee that the creek will continue to be financially viable for years to come. The plan for lower Barton Creek needs to address the items below but not limited to.

- » Create site plan that addresses formal trails, water access, invasive removal, soil removal, along with a robust planting plan.
- » Plant mottes in woodland expansion areas.
- » Construct planned improvements that result in ecological restoration and an enhanced user experience.
- » Stabilize Hike-and-Bike Trail and reduce gully erosion
- » Ongoing management.

GUIDELINES

Below are the guidelines for future Barton Creek project.

- » The map above is showing potential water access points within the Zilker Park Vision Plan study boundary.
- » The small or large access points should be existing desired water access points along the trail that currently need attention.
- » Access points should not be wider than 30 feet.
- » Investments will reduce impacts to other areas and mitigate existing erosion issues and prevent future issues while creating a better user experience
- » They should be spaced throughout the area. Their sizes suggest the complexity of the area. Steeper areas will be less/smaller access points and flatter areas will have more access points.
- » Spacing is based on topography and existing areas are being used.
- » After determining the access points, ecological uplift for the rest of area should occur as a part of the project.

EXISTING CONDITIONS LOWER BARTON CREEK



Stormwater Flow
Stormwater flows quickly off of the hillside, along the trail, and eventually to Barton Creek.

Erosion
Severe erosion is occurring, exposing tree roots and making it difficult for plants to propagate on the shoreline.

Unregulated Water Access
Heavy human use accessing the water's edge has caused severe erosion as well as compaction.

Enhanced Woodland
Enhanced canopy and understory species will slow down water flow off of the slope and increase habitat for native species.

Trail Edge
Cable fences and large rock edges can deter people from exploring off trail.

Drainage Improvements
Established vegetation can slow down water on its way to Barton Creek as well as deter people from short cutting.

Formalized Water Access
By formalizing a trail and space near the water, ecological degradation will be minimized, allowing riparian communities to thrive.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS LOWER BARTON CREEK



The graphic visualizes the Lower Barton Creek transformation. Drainage improvements works in collaborate with enhanced woodland and formalization of the trail edge and water access in order to create an exceptional space for humans and critters.

Existing condition shows degradation from lack of stormwater

management upslope, trampling, and flooding that has resulted in compacted soils, erosion, an incomplete canopy, struggling vegetation, and a degraded user experience.

Proposed condition shows the ecological health and enhanced user experience that results by addressing upslope stormwater with

green stormwater infrastructure, formalizing trails and water access, installing physical barriers to plantings, decompacting soils, and planting robust native canopy, understory, and groundcover vegetation.



CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

Climate change is integrated into the vision plan through adaptation, mitigation, and resiliency. The plan is aligned with the Austin Climate Equity Plan as well as the Climate Resilience Action Plan.

Adaptation refers to humans adapting to life in a changing climate. By expanding woodlands and increasing street trees, impacts of extreme heat and urban heat island effect will be reduced, making Zilker a refuge from climate change and a place where people can comfortably enjoy the outdoors.

Mitigation refers to the efforts to reduce or prevent climate change. Increasing vegetation and improving soil health will result in greater carbon sequestration, enabling Zilker to play a small role in pulling carbon out of our atmosphere and reducing global temperatures.

Resiliency refers to a landscape’s ability to deal with the effects of climate change. By increasing native species diversity and building more green stormwater infrastructure, the park will be less susceptible to catastrophic failure, reduces the chance of flooding, erosion, and water quality impacts, while preserving habitat.



Sustainability

IMPERVIOUS COVER CONCERNS

There are currently 51 acres of impervious cover within Zilker Park and the Vision Plan could increase this number if existing impervious cover is not removed. Impervious surface should be reduced from this number (51 acres), not exceeded. This can be done by removing existing parking lots, decreasing road width, transitioning paved paths to pervious cover, adding green roofs to buildings and parking structures, etc. All remaining impervious surface should have adjacent, downslope green stormwater infrastructure that will slow and filter stormwater runoff. All remaining impervious cover should also be lined with canopy trees in order to combat the heat island effect where possible. Reducing impervious cover in the floodplain and in water quality buffers is one of the best ways to increase water quality and the ecological health of Zilker Park – these actions should be prioritized in these areas.

NEW FACILITIES SHOULD ACHIEVE MINIMUM GREEN BUILDING RATING PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

(PARKING GARAGES, BUILDING UPGRADES, SITES, ETC.)

All PARD projects costing more than \$2 million will need to be SITES certified, according to a recent ordinance established by the City of Austin. In our fast changing world, Austin is the first city to implement this legislation, doing its share to promote sustainable development and environmental health.

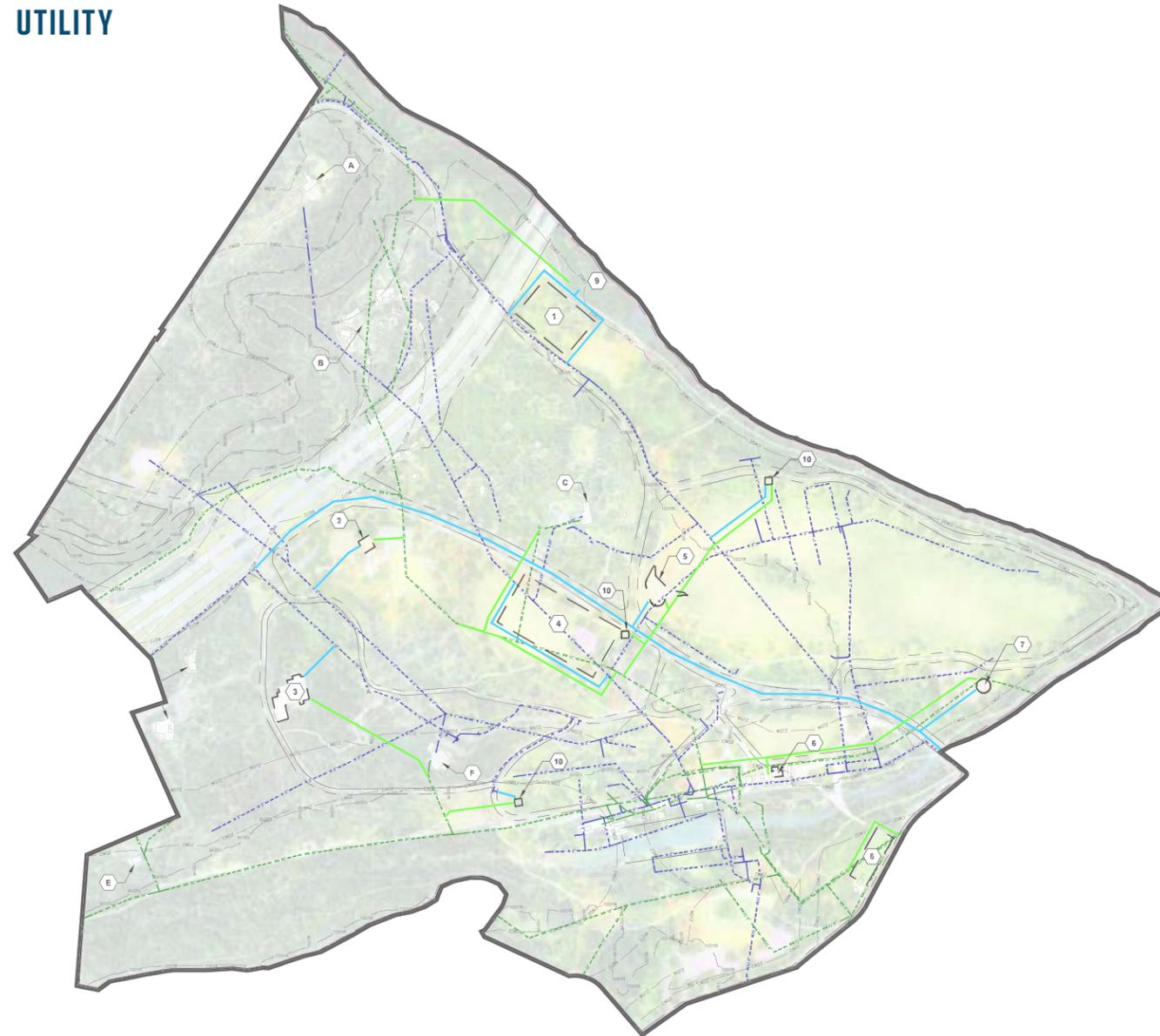
Landscape architects, engineers, and others are guided by SITES, a framework with a sustainability focus, toward techniques that safeguard ecosystems and increase the variety of advantages they continuously provide our communities, such as climate regulation, carbon storage, and flood reduction. While encouraging project teams to be adaptable and creative as they create attractive, practical, and regenerative landscapes, SITES supports the specific requirements of each site by offering performance measurements rather than prescribing techniques. Landscapes with SITES certification help lower water demand, filter stormwater runoff, create habitat for wildlife, use less energy, enhance air quality, boost chances for outdoor leisure, and more.

GOALS OF AUSTIN CLIMATE EQUITY PLAN

- 1 By 2030, legally protect an additional 20,000 acres of carbon pools on natural lands and manage all new and existing natural areas with a focus on resilience.
- 2 By 2030, protect 500,000 acres of farmland from development in the 5-county region through legal protections and/or regenerative agriculture programs.
- 3 Achieve at least 50% citywide tree canopy cover by 2050, with a focus on increasing canopy cover equitably.
- 4 By 2030, include all City-owned lands under a management plan that results in neutral or negative carbon emissions and maximizes community co-benefits.

INFRASTRUCTURE

UTILITY



LEGEND

- Existing Water Line
- Existing Wastewater Line
- Proposed Water Line
- Proposed Wastewater Line

- » Buildings with existing utility services to remain:
 - A – Zilker Clubhouse
 - B – Austin Nature and Science Center
 - C – Zilker Botanical Garden
 - D – McBeth Recreation Center
 - E – Girl Scout Cabin
 - F – Sunshine Camp
- » New buildings that will require new utility services:
 - 1 – Parking Garage #1
 - 2 – Sports Area
 - 3 – New Maintenance Facility
 - 4 – Parking Garage #2
 - 5 – Zilker Hillside Theater
 - 6 – Welcome Plaza
 - 7 – Concession
 - 8 – Parking Garage #3
 - 9 – Rowing Dock
 - 10 – Stand-alone Restrooms

UTILITY PLAN

WATER

- » There is existing water piping within the Park that is over 50 years old that should be evaluated during future projects for upgrades, including pipe material (from cast iron to PVC).
- » Provide additional fire hydrants and fire water coverage as needed for new buildings and structures (i.e. parking garages).
- » Coordinate with Austin Water to submit Service Extension Requests to determine if new infrastructure is required or upgrades to the existing system.
- » Improvements to address fire flow coverage are anticipated with new structures proposed.
- » Investigate existing water meters within the Park and consider if upgrades are needed or additional meters/sub-meters for the proposed improvements.
- » Explore opportunities to extend reclaimed water to Park with future projects for irrigation water supply

WASTEWATER

- » Existing wastewater gravity interceptor main through park conveys flows to the South Austin Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, and should be considered during project implementation.
- » There is existing wastewater piping within the Park that is over 50 years old that should be evaluated during future projects for upgrades, including pipe material (from concrete to PVC).
- » Coordinate with Austin Water to submit Service Extension Requests to determine if new infrastructure is required or upgrades to the existing system.
- » The public wastewater trunk lines crossing through the Park are connected to areas outside of the Park, and should be considered prior to relocating.
- » Maintain the existing Bluffington Lift Station #1 located in the northwest corner of the Park.
- » Consider the removal of the abandoned Zilker Park Lift Station #5 and Barton Creek Lift Station located on the south side of Barton Springs/Barton Creek, which are both identified in the Austin Water GIS system maps.

INFRASTRUCTURE

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

- » Zilker Park is located within three different watersheds: Lady Bird Lake, Eanes Creek, and Barton Creek. Implementation of the Vision Plan should maintain existing drainage patterns such that rainfall runoff stays within the watershed in which is originated.
- » Provide water quality treatment for all new or redeveloped impervious cover
- » Where prohibited by code (i.e. within CWQZ that is also within the 100-year floodplain), provide equivalent water quality treatment at an alternate location in the Park
- » For improvements within the Barton Creek watershed, which is part of the Barton Springs Zone watershed regulation area, provide water quality treatment that complies with current requirements.
- » Evaluate Eanes Creek and Barton Creek within the Park for potential opportunities to improve stabilization, erosion, and other creek health concerns.
- » Evaluate existing impervious cover areas and consider providing green stormwater quality infrastructure for existing untreated areas
- » Investigate a regional or comprehensive approach to stormwater management for the entire Park in lieu of a project-by-project approach
- » Provide stormwater detention as required by the Land Development Code for increases in peak flow runoff from existing conditions, unless otherwise not required (i.e. development immediately adjacent to and discharging directly to Lady Bird Lake is exempt)
- » Review existing stormwater management areas within the Park and upgrade to current code requirements as needed, as part of the project implementation

FACILITIES

CARETAKER COTTAGE

The Caretaker Cottage was recently remodeled, and the existing infrastructure appears to meet the existing usage. Unless the intended use of the facility were to be revised, it is not anticipated that revisions would be necessary to the Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing (MEP) infrastructure for the building.

MECHANICAL

Based upon field observations, the Caretaker Cottage is heating and cooled by a heat pump split system manufactured by Carrier. The four-ton split system was manufactured in 2015 and is in good condition. Barring any significant repurposing of the Caretaker Cottage or change of occupancy type the existing split will be usable for another 15 to 20 years. Use changes impact the outside air requirement. Any future use changes could require adjustment to the outside air intake size and location as well as impact the latent load experienced by the heat pump. This could require minor modifications to the existing system. Any changes which would add significant internal load (use as an assembly space, introduction of a server computer, etc.) will require modification to the HVAC system.

Based upon the condition of the existing system no modifications or repairs are required at this time.

ELECTRICAL

The Caretaker Cottage was recently renovated so that no further electrical work is needed within the interior.

The electrical service is routed overhead from a pole-mounted, 25kVA transformer to a weather head on the exterior of the building. The service is then distributed from there to the Cottage and to the Quonset such that they are on one meter. We would recommend that if the Quonset is to remain, that the building have its own service and not rely on service from the Caretaker Cottage. This would allow more capacity for the Quonset site and utility costs could be recovered for private use of the Cottage. We also recommend, if budget allows, that overhead electrical distribution

be revised to underground to avoid outages caused by tree limbs, wind, ice, etc.

PLUMBING

The existing facility has water and wastewater services serving the building, which is equipped with a restroom. No evidence of natural gas was found at the building. The rainwater from the roof was routed to a cistern, but the cistern was disconnected and not in use. The gutters were clogged and full of debris. It is recommended that maintenance be provided to clear the debris in the gutter and to reconnect the cistern. No other concerns were identified at the time of this report.



Ventilation of Caretaker's Cottage



Equipments of Caretaker's Cottage



Rainwater Treatment of Caretaker's Cottage



Electric Pole Beside Caretaker's Cottage

INFRASTRUCTURE

QUONSET MAINTENANCE BUILDING:

The Quonset site is currently serving as a mechanical maintenance repair shop, vehicle storage and materials yard with a few offices for maintenance personnel. If the site is utilized for a different usage, the existing conditions may need to be revised. Below is the information on the existing MEP infrastructure.

MECHANICAL

The existing mechanical systems serving the Quonset maintenance bay and interior offices are in poor condition with inadequate air balance. The original Quonset appears to have been once heated with a natural gas unit heater. This heater is in poor condition and disrepair. Repurposing of this existing space (or renovation within its current use) will require ventilation as well as new unit heaters for heat. Ventilation could be naturally induced through use of low and high louvers, with free area equaling 4% of the total floor area. Ventilation could also be mechanically induced through the use of exhaust fans and louvers through the envelope. Modifications to the envelope would need to be carefully planned to preserve the historic nature of the space. If enclosed fully, the Quonset would require HVAC via split system or otherwise. The existing office space is heating and cooled by a split system located adjacent to the restroom. It appears this system is not providing adequate outside air as to pressurize the office area, as such the office can become humid during unfavorable outside conditions. The restroom is served by an in-ceiling exhaust fan. It is recommended any future modification or repurpose of the Quonset include all new HVAC systems according to the needs of the new use.

ELECTRICAL

The Quonset has electrical service from the same transformer and meter as the Caretaker Cottage (see above), routed overhead to a weather head on the exterior of the building. From there, it is distributed to various load centers within the building. The electrical equipment in the original portion of the building is in poor condition and should be replaced, as well as equipment located on the exterior. The panel and disconnect switches in the building addition are still in good condition and can remain, if that area is not modified.

PLUMBING

The original Quonset has natural gas serving a unit heater, but did not appear to be in service. This suggests that gas service is likely available for buildings on the site (or nearby), if not necessarily used currently. This would allow for natural gas equipment and heat if so desired. The natural gas service appears to be provided by service near the street.

No water or sanitary was identified in the original Quonset building, but the addition to the space has a restroom and electric water cooler with water and waste connections. Therefore, there is both a water and wastewater service nearby that could be used to provide utilities to fixtures and restrooms on the site. The existing domestic water pressure was sufficient to serve a flush valve water closet. This suggests that there is sufficient water pressure to serve other fixtures.

Existing condensate appears to discharge to grade in places it could freeze and be a nuisance. This is not compatible with current City of Austin code requirements and could be a hazard if algae grows or the water freezes, causing a slip hazard. It is recommended that the condensate be routed to an appropriate drain and comply with discharge requirement by the authority having jurisdiction.

HILLSIDE THEATER:

The Hillside Theater usage may or may not be utilized differently in the future. There is existing infrastructure at the site for MEP that may require removal, modifications, or renovation, depending on how the site may be used in the future below are existing conditions.

MECHANICAL

The existing support spaces bordering the hillside theater are equipped with split system HVAC and roof mounted condensing units. Typical life span of this type of equipment is 15 to 20 years. It is anticipated that the reprogramming of the hillside theater space will require replacement or removal of these existing systems. New equipment will be sized and selected according to the needs of the back of house spaces and sound booth and may be limited to simply natural ventilation depending upon final programming.

ELECTRICAL

Over the life of the Theater, the electrical service has been modified to allow for added loads (sound system, air conditioning, theatrical lighting, etc.) and renovations. It is anticipated that the reprogramming of the space will require replacement or removal of the existing electrical equipment. When this occurs, capacity should be provided in the electrical service to allow for flexibility of Events and future loads. We recommend, if budget allows, that overhead electrical distribution be revised to underground to avoid outages caused by tree limbs, wind, ice, etc.

PLUMBING

The existing facility has water and wastewater services serving the theater, which is equipped with a restroom. No evidence of natural gas was found.



Ventilation of Quonset Hut



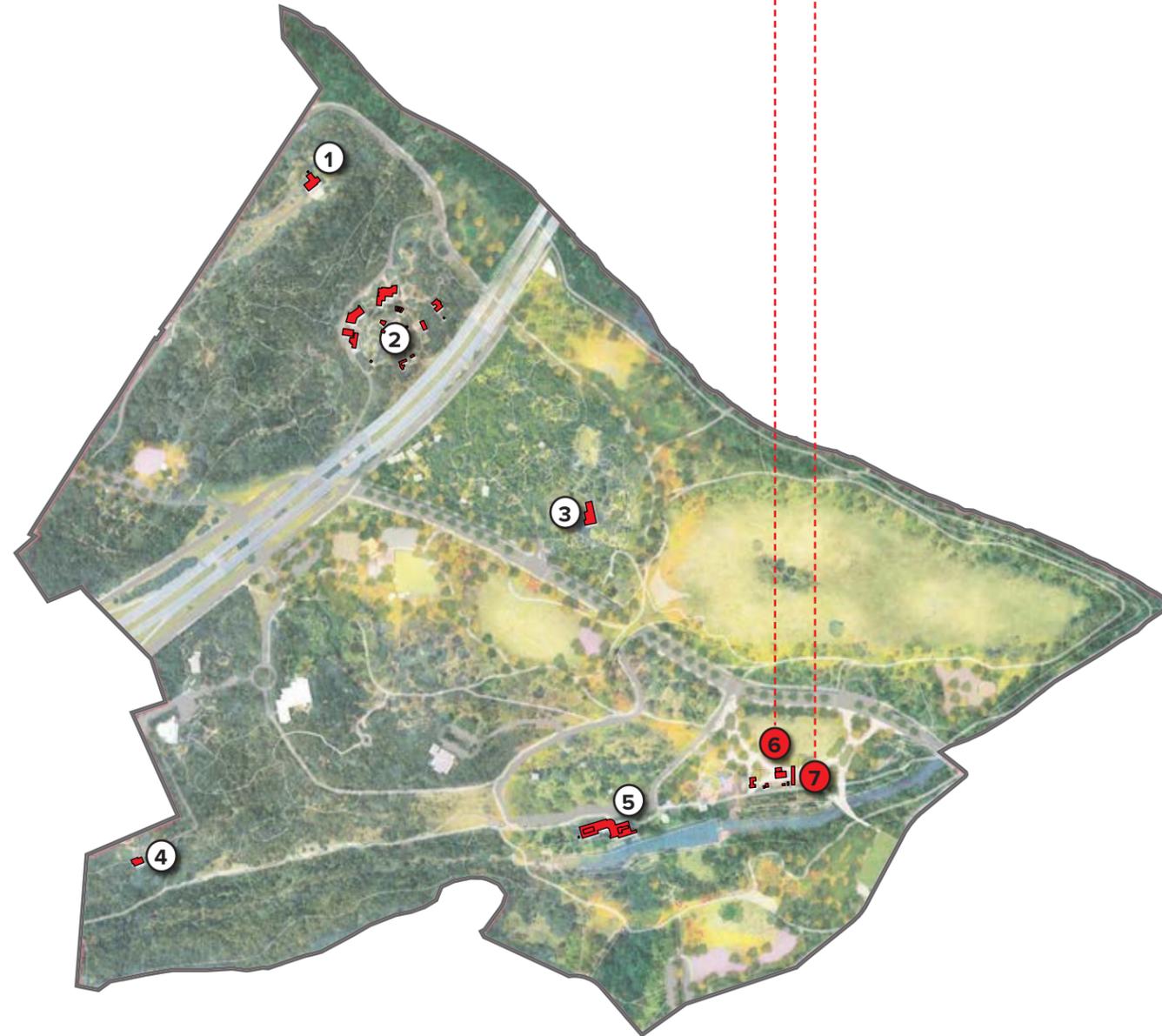
Equipment in Quonset Hut



Equipment in Quonset Hut

FACILITIES

ACTIVATING EXISTING FACILITIES



POTENTIAL FACILITIES TO ACTIVATE

- ① Zilker Clubhouse
Meeting Space, Conference Space
- ② Austin Nature and Science Center
Exhibits, Hand-on Discovery Labs, Classrooms, Meeting Space
- ③ Zilker Botanical Garden
Multi-Purpose Meeting Space
- ④ Girl Scout Cabin
Meeting Space
- ⑤ Barton Springs Pool Bathhouse
Exhibits, Meeting/Classroom Space
- ⑥ Caretaker's Cottage
Office Space, Classroom Space, Exhibits
- ⑦ Quonset Hut
Outdoor Classroom, Exhibit Space

WELCOME CENTER

Such a hub would be a major point of orientation for visitor to the park. It might contain educational or interpretive displays or be a staging area for recreational or educational programming for youth, seniors, or visitors or all ages. This does not have to be a new building but could be accomplished by repurposing an existing building such as the Zilker Clubhouse, Quonset Hut, Caretakers Cottage, or Girl Scout Cabin.

100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN

- » The 100-year floodplain presents a serious constraint to any visitation strategy centered around the Creek or the Pool. It dictates that allowable floor levels for new construction cannot be set lower than 24" above the 100-Floodplain.
- » Because new buildings within the floodplain are not a possibility, using the existing historic resources presents an attractive option (within limits). The attraction, of course, is that they are located where the action is, right along the Creek and at the Pool. The limits are that their volume or number cannot be augmented by new, proximate companion buildings. Existing historic buildings are allowed to continue being used as long as the level of hazard is not increased. This suggests that the existing buildings become even more valuable assets because of their proximity to the attraction that is the creek and the Pool. The challenge is, how to use them, knowing that growing the complex with new-building additions will not be possible.

FACILITIES

- » Barton Springs Bathhouse - Currently being fitted with 2,500 sq. ft. of exhibit and programmable space. Long-term potential as exhibit space, particularly as it relates to Eliza Spring. Additional possibility for small meeting space.
- » Eliza Spring - An important site for education and interpretation.



Kiosk



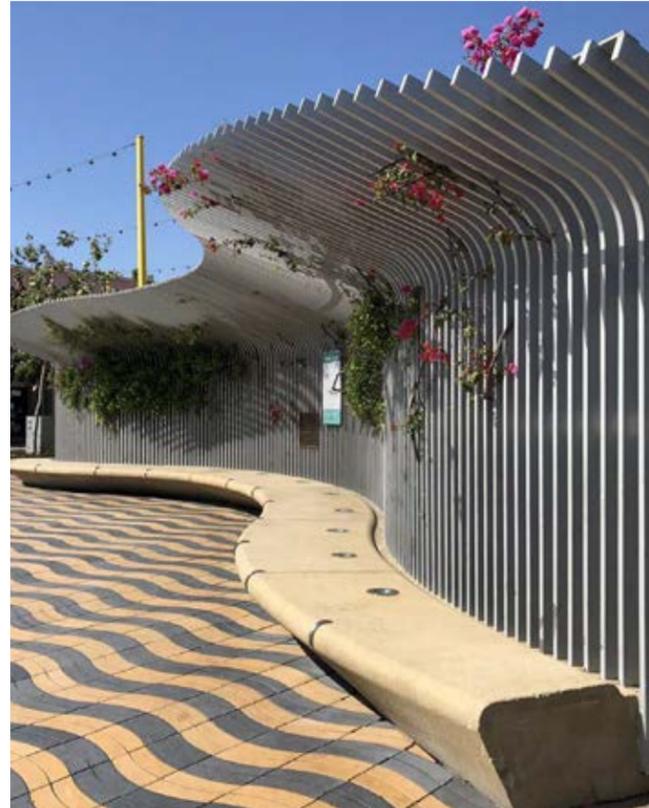
Shaded Pavilion

FACILITIES

- › Caretaker’s Cottage - Single-topic exhibit, meeting/ program space, office.
- › Quonset Hut - Outdoor classroom. Provides space for some programming for school-age children currently being hosted in the Bathhouse. Its proximity to the Creek is an asset.
- › Maintenance Yard - Repurpose as Welcome Plaza. Take advantage of elevated prospect to view across the creek (and provide interpretation) to the Sunken Garden outfall.
- › Sunken Garden - Enhance pedestrian access, create viewing prospects with interpretation.
- › Zilker Ponds - Connect by way of paths to other elements in the complex. Rehabilitate and fit the site with interpretive content.

The plan proposed to utilize existing resources to offer public welcoming services and to support the mission of education—instead of building a new building complex. The visitor center functions in lower-key terms that don’t endeavor to be a front-and-center face for the park. Instead, it focuses on existing historic resources—in particular, the Caretaker’s Cottage and the historic Quonset Hut. These facilities are beneficial for their practicality and for their proximity to the pool, the creek and the spring activity. It is intended to complement ecological restoration recommendations in other parts of the Vision Plan.

The Caretaker’s Cottage is repurposed for welcome and classroom activities. It would also hold office spaces. To complement this repurposing, the nearby Quonset Hut need to be used as an outdoor classroom. In this way, current educational activities that involve exploratory excursions to the creek followed by a classroom-setting review of findings is accommodated within a compact, convenient geography.



Shaded Seating Area



Outdoor Classroom

PARKING STRUCTURE

The parking structures will require careful design to provide cohesion to the park’s natural environment and atmosphere. The elevation should blend in to the park scenery by using vertical vegetation and green roof. The parking garage at Brackenridge Park in San Antonio is a good precedent.

Not only the design but the function needs to be special. The ground floor should be activated with restrooms, gallery, office, and cafe. Furthermore, the structure should be flexible so that it is uncomplicated to be repurposed when the park does not need the parking structure in the future.



Vertical Vegetation



Parking Garage at Brackenridge Park



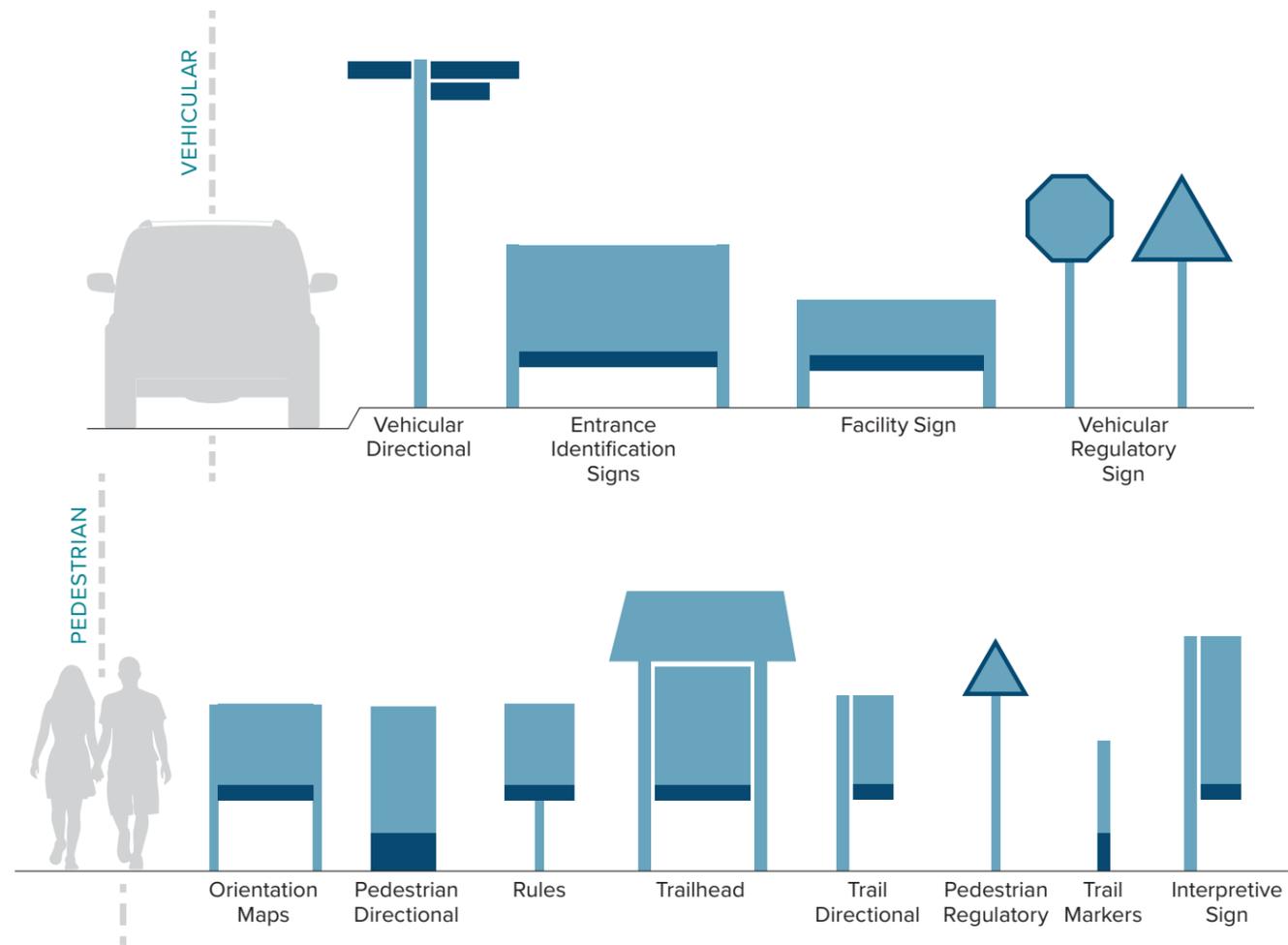
Green Roof



Retail under Parking Garage

INTERPRETIVE STORY

SIGNAGE FAMILIES



A well-considered wayfinding program aids navigation but can also engage visitors when a thoughtful strategy is employed. Zilker Park does not have a cohesive signage system currently and this issue has brought up during community engagement process. The signage in a park can be divided into four types. Type 1 are such as entrance identification signs or facility/donor signs. Type 2 are directional signs which can be vehicular, pedestrian, or trail directional. The third type is about regulatory or rules in the park. The last type is informative signs like interpretive signs.

Besides the development of the vision plan, separate planning efforts is needed specifically to address wayfinding needs and opportunities, and present a unified the navigational strategy that defines the programming, function and visual character of the park signage. The wayfinding vision plan would provide a design framework to consistently inform future signage design and function.

Table 4: Types of Signage

TYPES OF SIGNAGE	
Type 1	Entrance Identification Sign
	Facility/Donor Sign
Type 2	Vehicle Directional
	Pedestrian Directional
	Trail Markers & Directional
	Rules Sign
Type 3	Vehicular Regulatory Sign
	Pedestrian Regulatory Sign
Type 4	Orientation Map
	Interpretive Sign

INTERPRETIVE STORYLINE

- » This framework focuses on Zilker Park as a whole. Specific destinations within the park (Barton Springs, Zilker Botanical Garden, and Austin Nature and Science Center) already have their own vision and interpretive plans that are in various phases of implementation, and are only mentioned as they relate to the larger whole. It is assumed they will be interpreted as stand-alone destinations as well.
- » The storylines listed here are only a road map. Anyone doing interpretive planning in the future will need to conduct additional research and develop interpretive themes, in addition to writing the actual interpretive products.

STORYLINE 1: BARTON SPRINGS HAS BEEN A CONSTANT, BUT EVOLVING, DESTINATION FOR HUMANS FOR AT LEAST 10,000 YEARS.

- » Indigenous occupation: Archeological sites reveal that Indigenous people camped, hunted, fished, and quarried rock here for at least 9,000-10,000 years before European colonizers arrived. The Vara Daniels site, which lies beneath the Great Lawn and rugby fields, is one of the “largest deeply stratified sites known in Texas.” Today, it serves as evidence of Indigenous people’s long-term presence on this land, and presents an opportunity for contemporary Austinites to learn more about the generations of Native people who preceded them here.
- » Euro-American settlement and business enterprises: Beginning in the 1830s, Euro-American settlers brought their agricultural traditions and commercial/ industrial enterprises to this landscape. Within the present-day park boundaries, men including William Barton, Ashford B. McGill, and Dr. Barclay Townsend farmed and ranched; Michel Paggi, Jacob Stern, and the Rabb family all operated mills on the creek; Michael Butler mined clay for his brickworks; and Andrew J. Zilker used the spring water for his icemaking business and pasture for the horses that pulled his delivery wagons. While Barton Springs

was already a popular swimming destination by the mid-1800s, Paggi built a dam on Barton Creek in the 1870s to create a swimming hole and a bathhouse to accommodate swimmers.

- » Park origins and development: Through a series of land deals between 1917 and 1934, Andrew J. Zilker transferred three parcels of land that would become Zilker Park to the City of Austin. However, Zilker did not profit from these transactions; rather, he specified that the proceeds from the first two deals be placed in a trust for Austin High School, and gifted the third parcel of land outright. The subsequent development of Barton Springs and the surrounding land reflected popular ideas about recreation at the time (active recreational facilities in a naturalistic environment). Under the City of Austin and various New Deal institutions, the park’s naturalistic features and recreational facilities were expanded and remnants of its commercial and industrial past were removed. As the city grew and automobile ownership became more accessible, the park became a popular destination for white, middle class Austinites.
- » Modern gathering space: Today, Zilker Park is a blend of active recreational facilities (e.g., Barton Springs, hiking trails) and gathering spaces for events large and small, public and private (e.g., Zilker Clubhouse, Girl Scout Cabin, picnic tables for private gatherings; large open spaces for public events like ACL, Blues on the Green, the Zilker Kite Festival and Austin Trail of Lights). Austinites have also built a culture of informal gatherings at sites throughout the park, such as the Monkey Tree on Azie Morton Road.

INTERPRETIVE STORY

BENEFITS OF SHARING INTERPRETIVE STORY

- 1 It illuminates the power of place. Clear educational messages and content inform the public of each site's historic significance.
- 2 It does more than provide just dates and facts, but also inspires a feeling of stewardship in site visitors, strengthening awareness of cultural and natural resources.
- 3 Thoughtful and well designed signage programs demonstrate community pride in local heritage.
- 4 It provides a high-quality interpretive experience without the requirements of staff or facilities to maintain.

STORYLINE 2: ZILKER PARK'S EXTANT BUILT ENVIRONMENT TELLS PART OF THE STORY OF AUSTIN'S SETTLEMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND EVOLVING IDENTITY.

- » Zilker Park's built environment reveals clues to some aspects of Austin's history:
 - Settlement and Early Industry: The old Rabb homesite and the location of the Paggi grist and ice mill (at Sunken Garden/Old Mill Spring) both evoke Austin's early industrial period and speak to how crucial access to flowing water was for many people and industries.
 - Expansion: As Austin's population expanded, it outgrew some of Zilker Park's facilities. One of these was the Barton Springs Bathhouse. Completed in 1947, architects Delmar Groos and Dan Driscoll designed the new bathhouse with a Streamline Moderne aesthetic. This style strayed from the rustic-style park buildings constructed during the 1930s, but both approaches had something in common: they took inspiration from Zilker Park's landscape. The bathhouse was sited around the location's large trees, and the low-slung building took inspiration from the horizontal limestone terraces found throughout the park.
- » Zilker Park by Austinites for Austinites: Zilker Park's design was led by two local men: engineer Frederick A. Dale and architect Charles H. Page. Other Austinites were also involved in its design and construction: Hugo Kuehne designed the Caretaker's Cottage and the first Barton Springs bathhouse; plants for the Rock Garden came from the home garden of Dr. T.S. Painter on W. 33rd St.; young architect Bubi Jessen designed the iconic entry columns; materials and labor for custom light fixtures were donated by Gage Brothers, Weigel Iron Works, and Fox and Schmidt; and the Austin Police Department helped fund and build the shooting range.
- » Zilker Park and the New Deal: Many of Zilker Park's most iconic features were developed under various public works programs during the Great Depression.
 - Funding: Most of the Texas parks projects that were developed during this time were intended to be state parks. Zilker Park was an exception, and it received funding thanks, in part, to Congressman James P. "Buck" Buchanan, who represented Austin in the House of Representatives and was able to use his position on the House Appropriations Committee to fund work in his district.
 - Design: The park was developed under various New Deal programs, and its design was especially influenced by the National Park Service's emphasis on highlighting the natural topography and flora, and

constructing rustic-style buildings using natural materials.

- Construction: In 1933, Charles Page secured funding from the Civil Works Administration (CWA) to build the park, including the stone entrance columns and the beloved Zilker Clubhouse, both of which still stand today. In 1934, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Company 1814 designed and built roads, cleared land, and constructed park facilities (picnic tables, barbecue pits, and lighting). The National Youth Administration (NYA) repaired flood damage in 1935-1936 and built the Sunken Gardens in the late 1930s, and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) helped improve the park's lily pond. Without this substantial federal investment, Zilker Park would look very different today.

STORYLINE 3: ZILKER PARK HAS A LONG HISTORY AS A CONTESTED LANDSCAPE.

- » White settlement and white supremacy at Barton Springs:
 - Enslavement of African Americans. When William Barton settled on the banks of Spring Creek (known today as Barton Creek) around 1837, he brought his wife, children, and up to 30 African Americans he enslaved with him. The Bartons ranched cattle here. The African American men and women whom Barton enslaved likely worked in the Barton Family's ranching and domestic activities, increasing the Bartons' wealth through their uncompensated labor.
- » Settlement on Indigenous lands. As a white settler in Indigenous people's traditional homelands, William Barton was in frequent conflict with Comanches who claimed the land as their territory.
- » Exclusion of non-white and lower income citizens: When the City of Austin took ownership of Zilker Park in 1917, it instituted fee-based access, which solidified the pool as the domain of the white middle class. The implementation of the 1928 Master Plan, and specifically its recommendation for segregated facilities for Black citizens, codified this racial division. It wasn't until Black activists, such as Joan Means Khabele, Bertha Means, V. Sandra Kirk, and Willie Mae Kirk, fought to integrate Barton Springs that the park became officially accessible to Black Austinites. Nevertheless, racial disparities persisted: many Black community members continued to feel unwelcome in the park and at the pool well after the facilities were officially desegregated.
- » Community organizing and activism: Since the late 1960s, community members and grassroots activist organizations, including the Zilker Park Posse, Save Barton Creek Association, Save Our Springs Alliance, and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, have challenged development plans that would negatively impact the springs and the park (e.g., development in the Barton Creek watershed, construction of MoPac Expressway in the park). They have also supported scientific research and education, and advocated for better regulations to protect and preserve Barton Springs, Barton Creek, and Zilker Park.



INTERPRETIVE STORY



Donation Signs

STORYLINE 4: THE EBB AND FLOW OF WATER INDELIBLY SHAPES THE ECOLOGY OF ZILKER PARK.

- » Water as it shapes the landscape: The creeks and river create riparian habitat where water-loving plants thrive, wildlife is drawn to the fresh water, and resident bird populations seek out prime nesting and feeding locations. In the western half of the park, which is more characteristic of the Edwards Plateau, oak-juniper woodlands grow in shallow soils that formed atop limestone rock. Here, rainwater flows down through the limestone and into the Edwards Aquifer far beneath. The plants that grow in this area are adapted to the faster draining soils.
- » Springs as habitat: The springs in the park and the Edwards Aquifer beneath it support the endangered Barton Springs and Austin Blind Salamanders. As the park was developed and new buildings and features were constructed, the springs' flow was disturbed and the salamanders' populations decreased. Through careful planning, habitat restoration, and limited development, the salamander populations in Zilker Park are growing.

STORYLINE 5: ZILKER PARK OFFERS AUSTINITES THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE GREAT BIODIVERSITY IN A RELATIVELY SMALL AREA.

- » Ecotone: Zilker Park provides habitat for more than 600 plant and animal species. It straddles the Edwards Plateau and Blackland Prairie ecoregions and blends characteristics of both. Within the park's 351 acres, Austinites can spot armadillos while hiking through oak-juniper woodlands typical of the Texas Hill Country, paddle along shoreline communities of bald cypress trees and snapping turtles, and wade in a natural pool fed by the same springs that support two species of endangered salamander.
- » Biodiversity: At least 224 species of birds – more than 85% of the wildlife species that call the park home – can be found in Zilker Park. They include a diverse array of species drawn to the varied habitats that make up the park. Migratory songbirds stop to rest in the park on their way to their northern breeding grounds, and egrets and herons hunt along the banks of the river and in the creeks.



Outdoor Classroom with Interpretive Signages

GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

When developing interpretive signage, planners should consider the following factors:

- » Layering: Offering interpretive information in successive layers of depth allows visitors to engage with content based on their particular interest levels. The complete suite of interpretive signage should include high-level overview signs and more in-depth specialized signs. Individual signs should also be designed to accommodate those with passing, moderate, and deep interest in the content. Using headlines, lead text, body copy, captions, and sidebars to layer information allows users to engage with bite-sized "chunks" of information and decide how deeply they want to delve depending on their interest.
- » Modalities: Visitors learn in varied ways. Incorporating tactile, visual, text-based, manipulative, and interactive elements into signage offers a wide variety of users the opportunity to engage with the content they find most accessible.
- » Consolidation: Where possible, consolidating interpretive signage at existing gathering points (e.g., trailheads) and structures (e.g., restrooms, parking structures) will reach a larger number of users and also prevent the landscape from being littered with signage. However, consolidation of signage should be thought of as a guideline rather than a rule. Any efforts to consolidate signage into "nodes" will have to be balanced with the need/desire for visitors to be able to view and/or experience the resource being interpreted. In some cases, it will make more sense to locate an interpretive sign closer to a resource and away from an existing gathering point/structure.
- » Accessibility: Community input revealed strong support for considerations of equity in the Zilker Vision Plan. In that same vein, planners should consider interpretive signs' accessibility from a multitude of viewpoints. In addition to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act, placement, legibility, language, and reading levels should also be considered.

Beyond the text and images on a sign, the design of the sign and its support structure are opportunities to engage visitors playfully and/or create a sense of place. At Zilker Park, appropriate design inspirations could include the park's New Deal-era architecture and its flora and fauna.



Layering Interpretive Signage



Accessible from a multitude of Viewpoints



Interpretive Signage Located in Gathering Space

SUMMARY

Design is only a portion of park improvements. There should be an appropriate implementation, budget, and operation/management plan. For a park like Zilker Park, the implementation will last decades due to complexity of the existing systems within the park, funding availability and external projects and considerations outside the park's boundary. The speed of the project will be determined by funding availability and park management.

The physical improvements recommended in the Vision Plan are divided into projects based on their location within the park. The projects may be combined into larger packages based on funding availability.

The chapter continues with plans for park operation, management, and funding with an outline of potential partnerships—the vital ties to organizations and communities for the project.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Projects
- Project Packages
- Timeline
- Operation and Management
- Concessions
- Funding

IMPLEMENTATION

PROJECTS

ELEMENTS OF IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR ZILKER PARK

- 1 Projects to improve the park physically and systematically.
- 2 Identify a variety of funding sources.
- 3 Changes in operation and management system.
- 4 Partnerships to accomplish multi-organizational goals.

INTRODUCTION

Zilker Park Vision Plan is too complex to follow the traditional implementation process for other typical park vision plans. Therefore, the plan is divided into smaller projects, not phases to achieve more flexibility and closer collaboration with partnerships such as other departments in the city.

However, the projects are not the only element in an implementation plan. There are four elements: One is projects that are tactile and make the parks system physically and systematically better. Examples include park renovations and investments in existing and proposed facilities in Zilker Park. Identifying a variety of funding sources, like General Funds, General Bonds, Parkland Dedication Funds, grants, and partnerships. Changes in operation and management are also critical for a park implementation plan that have impact on how Zilker Park operates daily. Examples include suggestions for PARD staff roles and more sustainable maintenance practices. The last element is the partnership to accomplish cross-organizational objectives. Government organizations, other City departments, the City Council, neighborhoods, and nonprofits are examples of potential partners.

PROJECTS

The projects can be categorized into four different types. The first project type falls under Administration, such as forming a Zilker Park non-profit organization. The City has well-established inclusive hiring processes and the same would be expected of any partner organizations. The second type is ecological uplift, including restoration of the Butler Landfill and polo field areas, and invasive plant control. The third type concerns transportation and accessibility. Projects included in this category include Barton Springs Road improvements, construction of parking garage(s), an internal shuttle, and extension of the Zilker Eagle. The last group is the improvements of existing facilities and programs. The enhancement of the existing playground and construction of the land bridge is included here.

ADMINISTRATION

ZILKER PARK NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

RECREATION FEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

ANNUAL BUDGET/ MAINTENANCE REVIEW

EDUCATION PROGRAM TO ZILKER PARK STAFF

INCLUSIVE HIRING

DIVERSE VENDORS AND OFFERINGS

ECOLOGICAL UPLIFT

DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS

RESTORATION OF OLD ZILKER HILLSIDE AREA

INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL

RESTORATION OF LANDFILL AREA

MITIGATION OF EROSION ISSUES

RESTORATION OF POLO FIELD

TREE CANOPY ENHANCEMENT

ACCESSIBILITY

STRATFORD DR REALIGNMENT

ZILKER TRAILHEAD

WAYFINDING DESIGN

CANOPY WALK

REMOVAL OF SURFACE PARKING

UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE

ADDITIONAL BRIDGES ALONG BARTON CREEK

CLOSING LOU NEFF ROAD

INTERNAL SHUTTLE

ADDITIONAL TRAILS

BARTON SPRINGS ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

CLOSING ANDREW ZILKER ROAD

PED/BIKE BRIDGE ON LBL

ZILKER EAGLE

PARKING GARAGE

NEW TRAILHEAD TO NATURE PRESERVE

FACILITY/PROGRAM

ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING PLAYGROUND

PLAYGROUND ON THE LAND BRIDGE

NATURE PLAY

ADDITIONAL RESTROOMS

BARTON CREEK WATER ACCESS

NEW PICNIC AREA WITH CONCESSION

SPORTS AREA

LAND BRIDGE

SOUTH SIDE NEW PLAY AREAS

RELOCATION OF ROWING DOCK

WELCOME PLAZA

ZILKER HILLSIDE THEATER

PROJECTS PACKAGES

ZONES



PROJECTS AND ZONES

The projects can be combined into a package based on zones within the park. This package can happen all at the same time or project by project based on available funding sources. Zone 01 is the Land Bridge area and Zone 02 is the Landfill Area, Zone 03 is the Sports Area, Zone 04 is the Welcome Plaza, Zone 05 is the South Side of Barton Springs Pool, and Zone 06 is the Barton Creek area.

The zones as outlined are where most of the major improvements to Zilker Park will take place. Other projects like ecological uplift projects throughout the park, projects within the Zilker Preserve, and other miscellaneous projects could happen as funding becomes available and are not fully dependent on a sequential process.

ZONE 01: LAND BRIDGE

The land bridge area contains five different projects which are the restoration of Polo Field from informal parking, realigning Stratford Drive to the west side of

Zilker Botanical Garden, construction of an underground parking garage, construction of the land bridge, and the relocation of Zilker Hillside Theater. The sequence can be changed based on the operation and maintenance situation of the park.

ZONE 02: LANDFILL

Zone 02 is the Butler Landfill area which includes four different projects. The Butler Landfill will be restored into a natural area. Second, a parking garage is to be constructed under MoPac, and third, the Rowing Dock is relocated from the Nature Preserve to be adjacent to the parking garage, while creating access to the water under MoPac. The Zilker trailhead to the Butler Hike and Bike Trail would be located next to this facility.

ZONE 03: SPORTS AREA

The sports area concentrates the various sports fields scattered throughout the park into a singular area to create an active node. The projects in this Zone

Table 4: Project Packages by Zone

PROJECT PACKAGES BY ZONE				
Zone 01_ Land Bridge				
Restoration of Polo Field	Stratford Dr Realignment	Underground Parking Garage	Land Bridge	Zilker Hillside Theater
Zone 02_ Landfill				
Restoration of Landfill Area	Parking Garage	Relocation of Rowing Dock	Zilker Trailhead to Butler Hike and Bike Trail	
Zone 03_ Sports Area				
Restoration of Polo Field	Sports Area			
Zone 04_ Welcome Plaza				
Removal of Surface Parking	Enhancement of Existing Playground		Welcome Plaza	
Zone 05_ South Side of Barton Springs Pool				
Parking Garage	Removal of Surface Parking	Drainage Improvements	South side new play areas	
Zone 06_ Barton Creek				
Controlled Barton Creek Water Access	Restoration of Barton Creek Bank	Additional Bridge along Barton Creek		

are divided into restoration of the Polo Field and construction of the Sports Area, including new fields, trails, and a small surface parking lot adjacent to the MoPac feeder road.

ZONE 04: WELCOME PLAZA

The Welcome Plaza is the front gate of Zilker Park and becomes the central space for school gatherings or tourists. The improvement of the area starts with the removal of the existing surface parking. However, this only can happen when parking is accommodated elsewhere as per the plan, such as the parking garage on Azie Morton Road, parallel parking along Barton Springs Road or the underground parking at the land bridge. Improvements to the existing playground and renovation of the Caretaker's Cottage and Quonset Hut are projects within Zone 04.

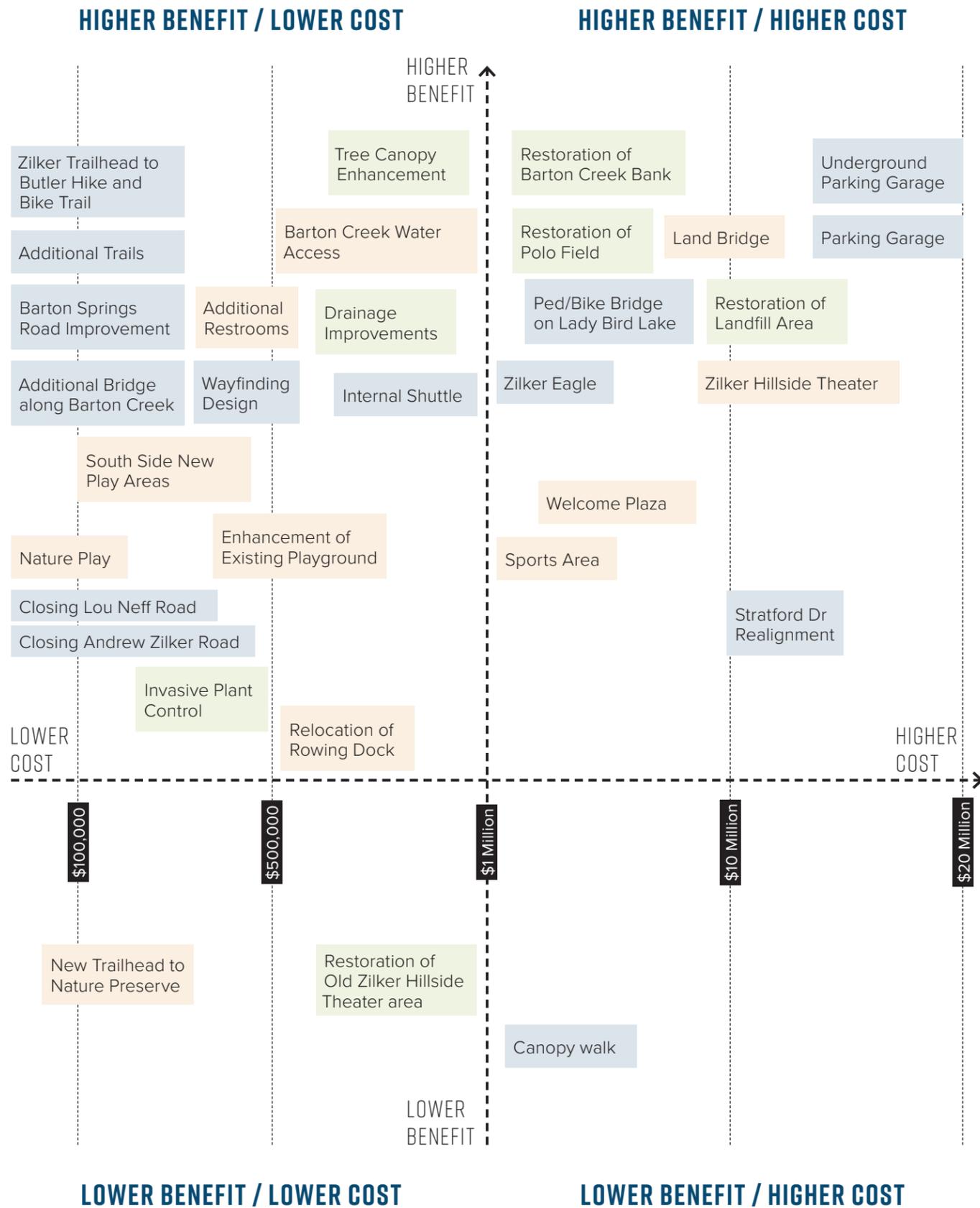
ZONE 05: SOUTH SIDE OF BARTON SPRINGS POOL

Existing surface parking will be removed to allow for drainage improvements and ecological uplift interventions. Furthermore, with the addition of new playscapes and gathering spaces, this area becomes more activated for everyday use.

ZONE 06: BARTON CREEK

The restoration of the banks of Barton Creek is one of the most critical projects in Zone 06. It is envisioned that safe, accessible walkways elevated up from the creek level are built, with hardscape areas for water access. Planted areas would allow for restoration of vegetation and for future generations of heritage trees to establish. Pedestrian and bike bridges along Barton Creek at Toomey Road, the west side of Barton Springs Pool and a crossing south of the Barton Springs Road bridge are included in this zone. These connections are vital to establish accessibility not only to this area but to the entire park.

PROJECTS BENEFIT AND COST RELATION

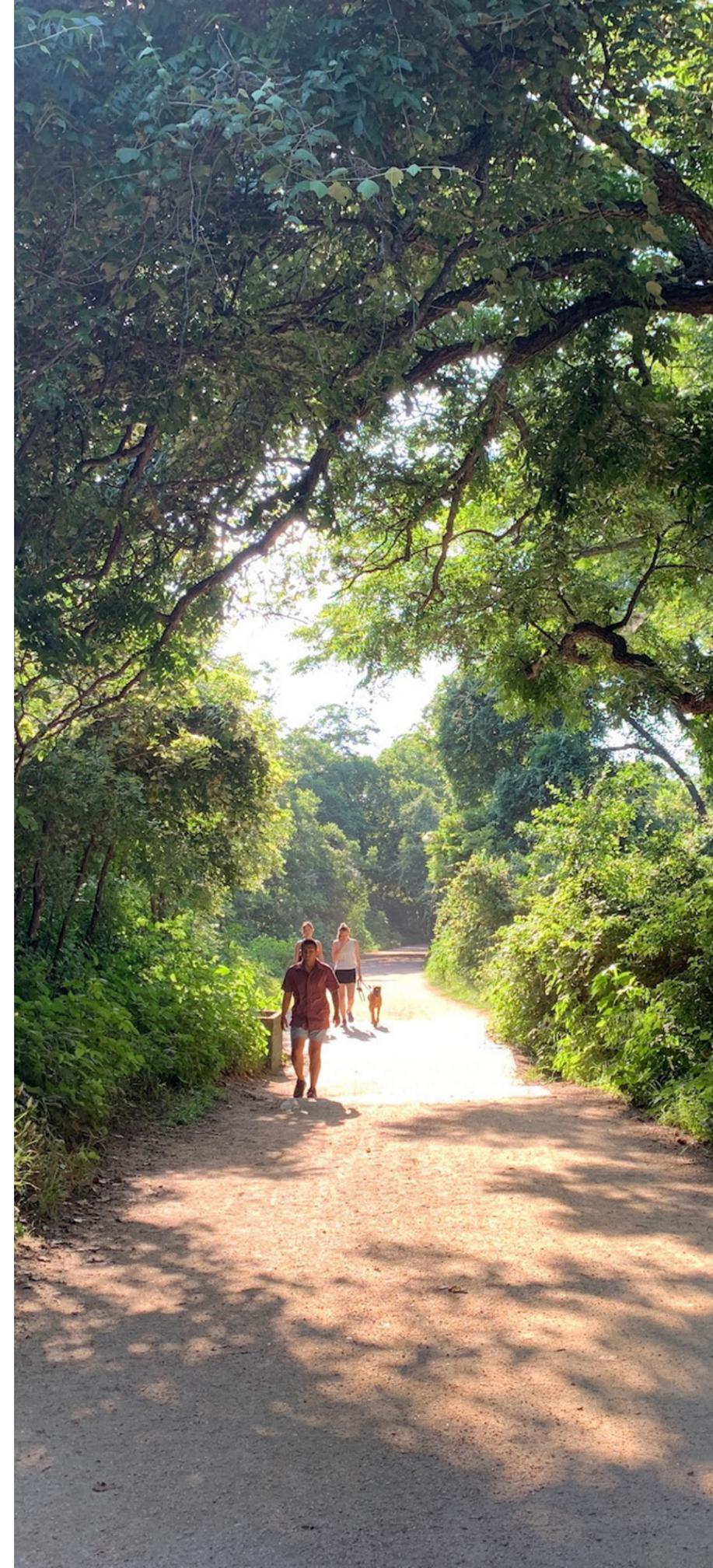


Benefit and cost relation analysis is a key strategy for prioritizing between multiple projects. The quadrants on the left side show the benefit and cost relation among the projects in the Zilker Park Vision Plan. Each quadrant indicates higher benefit/lower cost, higher benefit/higher cost, lower benefit/lower cost/ and lower benefit/higher cost. The projects in higher benefit/lower cost have been prioritized over the lower benefit/high-cost projects. However, it does not mean that the lower-benefit projects are disadvantageous. The diagram helps the City with prioritizing the projects, which is based on stakeholder and community feedback.

The cost axis of the diagram indicates cost ranges based on estimations completed during the planning process. In the past several years, the market has been volatile as the world has experienced supply chain issues and inflation. It will be critical to reevaluate costs when each project moves forward.

In general, the benefit of each project is based on community input received throughout the duration of the project and discussions with City departments and various implementers.

This diagram is an excellent tool which helps to understand and compare the benefit/cost projections for each project. By integrating community input, this diagram will be further informed by the priorities voiced directly from the public.



PROJECT TIMELINE

YEAR 1-3

Zilker Park Non-profit Organization	Departmental Partnerships
Establishing Partnerships	Barton Springs Road Improvements
Restoration of Barton Creek Banks	Barton Creek Water Access
External Shuttle	Internal Shuttle
Additional Restrooms	Closing Lou Neff Road
Drainage Improvements	South side new playgrounds
Wayfinding Design	Nature Play

NEAR TERM

Land Bridge	Zilker Hillside Theater
Closing Andrew Zilker Road	Underground Parking Garage
Restoration of Old Zilker Hillside Theater Area	Restoration of Polo Field
Enhancement of existing playground	Additional Trails

MID TERM

Parking Garage(s)	New Trailhead to Nature Preserve
Restoration of Landfill Area	Ped/Bike Bridge on Lady Bird Lake
Additional Bridge along Barton Creek	Welcome Center
Welcome Plaza	Zilker Eagle
Zilker trailhead to Butler Hike and Bike Trail	

LONG TERM

South Side New Water Play	Relocation of Rowing Dock
Sports Area	Canopy Walk
Stratford Dr Realignment	



TIMELINE

The project timeline was established based on the previous benefit and cost relation analysis. However, as mentioned earlier, the timeline of projects is fluid based on available budget opportunities. This timeline is a guideline for decision-making but is flexible.

The timeline spans from years 1-3, near term, mid term, long term, and ongoing projects, such as tree canopy enhancement, invasive plant control, reducing user impact, and removal of existing surface parking.

CORRELATION AMONG PROJECTS

The next critical fact in the timeline is the correlation between the projects. The Vision Plan is divided into smaller projects; some of which are dependent upon the completion of others before they can begin. An example of this is removal of surface parking lots within the park is dependent upon other parking spaces becoming available, either through construction of a structured parking garage, addition of on-street parking along Barton Springs Road, or viable transportation to the park through the shuttle.

PARKING

Careful calibration with alternative ways to arrive at Zilker will be needed as existing surface and temporary parking spaces are removed. Surface parking should be removed to align with the plan when the following conditions are present: a. internal shuttle and external

shuttle systems are running, b. shared use parking is viable through third-party software platforms, c. alternative parking spaces are constructed as projects are realized.

- » Substitute Parking
- » External and Internal Shuttle
- » External Parking Garages

PARKING GARAGES

There are up to three parking garages suggested in the Zilker Park Vision Plan. However, the ultimate number of garages may change based on:

- » The capacity of each parking garages
- » Access to external and Internal Shuttles

- » The capacity of external parking garages
- » More frequent CapMetro bus service to Zilker Park
- » Project Connect light rail station at the Long Center comes online

The quantity and size of parking garages can be reconsidered as these other criteria are met.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships within City departments and outside groups can influence the timeline. Examples of this include funding from non-profits, City departments outside of PARD, neighborhoods, etc. Partnerships with other groups are encouraged to successfully achieve the goals of the Vision Plan.

OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT



Zilker Volunteer Day by Austin Parks Foundation

Zilker Park is one of Austin’s busiest parks, given the many amenities and destinations located within its 351 acres, as well as its central location near downtown. As a result, the Austin Parks and Recreation Department is continuously challenged to keep up with the sheer volume of daily service requirements stemming from vehicle parking, trash and recycling management, trampling of natural areas (especially in the area below Barton Springs Pool), and general wear and tear brought by millions of visitors annually. Conditions worsen during the drought and high temperature conditions of Austin’s extended summer seasons.

There is a long history of both nonprofit and volunteer groups assisting the city parks department with Zilker programming, operations, and maintenance efforts, as well as helping to fund key capital improvements. Those efforts have been focused on specific aspects or amenities of the park, versus a holistic approach that benefits the entire park. With the Vision Plan, we believe that there’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a coordinated effort between the Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) and a unified (umbrella) nonprofit partner.

As we have been noted during the Vision Plan process, Zilker Park is a collection of destinations that draw millions of visitors annually, as well as entities that have long-standing relationships and agreements with the city. Sunshine Camps and the Girl Scout Cabin are smaller, lesser-known destinations, while the Austin Nature and Science Center, the Botanical Gardens, the Hillside Theater, and Barton Springs Pool serve a wide range of visitors arriving by a variety of transportation modes, from private vehicles and bikes to school buses and Capital Metro.

In the years leading up to the vision process, more collaboration has been evident:

- » The Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy was organized by the many garden clubs and groups that have used the grounds for meetings, workshops, and events over decades. The Conservancy now tackles fundraising, hosting events, and working hand-in-hand with PAR.
- » The Barton Springs Conservancy has raised millions of dollars for improvements in and around the pool, including the forthcoming bathhouse restoration. In addition, they supported the Vision Planning process by funding the Zilker Park Natural Resource Inventory and Management Guidelines that gave the vision planning process a significant head start.
- » The Hill Country Conservancy, collaborating with PAR, is funding improvements to the trailhead for Barton Creek

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Zilker Park Collective, The Trail Foundation, C3, Barton Springs Conservancy, Friends of Barton Springs Pool, Austin Parks Foundation, The Trail Foundation, Hill Country Conservancy (Violet Crown Trail), Girl Scouts of Austin, Sunshine Camp, Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy, Zilker Hillside Theater, McBeth Recreation Center, Austin Nature and Science Center

Greenbelt, on top of their ongoing efforts to build and maintain the Violet Crown Trail.

- » The Austin Parks Foundation has funded the return of a revamped Zilker Eagle train, as well as numerous other improvements throughout the park.
- » The Trail Conservancy continues to upgrade the much-loved Butler Trail, recently adding a joint effort to program, operate, and maintain the length of the trail around Lady Bird Lake.
- » Prior efforts across Zilker Park by these and other nonprofits and volunteer groups include improvements to the Great Lawn, planting and care of many of Zilker’s mature trees in the picnic groves, and funding of restoration work along the Barton Creek Greenbelt. While these efforts are welcome, they are, by nature, piecemeal or partial efforts.

These collaborative efforts are not limited to Zilker Park or Austin, but reflect a national trend of nonprofit park organizations working collaboratively with city parks departments to “fill the gap” in public park needs. In the past years, park nonprofits have contributed an additional \$12 to \$14M in funds annually for programming, operations, and capital improvements in Austin parks. While only 10 percent of the annual city parks budget, it can make a significant difference.

Therefore, we recommend a unified (or umbrella) Zilker Park nonprofit that can serve as a single point of contact for the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, serving as the go-between for the many active organizations and interested parties. There are some excellent examples for such a model, including the Prospect Park Alliance in Brooklyn, NY; and the Bronx River Alliance in the Bronx, NY. Both organizations were formed by a coalition of “friends of” groups who work closely with the New York City Parks and Recreation Department to advocate for the park, raise public and private funds, organize, and deploy robust volunteer programs, and supply additional staff and resources to aid the city parks department in caring for the park. We believe that this model applies to Zilker Park as well.

We believe that PAR will want to maintain a strong management and planning presence in Zilker Park, including phasing and implementation of the Vision Plan, overseeing capital improvements, day-to-day operations and maintenance, reserved area reservations, and permitting and management of large events (ACLMF, the Kite Festival, Blues on the Green, Trail of Lights.)

We know that usage of Zilker Park continues to increase annually, prior to any proposed changes outlined in the Vision Plan.



Potential Partnerships

OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT



Therefore, we recommend that PARD formally review its current operations and capital plans to ensure that the most efficient and accountable model(s) for management of a complicated capital plan, increased operations, and maintenance capabilities, as well as coordination with PARD nonprofit partners authorized to work in Zilker Park.

In this context, we believe that a Zilker unified (umbrella) nonprofit, formalized as a partnership with the city per council resolution 20200312-041, can provide additional unique functions alongside PARD. Among the proposed features are:

- » Advocacy for the plan in both the final approved form (early 2023) and as implementation phases are determined by Austin Parks & Recreation.
- » Work with the broader parks, open space and environmental coalition known as Austin Outdoors to campaign for public funds (bond elections, annual budget increases, allocation of previously approved bond funds) for capital improvements, restoration, and expanded operations and maintenance for Zilker and the entire Austin Parks and Recreation system.
- » Advocacy for operations and maintenance funding, as well as private fundraising for capital improvements, programming, operations, and maintenance. This includes advocating for an increase in annual funding to the Austin Parks & Recreation Department, solicitation of additional funds from private donors or grantmaking



organizations, and raising funds via fundraisers for specific improvements.

- » Coordinating efforts with existing nonprofit partners and focusing on park-wide efforts, including establishing and managing a park-wide volunteer corps. Building on the work of It's My Park Day, the bi-annual city-wide volunteer workday, to expand regular opportunities for one-time and recurring park volunteers. A best-practice example would be zone horticultural programs for volunteers (as implemented by Brooklyn Bridge Park, Central Park, Rose Kennedy Greenway, and others). These efforts will require coordination with the PARD Partnerships program and the Adopt-a-park program managed by PARD and the Austin Parks Foundation.
- » Beyond this initial set of possibilities, the Zilker unified nonprofit could tackle a range of efforts from ecological restoration to enhanced levels of horticultural care, programming, enhanced concessions, and more. Such efforts will need to be considered in a partnerships agreement, using the model that PARD has laid out and which is detailed below.

The city of Austin has the ability through its established PARKnerships program to enter into agreement with parks nonprofits to provide a range of services and benefits. 2020, in response to Council Direction and Department Long-Range Plan recommendations, PARD spent eighteen months researching park partnerships in the state and nation, meeting with various stakeholders regarding our current partnerships and drafting a program and policy that reflects Austin's values and commitment to our green spaces. The PARKnerships Program is guided by Austin's values and commitment to trust, equity, collaboration, and stewardship. Such agreements lay out roles and responsibilities for the city and nonprofits, and ensure city coordination. Nonprofits with broad-based agreements that can include programming, enhanced maintenance, and capital improvements currently include the Trail Conservancy, the Downtown Austin Alliance, Waterloo Greenway, and Pease Park Conservancy, with the Austin Parks Foundation and the Shoal Creek Conservancy in process.

To summarize, we recommend a collaborative approach between PARD and a unified parks nonprofit that coordinates and streamlines the existing partnerships at Zilker with a focus on advocacy, funding and coordination between the city and the many groups and organizations already working to care for, program and improve Zilker Park.

MOVING TO ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

Within the park system and within Austin there is a movement towards sustainable land management techniques that bring urban ecology to the forefront of how we manage open space and parkland. This is codified in much of the public input from the Vision Planning process and laid out as a framework within the Zilker Park Natural Resource Inventory and Management Guidelines Report completed in 2021. Along with City council policy to have every park improvement project over \$2 million in value as a SITES certified project (sustainable landscape certification), and additional efforts by the Barton Springs Conservancy, the Trail Conservancy, components of city staff associated with the urban forest and watershed protection point towards a paradigm shift in park management that manages natural areas through ecological restoration through the lens of adaptive management. This paradigm shift recognizes that much of our parkland in Zilker is utilized for passive recreation activities where the enjoyment of nature, and the quality of that natural experience are critical components of the user experience.

The management shift utilizes ecological restoration best practices to enhance the ecological health and immense value of Zilker Park. It repairs degraded landscapes by addressing erosion, invasive species, and soil health. It increases functionality through green stormwater infrastructure and canopy enhancement. It implements ecological restoration practices that enhance and expand meadows, savannas, and woodlands. The results: Protect and maintain endangered species habitat and water quality, Repair environmental degradation, Restore and enhance plant communities, Repair and improve wildlife habitat, Enhance the user experience, and Facilitate environmental stewardship. These ideas are further articulated in the Zilker Park Natural Resource Inventory and Management Guidelines.

CONCESSIONS

As we noted in the Site Analysis Need Assessment as part of Zilker Park Vision Plan issued in spring 2021, the city of Austin uses a traditional concessions model that focuses on very long-term contracts with concessionaires, usually 5–10 year terms. These contracts require a combination of annual payments plus a percentage of revenue from the vendor(s) to the city.

In addition, the concessionaires are required to provide capital improvements in the areas of the public realm in which they operate. This is especially true for the majority of concessions that operate at Zilker or in the encompassing Lady Bird Lake Corridor, primarily focused on water-based recreation, including rowing programs, paddling or SUPing. City Code Section 8-1-71 limits the total number of permanent concessions along the corridor, including Zilker Park. Therefore, any changes to concessions would require changes to city code and related ordinances by action through the Austin City Council.

The City has contracted with Huston-Tillotson University to undertake a (Lady Bird) Lake capacity study through its environmental justice academic program. This study includes a plan and recommendations informed by the analysis of vendors, watercraft usage and enforcement. This will be delivered by December 2022 and will provide input on the possibilities and give more information as to the extent of usage and possible capacity of Lady Bird Lake and connected water bodies. While this is larger than Zilker, it does affect the two existing watercraft-focused concessions operating from Zilker.

Apart from the pending Huston-Tillotson study, there are several key messages that we provided in the economic section of the SANA in the spring of 2021 that we want to update and recommend, namely:

Both watercraft concessions operating in Zilker Park will be subject to changes in location, operating facilities, and access, based on elements of the Vision Plan as approved. Temporary or permanent relocation of amenities and access will likely be required.

The Zilker Eagle, as of this writing, is still in testing and troubleshooting phase(s), but is expected to be operational by the end of 2023. Like watercraft concessions, it will be subject to changes in location, operating facilities, and access, based on elements of the Vision Plan as approved. Temporary or permanent relocation of amenities and access will likely be required.

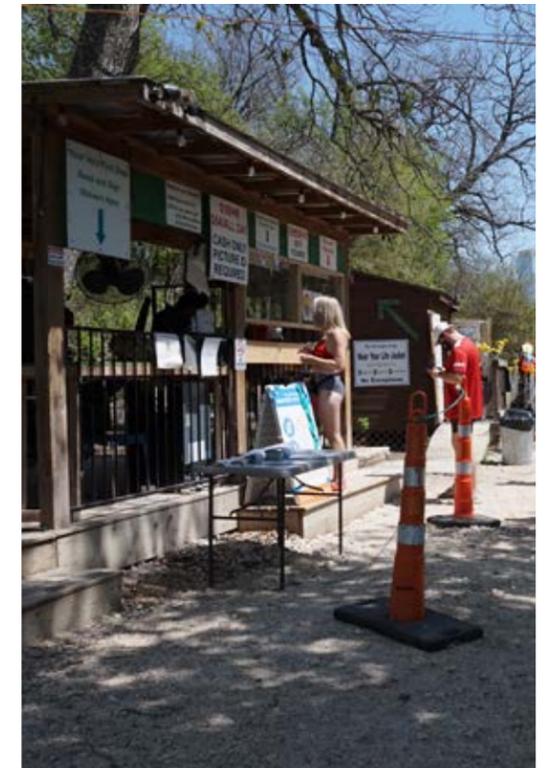
There is only a single food vendor with a permanent (and recently improved) location adjacent to the Zilker Café. In a well-publicized set of hearings in 2021, the approved operator was denied a conditional use permit by the Austin Planning Commission to serve beer and wine. The café has not opened, and we do not know the status of the café at this point.

Regardless of whether the café opens under the current operator or a future one, we believe that there are ample opportunities to provide additional food and drink concessions in multiple locations around the park, including but not limited to temporary or seasonal vending operators. Given the millions of people who visit the park annually, this seems like both a good placemaking opportunity as well as a revenue opportunity. We recommend that city and PARD consider the following opportunities:

- » Encourage temporary vending opportunities for food and drink at Zilker in several designated locations. Such a pilot project could provide input for a longer-term concessions strategy. PARD has existing contracts with local mobile food and drink vendors that it could use to develop an initial season-long pilot program. Such an effort would provide great input on where (and what) food and drink concessions work best.
- » For pilot food and drink concessions efforts, consider moving to a flat fee per order versus a percentage of sales plus an annual fee. This is a growing trend in many city parks (with public/nonprofit partnerships) to bring greater diversity in services and the types of concessions, while simplifying the accounting and verification duties of the city. Establishing a rotating set of vendors by days of the week for an entire season or year would also give PARD the ability to see which vendors are the most successful in terms of products offered and total sales.
- » Consider a concessions management role for the proposed unified Zilker nonprofit. Traditionally, city parks departments handle concessions in parks and public spaces. Such agreements, developed in accordance with city codes and approved policies, specify processes for vendor selection, management, and disbursement of revenues received from vending. These agreements can provide flexibility to adjust the number of vendors, locations, and offerings based on needs and successes. Such agreements specify processes for vendor selection, management, and disbursement of revenues received from vending, providing flexibility to adjust number of vendors, locations, and offerings based on needs and success. We'd recommend that any funds collected be directly spent on operations and maintenance efforts by the city / nonprofit parks partner, versus depositing them into the city's general fund.
- » Consider a change in city codes/ordinances that allows all concessions revenue to be dedicated to Zilker for maintenance and operations. As we noted in our presentations last summer, Zilker generates in excess of \$5.3 M per year from fees, events, space/site rentals, and concessions. All funds from Zilker are collected into the city's general fund, which funds a portion of the PARD budget annually. We cover this recommendation in greater detail in the O&M Funding section below.



Zilker Eagle



Zilker Park Boat Rentals

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CAPITAL FUNDING

Public funds used for capital improvement projects have strict requirements based on how those funds were obtained. Most capital projects funding in Austin Parks is from general obligation bonds, approved by city voters and restricted for capital projects. A smaller source of funds, with additional restrictions, is the city’s parkland dedication ordinance, which focuses on adding parkland and improved amenities for growing populations. Neither can be used for programming, operations, or maintenance.

This vision plan intentionally focuses on funding for operations and maintenance, since more mechanisms are designed to support capital investments. As traditional sources like grants, donations, public funding, and value-capture tools become available, capital investments in Zilker Park can be completed in phases identified throughout the Vision Plan

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE FUNDING

The greatest challenge facing city parks departments as well as their nonprofit parks partners is providing consistent funding for operations and maintenance. While programming can be funded through grants, sponsorships and fees, operations and maintenance is often invisible. Given that the majority of funds for O&M come from the city’s general fund and the general fund is under constant pressure (and competition) from many other departments, other sources of revenue to fund O&M are critical.

O&M funding frequently is derived from a few major sources, including earned income, contributed income, and creative public funding approaches. The mix of sources, described below, will enable the sustainment and enhancement of the park envisioned in this planning process.

CURRENT OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE EXPENSES

Overall, expenses at Zilker Park continue to increase, which is no surprise given the steady increase in visitors and usage. Between 2017 and 2022, PARD spent an average of \$6.5 million, an increase of \$1.47 million since 2017. This included all operating costs for Zilker Grounds Maintenance, Barton Springs Pool, the Austin Nature & Science Center, Zilker Hillside Theater, and the Zilker Botanical Garden.

Looking specifically at Zilker Grounds Maintenance, the average annual cost (between 2017–2022) is just over \$2 million. This has increased from \$1.47 million in 2017 to \$2.48 million in 2022.

Overall, Zilker Park expenses are just 6.2% of the total 2022 PARD operating budget of \$106.45 million. In turn, the PARD budget is just 2.26% of the total city operating budget for 2022.

The National Recreation and Parks Association reports on Park O&M costs through its annual Agency Performance Review. Their report is based on data gathered from over 1,000 public parks and recreation agencies. The 2022 report noted that the median for parks operations and maintenance is \$7,823 per acre, with the top quadrille median at \$9,269 per acre and the bottom quadrille median at \$3,959.

Determining Zilker Park’s cost per acre is a bit tricky, given that several areas are primarily staff costs for safety and programming (Barton Springs Pool, Austin Nature & Science

Center) versus maintenance. Using the Zilker Grounds Maintenance 2022 budget, the cost is \$7,065 per acre. Using half of Zilker’s overall budget (essentially combining grounds maintenance and botanical garden costs), the cost rises to \$9,259 per acre. We believe that PARD should assume a minimum cost of \$10,000 per acre going forward.

FUTURE OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE SOURCES

Securing any additional funding for park operations is challenging. To support the argument for increased funding, this section aims to connect the beneficiaries of better maintenance (e.g., residents, visitors, businesses, public and private operating partners) directly to the funding sources. Lastly, sources were specifically vetted for their relevance and precedent success in Austin and Texas.

EARNED INCOME

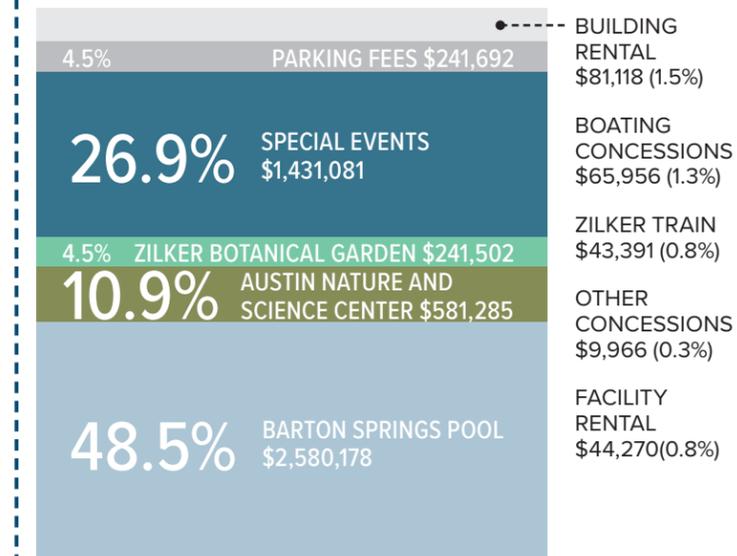
Primarily, Zilker Park should explore expanding concession opportunities and revenues. Only one food and drink concession is currently permitted in Zilker, and it has not been operational for some years. We recommend piloting a temporary concession program with a rotating set of food and drink concessions in key locations in the park on a seasonal (annual) basis. Furthermore, we recommend that concessions be charged a standard fee per order (ticket) to level the playing field. The total number of food and drink concessions should be carefully managed to ensure that the park isn’t overwhelmed by commerce and that participating vendors are operating on as level a playing field as possible.

The seasonal pilot program could be implemented using existing PARD temporary food concession contracts or via an annual request for proposal process. The results of the pilot over several seasons

REVENUE AND EXPENSES OF ZILKER PARK

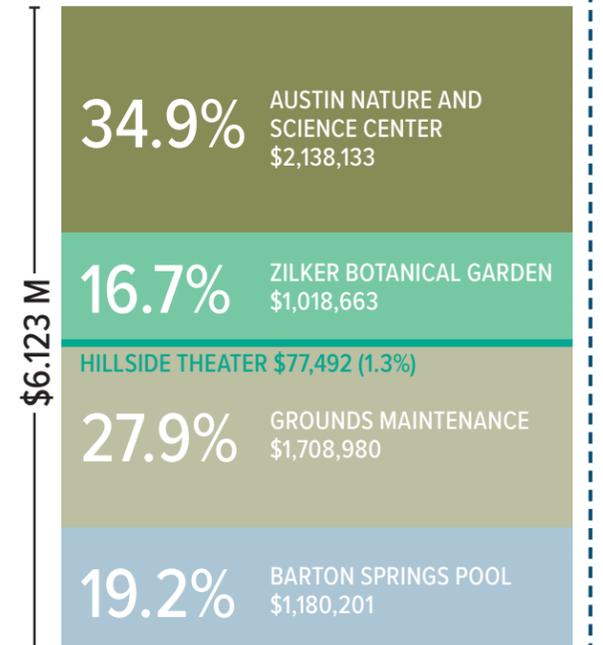
REVENUE ACCRUED IN ZILKER \$5.32 M

86.87% OF ZILKER EXPENSES
41% OF PARD GENERAL FUND INCOME



EXPENSES FOR RUNNING ZILKER PARK \$6.123 M

7.2% OF PARD OPERATION BUDGET
0.67% OF GENERAL FUND BUDGET



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can better inform if / where permanent food concessions in Zilker Park may be located, what infrastructure is required for temporary food concession hookups (water, wastewater, electrical, hardened pad, etc.), and how to manage such a program longer term.

While avoiding “commercialization” of the park space, we believe that there are ample opportunities to provide modest food and drink concessions in multiple locations around the park, including but not limited to temporary or seasonal vending operators. Given the millions of people who visit the park annually, thoughtful concessions would advance placemaking and generate additional operating revenue. We recommend that City and PARD consider the following opportunities:

- » Encourage temporary vending opportunities for food and drink at Zilker in several designated locations. Such a pilot project could provide input for a longer-term concessions strategy. PARD has existing contracts with local mobile food and drink vendors that it could use to develop an initial season-long pilot program. Such an effort would provide great input on where (and what) food and drink concessions work best.

- » For pilot food and drink concessions efforts, consider moving to a flat fee per order versus a percentage of sales plus an annual fee. This is a growing trend in many city parks (managed by public/nonprofit partnerships) that allows a greater number of vendors to participate in such a program and simplifies accounting and verification duties. Establishing a rotating set of vendors by days of the week for an entire season or year would also give PARD the ability to see which vendors are the most successful in terms of products offered and total sales.
- » Consider a concessions management role for the proposed unified Zilker nonprofit. Traditionally, city parks departments handle concessions in parks and public spaces. Increasingly, nonprofit parks partners are being contracted to provide these services for specific parks, subject to an agreement with the city. Such agreements specify processes for vendor selection, management, and disbursement of revenues received from vending, providing flexibility to adjust number of

vendors, locations, and offerings based on needs and success. We’d recommend that any funds collected be directly spent on operations and maintenance efforts by the city / nonprofit parks partner, versus depositing them into the city’s general fund.

- » Consider a change in city codes/ordinances that allows some concessions revenue to be dedicated to Zilker for maintenance and operations. As we noted in our presentations last summer, Zilker generates an excess of \$5.3 M per year from fees, events, space/site rentals, and concessions. All funds from Zilker are collected into the city’s general fund, which funds a portion of the PARD budget annually.

Zilker Park could also increase parking fees and dedicate this revenue towards park operations. Given that the parking program does generate several hundred thousand dollars in revenue at Zilker (after expenses are paid), it makes sense to see if parking fees can be increased or variable rates can be introduced, based on demand as is being done in a growing number of cities across the US. We understand that restrictions on use of funds may be limited to capital improvements or repairs, but wanted to note these fees as a possible growing source of revenue.

Finally, this report examined reserving all revenue from events, rentals, fees, concessions, and any other revenue that is currently deposited into the general fund to directly fund Zilker O&M. This would yield an

average of \$5.05 million annually, which is 36.5% of PARD’s annual general fund income of \$13.85 million. (For clarification, PARD generates just .29% of the total general fund income of \$1.17 Billion.). However, as Austin moves towards equitable citywide access to quality park space, this approach is unlikely to yield sufficient funding for the park system. Rather, Zilker Park and its supporters should be positioned as champions within park system to support increased funding for all parks.

CONTRIBUTED INCOME

One key strategy, securing additional contributed income, is to create unified nonprofit partner opportunities. It starts from that the city agrees to working with a unified nonprofit partner that serves as advocate for Zilker Park. The vision plan and implementing that plan, the unified nonprofit partner can work with individual existing nonprofits, philanthropic organizations, and individual donors to raise funds and provide support for O&M as a key component of their work:

- » Advocacy for public funding for O&M. As mentioned in the governance section, the unified Zilker nonprofit can take the lead in advocating for funding as part of the annual city budget process.
- » O&M funding built into donations for capital projects. As demonstrated by the Trail Foundation and others in Austin, major gifts now frequently include anywhere from 10–20% for a fund for replacement



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and repairs. This can help with increasing O&M funding across the park.

- » Sponsorships and support for programs and events. The unified Zilker nonprofit should be able to seek out sponsorships for programming and events being held at Zilker. A portion of funds raised can be used for O&M costs associated with programs and events. While this will require careful coordination with existing efforts (for example, at the Zilker Botanical Gardens), it can open opportunities for funding for a range of programming at the Beverly Sheffield Education Center, the Austin Nature & Science Center, the Hillside Theater, and other locations around the park. Details, including recognition dos and don'ts, would need to be addressed in partnership agreement(s) with PARD.
- » Volunteer Program development and management. A key part of the work of the unified nonprofit is to develop and manage a volunteer program for Zilker Park as a whole. Organizations such as the Austin Parks Foundation, Pease Park Conservancy, and the Trail Foundation provide a model for how an ongoing volunteer program can help with O&M efforts across the park, as well as care and maintenance of newly restored areas.

The unified nonprofit partner should be able to raise funds to pay for project managers, tools and supplies, and recognition programs for volunteers. A key goal should be developing the best practice of creating zone horticultural care program, where regular volunteers are paired with city and/ or unified Zilker nonprofit staff working to plant, water, weed, and otherwise maintain different portions of the park, but especially in areas targeted for ecological restoration. Again, details in agreement(s) with PARD would be key.

While this proposal isn't a direct source of O&M funding, it can provide a growing and flexible resource in knowledgeable volunteers working side-by-side with city and nonprofit staff. Parks of similar size see thousands of hours of work donated annually.

- » Assumption of food and drink concession program management. As mentioned in the Concessions

section, growing food and drink opportunities creates a new revenue stream.

- » Increasingly, nonprofit parks partners are being contracted to provide these services for specific parks, subject to an agreement with the city. Such agreements specify processes for vendor selection, management, and disbursement of revenues received from vending—providing flexibility to adjust number of vendors, locations, and offerings based on needs and success. We'd recommend that any funds collected be directly spent on operations and maintenance efforts by the city.

Additional contributed income may come from various donations, including both corporate sponsorships and individual donations. The creation of a park-specific organization, whether specifically on behalf of Zilker Park or supportive of Austin's entire park system, could include a membership structure that incentivizes corporations and individuals to contribute annually to park operations.

Finally, grants at the regional, state, or federal level typically focus on capital projects; however, some may be available to support ongoing operations. In particular, the national momentum around both equitable programming and climate resilience may point towards opportunities for operating grants.

PUBLIC FUNDING AND VALUE CAPTURE

Austin's park system creates significant value for the city of Austin, including its residents, visitors, and businesses. Zilker Park, as one of the crown jewels of the park system, is positioned to help champion a new effort to raise operating dollars for both the park and the park system as a whole. At the local level, the following options are the most likely to generate substantial revenue, though the implementation considerations remain significant:

- » Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT). HOTs help to direct some of the spending from visitors back into the City's general fund by leveraging a sales and use tax on most overnight accommodations in Austin. Austin's HOT is currently at the state maximum of 17%, with 11% going to the City of Austin and an

additional 6% going to the State of Texas. Zilker Park and the Austin park system are one of the core drivers of tourism in the city, suggesting there may be some ability to dedicate revenue to park operations.

- » Public Improvement District (PID). A PID sets a boundary around a specific set of businesses and/or residences to set a special additional property tax for the district. The funds from the tax are then directed back into the district to support operations and various programs. Austin already has three PIDs, including the Downtown PID, East PID, and South PID. To support operating funding for Zilker Park, funding opportunities could include extending the existing Downtown PID to include Zilker Park or creating a new PID around the Zilker Park area.
- » Municipal Management District (MMD). MMDs act similarly to PIDs, with funding typically based on commercial property tax or a district-specific sales tax. An MMD establishes a board of directors for the district that oversees the funds. There is not a specific cap on the amount of funds that can be raised, but to levy an assessment, the board of directors would need to gather petitions in support of the plan. This is most successful in highly commercialized neighborhoods, unlike the mostly-residential Zilker Park area.
- » Local Motor Vehicle Rental Tax. The State of Texas allows local governments to impose a tax on motor vehicle rental companies located within the boundaries of the taxing entity. The City of Austin currently has a 5% local motor vehicle rental tax which is dedicated to financing capital investments at the Town Lake Park Community Events Center Venue project, currently generating roughly \$10M annually to the City of Austin (pre-pandemic). This could be replicated but applied to ongoing citywide park maintenance, creating a new source of dedicated funding.
- » Parks Tax. A voter referendum can be designed to create either capital or operating funding for

parks throughout Austin. In 2018, Austin voters approved \$925 million in bond propositions including \$139 million for parks and recreation. With additional research, outreach, and modeling, a voter referendum could be designed to equitably and sustainably create a new source of operations and maintenance funding for Austin's park system.

CONCLUSION

Securing sufficient operating funding for Zilker Park, and more broadly, Austin's dynamic and quintessential park system, will require layering a series of funding sources that are appropriate and feasible for the desired program or use. By regularly evaluating earned income, contributed income, and public funding opportunities, Zilker Park can lead Austin in sustainably and equitably funding park operations.

CHAPTER EIGHT

IN THIS CHAPTER

Glossary

APPENDICES

GLOSSARY

- » 100-year flood plain – p 93 – The land area predicted to flood during a 100-year storm, which has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year. The 100-year flood plain is used by the federal government to administer the federal flood insurance program and by the City of Austin to regulate development within the flood plain area.
- » Active modes – p 76 – Active modes of transportation and mobility, such as biking, walking, scootering.
- » ADA – p 30, 92 – The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities engaging in everyday activities. The law addresses access to government services and activities in public places. In 2004, extensive provisions were added to the accessibility guidelines to provide accessibility to recreational facilities, including boating facilities, play areas and swimming pools.
- » Adaptation – p 175 – Adjustment to environmental conditions, such as humans adapting to life in a changing climate.
- » Adaptive Management – p 28, 188 – An iterative process, sometimes called adaptive resource management, to work toward ecological restoration goals, tempered by simultaneous monitoring of the effects of previous management methods. Hypothesis testing is used to inform decisions about future actions and allows for shifting of goals and strategies as new information emerges.
- » Berm – p 170 – A linear mound or ridge of earth, typically used to direct the flow of surface drainage.
- » CapMetro – p 30 – The Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the public transportation provider in Austin. CapMetro operates bus, paratransit and commuter rail services in the city and surrounding region.
- » Carbon sequestration – p 175 – The process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide, as a method of reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere in an effort to reduce global climate change. Specific to Zilker Park, the Vision Plan recommends increasing vegetation and improving soil health to enhance carbon sequestration.
- » City climate goals – p 30 -
- » Climate Resiliency – p 175 – Climate resilience is the ability to recover from climate-related shocks such as flood or drought, or the mitigation of vulnerability to those shocks. Increasing climate resilience is intended to reduce the climate vulnerability of communities to the effect of climate change.
- » Compatibility Standards – p 95 – A zoning regulatory tool used to protect and preserve existing neighborhood character and scale. In Austin, compatibility standards are applicable to property adjacent to residential zoned (SF-5 or more restrictive) property, and regulate allowable height, setback and building area on surrounding properties within which new development may occur.
- » Constituents of concern – p 65 – Any substance defined as a hazardous substance, hazardous waste, hazardous material, pollutant or contaminant, petroleum hydrocarbon, asbestos, PCB or similar substance, the generation, recycling, use, treatment, storage, transportation, release, disposal or exposure of which is subject to regulation under Environmental Law.
- » Critical Environmental Feature – p 93 – Critical environmental features (CEF) are defined and protection requirements outlined in the City of Austin Environmental Criteria Manual and Land Development Code. Critical environmental features include caves, sinkholes, springs, canyon rimrocks and bluffs, and protection of them by provision of a surrounding buffer area is required to protect water quality in the area of the CEF.
- » Critical Water Quality Zone – p 93 – Critical Water Quality Zones (CWQZ) are defined and development requirements outlined in the City of Austin Land Development Code. Critical water quality zones occur in watersheds outside those defined as urban watersheds, including rural and suburban watersheds and the Barton Springs Zone. CRWZ boundaries generally follow those of the 100-year flood plain or are defined as a set number of feet from the centerline of the waterway, with the width increasing as the size of the waterway increases.
- » Detention – p 97 – A detention pond is a stormwater control measure, designed to provide controlled release of storm runoff during or immediately following a storm. Depending upon the design conditions and regulatory requirements, detention features may be off-site, on-site, on-stream or regional.
- » Dillo-type – p 36 – The Dillo was a downtown circulator shuttle bus operated by CapMetro between 1984 and 2009.
- » E- bike – p 161 – An electric bicycle, equipped with an electric motor to assist while one is pedaling. An e-bike provides assistance with pedaling but does not fully propel the rider.
- » Ecological uplift – p 36, 124, 167 – The quantifiable environmental benefit of restoration actions undertaken. The environmental gain, or uplift, resulting from conservation actions or projects.
- » Edwards Aquifer – p 63 - The Edwards Aquifer is an artesian aquifer and groundwater system, an underground layer of porous, water-bearing rock that is roughly 300-700 feet thick and 5,400 square miles in area. The Edwards Aquifer Region extends from Brackettville to Austin, in a gentle arc shape. It is divided into three primary zones – the contributing zone, the recharge zone and the artesian zone. Zilker Park and Barton Springs Pool fall within the Edwards Aquifer Region.
- » Edwards Aquifer Contributing zone – p 67 – The contributing zone of the Edwards Aquifer is the drainage or catchment area of the Aquifer and occurs in the Texas Hill Country.
- » Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone – p 93 - The recharge zone of the Edwards Aquifer is the area where Edwards limestones outcrop at the land surface. The Edwards limestones are fractured and faulted and allow large quantities of ground water to flow into the Aquifer. Zilker Park and Barton Springs Pool fall within the recharge zone.
- » Edwards Aquifer Transition Zone – p 93 – The transition zone is a thin strip of land south and east of the recharge zone, also with fractured and faulted limestones, with caves and sinkholes that allow surface water to pass. The transition zone is part of the artesian zone, where water is drawn out of the aquifer at wells and springs. A portion of the eastern end of Zilker Park falls within the transition zone.
- » Environmental Resource Inventory – p 93 – A document required under the City of Austin Land Development Code and Environmental Criteria Manual for proposed development on properties in select locations, including within the Edwards Aquifer recharge or contributing zone. The environmental resource inventory (ERI) must identify critical environmental features and propose protection measures for them and must provide environmental justification for proposed spoil disposal location and roadway alignments and propose methods to achieve overland flow. The ERI must include a hydrogeologic report, a vegetation report and a wastewater report.
- » External circulator – p 160 – Short distance, fixed-route, circular transit option that takes riders around a specific area with major destinations. Typical circulator vehicles are trolley, jitney or other small bus-type vehicles. The external circulator noted in the Vision Plan is envisioned as connecting transit hubs or destinations outside Zilker Park with an entry point to Zilker Park.
- » Forbs – p 71 – A herbaceous flowering plant, that is not a grass, sedge or rush. Sometimes referred to as phorb. Forbs have stems and leaves, produce seeds and die back at the end of the growing season. Forbs are found in grasslands and understory plantings.

GLOSSARY

- » Green infrastructure or green stormwater infrastructure – p 63, 68, 170 – Green infrastructure filters and absorbs stormwater where it falls. It augments so called “gray infrastructure,” systems of gutters, pipes and tunnels, which moves stormwater away to treatment plants or direct discharge to water bodies. Green infrastructure uses plant or soil systems, permeable paving, stormwater harvest and reuse and/or landscaping as ways to store, infiltrate, evaporate or transpire stormwater and to reduce flows to sewer systems or water bodies.
- » Guiding principles – p 27 – Sustainability, diversity and inclusion, nature and ecology, history and culture, and accessibility.
- » Hydrology – p 45 – The study of the movement, distribution and management of water on the planet.
- » Impervious Cover – p 97 – The area of any surface that prevents the infiltration of water into the ground, such as roads, parking areas, concrete paving and buildings.
- » Internal circulator – p 160 - Short distance, fixed-route, circular transit option that takes riders around a specific area with major destinations. Typical circulator vehicles are trolley, jitney or other small bus-type vehicles. The internal circulator noted in the Vision Plan is envisioned as connecting destinations within Zilker Park.
- » Interpretive program – p 29 – Interpretive programs are the methods used to connect people to places and sites through educational materials. Interpretive programs may include exhibits, websites, live programs, special events, publications, signage and audio or video presentations. Successful interpretive programs build intellectual or emotional connections to the stories told and information provided and will encourage the development of stewardship and support for the messages and places.
- » Invasive species – p 71, 73, 173 – An invasive species is a living organism that is not native or indigenous to a particular area or ecosystem and causes harm. The term is often used to describe plants that have been introduced to a site, often with good intentions, that have caused unintended consequences.
- » Land Bridge – p 184 – A manmade, engineered bridge connecting two sides of a site, typically over a traffic roadway. In park settings, earth and plantings are used at the surface of the land bridge to continue the natural experience of the park.
- » Lithostratigraphy – p 70 – The classification of rock formations based upon the lithological character of the rock strata and their stratigraphic relations. Lithology describes the composition of properties of rock units. Stratigraphy describes the rock layers and layering.
- » Low impact play – p 170 – Low impact play or activity includes movement that is gentle on joints and performed with a fluid motion. Common examples are swimming, cycling, yoga, nature hiking, disc golf and pitch ball games like bocce and petanque.
- » Megafauna – p 64 – Large or giant animals of a habitat or geological period, now extinct in many instances.
- » MetroBike dock – p 161 – A public bike share system in Austin, owned and operated by a partnership of the City of Austin, CapMetro and Bike Share of Austin. The bike share system is intended to support trips that are too far to walk but too short to drive.
- » Metropolitan park – p 54 – A metropolitan park serves city-wide population and is the largest park type operated by the Parks and Recreation Department in Austin, over 200 acres in size. Metropolitan parks in Austin are typically natural resource-based and include swimming areas, open play areas, picnic facilities and trails for hiking, bird watching and interpretation of nature.
- » Micromobility – p 76 – Use of small, lightweight vehicles operating at speeds below 15 miles per hour and driven by users. Micromobility vehicles include bicycles, e-bikes, scooters, skate boards and other small mobility vehicles without license plates.
- » Mitigation – p 175 – In the broad sense, mitigation is the process of making something less damaging, harmful or severe. In the context of the Vision Plan, mitigation refers to efforts to reduce or prevent climate change, and strategies to do so are described in the Plan document.
- » Mode split – p 30 – The Austin Strategic Mobility Plan outlines a 50/50 mode split between drive alone vehicles and other modes of travel, as a top strategy. The mode split includes non-vehicular modes of travel, including walking and bicycling.
- » Multi-modal transportation – p 30 – Multi-modal transportation includes a coordinated system of various modes of transportation, and not just cars, buses, rail, bicycles or walking.
- » Natural Resource Inventory – p 67 – A list and description of naturally occurring resources in a particular area, such as water bodies, forest land. Cultural resources, including historic , scenic or recreational resources, may also be included. A natural resource inventory provides reference information for land-use and conservation planning and informs local planning and zoning processes.
- » Park circulator – p 37 - Short distance, fixed-route, circular transit option that takes riders around a specific area with major destinations. Typical circulator vehicles are trolley, jitney or other small bus-type vehicles. The park circulator noted in the Vision Plan is envisioned as connecting destinations within Zilker Park.
- » Parkner – p 84, 101 – Non-profit, conservancy, neighborhood, community or business entities working with the Austin Parks and Recreation Department for park development, maintenance, management and programming.
- » Parknerships – p 188 – Austin Parks and Recreation Department Community PARKnerships program serves to coordinate the efforts of partners and volunteers.
- » Pervious cover – p 42 – Pervious surfaces allow water to filter into the ground, enhancing groundwater recharge, filtration of pollutants and reducing erosion and flooding.
- » Phytoremediation – p 109 – The use of plants to clean up contaminated environments. The method works best where contaminant levels are low, as high concentrations take longer to clean and may limit plant growth.
- » Placemaking – p 189 – A participatory process for shaping public space, creating quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in.
- » Programming – p 25 – The provision of public activities to or in public spaces.
- » Protective Concentration Levels – p 49 - The concentration of a chemical of concern which can remain within the source medium and not result in levels which exceed the applicable human health risk-based exposure limit or ecological protective concentration level at the point of exposure for that exposure pathway.
- » Public/private partnerships – p 28 – Collaboration between a government agency and a private sector company or entity that can be used to finance, build and operate projects.
- » Rain garden – p 170 – A shallow vegetated depression designed to absorb and filter runoff and drainage from impervious surfaces, like paving, driveways, sidewalks and roofs. Rain gardens are typically landscape with native plants and grasses and help protect water quality and conserve water in an attractive way.
- » Re-wilding – p 42 – Conservation efforts intended to restore and protect wilderness areas and natural processes. Re-wilding is focused on restoring ecosystem health and biodiversity by protecting wilderness areas and providing connectivity between such areas.
- » Recharge zone – p 67 - The recharge zone of the Edwards Aquifer is the area where Edwards

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limestones outcrop at the land surface. The Edwards limestones are fractured and faulted and allow large quantities of ground water to flow into the Aquifer. Zilker Park and Barton Springs Pool fall within the recharge zone.

- » Recognized Environmental Condition (REC) – p 49, 63, 65, 169 – A REC, as defined in ASTM E1527-21 as “(1) the presence of hazardous substances or petroleum products in, on, or at the subject property due to a release to the environment; (2) the likely presence of hazardous substances or petroleum products in, on, or at the subject property due to a release or likely release to the environment; or (3) the presence of hazardous substances or petroleum products in, on, or at the subject property under conditions that pose a material threat of a future release to the environment.” (Note that this is the current version of ASTM 1527. The Phase I Environmental Site Assessment for Zilker Park referenced a previous version, ASTM E1527-13.)
- » Remediation – p 170 – Environmental remediation is the removal of pollution or contaminants from groundwater, surface water, soil, sediment or other environmental media.
- » Riparian – p 71 – Relating to wetlands adjacent to rivers and streams. The interface between land and a river, stream or creek.
- » Savanna – p 169 – A mixed woodland-grassland ecological system with trees widely spaced, so the tree canopy does not close.
- » Shared use pathway – p 37 – Paved, off-road pathways designed for use by a variety of nonmotorized users, including cyclists, pedestrians, skaters, joggers, scooters, skateboarders and others.
- » SITES certification – p 176 – The Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) encourages projects that improve site sustainability and protect and restore ecosystem services. The rating system outlines minimum requirements (prerequisites) and different levels of performance-related points to achieve SITES

certification ranging from Certified to Platinum. The program is administered by the Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI).

- » Stewardship – p 29 – Environmental stewardship is the responsible use and protection of the natural environment, achieved through active participation in conservation efforts and sustainable practices.
- » Stormwater runoff – p 26 – Rainfall or snowmelt that flows over the surface of the ground. Precipitation in an urban/suburban area that does not evaporate or soak in to the ground but runs across the land and into an adjacent waterway is stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff is a source of pollutants, picked up as it flows over streets, paving, sidewalks and lawns, including lawn and garden fertilizers, animal waste, sand, sediment, chemical contaminants and trash.
- » Sustainable Land Management – p 188 – Practices and technologies intended to integrate the management of land, water and environmental resources to meet functional needs while ensuring long-term sustainability, ecological system services and biodiversity.
- » Swale – p 170 - A linear shallow depression in the earth, typically used to direct the flow of surface drainage.
- » Tree canopy – p 173 – The above-ground portion of trees, covered in leaves, which form a canopy above the ground, providing shade below.
- » TxDOT – p 30 – Texas Department of Transportation, the state agency responsible for planning, designing, building, operating and maintaining the state’s transportation system.
- » Urban Ecology – p 188 – The study of ecological processes in urban environments.
- » Urban heat island – p 68 – Urbanized areas create heat islands that have higher temperatures than those found in outlying areas. Buildings, roads and infrastructure absorb and re-emit solar heat more

than undisturbed natural landscapes do, creating higher temperatures in urban areas.

- » Water Quality Transition Zone – p 93 –Water Quality Transition Zones (WQTZ) are defined and development requirements outlined in the City of Austin Land Development Code. Water quality transition zones occur parallel to all critical water quality zones and extend from the outer boundary of the CWQZ for a set number of feet, with the width increasing as the size of the waterway increases. Development and construction activity is limited in the WQTZ, with some exceptions and allowances for open space and parks/
- » Water Quality Treatment – p 97 – A water quality control structure, system or feature that provides water quality benefits by treating stormwater run-off.
- » Wayfinding – p 30, 160 – The Society for Experiential Graphic Design (SEGD) defines wayfinding as information systems that guide people through a physical environment and enhance their understanding and experience of the space.
- » Woodland – p 169 – Land covered with trees and woody vegetation, such as a timberland or forest.