



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Sara L. Hensley, CPRP, Director  
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

**DATE:** April 21, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Update on the Norwood House

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In November 2010, the Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) retained the services of a qualified team of consultants under the direction of Casa Bella Architects, to assess the condition of Norwood House and grounds (9.5 acres) and to develop a long-range plan for the site with input from staff and the public. Together with its consultants, PAR will engage the community at public meetings scheduled over the next five months.

There has been much media attention that has focused on the possibility of closing the Norwood Park off-leash area. Though the off-leash area falls within the limits of the study area it is not the primary focus. PAR has been consistent with message that the off-leash area was established in 1994 as a temporary facility and will close once redevelopment plans were developed for the park and alternative off-leash facilities are developed within a reasonable proximity.

The Off Leash Area Advisory Committee, composed of citizens representing each dog park, has been working with PAR staff for over a year to establish a long range strategic plan for off-leash facilities city-wide. The Norwood site has had representation on this committee. This citizen advisory group is generally in favor of the eventual closing of this off-leash area in favor of a facility that is more appropriately located and designed. We look forward to continued collaboration with our off-leash advocates on this subject.

The findings of the Norwood Condition Assessment and Feasibility Report will provide restoration and/or redevelopment options that will be generated by the consultants through a collaborative public process. The project will rely heavily upon the technical and objective condition assessment of the house and grounds. A broad range of parkland redevelopment options for the site will be explored, including but not limited to the restoration, modification and/or repurposing of the existing house and grounds. Public

opinion, site history, life cycle and operational costs, and future programming opportunities will all factor in the selection of preferred alternative.

Projected dates for this project are as follows;

April 20, 2011	Community Meeting #1 (Project introduction and public input)
May 17, 2011	Community Meeting #2 (Prioritize issues and needs and discuss general concepts)
July 2011	Community Meeting #3 (Present 3 schematic design options with projected costs)
August 2011	Provide Briefing to Parks and Recreation Board
September 2011	Community Meeting #4 (Present final design concept)
September 2011	Present Preferred Alternative to Parks and Recreation Board
October 2011	Presentations to City Boards and Commissions as Appropriate
November 2011	Presentation to City Council

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kelly Snook, Assistant Director, at 974-9451.

Cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager  
Bert Lumbreras, Assistant City Manager  
Kelly Snook, ASLA, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation Department  
Marty Stump, RLA, Park Development Coordinator